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Don't let GMO destroy the agri heritage of India

I have been reading your articles on the website and Facebook. This is to express my support. Kindly continue the good work and DON'T LET ANY GMO CROPS DESTROY THE AGRI HERITAGE OF INDIA. Our Vedic Seeds are the best. Be assured that many, many people who are not active members and supporters are with you against GMOs. And they will stand up, if need be. Hope to drive out gmo's from Bharat like in Russia, EU and many countries.

- Amaresh Kumar, kumaramaresh.doc@gmail.com

Double standards expose presudo-intellectuals

Return of awards by academicians, intellectuals and other dignified and learned persons have to either Sahitya Academi or such other agencies in quick succession is a contested news these days. Lately some filmmakers have joined the 'protest' against the increasing attacks on 'minorities'. However, it is purely personal view of writers, academicians and other intellectuals as a way to show their resentment and protest which shall not and can't be questioned. I am, however at a loss to understand why such conscience did not kindle in them when there was mass exodus of the single largest minority of Kashmir, the Kashmiri Hindus who were forced to leave their ancestral homes without any fault of theirs. Not only forced to leave, prominent intellectuals of the community including judges, professors, lawyers, journalists & scholars were murdered and massacred in cold blood. Were they not human beings? Were they not Indians and permanent residents of Kashmir? Where was the so called conscience of this award returning brigade at that time? This speaks of double standard adopted by these intellectuals. The way in which the intellectuals were hacked to death mercilessly and the repetition of such stories in Kashmir compels any person to think that those were barbaric activities. But alas! These 'sages' and intelligent persons remained silent and showed no resentment at that time. But why so? This simply speaks of the communal tinge. So in order to be positive and rational, one should look into the depth of a thing from rationalistic point of view in order to have the scales of justice smooth and even.

- DN Raina, *Muthi, Jammu*

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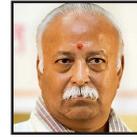
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Quote-Unquote



Baba Saheb Ambedkar's talent was a confluence of Acharya Shankar's sharp intellect and Tathagat Buddha's unbounded compassion. He made a lifelong struggle against the injustice of social inequality.

Dr. Mohan Bhagwat

Sarsanghchalak, RSS



'Never say die' attitude of our infantry has always been a prized asset of our armed forces. Courage & valour of our infantry is admirable.

Narendra Modia

Prime Minister, India



Just as a gun incident in US doesn't make every American a gun toting murderer, a few unfortunate incidents don't make Indians intolerant.

Chetan Bhagat

Writer



Indian lifestyle is sustainable way of life. It is not born out of poverty; it is born out of the values we cherish.

Prakash Javadekar

Environment Minister

India Africa Forum Summit

The challenging opportunity

Post world war global power structure has lost its relevance. World order is undergoing one of the greatest transitions in its history. The circumstances in which victorious countries dominated global institutions like UNO, IMF and World Bank etc. and virtually dictated terms and conditions to rest of the world have changed completely. The relentless anxiety among member states portrayed in the debate over reforms and evolving framework of global interaction between different countries between unipolarity and multipolarity is the result of the hegemonic actions of the developed west lead by the United States that prohibited the world bodies to play a neutral role. The countries like India that have become the backbone of United Nations peace operations and the principles of the UN are not ready to accept discriminatory working style. They demand full consultations, representation in the UN Secretariat, and reliable political support from major powers to truly democratise the future world order and the institutions. But the defiant west is refusing to learn lessons. It instead continues to push forwards exploitative policies. These countries unashamedly take U-turns to suit their interest as is evident from dumping multilateralism and far bilateral pacts soon after the rest of the world challenged their hegemony in WTO and also in case of legally binding commitments under Kyoto protocol to protect environment.

Third Indo-Africa summit (AIFS-III) needs to be seen in this background. The summit held in New Delhi from 26-30 October 2015 is no doubt a landmark event in the history of relations among these emerging powers. The summit that started with consultations on official level was followed by the head of states/governments level summit on 29 October 2015 and over forty African heads of government and state attending and meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It not only was a real massive gathering of important leaders from a rising continent on Indian soil, but also another confirmation of an eminent stature for India as a leading developing nation. It also was one of the biggest diplomatic outreach of NDA government that surely will yield positive results in future. Importance of the relation between the African countries and India was well stated by Prime Minister during the summit. "Our institutions cannot be representative of our world, if they do not give voice to Africa, with more than a quarter of UN members, or the world's largest democracy with one-sixth of humanity" he asserted. He further added and rightfully so "Two-thirds of India and two-thirds of Africa is under the age of 35 years. And, if the future belongs to the youth, then this century is ours to shape and build." Calling India & Africa as "the two bright spots of hope and opportunities in the global economy", Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged African nations 'to speak in one voice' along with India for UN reforms. Prime Minister was right in underlining the fact that relations between India and African countries are not just political & economic but have a "very rich cultural tradition". The logo depicted it all. A Lion with one half of an African lion and another half of an Indian lion. The official website mentioned about the logo: "Proud, Courageous, Bold and on the Prowl, ready to take on the future and seize every opportunity". In the background African map overlapping merges with Indian map in a reference to ancient Gondwanaland when Indian subcontinent used to be part of today's Africa's continental landmass millions of years ago. Therefore, it goes without saying that summit was a great success. Role of Sushma Swaraj, the talented and experienced MEA in making the summit a success needs to be appreciated appropriately. It however does not mean the future of relations is a bed of roses. While the economic content/aspect may see a movement forwards as India is Africa's fourth-largest trading partner, after China, the U.S. and the European Union. Over the past decade, the two-way trade between India and Africa has witnessed a massive surge - from \$25 billion in 2006 to the current level of over \$70 billion. India currently has oil investments in Mozambique, South Sudan, Egypt and Libya, and is also the biggest importer of crude oil from Nigeria. However, despite the rise, the bilateral trade still lags behind China's trade with Africa, which currently stands at \$200 billion. But what is important is the ability of the leadership of both sides to take care of global politics, be that creation of a exploitation free world order and institutions suitable for that purpose or reform of present institution to put an end to their limitations. India has some extra responsibility to stand up particularly on issues IPR, affordable drugs etc. We shall be careful not to betray developing nations again as was done in past.

Pulses production:

Taking care of consumers, leaving farmers in the lurch



Ban on futures and forward trading in pulses imposed earlier by the government is a very sensible step as Futures in agricultural commodities have always been associated with flaring prices, declares

**Dr. Devinder
Sharma**

No sooner had the Finance Minister Arun Jaitley declared that 36,000 tonnes of hoarded pulses had been seized in a nationwide crackdown, a loud chorus began defending hoarders and black marketers. Interestingly, the chorus is being led by the same group of mainline economists and trade bodies who have been on the forefront demanding dismantling of the APMC regulated markets so as to free the supply chain of the manipulative power of a cartel of wholesale traders. This was on the expected lines. Whenever food prices are on an upswing, except when the blame can be easily pointed to APMC markets, there has always been an organized uproar against any crackdown on traders. The prevailing mindset is that it's only the *dboti-kurta* clad *arbitiya* or middleman who is the problem. The suited-booted middlemen can do no wrong. In the case of pulses, it is mainly hoarding by the big retail and e-commerce and therefore the strong defense. Since there was no shortfall in the availability of pulses (domestic production plus imports) I see no other reason why the prices of pulses should have skyrocketed. The trade cannot be allowed to go untamed.

Imposing stock limits and ensuring no illegal hoarding takes place at any time of the year is an efficient administrative system that has to be permanently put in place. Although seen by many economists as simply a knee-jerk reaction, the ban on futures and forward trading in pulses that was imposed earlier by the government is a very sensible step. Futures in agricultural commodities have always been associated with flaring prices. It is primarily for this reason that a working group of chief ministers, led by then Gujarat chief minister, Narendra Modi, had in a report submitted in 2011 called for banning futures trading of essential commodities to tame rising food prices.

Even during the 2007 global food crisis when 37 countries faced food riots, a report submitted by then Special Rapporteur on Right to Food to the UN Human Rights Council had blamed futures in farm commodities to have caused

COVER STORY

at least 70 per cent jump in global food prices that eventually led to an unprecedented food crisis.

Although the production of *kharif* pulses is expected to register a fall in view of the drought and early withdrawal of monsoon in the later stages of crop growth, I still don't see any reason why the retail prices should not come down. Given that the private trade has already contracted for importing 2.5 million tonnes of pulses, which will be in retail stores latest by December, any shortfall in production will be adequately met from imports. If the government continues to use anti-hoarding laws effectively, and keeps an effective track of supplies, the open market prices can be easily brought down to last year's level.

Instead of announcing imports as a panic reaction whenever food prices go up, which in turn

sends international prices spiralling and makes imports expensive, the policy mechanism should aim at increasing domestic production and reducing imports. At the same time, since the common man's *dal* – a primary source of protein – is an essential part of Indian diet, all efforts should be to enhance its domestic production so as to increase its per capita availability. With incomes being low, pulses remain the major source of a protein-rich diet for the poor and also the middle class. At present, the per capita availability of pulses hovers at 31.6 gram per day which is awfully low.

While the policy thrust should be to increase domestic production with the aim to raise the per capita availability to 100 grams per day in the years to come, I find the government is easily washing its hands from any such responsibility be merely creating a buffer stock

of 40,000 tonnes of pulses to be purchased directly from farmers. This buffer stock will certainly address the problem of rising consumer prices but it doesn't provide any succor to farmers to incentivize cultivation of pulses. Since a Price Stabilisation Fund is also a consumer subsidy it seems the effort is only to keep the consumers happy.

For its buffer stock, Centre will procure directly from farmers at a minimum support price (MSP). In other words, selective number of farmers will get a benefit of an assured procurement. The rest of the farmers will be left in the lurch to face the vagaries of the markets. This is rather unfair. What is needed is an assured procurement along with a high price for farmers if the government is to make any serious efforts to raise domestic production of pulses. □□

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It is not dal, it is lack of governance



Political players and cartelized traders may have every reason to be gleeful or ignore the vital issue. The blame game may suit poll campaigners, but it is eroding credibility of governments and shaking the faith of people in the democratic tradition, believes Shivaji Sarkar

The capitalism is at its zenith in a country which has a statute abiding by socialism. So the poor man's dal – pulses – is demanding a price – around Rs 200 a kg, most Indians can ill afford. The crux is the “promises” of politicians in Bihar to bring down the price to Rs 100, which would be at least Rs 20 more than the price prevailing about two months back at around Rs 80.

Who gains? The capitalist dalwalla! Politicians instead of bringing down the prices to around Rs 30 – 40, about two years ago, are willing to give the predatory sellers a minimum bonus of Rs 20 a kg.

It seems the political dispensation is not trying to protect the interests of the poor man, the *garib*, who has been losing all battles. His votes are going waste!, many aver as the governments at all places are trying to protect the cartels, hoarders and all those who fleece him. The politicians, who promise to halve the prevailing dal price, forget that it is the same *arhar* or *tur* dal that the farmers have sold for less than Rs 40 a kg.

They have similarly not been successful in checking onion prices. It sells at Rs 60 to 80. All other vegetables are beyond affordable level. So are rice and wheat. Even other commodities like soap and detergent are selling at prices three to four times their manufacturing cost.

Political players and cartelized traders may have every reason to be gleeful or ignore the vital issue that is eating into the core of democracy. They have got nothing to lose. Prices rise or fall their pockets get heavier despite now more stringent black money laws.

The blame game may suit poll campaigners but it is eroding credibility of governments. People have started feeling that they are “birds of same feather” – *ek hi thali ke chatte batte hai*, rural voters say. That is dangerous. It signals frustration and it is shaking their faith in the democratic tradition.



It is leading to a belief that politician is no more the master of governance. Then who is? The popular refrain is that the bureaucracy is ruling the roost. Some even point out a nexus between the officialdom and fleeing traders. To support their argument, the common man says, that whichever the government it might be, nobody has the courage to touch the bureaucracy. Despite change of many governments across the country no dispensation dislodges the officials from their portals. The nexus of officials and business continues. People continue to suffer.

Their arguments may have some logic. This country had seen that the government body NAFED has been into the spiraling of onion and potato prices many times. It had also seen how carefully Amul changed the packing mode of edible oil to litre to add to the profits of oil traders by over ten percent. So called political bosses, who happen to be chairmen of such organizations, neither tried to prevent these machinations nor even uttered a word in protest.

Strangely enough UP chief minister Akhilesh Yadav does not know that he can order raids. Instead Yadav wants the prime minister to suggest a formula. Is there any formula to take him out his apathy – or is it sheer complicity?

It is not that some states have not realized it. At least Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Andhra and Karnataka some other state conducted 3000 raids to “unearth” 36000 tons of hoarded pulses.

That there is bureaucratic complicity is obvious. Every police station knows these activities. Possibly they do not act for a price. Else a scam of such all-India mag-



Indian large businesses consider themselves above the law.

nitude can never take place.

Apart there is supposed to be intelligence bureau (IB) & state local intelligence units, whose job is to monitor such anti-people activities. If they have not reported such hoardings, they from topmost to the lowest employee must be severely pulled up. In case, they had reported it and action at other levels was not initiated, all such officials need to be summarily sacked for effective governance as also to restore faith of the people in the system.

Some strange alibi is often extended at all such rises in prices. It is said that there is a gap in production and demand. The demand for pulses is at around 21 million tons and production at 17.38 million tons. The supposed shortage is being met through 5000 million ton imports. That's good. But why despite such imports prices do not remain in check? The instances of the states which acted are enough to suggest that the traders have cartelized and indulged in hoardings all over the country.

It may be they are also moti-

vated by certain political dispensation to embarrass the government.

The other reason is the Indian large businesses consider themselves above the law. Is it so because they can buy whosoever they want? Why those at the helm of the affairs unable to check the phenomenon? These are difficult questions but it has to be answered.

The first NDA government of former prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee had realized the misdemeanor of the businesses. Vajpayee had set up an agriculture monitoring body. It used to regularly keep a watch on production of different farm commodities and plan accordingly. It had a sanguine effect. Prices during his six years of rule remained stable and inflation almost unknown. The subsequent UPA government dismantled it and the country is in throes of severe price spiral since then.

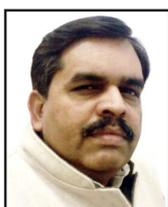
Maintaining prices – just not the price index - at affordable levels has to be the prime concern of any government. Agriculture has to be in direct focus of governance. Proper production, uninterrupted supply chain - may be a PDS, check on hoarding and other malpractices can make commodities affordable. Farm prices are key to the people's purchasing power. The growth the country is looking for can be ensured through this measure.

If it is ignored or left to “market forces”, as the UPA did, it would lead to the collapse of the economy and perhaps much more. There is no shortage of any commodity. It is mismanagement that is causing the turmoil. Capitalism or socialism has only one aim. Keep the people happy and let the country prosper through proper governance. □□

Ensure Pulses for Poor



People were yet to recover from high priced onion that prices of pulses started sky rocketing, especially 'tur' and 'urad' and these pulses are being sold at more than Rs. 200 per kilogram. Prices of pulses are keeping high for the last so many years, and now they have gone beyond the reach of the poor, as prices of pulses have increased by more than 40 percent in the last one year. Even Finance Minister concedes that though inflation has cooled down, except for onion and pulses. With pulse's price going uphill, government has hurriedly ordered for import of pulses and have also created a fund of rupees 500 crore to compensate for transport and processing of pulses, so imported.



Promotion of domestic production of pulses will go a long way in improving the condition of farmers, providing natural protein to people and cooling down the prices, underlines

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan

Pulses are Essential Nutrient

India has the distinction of being the largest consumer of pulses in the world; however we are not self sufficient in the production of pulses in the country and therefore import large quantities of pulses every year. Pulses are important, not merely as food habit of the people, but are essential nutrient for the masses which by and large, depends on vegetarian food. By providing required protein, pulses make our diet balanced; however, due to sky rocketing prices of pulses, not only our family budget is getting spoiled, even diet balance is also getting disturbed.

Insufficient production

It is notable that whereas incomes of the people and thus the demand for pulses increased manifold, increase in production of pulses was badly insufficient. In 1960-61, total production of pulses in the country was 13 million tons, which increased to 19 million tons (less than 50 percent increase in 53 years). Major reason was, stagnant per hectare productivity, with nearly no expansion in area under pulses cultivation. In 1964-65 per hectare productivity in pulses was 520 kilogram per hectare, which could increase to only 760 kilogram in 2013-14; whereas in case of wheat per hectare productivity increased from 910 kilogram

to 3030 kilogram during the same period, that is, 3.6 times increase. This imbalanced growth led to declining per capita availability of pulses from nearly 70 gram in early 1960s to 42 grams now. It is notable that per capita availability of cereals has increased from nearly 400 gram to 440 gram during the same period. Decline in per capita availability of pulses has been posing serious challenge for poor man's food basket.

How to Bring Pulses Back to Poor Man's Basket

Most common method to tackle the shortage and inflation in any commodity is to import that commodity. Pulses were no exception to this rule, and we have been importing pulses and edible oils on a large scale from abroad, merely to fill demand – supply gap and cool down inflation. The obvious result was that nation got dependent on the imported pulses and edible oils. Though it is true that nation exports agri-products on a large scale including rice, tea, coffee, tobacco and spices; dependence of the nation on imports has also been rising fast with respect to edible oils and pulses. Whereas in 2005-06 we used to import only \$0.56 billion worth of pulses, in 2014-15 nation imported pulses worth \$2.8 billion. International price of 'Tur' and 'Moong' is nearly rupees 80 per Kilogram, now and if we add transportation and handling cost, price of imported pulses would be much higher. Given acute problem of foreign exchange, and ever rising domestic demand, import of pulses on such a large scale cannot be legitimized. It is notable that whereas demand for pulses rise by 4.2 percent annually, against which domestic pro-



duction is nearly stagnant. Therefore we need to raise domestic production of pulses. Government also concedes that we have a shortage of 3.5 million tons of pulses annually, for which we may have to evolve a strategy to raise production at home.

How to Increase Production

As we understand, according to people's preferences and food habits, there is a dire need to make pulses available to fulfill protein requirements. And for fulfilling food requirement for 128 crore people in the country we cannot depend on foreign countries. Therefore there is a terrible need to raise production of pulses in the country. History tells us that assured minimum support prices for wheat and rice has helped raising the production of these cereals, in the country. Farmers in India can produce any quantity of agricultural products, provided they are given remunerative prices. Today per hectare productivity of wheat is four times that of pulses, therefore if we give minimum support price of Rs. 1500 per quintal for wheat, legitimately we can provide minimum support price for different pulses, depending upon variance in the per hectare productivity vis-a-vis wheat (ranging from two to five times).

Per capita availability of pulses in India declined from 70 grams in 1960, to 42 grams now.

This way we can promote domestic production of pulses. It is notable that international price of 'Tur' is rupees 80 per kilogram and government is compelled to purchase the same, in view of shortage. In such a case, promotion of domestic production of pulses will go a long way in improving the condition of farmers, providing natural protein to people and cooling down the prices.

It is unfortunate that in the last 50 years of 'green revolution' pulses which are essential source of protein for masses remained neglected. We can provide better seeds, irrigation and other agricultural inputs to help increase production of pulses. At the same time we need to be cautious too, as taking advantage of the situation, some seed companies are trying to promote their GM/Bt varieties. We need to generally promote organic pulses, which have a huge potential for exports too. □□

Dattopant Thengdi – Dreshta & Sreshta

Saroj Mitra

Not revolution, though he was not averse to it, but create conditions for a renaissance- was the goal of **Dattopant Thengdi**. He created mass organisations which succeeded in mass mobilisation though he kept himself detached from pelf and power. Thus Thengdi ji was both a **Dreshta**, a **visionary** who foresaw events and **Sreshta** a creator of institutions and organisations for addressing the future needs of the society. Various master strokes used as a strategy to pull down Indira Gandhi's emergency regime is yet to be revealed to the world.

It was war of nerves declared Thengdi ji during emergency. He asked activists not to resort to violence and circulated a master piece article on "Armed revolution and coup d'état so far ahead all over the world. Afzal Khan lost his patience, entered into forest and came within strategic range of Shivaji. Shivaji waited patiently. Similarly have patience, he asked his followers, so that Indira Gandhi would come within our range. The above write up was sent to us in side prison which enthused all of us including some Jamat Islami activists.

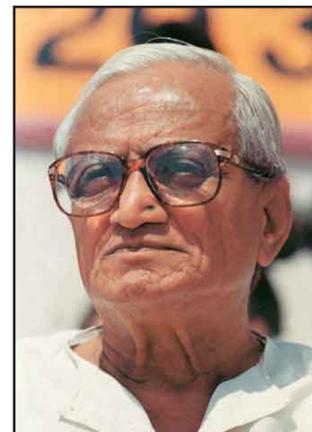
Thengdi ji's role in emergency – 1975-77

After Nanaji Deshmukh's arrest Dattopant ji Thengdi took the reins of Lok Sangharsh Samiti. Thengdi ji resigned from Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh as its General Secretary and left his residence at 57, South Avenue, New Delhi. The government announced 50 thousands rupees reward to locate him for his arrest. On Sept. 9, 1975 we met Thengdi ji in Kolkata at night where he declared that the government of Indira Gandhi would come to "a grinding halt" within 17 months. It happened exactly within that time frame. But he was moving with Ravindra Verma throughout India to start agitation against imposition of emergency. Thousands of people courted arrest majority of who were RSS activists.

Charan Singh's drama

During 1976 Charan Singh came out on parole

and met Jaiprakash Narayan at Jaoslok Hospital in Mumbai. He advised Jaiprakash to nominate his successor as his health was deteriorating expecting himself to be JP's successor. JP asked Thengdi ji to suggest a person to be his successor. Thengdi ji suggested the name of P.C. Joshi and submitted his bio-data in writing to JP.



Many days later Charan Singh issued statements accusing Jan Sangh of opposing him. When Thengdi ji met JP it was found that his letter containing bio-data of P.C. Joshi was missing from the file of JP. It was clear then that letter was taken away by Charan Singh and because of reading P.C. Joshi's name was issuing denouncing Jan Sangh and RSS. Thengdi ji with great risk, since Intelligence sleuths were desperately searching for him, went to Baghpat and met Charan Singh. Seated on an arm chair Charan Singh did not even look towards Thengdi ji. Thengdi ji told him that the reason to put P.C. Joshi's name instead of Charan Singh to JP as successor was actually to help Charan Singh. As people will expect successor of JP to follow his footsteps and remain outside power politics. Charan Singh as Thengdi ji was revealing this stood up and embraced Thengdi ji and said, "You are like my younger brother, do whatever you like". Thus JP was relieved of impending split in his proposed endeavour.

Due to Thengdi ji's effort Janta Party was formed to fight general election in 1978 after emergency was lifted. Thengdi ji's task was over. He withdrew from political activity nowhere to be seen in corridors of power. Even very few in Janta Party ever enquired or far too realised how thousands of people were mobilised all over India against Indira Gandhi during 1975-77 which finally resulted in her defeat in election of 1978..

□□

Remembering Rev. Dattopant Thengdi

Swadeshi Jagaran Manch, We all know, was officially launched almost 24 years back on 22.11.1991 in Nagpur Maharashtra. Social activists, political leaders and economists of different background under the able and visionary guidance of Dattopant Thengdi who had earlier founded Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, Bharatiya Kisan Sangh and Sarva Panth Samadar Manch, among others joined hands to resist the renewed onslaught from the west.



rasta Manch, Sarva Panth Samadar Manch and the Swadeshi Jagran Manch and few more similar organizations. A lot credit goes to him for the effective functioning of majority of such bodies in India. Thengdiji also founded the Samskar Bharti and inaugurated Akhil Bhartiya Adhivakta Parisad, Bhartiya Vichar Kendra, Akhil Bhartiya Grahak Panchayat etc.

The great sentinel of India's freedom movement, national organizer, architect, thinker, visionary, writer, austere, seer, honorable Shri Dattopant Bapurao Thengdi was born on 10th Nov 1920 in village Arvi of Wardha distt. in the Maharastra. His father was honorable Shri Bapurao Dajiba Thengdi.

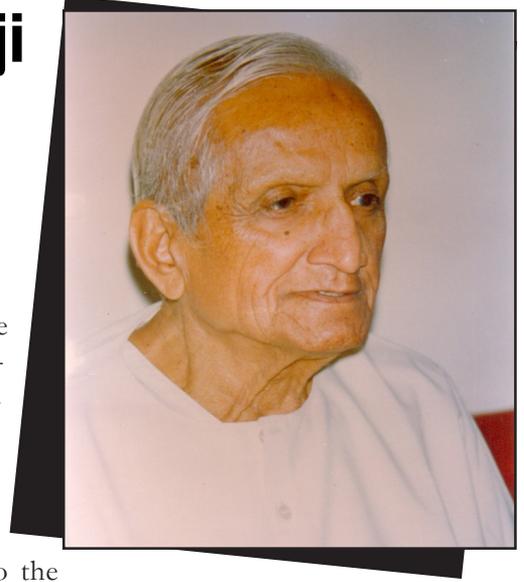
From childhood he was intelligent and hard working student who became committed for the national cause from very early age. In 1935 at a young age of 15 he was elected President of Arvi Taluka municipal high school. From 1936 to 1938 he worked as an active member of Hindustan Socialist Republican Army, Nagpur.

From early life he took to social service and the national cause. He took admission in Morris College and Law College of Nagpur and was awarded the degrees of MA and LLB respectively. From his student life since 1942 he became a Swayam Sevak of the RSS which had been the main source of inspiration for him. From 1942 to 1944 Thengdiji worked to develop organizations like Shri Vagmala Nanda. Society Kalicut, Arya Samaj Kalicut, Hindu Mahasabha, British Malabar Poor Home Kalicut. In 1955 established the Bhartiya Majdoor Sangh or BMS which developed literally from a tiny acorn in beginning to now a mighty oak. For more than 50 years he remained active for social and national awakening. To strengthen the creative fields of RSS he initiated the establishment of Bhartiya Kisan Sangh, Samajik Sam-

There may hardly be any national labour organization, Dalit Sangh, Railwaymens organization, farmers association, educational or literary association to which he had not given his earnest contribution. His whole life was embodiment of simplicity, steadfast commitment, studies, clarity of aim and vision. He has contributed 26 books in Hindi, 12 in English and 2 in Marathi. These books are testimony in print of his mission for the nationalist cause. His two books "Rashtra" and "Dhyepath par Kisan" are guiding light like Gita.

Shri Thengadi was also a member of Rajya Sabha. In 1969, He visited Soviet Russia and Hungary as member of a parliamentary delegation; in 1977 he went to Switzerland as a delegate to an ILO conference and also to the Second International Anti-apartheid Conference at Geneva. In 1979, he was invited to Yugoslavia by the Trade Union there to study that country's labourization, and also by the USA to study the American trade union movement. The same year he also visited Canada and Britain on invitation. Rev. Thengadi ji was a full-time Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh *pracharak* until his death on 14 October 2004. The kind of impact he left on the social and economic life of India was unique, and set the tone for generations to come. Some of the hallmark qualities of his lifestyle are: simple living, in-depth study, deep thinking, clarity of thought, courage of the conviction and missionary zeal for the goal. Swadeshipatrika joins millions of people inspired by him in paying respectful homage on his birth anniversary. □□

Remembering Thengadiji



It is my good fortune that I have been closely associated with the Samarasata movement in Maharashtra since its inception. 14th April 1983 was the significant day in the history of that movement. 14th April happens to be birthday of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. According to the Hindu almanac, the New Year day i.e. Varsh-Pratipada happens to be the birthday of Dr. K. B. Hedgewar, the founder of RSS. Incidentally in 1983, both of these important days had fallen on 14th April 1983. To celebrate this unique moment a program was organized in Pune to launch the Samajik Samarasata Manch. Dr. Gangadhar Pantavane, eminent Marathi litterateur was the chief guest of the function and Shri. Dattopant Thengadi was the chief speaker. Dattopant was a great thinker who contributed immensely to the development of the ideological framework of many organizations affiliated with the RSS. The Samajik Samarasata Manch was one of them. He took deep interest in the development and progress of the Samarasata movement in Maharashtra as well as in India, till his sad demise in 2004.

Dattopant Thengadi was a great thinker who contributed immensely to the development of the ideological framework of many organizations including Samajik Samarasata Manch. He took deep interest in the development and progress of the Samarasata movement in Maharashtra as well as in India, recalls Prof. Shyam Atre

I remember his keynote address on that occasion vividly. He dealt with the concept of Samata (equality) and Samarasata in detail and in depth. Samata, according to him, has its roots in western ideology and its world view. It has materialistic overtones. It is concerned mainly with the material and this worldly well-being of human beings. It is a concept of equal opportunity to be given to every human being for his progress and prosperity here in this world. However, the import of this concept has been challenged and contested by many social thinkers of the western world.

History tells us that liberty, equality and fraternity were the basic tenets of the French Revolution. In that ideological frame equality and fraternity are considered as different concepts. It means they are independent of each other. Equality does not include fraternity since it is a different proposition.

In the Indian context equality means Samata. But Samarasata is different from Samata. The Samarasata is deeply rooted in Indian culture and philosophy. It is essentially a spiritual concept. Its connotation is emotional bonding among the human beings. It is the spirit of brotherhood. Fraternity or Bandhuta is an integral part of this concept. Its import is embedded in the Indian philosophy and its inclusive world view. In Indian scriptures, it is said —

सर्वेऽपि सुखिनः सन्तु, सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः।

सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चित् दुःखभाग भवेत्॥

(Everyone and all in this world be happy and healthy. Everybody should get

only good things and nobody should have to suffer from any sorrow in life.)

Everybody is entitled to get equal opportunity to achieve the objectives reflected in this shloka. This is the spirit of Samarasata, the process of assimilation in any society. Thus concept of Samarasata has a far wider and all embracing meaning. Samata could be an aspect of Samarasata though its importance and significance can never be denied. In a country like India where there is so much of diversity, Samata is not enough. It must evolve Samarasata as well. It is a unifying force developing emotional, cultural and spiritual bonding among the people. If we have to march towards evolving the spirit of Samarasata in our society, we have to follow it in its spirit. That was the sum and substance of Thengdiji's speech.

Late Shri Deendayal Upadhyay, an eminent thinker and ideologue, has raised some pertinent questions in his thesis called 'The Integral Humanism'. In his introductory remarks he has asked, "what would be the face of India after independence? In which direction were we to advance and progress?" In his thesis he has made genuine attempts to find out answers to these questions. In his four lectures on this subject he has dealt with various aspects of these problems and indicated possible directions to tackle them. But due to his untimely death he could not get opportunity to elaborate the points he made in nutshell in this thesis. He had merely suggested a loose framework based on Indian philosophy and culture. Later on, it had befallen on Shri. Golwalkar Guruji and Dattopant Thengadi to

explain the import of that thesis in detail. Thengadiji delivered many thought-provoking lectures to deal with what was left unsaid by Panditji. On the background of failure of Capitalism and Communism in providing sustainable and inclusive answers to attaining material progress and spiritual well-being of every individual in the society, it was imperative to find out other alternative, the third way. Indian culture and philosophy has every potential to provide satisfactory answers to these pertinent questions. And Dattopant wrote a well researched book called 'The Third Way' to discuss in depth all aspects of Panditji's thesis. It reflects essentially an Indian perspective and world view. If we read 'Integral Humanism' along with Shri. Guruji's lecture on this topic and 'The Third Way' a book authored by Thengdiji, the whole exercise will become meaningful and will help us in proper understanding of Panditji's thesis. 'The Third Way' will enlighten us in grasping the Hindu way of life. So much for the greatness of Shri Dattopant Thengdi as a thinker of high repute.

Finally I would like to say a few words about Thengadiji's social world view. He has studied in depth the renaissance and social reform movements of India in general and in Maharashtra in particular. He has authored a book called 'The Movement of Social Revolution and Dr. Ambedkar' in Marathi, in which he has given his own analysis of the think-line of the social reformers in India, how they were impacted by the European renaissance, and how social reform movement in India was shaped. He has shared his understanding of the life and letters of Dr. Ambedkar in

the context of social reform movement in Maharashtra. He made a clear distinction between two streams of social reform movements as well as social reformers. The upper caste social reformers touched upon only the upper layers of social issues and problems. That was one stream. The other stream was represented by Mahatma Phule and Dr. Ambedkar. They stood for the downtrodden, neglected, poverty-stricken and untouchable class of society. The upper caste social reformers focused on those reforms which were concerned with middle and upper class of society. Though they strongly repudiated casteism and untouchability, it was their stand only in principle and they hardly practiced it in their personal life. Mahatma Phule bluntly spoke against the hypocrisy of the upper class people, the Brahmins included. He was the champion of the neglected class of people and started many social reforms and educational movements for their upliftment.

Thengadiji has taken a dispassionate review of the reform movements centered around lower sections of the society. He has also taken a broad review of Dr. Ambedkar's world of thought, his reform initiatives as well as his contribution to the well being of India. It is indeed, a landmark book of Thengadiji.

May I take pride in mentioning the fact that Thengadiji has freely quoted from my book 'Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Vicharyatra' (a journey of Dr. Ambedkar's thoughts) in that book. I consider it as my honour. So was the greatness and magnanimity of Thengadiji. My heartfelt respects to his memory. □□

Black Money Trail Chidambaram's lies nailed

To continue tracking the JD Group-Vasan-Chidambarams black money trail calls for moving back a little to move the story forward. The New Indian Express expose had cited two pieces of evidence of black money payments of Rs 223 cr by the little-known tax-fraudster JD Group to the well-known Vasan Eye Care for onward remittance to the Chidambarams. The cited evidences were: one, notes on black payments seized in the tax search on the JD Group; and two, the affidavit of M Srinivasa Rao, commissioner of Income Tax, before the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) saying the money has passed to the Chidambarams. In a knee-jerk response (TNIE Sept 21), P Chidambaram labelled the expose as “ridiculous” and “laughable”, more like a politician and less like a lawyer, without contesting the evidence tendered. Abusing the expose as ridiculous without refuting the facts is really laughable. In the next 24 hours, The New Indian Express (Sept 22) did slap its rejoinder to Chidambaram saying that he did not dispute, much less rebut, any of the facts. And now comes a devastating piece of evidence. Read on.

CBDT Confirmation

The new evidence is the counter affidavit filed by CBDT (Central Board of Direct Taxation) officials on August 18, 2015, to oppose Rao's application to CAT. Express did not have access to it when it first exposed the scam. It now has the CBDT affidavit in its possession. Far from saying that Rao's application is untrue, the CBDT affidavit threatens action against Rao for disclosing the facts! In Para 6 of its affidavit, the CBDT says that the information disclosed in Rao's affidavit is prohibited under sec 138 of the Income Tax law “as it relates to the assesses and is held by the Income Tax Authorities in fiduciary capacity and is confidential in nature”.



New evidence nails Chidambaram's lies on both black money and his family's links with Vasan. Vasan and the Chidambarams are stealthily linked by the surreptitious payoff in black, discloses S.Gurumurthy



Now recall the information disclosed in Rao's affidavit. Rao had revealed that a tax raid on JD Group in January had brought out black money of hundreds of crores of rupees paid by it to Vasam, which in turn had made it over to the Chidambarams. By saying that what Rao has divulged is prohibited for disclosure, the CBDT in fact confirms what Rao had said as true. The CBDT has reinforced it by saying that it intends to take action against Rao "for disclosing" the "confidential information" held by the department. The CBDT confirms three facts: one, the department does possess the confidential information forbidden for disclosure divulged by Rao; two, it holds it as trustee of the assesses and the disclosure by Rao is in breach of trust; and three, for disclosing the prohibited confidential information, the CBDT intends to take action against Rao.

This new evidence nails Chidambaram's lies on both black money and his family's links with Vasam. Vasam and the Chidambarams are stealthily linked by the surreptitious pay-off in black.

Karti-Vasam tie-up old story

That the Chidambarams and Vasam had formal links is too old a story for Chidambaram to hoot "we have nothing to do with the concerned company" and scoot now. The news of Vasam-Karti link was in public domain over three years back. Only the pay-off in black to the Chidambarams via JD Group is current news. The relation between Karti and Vasam, open for a while, was for unknown reasons suddenly tucked under a corporate structure manned by his buddies. The Economic Times



***Karti
camouflaged and
hid his holdings
in Vasam through
Advantage and
Ausbridge***

(May 11, 2012) first broke the story of Karti's links with Vasam through two corporates — Advantage Strategic Consulting Private Limited (Advantage) and Ausbridge Investments and Holdings Private Limited (Ausbridge). ET reported that Ausbridge promoted and owned by Karti had almost fully, 95 per cent, acquired two-thirds ownership of Advantage, which in turn, had bought 5 per cent of Vasam's equity. ET brought out how Karti got Vasam shares stealthily through Advantage at half the price that the others had paid for his shares. The throwaway price at which Karti's Advantage acquired it implied and exposed the Chidambarams' link with Vasam. ET also demonstrated how Karti's 5 per cent holdings in Vasam, which had cost him just Rs 1.5 cr, was worth over Rs 250 cr as valued by the private equity industry when ET was writing the story in 2012. It also reported that when ET contacted, Vasam did not respond and Karti declined to comment. Chidambaram was the finance minister when Karti acquired Vasam shares in 2008 and in 2012 when the story appeared. Yet, he did not contest the report. Now he denies that his family had anything to do with Vasam and pretends as if his family has never heard of Vasam name - for him it

is now "the company concerned". Does Chidambaram not know now he is telling a lie?

Windfall gains

Now see how Karti camouflaged and hid his holdings in Vasam through Advantage and Ausbridge manned by his confidants. Karti, like most politicians, needed front companies, benamis and proxies, to do commerce. Among those fronting for Karti are: CBN Reddy (described as his benami by intelligence reports), Sundar Srinivasan and Mohanan Rajesh regarded as close to him. One Bhaskar Raman is described by intelligence reports as "close to Karti and knows all his secret dealings and investments". Three more — Ravi Viswanathan, Padma Viswanathan, and Suchitra Rajesh, the spouse of Mohanan Rajesh — also figure in this list. They are the ones who double up and substitute for him as directors and shareholders of his front companies — Ausbridge and Advantage.

Here is a more forensic picture of how Karti acquired Vasam holdings for a song. Dwarakanath, the father-in-law of Dr Arun, the perceived promoter of Vasam, acquired 3 lakh shares in Vasam, at Rs 200 per share on 29.10.2008. Within 24 hours, he sold half of it - 1.5 lakh shares - to Advantage, intriguingly at half that price. Advantage

did not pay a single rupee even towards the discounted price till March 2010, when it paid Rs 50 lakh. The balance Rs 100 lakhs remains due, perhaps even Chidambaram was the finance minister then. Two years later, on 26 Oct. 2010, Advantage sold 30,000 shares (out of the 1.5 lakh it had acquired at Rs 100 per share) at Rs 7,500 per share to Sequoia Capital India Growth Investments and made a killing of Rs 22.2 cr. At that sale value, the 1.5 lakh shares of Vasam held by Advantage would be worth Rs 112.5 cr. as against the investment of Rs. 1.5 cr.

When it was paying Rs 7,500 per Vasam share to Advantage, Sequoia had already subscribed Rs 100 cr into Vasam's Preference shares, which would entitle Sequoia, at any time it wanted, to over a million Vasam shares at Rs 912 per share. Why, when it could ask for a million Vasam share at Rs 912 per share, should Sequoia pay over eight times that amount to buy 30,000 Vasam shares from Advantage? Intriguing, isn't it? What follows is something equally interesting.

Probe must

Within five months of Advantage making the windfall gain, on 25.3.2011, Ausbridge - almost fully owned by Karti since 2006 - acquired two-thirds of the ownership of Advantage, which had got the windfall gain. At what price? The existing shareholders of Advantage had paid Rs 77.5 per share before Advantage got the windfall gain. By the windfall gain, Advantage's share's break-up value had shot up to Rs 1,220 per share five months before Karti's Ausbridge acquired it. Yet the Karti-owned Ausbridge got the shares of Advantage at - believe it - Rs

15 per share. Which was less than one-fifth of the price the other shareholders had paid and just a little over one per cent of the true worth of Advantage.

Ausbridge — read Karti — did not even pay Rs 15 per share in full. It paid only Rs 2.5 per share, the balance remaining outstanding. By Ausbridge investing just Rs 5 lakh in Advantage, Karti got to own two-thirds of Advantage whose net worth was over Rs 18 cr.

Income tax law taxes this differential between Rs 18 cr and Rs 5 lakh. Has Ausbridge paid tax on it? If not, did the tax department look into it? Chidambaram was the all-powerful home minister at the Centre then. Immediately after Karti acquired two-thirds stake in Advantage, Rs 8.70 cr out of the windfall gain was siphoned out as investment in a Singapore subsidiary Advantage Strategic Consulting Singapore Pte Limited.

Another interesting turn here. Within six months of Karti getting two-thirds stake in Advantage, on 5.10.2010, he transferred his entire (95 per cent) holdings in Ausbridge (with its two-thirds holdings in Advantage and its Singapore subsidiary) to his confidant Mohanan Rajesh. The price at which Karti sold his stake in Ausbridge to Rajesh is unknown. Had Karti transferred the Ausbridge shares at full value he would obviously have paid tax on the gain. Had he underpriced it, which is likely, he would have to pay tax on the undercharge. Has he? Did the tax department, which must have the information, demand tax on it? Chidambaram was then also the home minister.

The circumstance of the transfer to Mohanan itself showed that

the transferee only Karti's proxy. Even after Karti suddenly disappeared from Ausbridge, the fortunes of Advantage continued to rise. During the year ended March 2013, Advantage again sold 30,000 shares of Vasam to Sequoia. It is not known at what price. It also received a consultancy fee of Rs 29.5 cr. Against, a total income of Rs. 39.8 cr for the year, it incurred expenses of Rs. 80 lacs only. The director's report of Advantage says that no employee gets salary of more than Rs 2 lakh per month and yet the company gets a consultancy fee of Rs 29.5 cr! Who then worked to get such huge fee? Does it need a seer to say that Advantage is a proxy to receive and keep illicit monies of someone else? Did the department, led by Chidambaram as finance minister then, probe into whether such intriguing dealings are genuine?

Karti's hidden and proxy holdings in different companies, under-charged buying and selling, secret gains and his inexplicable appearance and disappearance from companies - all call for a through tax probe at the minimum. Underselling assets to Karti, the only son of a Central minister, would definitely need probe under the anti-bribery law. Even Chidambaram can't dispute this. Will he ask for a probe instead of making empty denials?

Karti hid holdings behind benamis

Karti hid his holdings in Vasam through Advantage and Ausbridge. Among his benamis were confidantes CBN Reddy, Sundar Srinivasan, Mohanan Rajesh, Bhaskar Raman, Ravi Viswanathan, Padma Viswanathan & Suchitra Rajesh. □□

(courtesy: The New Indian Express)

Revisit Drought Policies

Drought, deficient rain, water scarcity, floods and farmers' suicides are part of Indian daily news. India is a geographically vast and hugely populated country with different climatic zones and it is natural that when one part of India faces drought and rain deficiency another faces floods. Indians faced and managed these situations from time immemorial. Indian government after independence framed policies to combat droughts, floods and famines and helped save lives and reduce starvation deaths by offering gratuitous relief and providing short term employment on public works apart from adopting programmes for irrigation, water harvesting and environment protection. True, there are no famine deaths now. But still there are farmers committing suicides due to crop failures and high indebtedness. Additionally, there is water scarcity everywhere throughout the year and there is now no area of city town or village where water tankers are not seen. This necessitates review of drought related policies.

Indian droughts

Drought is considered natural phenomenon and a result of climate variations mainly in the form of a long continued dry weather and/or insufficient rain. The loss of soil moisture, depletion of underground water supply and reduction of stream flows apart from crop failures and water scarcity are visible signs of a drought. The National Commission on Agriculture in India has categorised Indian droughts as meteorological, agricultural and hydrological. Meteorological drought is defined as a situation when there is significant decrease from normal precipitation over an area (i.e. more than 10 %). Hydrological drought results from prolonged meteorological drought manifested in depletion of surface and subsurface water resources and Agricultural drought is a situation when soil moisture and rainfall are inadequate to support healthy crop growth. The droughts in India are presumed to be affecting limited areas that are defined as drought prone



Climate change is a reality threatening earthly life. Combat efforts should not be limited to afforesting and environment protection but should include research that helps small farmers to get short duration and drought resistant crop varieties suiting to climate changes, Says Anil Javalekar

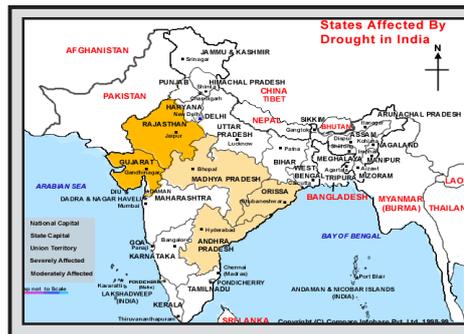


Analysis

areas. Many times, country as a whole is affected by different types of droughts and all policies and programmes adopted are mainly to mitigate the impact of a drought. In India, around 68% of the country is prone to drought in varying degrees. 35% which receives rainfall between 750 mm and 1125 mm is considered drought prone while 33% receiving less than 750 mm is chronically drought prone.

Indian approach towards drought

Indian system sees drought as a part of disaster management and all efforts are directed for its mitigation only after declaration of a drought. The policies are also mainly to rescue people from the drought conditions and help them survive. Indian Government policy mainly rests upon early warning preparedness, Crisis Management (Response) and Mitigation and Long-term Drought Management measures. A number of long-term and short-term programmes for the rural India have been evolved for the purpose. Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP), Desert Development Programme (DDP), Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP), Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY), Food for Work Programme (FWP), National Watershed Development Programme (NWDP), Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (REGP), Integrated Wasteland Development Programme (IWDP), Swarna-Jayanthi Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), Swarna-jayanthi Grameen Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Tube Wells, Food & Fodder Development Programmes etc are some programmes implement-



*In India,
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ed under different Ministries/Departments of the Central Government and the State Governments. Indian banking and Cooperative Credit Societies also provide help to drought affected persons by way of loan conversion, loan rephasing/reschedulement or simply loan waivers and supplying of fresh credit.

Need new approach

Reading Sri P. Sainath's book 'Everybody loves a good drought' even after 15 years of its publication gives glimpses of today's Indian droughts and the treatment it receives. True, Government spends lot on drought relief and much of it is on varied programmes meant for the people and area affected by drought. The droughts however, are frequent and its impact severe in spite of all the government spending. Indian droughts start with Metrological and results in agricultural and hydrological. The nature is blamed for the droughts but human interventions in nature have aggravated its impact. The droughts are recurring and its impact is now long term and not limited to specific areas or people. Earlier, facing drought was simple; adopt to the situations and do whatever possible for survival or simply migrate to better areas. This is now not possible because rising regional identities restrict migration and state's insis-

tence for identity proof and registration for everything makes even begging difficult. That makes drought severe not only for human beings but also for animals. This need changes in political behaviour and the state policies.

First is the need to realise that the **climate change is a reality** and not an issue only to be discussed in conferences and seminars. There may be more important happenings in the world affecting or threatening earthly life but climate change is a priority for a country like India where poverty and agriculture still matters. The action to combat this climate change need to be through continuous and serious efforts. More important, the efforts should not be limited to afforesting and environment protection but should be on research that help small farmers to get short duration and drought resistant crop varieties suiting to climate changes. It is also necessary that the consumptive lifestyle supportive to the climate changes is promoted. More than that, the production and distribution side of consumptive lifestyle that damage the natural resources need to be Controlled and managed properly. These need changes in production mechanism and policies that support urbanisation and industrialisation.

Second is the need to help

small farmer who suffers most in droughts. The agriculture has changed and is not the same when farmers simply cropped for family consumption that too only with family labour. Farming has also not remained a survival kit nor do crops taken only for its nutritional value. Now farming is a commercial add on business unit and crops are a profit venture. Thus crop failure is a death of business that leave farmers not only with financial losses but huge unpaid debts. As is known, Indian agriculture will remain with small farmers and with all its technological development and crop research it will remain vulnerable to vagaries of nature. Thus the need to stabilize risk management in agriculture. All partners in agriculture production including seed industry and government that induces farmers for heavy investment in agriculture need to share the production risks. The agriculture trade and market partners also need to be involved in after production risk management and all contract legislations need to care for the same. Pricing and prices of agriculture produce has not been favourable to farmers so far and need rethinking. It is important that the agriculture related systems including government should not in any case leave farmer alone to bear the agriculture risks. Agriculture risk management support is more important because more and more women are taking to farming.

Third is the need to make agriculture human centric. Commercialisation of agriculture has played havoc in agriculture cropping system. The usage of agriculture has not remained for human beings; more and more

land is being used for producing cattle feeds and automobile feeds. Producing cattle feed for meeting the meat requirements is a costly affair and producing automobile feed will endanger the food security. This makes agriculture more commercial and prone to market volatility apart from making it unsustainable. It is desirable that society remain vegetarian and agriculture should meet the vegetarian food demands of the society. Meat demands should more and more be met by poultry and fish that are not much burdensome to agriculture. It is to be remembered that market orientation of agriculture forces farmers to take crops that are not suitable to their farms and make them adopt unsustainable agriculture practices that endanger the future cropping systems. In the circumstances, droughts only aggravate human sufferings and unsustainability of agriculture.

Fourth is the concern of water scarcity. It is necessary to understand that digging and deepening of more wells, constructing more Irrigation projects, linking of rivers and water supply by tankers are not the solution. The efforts in water harvesting and recharging of ground water resources will also help only when water usage is controlled and managed properly. There will be a need to stop high water consuming cropping systems, heavy construction activities and water consuming industries & plants including water bottling plants. Remember that water disputes are growing and people in the command areas of irrigation projects are claiming rights on water and are not allowing water to down streams areas. The time will come when water tankers will not be allowed to

take water to other areas leading to socio-economic conflict. This needs discussions & definite policy initiative on water usage.

Fifth need is to insist on local self-sufficiency model of development. It is important that local areas are given priorities in planning and development that too within their resource base. The orientation of demand based development or imitating consumptive lifestyles of others without reference to local resources and local capabilities is a false idea. The development should be based on local resources and the cropping systems, trade and industries should be conducive for such a development apart from the consumptive lifestyles. Outsourcing of development in its every aspect has made local people and area dependent on outside agencies including government and has made rural areas more vulnerable to many of natural and man-made disasters including drought.

Let not disaster take decisions

The real estate sponsored urbanisation, profit based industrial expansion and commercial agriculture are not sustainable tools of development and need revaluation. The survival of human life is important and more important is the survival of healthy systems of life. Droughts due to sudden climate variations can be tackled only when all other socio-economic life systems are in working conditions. It is desirable not to allow disasters like droughts to take decisions and decide the fate of society particularly agriculture and small farmers. It is good if State Policies and political behaviours influence the change and decide the future sustainability of human life. □□

Current Economic Downtrend Need of a Timely Turnaround

The economy appears to be losing pace to meet the 8-8.5% growth-target, as envisaged for the FY16. An overall decline in most of the performance parameters, including the growth rate, exports, trade-balance, exchange rate, fiscal deficit, investments etc. in the first five months of the current fiscal year, necessitate an effective and -timely spurt to be given to enhance output and investments in the economy, through a slew of all possible measures. Amid an overall slowdown in manufacturing, services and farm sectors, including the exports, investments etc., India's GDP growth has also slowed to 7 percent in the April-June quarter, from 7.5 per cent in the previous quarter, as per the official figures released on, the August 24. Even the infrastructure sector, which accounts for nearly 38 per cent of industrial production, has grown just 1.1 on a per cent year-on-year basis in July, which has been at its slowest pace in these three months would also take time to revive. The services sector alone, in the last quarter grew at an annual pace of 8.3 per cent. But, it was also at a much slower pace vis-a-vis 10.2 per cent rise in the March 2015 quarter. Hence it would be tough to attain the overall budget estimate of 8 to 8.5 percent growth rate in 2015-16. If the official target of 8 to 8.5 per cent, an early action to give renewed spurt is warranted.

The cut in the interest rate by 0.75 per cent in three tranches since January by the Central Bank too has not brought any cheers in the pace of investments and output. The farm and allied sectors too could grow only at 1.9 per cent in the April-June quarter, down from 2.6 per cent in the previous year, as per the figures of the Central Statistics Office released on Monday, the August 24, 2015. The output of mining and quarrying sector has slipped marginally to 4 per cent, from 4.3 per cent a year ago. Financial, real estate and professional services growth too



Decline in the pace of economy appears to be widespread and across the sectors. Deteriorating fiscal health of the government may worsen even further and faster, cautions

Prof. Bhagwati Prakash Sharma



has shrank to 8.9 per cent as against 9.3 per cent a year earlier. Thus the decline in the pace of economy is widespread and across the sectors.

Problems in Fiscal Balance

Coming to the fiscal health of the government, we find substantial deterioration, which may worsen even further and faster. India's fiscal deficit has been Rs. 3.85 lakh crore during April-July, almost 69.3 percent of the full-year's target as per the aforesaid government data. The fiscal deficit was only 61.2 percent during the same period a year ago. Net tax receipts were at just Rs. 1.54 lakh crore in the first four months of the current fiscal ending in March 2016. The additional liability, not budgeted in the Union Budget 2015-16, and likely to arise from the one rank one pay (OROP) scheme, would 'further worsen the situation. Though, the government is claiming very hopefully to accommodate this extra burden of OROP via savings in the fuel costs and fertilizer subsidies, as well as from the higher mop up of indirect taxes. But, it should also be borne in mind that it would be hard to get parliament's nod on unifying the nation's 29 states under a single Goods and Service Tax, which is being touted as a big ray of hope for enhanced revenues. But, one should also keep in view that a high rate proposed for the new goods-and-services tax (GST) for the purpose of offering more revenue' to distribute to the states would hit the business turnovers and consumer spending, which may ultimately prove to be counterproductive. Besides, the proposed GST framework has many grey areas against augmenting the central revenues. It may exclude major items like alcohol,



Financial, real estate and professional services growth too has shrank.

tobacco and petroleum products from its purview and the revenue neutral rate or the combined incidence of the state-level and central GST may be fixed at an unreasonably high level at 27 per cent. The goal of widening the tax base may therefore remain unrealised, if so many items are kept outside the purview of the GST.

To the contrary, it will be important to bring more goods under the GST regime so that the overall revenue neutral rate can come down to a more reasonable rate of 18 per cent, the level recommended by expert committees in the past. But, the fourteenth finance commission has already striped centre of its 10% additional revenue by recommending transfer of 42% of central taxes. In view of the other inelastic liabilities like defense etc. the loss of revenue would be more than 10%.

Collapse of Exports

The worst news is that defying the all possibilities to attain target to double the exports to \$900 billion by 2020. The exports are actually declining very fast. The resultant a persistent and stubborn trade deficit along with high current account deficit (CAD) continues to bring pressure upon exchange value of the Rupee, as well as to keep the government 'badly dependent upon foreign invest-

ments (both FDI & FPI) to cope up with the long perpetuating CAD. It would be the biggest impediment to usher in an era of self-sustained growth in the economy. According to the RBI Deputy Governor Urjit Patel, CAD would continue to hover around 1.5 per cent of GDP in the current fiscal. For the first quarter ended June, CAD narrowed to 1.2 per cent of GDP at USD 6.2 billion following contraction in trade deficit and higher earnings from services exports. But, the exports had been by and large stagnant since last 3 years and now they are on a path of decline would render it altogether-impossible to meet the target to double the exports in 5 years.

With even non-oil exports contracting for the eighth month in a row and the August contraction being 13.9% versus 1.7% in July, the outlook for exports look quite disappointing. It would have a bearing on the overall growth rate as well. At an overall level the April-August exports fell down to \$110.6 billion this year from \$133.1 billion last year. Within this, oil exports fell to \$13.7 billion from \$28 billion and non-oil to \$96.9 billion from \$105.1 billion. Given that imports too have also collapsed during this period, so, the trade deficit may not blow off as it is just \$57.9 billion this year as com-

pared to \$57.5 billion last year where there is, just a marginal change.

Reasons for such a fall in exports are legion of which some are local, but mostly global. In the case, of engineering exports which had contracted by 29% in August, it is largely due to the hike in import duty on steel in June which had though made imports more expensive, but, since the government did not commensurately increase the value of the duty drawback to facilitate exports, the engineering exports too had contracted. When the 20% safeguards duty on steel imports has been imposed a few days ago, the drawback had to be increased even more that proportionately, and much faster, if engineering exports has to be jacked up. Likewise, the government has not been able to finalise the interest subvention scheme 100 for labour-intensive exports in spite of repeated industry demand and government assurances.

So, when the exports have been falling for so long, the government has to act much faster to combat this. Around 15% of our manufacturing sector output is being exported, so, it was possible over the entire last decade, that India's IIP growth had been the highest in these years, by virtue of higher exports, which were grow-

ing at around 25% in dollar terms. So, exports need more effective sops to jack up the overall growth as well. Indeed the GDP and exports have mutual interdependence. For Instance, from, 2004-08, the global GDP was growing at around 5% per annum and the global exports trade was growing roughly at double the pace of 9-10%. Over the past 3-4 years, however, this pace of growth has dissociated and partly reversed. The global trade is now growing much slower than the GDP growth. Now the trade-GDP ratio has also partly reversed from 2:1. In 2012 the global GDP has grown by 3.4%, but, trade grew just 2.8% in 2013, it was 3.4% and 3.5%, respectively, and in 2014, both (trade and GDP) grew by 3.4%.

Now even the IMF in July i.e. in its latest update before the G-20 summit, had agreed about slowing of manufacturing growth in the first half of 2015 over that in the second half of 2014 and also of the contraction in world trade in volume terms in the second quarter of this year. The scenario therefore, appears quite pessimistic. One of the reasons for decline in trade is that China has indigenously integrated its production, a lot more over these years for reducing its imports from the rest of the world. Indeed, the share of

imported components in China's total exports has already come down from a peak of 60% in the mid-1990s to around 35% today and this trend is still on the rise. The government is though trying to see an opportunity in the present Chinese crisis. But, today we are more crisis-led than China. We have experienced a fourfold contraction in our exports than the China. So any such opportunity is only a distant goal.

Our exports have already declined 21% to \$21 billion in August and our Imports have fallen 10% to \$33.7 billion. Consequently, the trade deficit has widened to \$12.5 billion in August 2015. The merchandise exports have plunged 20.7 per cent to \$21.3 billion in August from \$26.8 billion in the year-ago period. It is the ninth consecutive monthly decline in exports and the steepest in the first five months of this financial year. This fall has resulted from a massive demand slowdown in global markets and an uncertain global economic environment, owing to the crisis brewing in China. Therefore, to keep ourselves afloat we have to make serious efforts at home front. And dream of deriving an opportunity from the global economic arena including that from the ongoing Chinese crisis. Euro-American turbulence would prove to be a deceptive mirage. The value of our exports in August was the lowest in last five years, reflecting a greater crisis for us, than an opportunity.

Though, India wasn't alone in Asia to see a steep fall in exports. But, we have seen a much worse decline. Exports from Korea have declined 14.7 per cent in August, the most in six years and the Chi-



Euro-American turbulence would prove to be a deceptive mirage.

nese exports have contracted 5.5 per cent. But, our decline in August exports has been 21% and the cumulative data of April-August are also equally pessimistic.

For April-August, exports from India stood at \$111.1 billion, down 16.2 per cent-compared with \$132.5 billion in the year-ago period, according to the data released recently by the commerce and industry ministry on Tuesday, the September 15, 2015. The trade deficit for August 2015 has though stood at \$12.5 billion, a bit lower if compared with \$12.8 billion in July but, higher than \$10.8 billion of August 2014. For April August, the deficit stood at \$57.5 billion, against \$58.2 billion in the corresponding period of 2014. But, as percent of total trade or GDP, it is higher. The trade deficit is now beginning to be an intriguing factor. For the past two months, it was around \$12 billion and this, if coupled with the withdrawal by FIIs (foreign institutional investors), it has been depleting forex reserves a more serious cause for concern. So, the advantages from a fall in crude oil prices too aren't available to us anymore.

A detailed analysis reveals that, in August, the goods that fared poorly in terms of exports had included petroleum 'products, which declined 47.9 per cent to \$2.77 billion. While exports of engineering goods fell 30 percent, those' of iron ore declined 34.3 per cent and electronic goods 17.4 per cent. Exporters said softening of the prices of key agricultural and industrial inputs, coupled with a contraction in global demand, was the primary reason behind such a steep decline. The Federation of Indian Export Organisa-

tions has long been asking the government for "immediate introduction" of three per cent interest subvention. But the fiscal health is not very good to bear such extra burden. Though the Commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had assured that the government would roll out the interest subvention scheme soon, but, it is yet not a



'Made in China' alone has wiped out 1600 points from our Sensex.

reality. We have to provide a host of sops as well, if we have to boost exports and attain the targets of our new trade policy 2015-20 announced on April 1, 2015 envisaging to raise our exports to \$900 billion, double of what they are today. During the month, imports shrunk 9.9 per cent to \$33.7 billion from \$37.5 billion in August 2014. For April-August, imports fell 11.6 per cent to \$168.6 billion from \$190.7 billion in the year-ago period. But the gold imports jumped 140 per cent — from \$2.06 billion to \$4.95 billion; partly due to lower prices and partly due to ensuring festivals.

The fragility of our external sector is today most exposed. The crisis, 'Made in China' alone has wiped out 1600 points from our Sensex and Rs. 7 Lac crores in market capitalization, within hours of the Black Monday of China on August 24, 2015 exposing our vulnerability to any external tremors. Government has though been try-

ing to see an opportunity into it, but, it would be in vain in light of the visible trends across the sectors. It is a fact that we could not do anything, when a global sell-off triggered by the Chinese rout sent the Indian market crashing on Monday which plunged the most in over six years — 5.94 per cent or 1,624 points — to close at a 12-

month low of 25,741 wiping out Rs 7 lakh crore in market capitalization of all BSE listed companies within hours. The broader Nifty at NSE too fell 5.9 per cent to close at 7,809 Monday. Deriving any advantage out of any external crisis needs more internal integration, instead of depending upon foreign investments.

The Monday's (August 24, 2015) fall came on the back of a decline in the Chinese and Japanese markets that fell 8.5 per cent and 4.6 per cent respectively, because of our over dependence on foreign funds. So, when major European markets were down by around 6 per cent, the Dow Jones Industrial in the United States plunged less than proportionate and was down only because of better intrinsic strengths. It lost 4 per cent in the morning trading hours. Friday too, it closed with a loss of 3.1 per cent, pre-setting the tone for Monday's fall.

To be concluded

Indo-Pak Race for Civil Nuclear Deal with America



Pakistan has been always concerned about the Indo-US Civil Nuclear Cooperation. When 10 years ago Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and US President George Bush signed the joint statement on 18 July 2005, Pakistan strongly opposed the nuclear deal but ironically, at the same time it demanded a similar arrangement for itself that was flatly refused by the US Administration declaring that India was a special case. Pakistan has been consistently repeating this demand over the years and speculations went wild that such a deal may be discussed when Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif meets US Pres-

ident Barrack Obama in October 2015 who is believed to be less hostile to the issue. Is the present situation conducive for such a deal with Pakistan as it was in 2005 for India? The answer is “NO”. The White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest during his daily brief on 16th October had told the reporters “The expectation that we have is that a deal like the one that’s being discussed publically is not something that’s likely to come fruition next week’

One must remember that ten years ago in July 2005 the civil nuclear cooperation that was explored was between the two great nations that highly value democracy. It wasn’t easy for either of the parties. The US President was handicapped with the section 123 of the US Atomic Energy Act 1954 that restricts nuclear trade only with countries that are signatory to the NPT and India is not. To overcome this hurdle the US enacted an India specific (The Hyde Act 2006) enabling legislation to permit the President to negotiate nuclear deal with India. There were several pressing reasons for the US to go out of its way for the civil nuclear cooperation with India. Firstly, India needed electrical power for its growing industries. It had been for quite some time negotiating the Iranian gas while the US enacted Iran-Libya-Sanction Act 1996 was being strengthened as Iran Sanction Act 2006. The US was therefore desirous of dissuading India from Iranian gas deal offering in return the fuel and technology for nuclear energy. India’s nuclear reactors were running at their half capacity since India was unable to import nuclear fuel due to global sanctions that was spear-headed by the US. India wanted US help to lift the sanctions. Secondly, a nuclear cooperation with India had a potential for generating employment of over 50,000 high tech experts in the US. Thirdly, after the 1998 nuclear explosions India had already entered the exclusive 5-member nuclear club and the US was keen to contain India in its nuclear adventures. The US had also realized that despite acquiring nuclear strategic capabilities, India had shown great maturity and restrain in its nuclear policy. It had acted as a responsible nuclear State having declared voluntary moratorium on testing and No-First-Use of its nuclear weapons. Fourthly, the US wanted to check China which was emerging as a regional power in Asia and felt that India



For a similar civil nuclear deal with Pakistan the US Administration under President Obama appears to be not as hostile as it was under President George Bush. The path is however rough and the journey is tough on several counts, explains Dr. B.B Singh

being an economically strong country was its best bet.

It was after a prolonged debate in both the countries the Indo-US 123-Agreement was signed and India was granted NSG exemption paving the way for it to enter into global civilian nuclear trade. It must be remembered that during the process India had to compromise even its sovereignty and independence in nuclear activities in the interest of its economic development. Indeed, soon after the NSG waiver India rushed to various countries seeking cooperation and purchasing nuclear fuels for its power reactors which are now running with full capacity. Undoubtedly, India recognizes that it could not have been achieved without the US support but in return India had to make several financial commitments including purchase of nuclear power reactors from the US at costs several times higher than that for the indigenously produced.

For a similar civil nuclear deal with Pakistan the US Administration under President Obama appears to be not as hostile as it was under President George Bush. The path is however rough and the journey is tough on several counts. First and foremost, Pakistan is a weak democracy with a strong military hold over its policies and the nuclear arsenal. Secondly, it is known to have acquired technology of nuclear weapons in the most clandestine manner through the discredited scientist A.Q. Khan. It is well known that Pakistan has further passed on the ill-acquired technology to other countries like Libya, Iran and North Korea in complete disregard to the non-proliferation doctrine and has acted in



Pakistan appears a war-hungry nation.

the most irresponsible manner. Thirdly, Pakistan appears a war-hungry nation and has repeatedly shown its intention of using nuclear weapons against India even in case of simple boundary skirmishes. Its nuclear doctrine is war oriented and has not adopted such peace and restraint-oriented policies of No-First-Use (NFU) and No-Further-Test (NFT) unlike India. Hence Pakistan cannot be trusted as a nuclear power country interested in maintaining world peace. Fourthly, Pakistan is at the verge of economic bankruptcy and cannot afford to buy nuclear power plants or materials without heavy subsidies. Hence except the Chinese no other nuclear trader will have any business interest in Pakistan. Fifthly, Pakistan is well known harbinger of terrorists and possesses small size tactical nuclear weapons which may fall into the hands of terrorists. Pakistan has developed these battlefield weapons specifically for war with India shall never forego these warheads. Sixthly, Pakistan's political disloyalty to the US is no secret despite the huge grants it has been receiving from Washington for decades. It is now turned an ally of China. Seventhly, Pakistan does not have any lobby in the US to support its cause unlike the Indian Diaspora that is intellectually and financially strong and is contributing substantially to

the US economy. And finally, Pakistan has also not signed the NPT thereby the US President is handicapped to negotiate with it any nuclear deal unless another enabling legislation like The Hyde Act 2006 is enacted. In such circumstances, it would be a not less than miracle if the US Congress, Senate or even general public supported any civil nuclear deal with Pakistan.

Notwithstanding it must be mentioned that during the last visit of our Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the US the nuclear issue was discussed in totality once again. Reports have appeared that the US nuclear industry is not willing to enter Indian markets. As it stands today, India has not got a single nuclear reactor during all these years from the US and none is likely to come in near future despite the frantic attempts from all sides. The US Ambassador to India Richard Verma has recently commented that the deal between India and the US is not going to happen quickly because among other things, the insurance pool is still being worked out and the international convention on nuclear liability is yet to be ratified. India's nuclear deal with the US appears only half successful and Pakistan is yet to qualify as a player. The Indo-Pak civil nuclear race is yet to begin. □□

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This is not Indian Economic Thought

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has proclaimed that Hindi will be among the three global languages of future along with English and Chinese. His Government is making efforts to promote this language. Home Minister Rajnath Singh has made clear that his Government is moving towards imposing a nationwide ban on cow slaughter. These steps are welcome. The self esteem of a people is centered in their culture. It is not possible to make a strong India without respect for our own culture. But these are only the external manifestations of our culture. The fundamental tenets of a culture depend upon its attitudes towards its ordinary people. The Russian Czars had a different culture than American democracy. The central question is whether we are following our own system of governance?

The Indian system of governance was explained succinctly by Rama to Bharata when the latter had come to visit him at Chitrakuta. Rama gave lessons on governance in form of certain questions. “Is your income more and expenses much less? Your treasury is not in the hands of undesirable persons?” he asked. Here “undesirable persons” is proxy for undesirable expenditures. Revenue expenditures such as paying ever increasing salaries to the government servants are “undesirable” while capital expenditures such as in building highways are “desirable.” Share of revenue expenditures in total government spending has increased under Modi while capital expenditures continue to decline. The slower rise of prices observed in the recent period is being touted by the Government as a “great” achievement. It is left unsaid though that this has come at the cost of reduced public investment.

Rama asked Bharata, “Those earning livelihood from agriculture and animal husbandry are loving towards you?” Such does not appear to be the case today.



The self esteem of a people is centered in their culture. It is not possible to make a strong India without respect for our own culture. The fundamental tenets of a culture depend upon its attitudes towards its ordinary people, explains Dr Bharata Jhunjunwala



Basic problem of the farmer is that price of produce is less while cost of production is more. Farming has become a loss proposition. Farmers are not able to repay debt because prices are low and are committing suicide. The solution is to increase the prices of agricultural produce. Modi continues to tread on the UPA policy of importing food items to keep domestic prices low. Recently the Government has decided to import urad daal. This will deprive the farmer of high prices. Modi is flaunting useless schemes as “Soil Health Card.” The farmer will know what fertilizers to buy. But where is the money to buy these? The increase in Minimum Support Price announced recently should not be treated as a pro-farmer step. It only follows the past trend and does not go beyond the rate of inflation. How will the farmers be loving towards Modi in absence of such policies? Modi is only befooling the farmers by touting schemes like Soil Health Card and Insurance. The farmer does not have the money to buy fertilizers. So how will it help to know which fertilizers to buy?

Rama asked: “Have you appointed brave, learned, and self-controlled persons as your advisers?” Modi’s advisers are Government Servants manning the PMO. These are “servants.” Their world view is limited to their personal gains. They care not what happens to their master. Once an employer lost his job. He asked his servant to stop using ghee on roti. Yet the bottle of ghee continued to deplete. When ask for reason of the same, the servant said, “Sir, you have lost your job, but I have not lost mine. I do not apply ghee on

your roti as told by you, but apply ghee on my roti.” Such is the character of servants. One senior IAS official working in the PMO once said to me that he was only pushing papers! Such are Modi’s advisers. They will happily mislead the Prime Minister to keep him in good humour so that they may be made Governor of some State after retirement. Indira Gandhi during Emergency and Vajpayee were misled by these pliable Servants. Sonia Gandhi had adopted the correct strategy. She had appointed independent persons to the National Advisory Council. The success of the UPA in 2009; and failure during 2014 is attributable, in my opinion, in part at least, to the effectiveness of the NAC in 2009 and disbanding of the same before the 2014 elections.

Rama asked, “Do your judges decide without being swayed by allurements of money etc. if a poor person approaches the Court in a dispute between rich and poor?” Rama assumed that it was possible for the poor to approach the Court. Modi wants to take away this right itself from the poor. The present position is that an aggrieved person can approach the National Green Tribunal (NGT). Modi had set up a Committee under Chair of TSR Subramanian to suggest changes in the environmental laws of the country. The Committee has suggested that the right to approach the NGT may be removed. Instead the poor person should be asked to approach an Appellate Board constituted of one retired judge of the High Court and two Government Officials. Instead of Judges, now the same Government Officials who are the culprit will deliv-

er justice! The proposed amendments to the Land Acquisition Act are wholly designed to disempower the poor. The requirement of consent from the affected farmers is sought to be hugely diluted. That is hardly the justice that Rama had in mind, I think.

Rama was conscious of the need to protect the environment. He asked, “The Kosala Country that has large number of ponds is well?” Again, “The forests where elephants grow are protected by you?” Modi has no place for the traditional water harvesting technologies of the country. His policy is to make big dams like Lakhwar Vyasi that has been cleared recently by his Government. Such large projects provide huge opportunities to the big companies to make profit and also destroy the environment and culture of the country. Modi’s advisers do not want to revive the ponds because there is nothing in their revival for them. Big dams, on the other hand, provide plenty opportunities to the officials to make money on the sly. Forest, of course, are useless for Modi. The Subramanian Committee has recommended that 90 percent of the country’s forests that do not have dense cover be opened to cutting and mining.

Modi, however, is strong on cosmetic works. State BJP Governments have banned cow slaughter. Modi had obtained a huge photo opportunity by doing yoga in public. He is pushing the Sanskrit language. The reader will note that such fringe activities do not find any mention in the discourse given by Rama to Bharata. There is more to culture than such cosmetic activities. □□



Central Working Committee Meeting, Delhi - A Brief Report by Swadeshi Samvad

Central Working Committee (CWC) of Swadeshi Jagran Manch was held in Punjabi Bagh, New Delhi on 10th & 11th October 2015. Shree Arun Ojha, national convener of SJM chaired the two day meet. The Meeting began as usual with garlanding of portraits of Bhartmata, Mahatma Gandhi and Dattopant Thengadi.

Sh. Arun Ojha ji in his opening remarks at the beginning of the meet pointed out that world was going through an economic crisis. Managers of global economy continue to mislead people by recommending same medicine that is at the root of this crisis. Arun Ojha underlined the fact that the principled stand taken by SJM has been vindicated.

After opening remarks by Arun Ojha reporting from different state units was done by the conveners/ representatives of respective state units. They shared with CWC members attending the meet some major events organized by their state units after June meeting held in Vijaywada.

Detailed discussions were held on some important issues after initial comments were made on these issues by different leaders of SJM in different sessions during the meeting.

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan spoke about GM crops and issues related to the BT cotton and open-field-

trials of BT food crops. He also shared with delegates' status of the interaction with government and GEAC. He emphasized that the battle over GM technology was not a fight between Scientists and activists. It is between good science and bad science, he added.

Prof. Bhagwati prakash ji spoke about economic scenario and need to adopt Made-by-India. The economy, he said, appears to be losing pace to meet the 8-8.5% growth-target, as envisaged for the FY16. He further added: An overall decline in almost all the performance parameters, including the growth rate, exports, trade-balance, exchange rate, fiscal deficit, investments etc. in the first five months of the current fiscal year, necessitates an effective and -timely spurt to be given to enhance output and investments in the economy, through a slew of possible measures.

'Make in India' project, is search for FDI in disguise and government is rolling out a red carpet to foreign companies to set up industries in India. The difference between "Make in India" and "Made by India" is of ownership. 'Made by India', means that a product is built with Indian talent, Indian capital and Indian ownership. It also means developing Indian brands and revitalising manufacturing sector which can have a multiplier effect on the economy.

Indian industry, be that in defence production,

solar energy or in telecom, needs to unleash its potential and make policies to encourage entrepreneurship with steps like MUDRA bank.

Bhagwati ji also spoke about China's presumed decline and currency war. He explained that China was not in pain and that country was working under a long term plan. Bhagwati ji added that India cannot gain from China's planned pain as India is not taking right steps in that direction.

We are too obsessed with FDI. Quoting figures Bhagwati ji said that capital formation is inversely proportionate to FDI inflow in the country. Pleading techno-nationalism to develop Indian brands Bhagwati ji emphasized to create pre competitive consortiums to promote R&D.

Other issues discussed in the CWC meet include E-commerce; Solar power development; Datopant Thengdi Birth anniversary and sustainable development.

Sh. Dhanpatram Aggarwal spoke about IP related issues and Intellectual Property Regime

Intellectual Property is now the mainstay of western economies, he said. Substantial part of their GDP; 35% in case of USA and 39% in case of EU, comes from IP intensive industry. Similarly India is forced to part with 32-33% of its national income in various forms termed FDO.

USA and western countries are forcing us to further amend our IP Laws. Our IP Laws are WTO compliant yet we are being arm twisted to yield what is called TRIPS + concessions. Being very poor bargainers we get nothing in return. We have already compromised our sovereign rights by accepted a joint working group with



decision making powers during the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first trip to USA.

Under attack in particular is 3D, compulsory licenses, Art. 39.3 Of TRIPS Act etc. USA and other western countries are now bringing to table Non-violation complaint also. To pressurize India, USA is using USTP list to put us on notice. IP is related to Trade Mark, Patent, industrial layout, GI, copy right, Traditional knowledge, biodiversity etc.

The final draft of India's National IP Policy that was leaked a couple of days earlier is supposed have recommended new laws for trade secrets and utility models that is data exclusivity and petty patents. SJM needs to highlight inherent dangers in doing so.

FTA with Australia

Sh. R. Sundaram ji spoke about FTAs in general and with Australia in particular.

Every nation in the world, big and small enters into Bilateral and Free Trade Agreements, he said. India is also doing the same. To protect and further the political, security and economic interest this has become a necessity. It is in this context the situation has been analysed. China our main challenger has been aggressive in Trade Pacts and Investment and through that gains political strength. For example it is

planning major investment push in Afghanistan by reaching Taliban through Pakistan army and planning to replace India the major player so far. Since Americans plan exit from the country, China is moving its cards. US also wants to stop China and few days back inked TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP by sealing agreement with 12 Pacific Rim countries to create the world's largest free trade area. The deal will lower trade tariffs and help countries counter China's economic influence in the region. These countries have combined gross domestic product of \$28,136 bn on 2012 figures which is 40% of the world's GDP. Regional Trade Agreements now operate alongside multilateral trade agreements and account for more than half of world trade. Currently there are 379 Regional Trade Agreements as notified by the World Trade Organisation.

India has so far signed 10 Free Trade Agreements and Preferential Trade Agreements and is in the process of negotiating 18 Free Trade Agreements. (Economic Survey 13-14 page 133.) Performance of Indian Regional Trade Agreements; India signed most of its Agreements after 2006. First, Indian exports to its RTA and its non RTA partner countries have grown at the same rate since 2006. India's

exports to RTA partners increased by 21% year on year quite the same as exports to non RTA partners. Therefore India's export surge could be attributed more to the diversification of India's export basket - both in terms of destination and product mix, and less to RTAs.

After coming effect of India's trade pacts with ASEAN, Japan and Korea, trade deficit with these countries has increased drastically. While the trade deficit with ASEAN from \$7.6bn in FY10 to \$9.9bn in FY 13, it increased from \$3.1bn to \$6.3bn with Japan and from \$2.2bn to \$8.9bn with South Korea. According to Asian Development Bank, utilisation rate of India's FTA's varies between 5 and 25 per cent (one of the lowest in Asia). One of the reason is there could be numerous standards, sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures. A strong argument in favour of FTAs with ASEAN, Japan and Korea has been that they will facilitate cheaper imports of raw materials, intermediaries and parts and components and help improve the competitiveness of the India's manufacturing exports which has not happened. Internal studies suggest that India has not benefitted much from many FTAs and Investments pacts. The offsetting gains expected in services exports and higher investment have not materialized. Trade agreements have benefitted regional manufacturing process which many experts say have undermined India's attempt to revive manufacturing. Various department of commerce are carrying out impact assessment studies. The present government is very serious about reviving domestic manufacturing and it is to be understood that FTAs are no substitute for

domestic manufacturing. Leading Indian industry voices like L & T Chairman Naik wants FTAs rolled back saying that the world is free but trade deficit is one way. We are exporting jobs and not creating jobs within the country. Though Trade Agreements are inevitable in today's context the existing agreements must be thoroughly reviewed and future agreements carefully negotiated in consultation with all stake holders so that the country gains overall.

Sustainable Development

Referring to the lecture delivered by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in UN general assembly Sh. Kashmiri Lal ji reminded that India has done unparalleled work in this direction. Kashmiri Lal cited a research report of Yale University that is says environmental damage was accelerated after 1750. The report further says that 50% of this damage happened in last 25 years only and 63% of it was caused by just 90 MNCs.

He further added that per capita emission levels are around 2.25 tons in India while as that of USA it is 20 tons. Exposing double standards of these MNC's Kashmiri Lal ji said that while on one hand they pollute environment, on the other hand they also fund sponsored NGO's to raise hue and cry on petty environmental issue in order to divert attention of people from serious one's in which they are involved. He asked delegates to contact experts of environmental protection along with activists in their respective states to promote and propagate Indian Model of sustainable development that ensures improvement in lifestyle of the people, but causes minimum harm to environment.

National conference (Rashtriya Sammelan) of SJM to be held in Jodhpur in December was also discussed in detail in the CWC meeting. It was estimated that around 1500 delegates will participate in the 3-day Sammelan.

Sh. Arun ojha ji declared names of the persons who will be members of different committees to help smooth conduction of the Jodhpur Sammelan.

These include:

Sanchalan samiti, Prastav samiti and Vyvastha samiti etc.

Resolutions will be moved on four issues 1. Made-by-India, IP issues: education and sustainable development.

Sanchalan Samiti and Prastav Samiti will meet on 24th December at 11 AM in Jodhpur.

Rashtriya Parishad will meet at 3 PM same day same place. It was decided that resolutions will be passed on following important issues in the Rashtriya Sammelan.

Made by India; Intellectual Property Regime; Sustainable growth and Education.

After every key note presentation on specific subject there was a lively and informative discussion. One session was kept for 'Mukta Chintan ' or agenda free discussion where participants were free to raise any issue of their choice.

Future Events

- Dattopant Thengadi Memorial Lecture – 10th November 2015.
- Akhil Bharatiya Vichar Valay Baithak – 25th November 2015 from 10 am – 4 pm at Nagpur.
- Babu Genu Balidan Divas – December 12, 2015.

Meeting Concludes with a call to strengthen organization vertically & horizontally. □□

National Swadeshi Mela

Dwarka, New Delhi



Good display, celebration and show of Swadeshi products, culture and values was the high points of three day “National Swadeshi Mela” organised by Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) at Sector-7 Dwarka in CCRT ground. The event drew large number of crowds from all across Delhi including some prominent people from the society, intelligentsia, public life and politics.

SJM is organizing “Swadeshi Melas” all across the country to bring awareness, popularity and

platform for swadeshi products which are largely made by small community groups, handicrafts society, local tribal communities and other people with less capital but with hard labour and variety.

The swadeshi fair was aimed to promote country made products from cottage industries, small scale industries, community groups and societies and other related sectors. The Mela featured around 100 stalls on subjects like food and health, clothing, handmade wooden work, handloom, handicrafts,

grocery products, small toys and other daily utilities etc. Artisans from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Chhatisgarh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh made the display of their products, along with some government agencies and private groups putting their stalls. Carpets from Kashmir to intricate zari work of Rajasthan and decorative pieces from Gujarat, the mela has a lot to offer by artists who have gathered from various states.

The last day saw closing ceremony of the Mela in the auspicious presence of Smt. Kiran Chopra (Editor in Chief, Punjab Kesari). She made the tour of the ground and praised the presence of different varieties of stalls in the Mela and congratulated SJM for organizing such an event in a proper manner with huge public participation.

The event also witnessed felicitation of many individuals and groups who have achieved the success in their production and work with less capital and resource. □□



Rabid anti-BJP elements returning awards

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley hit out at those creative personalities returning awards terming them as “rabid anti-BJP elements” and said some of them had gone to Varanasi to campaign against Narendra Modi in the last general elections. “Those returning awards are playing politics by other means. They are rabid anti-BJP elements,” Jaitley, who also holds charge of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, told reporters while replying to a question on the returning of awards by writers and film-makers.

Stating that space of the Left has reduced, he claimed that those returning awards were in a way electioneering against the BJP in Bihar polls. Rejecting the charge that an atmosphere of intolerance was prevailing in the country, he said there was normalcy in the country and there was no atmosphere (of intolerance) for which the central government was responsible. He condemned all the incidents being dubbed as examples of intolerance and called for strict action against those responsible for it. The union minister, however, said there was a disproportionate political reaction to the incidents taking place in the country. □

India offers Africa \$10 bn soft loan

India has offered a concessional credit of USD 10 billion to Africa over the next five years and a grant assistance of USD 600 million even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a strong pitch for deeper ties in key areas of counter-terrorism, climate change and UN reforms.

Addressing the inaugural session of the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) describing it as a “meeting of dreams of the one-third humanity under one roof”, Modi said the heart beat of 1.25 billion Indians and 1.25 billion Africans is in rhythm and the partnership was “beyond strategic concerns and economic benefits.” Admitting that there are times when India has not done as well as they have wanted and not fulfilled commitments as quickly as it should have, he said the country will raise the level of its support for the vision of a prosperous, integrated and united Africa that was a major partner for the world.

“To add strength to our partnership, India will offer concessional credit of USD 10 billion over the next five years. This will be in addition to our ongoing credit programme,” the Prime Minister announced.

Stressing the need for UN Security Council reforms, he noted that the world was undergoing political, economic, and technological and security transition on a scale and speed rarely seen in recent history.

Carry out mitigation measures

Ahead of the crucial climate change summit in Paris, India and Africa urged developed nations to undertake “ambitious” mitigation measures to reduce carbon emissions and “honor” their commitment of providing financial resources and technology to developing countries. “Excess of few cannot become

the burden of many”, asserted Prime Minister Narendra Modi who had earlier invited African countries to join an alliance of solar-rich nations that he would announce on November 30 at crucial climate Summit in Paris. Both India and Africa also decided to enhance cooperation and coordination in finalizing an “ambitious and comprehensive” climate change agreement during the forthcoming Conference of Parties (COP21) negotiations in Paris even as it stressed that developing countries need to be “assisted” to mitigate climate change.

The declaration also said that the United Nations should function in a “transparent, efficient and effective” manner while the composition of the central organs must reflect “contemporary realities” in order to work towards the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and tackle challenges and threats ranging from security environment to climate change.

Govt bans import of human embryo

The government has banned the import of human embryo. The move assumes significance in the backdrop of concerns being raised over commercial surrogacy. “Import policy of the item ‘Human Embryo’...has been changed from ‘free’ subject to a ‘No Objection Certificate’ from Indian Council of Medical Research to ‘Prohibited’ except for research purposes based on the guidelines of the Department of Health Research,” Director General of Foreign Trade has said in a notification dated October 26.

The government told the Supreme Court that foreigners cannot rent a womb in India. Surrogacy services would only be available for Indian couples, it had said in an affidavit filed before the apex court. The government told the court that it decided to pro-

Economic cements to India-Africa ties

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj engaged with African leaders on a one-to-one basis, giving a personal touch to the Indo-African relationship. Both Modi and Swaraj made a record of sorts as they held back-to-back bilateral meetings with their African counterparts on day three of the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit. While Swaraj met nearly a dozen Foreign Ministers, Modi met 19 Heads of States from Africa, including chairperson of African Union Commission. The talks with African leaders largely focused on enhancing trade and investment. India utilised meetings with Nigeria and Togo to seek early release of 16 Indians detained there. Eleven Indians are languishing in Nigeria while five are detained in Togo on allegations of piracy. During his meeting with Muhammadu Buhari, President of Nigeria, Modi made a personal request for expediting the judicial process and early release of these Indians. Similarly, Swaraj raised the matter of five Indians detained in Togo with her counterpart Robert Dussey. □

hibit the import of human embryo for the purpose of commercial surrogacy for foreigners.

Call compensation rules stay

Telecom regulator Trai has asked mobile service providers to ready their systems to compensate consumers for call drops from January 1. And in the meantime, it has expressed its willingness to examine the issues raised by them. "I have made it very clear. It's a valid regulation. Neither overturned by a competent authority, nor annulled, modified or cancelled. The operators must take steps to prepare themselves to implement this," Trai Chairman R S Sharma told reporters. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India had already held a meeting with telecom operators on implementation of call drop compensation rules and steps taken by them to improve quality of service. According to the guidelines, telecom operators will have to compensate consumers Re 1 for every call drop that occurs due to fault in their network, which is limited to a maximum of Rs 3 a day per consumer.

Telecom operators have questioned Trai's jurisdiction to impose such rules on them and technical feasibility of its implementation.

Name & shame telcos for call drops

Telecom regulator Trai has decided to name and shame mobile operators who are offering deficient services that result in call drops and poor network connections. The regulator has also asked sulking mobile operators to start preparations for paying penalty on call drops from the New Year, a measure that telecom companies are opposing tooth and nail.

Trai chief R S Sharma met the CEOs of mobile companies — who have been demanding a rollback of the penalty clause — and told them that mobile services need to be improved and the menace of call

drops contained. The regulator is "concerned" over the deficient telecom services in the country, and will carry out further road tests in Delhi and Mumbai as well as other cities to check network coverage of mobile companies.

Gypt to extradite Indian prisoners

As a goodwill gesture, Egypt has decided to extradite two long-term Indian prisoners to India. They had been in prison for 22 and 16 years respectively. "Diplomacy in action. As goodwill gesture Prez Sisi tells PM that Egypt will extradite two long-term Indian prisoners. They had been in prison for 22 & 16 years. We had sought their return under Transfer of Sentenced Persons Agreement in December 2014", External Affairs ministry spokesperson tweeted on Thursday.

West Bengal starvation deaths

North Bengal tea gardens have witnessed a number of starvation deaths in the past one month or so. The last such deaths occurred when two more workers perished allegedly on account of prolonged starvation-induced illness, sources said. Most of the deaths were reported from a tea garden at Bagrakote of Malbazar sub-division in Jalpaiguri district. The tea garden was lying closed for the past several months threatening the livelihood of several hundred workers.

While the total number of starvation deaths recorded in the past 40 days was 11, locals said more people had died on account of illness. Last year about one hundred tea garden workers had perished due to starvation in North Bengal. The bigger irony was however that the deaths were reported at a time when a Government-sponsored food-festival "Ahare Bangla" was being celebrated in Kolkata reportedly to promote various kinds of local delicacies. □□

Musharraf admits fanning terror

In deeply embarrassing remarks for Pakistan, former president Pervez Musharraf has acknowledged that his country supported and trained terror groups like the LeT in 1990s for fanning militancy in Kashmir. The 72-year-old former military ruler also asserted that terror leaders like Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri were Pakistan's "heroes" but later became "villains".

"In 1990s the freedom struggle began in Kashmir...At that time Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and 11 or 12 other organisations were formed. We supported them and trained them as they were fighting in Kashmir at the cost of their lives," Musharraf said in a recent interview to Dunya News.

The former army chief's remarks came while responding to a question about demand for action against LeT's Hafiz Saeed and Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi. He said Saeed and Lakhvi-type people enjoyed the status of heroes at that time.

"The Kashmiri freedom fighters including Hafiz Saeed and Lakhvi were our heroes at that time. Later on the religious militancy turned into terrorism. Now they (referring to militants in Pakistan) are killing their own people here and this should be controlled and stopped," he said. Asked whether Saeed and Lakhvi should also be "controlled and stopped". Musharraf said, "No comments." Musharraf said that "religious militancy" was started by Pakistan which brought militants from all over the world to fight against Soviet forces. He said in 1979 Pakistan was in favour of religious militancy. "We trained Taliban and sent them to fight against Russia. Taliban, Haqqani, Osama Bin Laden and Zawahiri were our heroes then. Later they became villains," he said, adding that people need to understand the whole environment at that time. □

UK rejects new 'mega mosque' plan

The UK government has rejected plans by an Islamic group to build a new 290,000-square-foot "mega mosque" in east London, citing "conflict" with authorities' local plans for the borough. Tablighi Jamaat's mosque with 190-foot minarets near the Olympic Park would have accommodated up to 9,300 worshippers in two main gender-segregated prayer halls and a further 2,000 in a separate hall.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has dismissed appeals against the refusal of planning permission for the mosque in Newham area of the city. A DCLG spokesperson said: "The decision was based on concerns that include local housing provision and conflict with the council's local plan for the borough. The project proposed by Tablighi Jamaat - referred to by a number of names such as Abbey Mills Markaz, London Markaz, Masjid-e-Ilyas or the Riverine Centre - was rejected by the local Newham Council back in December, 2012, with councillors saying the building was too large and would harm their plans for a mixed-use neighbourhood. Tablighi Jamaat had appealed, taking the application to a three-week public inquiry last year.

Trump favours retaining foreign talent

Republican presidential hopeful and real estate tycoon Donald Trump has said he was not opposed

to H-1B visas - popular with Indian IT professionals - and favours talented foreign students staying in the US after completing their studies and working in the Silicon Valley.

"I am in favour of people coming into this country legally. And you know what? They can have it anyway you want. You can call it visas, you can call it work permits, you can call it anything you want," Trump said participating in the third Republican presidential debate.

69-year-old Trump, who according to the latest CBS/New York Times poll has lost his frontrunner status, was asked if he was in favour of H-1Bs or if he was opposed to them. Trump was joined by Florida Senator Marco Rubio - despite their past difference on the issue in particular H-1B visas who said that he supports legal migration that attracts the best of the talented people from across the world. They come from another country and they're immediately sent out," he argued. The New York-based real estate tycoon had proposed to raise the minimum wage for the H-1B visas, saying such a move would force companies to give IT jobs to unemployed Americans and not cheaper workers from overseas, including India.

No anti-China block in the making

The US has said there is no anti-China grouping in the works as its recent military manoeuvres in South China Sea against Chinese maritime territorial claims has gained support from several countries in the re-

China plans to double size of economy

China's leaders affirmed plans to double the size of the country's economy by 2020 from 2010 levels, a goal that sets up a potential clash with efforts to nurture more self-sustaining growth. Communist Party leaders are struggling with conflicting goals of pushing ahead a painful economic restructuring and preventing growth that declined to a six-year low of 6.9 percent last quarter from falling too low, leading to potential job losses and unrest.

In a statement carried by the official Xinhua News Agency, party leaders affirmed plans to develop a consumer economy and promote technology to replace a worn-out model based on trade and investment. It gave no annual growth target. But doubling the size of the economy in one decade would require annual growth to average 7 percent. That is in line with previous party promises but higher than forecasts by the International Monetary Fund and private sector analysts, who expect growth to slow to 6 percent or lower by 2017. Economists warned in advance that enforcing high growth targets could require Beijing to resort to stimulus spending or other government intervention. □

gion. "No," State Department Press Secretary John Kirby said when asked if there is an anti-China block forming in view of the recent developments in South China Sea given the fact that several countries are supporting its move.

The Asia Pacific rebalance that the US continue to pursue and the security aspects that it continues to observe in the Asia Pacific region are not aimed against or for any one nation. "It's about preserving our own national security interests in that part of the world, the national security interests of our allies and partners," he said. Five out of seven of US's treaty alliances are in the Pacific region. Meanwhile the White House reiterated that its military operation in South China is in accordance with international law.

"These operations are conducted in accordance with international law and applied evenhandedly around the globe," White House Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz said.

Bidya devi is Nepal's 1st woman prez

Communist leader Bidya Devi Bhandari was elected as Nepal's first woman President, weeks after it adopted a new landmark Constitution that declared the country a secular State. 54-year-old Bhandari, the Vice-president of CPN-UML and widow of late general secretary of the party Madan Bhandari, secured 327 votes against 214 votes of her rival veteran Nepali Congress leader Kul Bahadur Gurung. "I announce that Bidya Devi Bhandari has been elected to the post of Nepal's president," Speaker Onsari Gharti Magar said, to loud cheers from lawmakers. She succeeds incumbent Ram Baran Yadav who was elected as the country's first President in 2008 after Nepal was declared a Republic following the abolition of a 240-year-old monarchy.

With the promulgation of the Constitution on September 20, it was required to elect a new President within a month of the commencement of the Parliament session. In her first public statement as the President, Bhandari said the new Constitution would work for Nepal's sovereignty and independence during her tenure. She said the charter promulgated from the Constituent Assembly last month would protect sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

PAK ahmadis to boycott polls

Pakistan's minority Ahmadi community has decided to boycott the forthcoming local body polls in Lahore and other districts of Punjab province to protest "religious discrimination" embedded in the provision of separate voting list for them. Jamaat-i-Ahmadiyya (JA) will not partake in the local body elections, starting October 31, and being held in different phases after some eight years, Salimuddin, a spokesman of the organisation, said in a statement here.

"The separate voter lists for Ahmadis only on religious grounds is discriminatory and against the spirit of joint electorates," he said and expressed surprise that Muslims, Sikhs, Hindu, Jews and Christians are all included in one electoral roll and only Ahmadis are registered in a separate list. JA has also written to the Election Commission of Pakistan that such discrimination not only makes them vulnerable to target killings but is also a burden on their conscience to vote on condition of denying to be the followers of Prophet Muhammad, the statement said.

"Ahmadis have to sign a declaration showing their disassociation with the Holy Prophet for registering themselves as a voter in it. This is something that no Ahmadi will accept," Salimuddin said. □□

India, Africa align on WTO issues

India and Africa say that the two partners are aligned on the outstanding issues at WTO and are in favour of multilateral trading systems.

“The WTO Ministerial scheduled for December in Nairobi will be held for the first time in Africa where we will be looking for outcomes that will be of interest to both India and Africa,” Minister of Industry and Commerce, Zimbabwe, Mike Bimha said briefing reporters after the 4th India-Africa Trade Ministers’ meeting on the eve of the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit in New Delhi on October 29.

Union Commerce & Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that a round table was also held earlier in the day to discuss the outstanding issues at the WTO, including India’s long-held position on the nation’s food security policy, especially the minimum support prices-based procurement from farmers.

At the Bali Ministerial in 2013 too, Africa and India had united in seeking an interim mechanism for safeguarding minimum support prices to farmers against WTO caps till a permanent solution is found and adopted. India’s concern is that even though the interim mechanism has become available indefinitely, the WTO has not made enough progress in finding a solution to the issue ahead of the Nairobi Ministerial.

Permanent solution to food security issue

Prime Minister Narendra Modi pitched for a permanent solution to the food security and agriculture subsidy issues at the Nairobi WTO meet, to be held later this year.

While addressing the inaugural ceremony of the third India-Africa Forum Summit, he said India and Africa also seek a global trading regime that serves development goals and improves trade prospects.

“When we meet at Nairobi Ministerial of the WTO in December, we must ensure that the Doha Development Agenda of 2001 is not closed without achieving these fundamental objectives,” he said here.

“We should also achieve a permanent solution on public stock-holding for food security and special safeguard mechanism in agriculture for the developing countries,” he said.

The WTO’s General Council, the highest decision making body of the organisation, had accepted India’s demand for extending the peace clause till a permanent solution is found for its food stockpiling

issue. For a permanent solution to the food security issue, India had proposed either amending the formula to calculate the food subsidy cap of 10 per cent which is based on the reference price of 1986-88 or allowing such schemes outside the purview of subsidy caps. If no solution is found by the agreed deadline of December 31, the peace clause will continue till the time a solution is found.

WTO to support better public health

Opening a symposium on “Public Health, Intellectual Property and TRIPS at 20” at the WTO’s headquarters on 28 October 2015, Director-General Roberto Azevedo emphasized that the TRIPS (trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights) Agreement can be part of the solution in tackling public health challenges in developing countries.

He also recognized that enhanced cooperation and dialogue between the WTO, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) is a vital contribution to creating a stronger and more stable global framework that helps people lead better and healthier lives.

Pakistan ratifies TFA

Pakistan has ratified the WTO’s new Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), making it the 51st WTO member to do so. Ambassador Syed Tauqir Shah presented Pakistan’s instrument of acceptance to Director-General Roberto Azevedo on 27 October. Concluded at the WTO’s 2013 Bali Ministerial Conference, the TFA contains provisions for expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit.

It also sets out measures for effective cooperation between customs and other appropriate authorities on trade facilitation and customs compliance issues. It further contains provisions for technical assistance and capacity building in this area. The TFA will enter into force once two-thirds of the WTO membership has formally accepted the Agreement.

Ukraine files dispute against Russia

Ukraine notified the WTO Secretariat on 21 October 2015 that it has initiated WTO dispute proceedings against Russia regarding measures affecting the importation of railway equipment and parts into Russia. □□