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Reluctant Beginner

I have been reading "Swadeshi Patrika" regularly for quite some time now. I began as a reluctant contributor under influence of a friend. But now I like to read it. The issues in the magazine are not unknown. There is hardly any sensational breaking news. But the analysis of issues is definitely unique. Policies of the government those look so nice and beneficial when presented by official media appear altogether a different picture when discussed in Patrika.

Also the hard work put in by organizations like SJM through out country gives a sense of confidence that there still is the hope. Reports of impressive programmes with colourful photographs is a pleasurable reading. Even though ignored by national media, people get to know about these activities on ground through such magazines. It is important to expand the reach of these publications so as to cover more and more people.

– **Ashok Pandit**, Vaishali, Gaziabad, U.P.

Media Shammed

What the people of this country always knew as a fact has now come out in open. Exposure of self proclaimed celebrity journalists like Barkha Dutt and Vir Singhvi, who used to laugh contemptuously on politicians and bureaucrats stand themselves exposed and shammed. No matter how strong denial statements they may issue and inspite of the total black out by their cohorts in the profession. The news reaches the people and has infact already created an impact. We must actually thank internet for providing common citizens a form to share both information and opinion. Internet may still have a limited reach but that does not limit its potential. This is particularly true for the section of society to which these English news channels cater to. This section of the citizens is connected through net and is actually influencing opinion. Moreover now people from smaller towns and villages are also able to use modern modes of communication like internet and SMS on mobile. So the alternative channels of information are already effective and will be more so in near future. We already see the impact on ground. Bihar election results and discourse on Kashmir are just the recent examples. In both these cases opinion that was being forced on people from above through "Purchased Media" was unable to influence public opinion. These saleable journalists have now become themselves a laughing stock.

– **Shaily Chopra**, Ambala Cantt

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The views expressed within are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the views of Swadeshi Patrika. Swadeshi Patrika often present views that we do not entirely agree with, because they may still contain information which we think is valuable for our readers.

Quote-Unquote



Only a strong and untied society can provide a lasting solution to the present problems.

Mohan Bhagwat
Sarsanghchalak, RSS



I do not know how to resolve the Parliament impasse.

Pranab Mukherjee
Union Minister for Finance



Bihar is safe and Delhi is unsafe for women.

Sushma Swaraj
Senior BJP leader



Merely saying that there is an India and a Bharat, or a rich India and a poor India, will not serve any purpose.

Shivraj Singh Chouhan
Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh

Fall & fall of the fourth estate

Free and fair media has often, and rightly so, been termed as the fourth pillar on which democracy endures. The concept of the Fourth Estate as an institutionalized societal force whose influence though not officially recognized is yet accepted to be all prevailing and potent. We Indians are very proud of our democratic credentials. We are not tired of declaring from rooftops in loudest possible manner the moral high ground of being the world's largest democracy. We have, and continue to equally boost about the existence of a free and fair press. Yes it is a fact that India is a democracy and that democracy has taken deep roots in the country. It is also a fact that we vote political parties to power and also vote them out. India without any doubt has a well established fourth estate that in both size and quality can be considered second to none in the world. But the media which is referred as the fourth estate has never been under cloud in India in the manner it is at present.

Media in our country has always been accorded a privileged position even at the cost of common people. Journalists are being provided several concessions which is not available to other sections of the society. From a separate counter on a railway reservation centre, free movement during curfew restrictions, out of turn allotments, and other freebies to unhindered access to power corridors including space on high profile chartered flights of PM's during their visits to places within or out side national boundaries. Journalists get a preferential treatment everywhere. All this was thought of with a purpose of allowing pen pushers to perform their duty of disseminating information and giving voice to the voiceless in a system where otherwise powerful people may tend to become ruthless. But all these ideals are of a by gone era. Journo's have undergone a total transformation. They are now behaving as kingmakers. Gathering of information from reluctant knower and decision makers no more interests the tribe now. They instead derive pleasure in being biased participants in partisan political drama. Most of them are ready to be of service to political masters individually as well as collectively. They get involved in the mad race for a seat in Raj Sabha and can switch sides for it without any hesitation. Newspapers and TV channels have shunned their responsibility as 4th pillar of democracy and are now treating the media as a "product" like any industrial product that needs to be produced and marketed for a profit. Managers instead of editors, advertorials in place of editorial comments, models as newscasters and cheap propaganda material as news is the natural consequence of this ignominy. Any factual news that may in any way adversely affects its advisers is simply blacked out. This is not limited to ordinary issues concerning business and trade related matters only but in reality covers serious issues related to national security and social harmony. Similarly we have no authentic information about any code of ethics in most of these media organization. A toothless Press Council has been unable to stem the rot. Yet they go on making a huge cry when finger is pointed towards them.

Not that this is a new phenomenon or that this rot was unknown to people of this country. Black sheep in the field of journalism as in any other field existed from the very beginning. But that was always a minuscule minority. Majority in the profession were honest believes of what they thought correct. No amount of pressure or allurements was able to digress them from their responsibility. Not so any more, as has been revealed by recent exposure of Niira Radia Taps. 'Reputed' journalists who were honoured by this country for their contribution to the field have fallen from the grace. They have brought shame to otherwise great profession. It is clear, as these taps reveal, that these so called celebrity journalists have performed acts which they were not supposed to do. It needs to be inquired thoroughly what these self righteous icons of modern journalism have received for the services they provided to the lobbyists. Government has hinted at an enquiry that is welcome.

Let us hope that the promise is kept and people are allowed to know the truth.

Land mark victory for Swadeshi Movement

In its significant Judgment Orissa High Court has generated tremendous hope among people engaged in peaceful pro-poor mass movements, says G. Raina.



In a remarkable and path breaking judgment Orissa High Court has ruled that the land acquisition for the Vedanta University near Puri is illegal and void. The Hon'ble High Court has gone ahead and directed the company, The Vedanta Foundation, to return the acquired land to the concerned land lords. It is a great moment for Swadeshi in general and SJM in Particular. It was SJM that understood the great game of land grab in disguise of noble objective of developing a world class University. SJM leadership was quick to realize mood of the local people who were being coerced to part with their Land. It was not just the farmers who depend on farm lands for their existence; the scoundrel did not spare even the Lord Jagan Nath. This was enough to rouse the mass-

es of the state as a whole against the greedy corporates and inane politicians. Affected people came together and refused to dissociate from their land holdings.

SJM and other concerned citizens provided the guidance. SJM Orissa unit took lead in providing a proper platform to these protesting villagers to vent their grievance. Most remarkable thing about the resistance movement is that it has been peaceful, democratic and of least inconvenience to the general public. This is unlike other similar protests going on in different parts of the country where people are resisting illegal and immoral land acquisition.

Sterlite Foundation, a private limited company which subsequently changed its name to Vedanta Foundation in 2004, en-

tered into an MoU with Orissa government on July 19, 2006 to set up a university near Puri.

The proposed Vedanta University was, claimed by its promoters, India's answer to Stanford and Harvard. The Rs 150 billion multi-disciplinary university was being built by Anil Agarwal Foundation, a registered not-for-profit entity controlled by family members of metal billionaire Anil Agarwal, was proposed to spread over an area of 8000 acres which later scaled down to 6892 acres on Puri-Konark marine drive overlooking the Bay of Bengal. The university, when fully operational, was projected to have an intake of 100,000 students with cutting-edge research facility in 95 academic disciplines, we were told. The Foundation had acquired about 4500 acres of the 6892 acres allotted to it. The land acquisition was done under Land Acquisition Act and Sri Jagannath Temple Act, 1954.

Swadeshi Jagaran Manch and the people of Orissa did not purchase these tall and hollow claims of the foundation and the government of Orissa that went out of its way to help the foundation in acquiring the land. Government of Orissa acted in a dubious manner and undermined almost every law. It was accused of encouraging real estate business of Vedanta group than any academic endeavour.

Now the Division Bench of

Orissa High Court comprising Chief Justice V Gopal Gowda and Justice BP Das of Orissa High Court has quashed the government's land acquisition notification on 17 counts also directed Vedanta Company to return to the original owners the land awarded to them. The judgement of the Hon'ble. High Court establishes that what people feared was correct.

At least two PILs and six individual petitions were filed in the High Court since 2007 challenging the state government's notification on the land acquisition procedures. The petitions had said that land acquisition company rules, 1963 had not been properly followed. Former legislature Umaballav Rath filed the first Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Orissa High Court challenging the varsity project.

The Vedanta Foundation had acquired about 4500 acres of the 6892 acres allotted to it, in which 500 Acres of Land belongs to Sri Jagannath Temple, Puri.

Swadeshi Jagaran Manch was spearheading the movement against the illegal and immoral acquisition of land in the name of the proposed Vedanta University, claimed by its supporters to be India's answer to Stanford and Harvard.

In a memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister of India in April SJM proposed to the government of India, "The MOU signed between the Govt of Orissa & Vedanta company needs to be cancelled immediately & the land given to Anil Agrawal must be returned without wasting any time. Centre needs to interfere in the matter to return the Amrut Manohi land of Lord Jagannath."

Prior to that Swadeshi Jagaran Manch & Vedanta BiswaBidya-

Orissa on Sale

The govt of Orissa is acquiring agricultural land by driving out thousands of villagers & demolishing about 20 villages in Orissa near sea coast of Puri to hand over about 8,000 acres of lands at present & seven thousand acres later on to M/s Anil Agarwal, a registered company which will establish one university which is yet to be registered as an educational institution.

Instructed by Chief Minister of Orissa, State govt moved in undue haste to mend, bend all rules and regulations to satisfy one company which changed its name from Sterlite to Vedanta & to Anil Agarwal Foundation with sole purpose and motive to grab thousands of acres of prime land in the sea coast of Puri known as Marine Drive the company changed its status from private to public company. The proposed university will not pay any tax for next 20 years and will enjoy full autonomy in its administration, admission, teaching etc. This institute will not follow the declared reservation policy. The township to be built by M/s Anil Agarwal around the university will have its Captive Power Plant, Airport etc. and it will have control over 5 km area including the National Highway connecting Puri Town with Konark Sun Temple.

Thus, it will become one SEZ fully commercialised though in the name of education. The entire exercise may be termed as Mega Land Grabbing in broad day light by govt. of Orissa. About 1,000 acres of agricultural land for preparing Mahaprasad belonging to Sri Jagannath of Puri are being transferred to M/s Anil Agarwal. People of these villages have already started agitating against this shoddy deal.

SJM condemns such criminal, anti-people act on the part of govt. of Orissa and demands for cancellation immediately of such deal with M/s Anil Agarwal. SJM declares that it will launch massive agitation against this Mega Land grabbing in the name of Vedanta University.

SJM appeals to all democratic minded people throughout the country to extend their support to this mass movement to be launched in Orissa. □ (Resolution passed by SJM)

lya Birodhi Sangharsa Samiti had staged a large scale demonstration before parliament. In that demonstration a large number of people including a number of intellectuals, environmentalists, socialists & senior politicians had joined.

A Sankalpa Yatra was organized against the proposed Vedanta University in the affected state. The rally was kicked off from Biharekrushnapur of Puri and concluded at Lord Jagannath Temple, Puri on April 5. Advisor of Sangharsa Samiti Uma Ballabh Rath was emphatic in declaring that in no

way any land of Lord Jagannath will be left to Vedanta. All India organising secretary of Swadeshi Jagaran Manch Sh.Kashmir Lalaji who had flaged off the Yatra said how the company acquired thousands of acres of land in the real estate way in the name of establishing a university & by showing false illustration to all. Muralidhar Rao the former national convener and at present National secretary BJP had asked P.M. to directly intervene in this matter. He was in fact the first person to understand the importance of the issue and

Fact Sheet of Vedanta University

Time Table of the Events

- **Sept 2006**- Land acquisition for the university starts under Land Acquisition Act and Sri Jagannath Temple Act, 1954.
- **Dec 2006**- Proposed area of the university scaled down from 8000 acres to 6892 acres by Orissa government.
- **January 2007**- People of 22 villages in Puri start opposing acquisition of their agricultural lands by Vedanta.
- **Dec 2008**- Vedanta University Bill tabled in Orissa Assembly.
- **Dec 2008**-Trade Union leader Dwarika Mohan Mishra files 3 petitions before Orissa Lok Pal justice PK Patra alleging illegalities in land acquisition for Vedanta university.
- **July 2009**-Orissa Assembly passes the Vedanta University Bill paving way for the university.
- **March 2010**- On 31st March Lok Pal justice PK Patra recommends probe into Vedanta land deal and suggests that chief minister Naveen Patnaik may order a moratorium on the project.
- **April 2010**-MoEF gives provisional environmental and CRZ clearance to the project saying it can't draw groundwater.
- **May 2010**-MoEF withdraws environmental clearance from the project over allegations of irregularities, illegal and unlawful deeds by the Anil Agarwal Foundation.
- **Nov 16, 2010**- **Orissa High Court declares land acquisition for the university illegal.**

Main charges against this Vedanta University

1. Regarding the Status of the Company itself:

1.1 Defects of LA Act 1894, acquisition under this act is illegal because it is not for a 'person' but it is for a 'public' and Anil Aggarwal foundation is a private company, and it has illegally concealed its identity.

1.2 Lokpal has also passed strictures against three senior officers who camouflaged the identity of the company.

1.3 The law in itself if a draconian law which was drafted by foreign rules to deprive the common men of their land, and even after years of Independence we are not able to rescind this Law. There are certain examples where this law has not been misused.

1.5 LA 1894 clearly mentions that the land is to be acquired for only 'public purpose', whereas Vedanta

is a private company registered under Companies Act of 1956 Anil Aggarwal Foundation is a company registered under the provisions of Section 25 of the Companies Act, as a company "limited by Guarantee having no share capital" and the guarantee is only 20,000 rupee and is purchasing land of 6000 acres. It has misrepresented itself as Public Ltd company with Share Capital Under the law of Companies Act 1956, a company registered under the provisions of Section 25 cannot be converted into a "Public Limited Company with Share Capital..

1.6 Clear cut violation of the UGC Act of 1956 which clearly says that without granting the university by any competent authority, nobody can use the word university & provides for a penal fine of Rs. 1000. However no action is contemplated against this institution.

2. Bhagwan Jagannath's Land: Government has sold 500 acres of land @ Rs. 1.5 lacs per acres against the circle rate of Rs. 3 lacs. whereas the prevailing market rate is Rs. 10 lacs per acres.

2.1 Shri Jagannath Temple Act 1955 clearly states that no land of this temple can be leased out for more than 5 years or mortgaged, sold or otherwise alienated except with previous sanction of the State Government. Here no such permission was received. The reasons given by the Administrator are very queer. He says that the land acquired by this university though belongs to Jagannath ji was however under the plough of local farmers and in case of sale it was first to be offered to the cultivators in possession and they have already accepted the LA compensation under protest, thus its all legal and regular. Fraud of course.

2.2 Irreparable cultural loss. Magnificent Sun temple of Konark is the culmination of Orissa temple architecture and one of the most stunning monuments of world level. Kona and Arc which means angle and Sun (built in 1278 CE and called black Pagoda throughout the world and is a World Heritage according to UNESCO, whereas Jagannath temple is called White Pagoda. Jagannath temple has a reference in Rig Veda and was built in 1174 CE.

2.3 Even now the Puri town is used by foreigners as a destination for cheap narcotics and psychotropic substances because of availability of several banned substances here. Further increase in population due to this project will change the nature of the religious sanctity.

Fact Sheet of Vedanta University

3. *Forced Displacement of People (DIDR):*

3.1 Orissa has 70% of its population living in rural areas and 75% of its workforce depends on agriculture.

3.2 The total cultivable area of the state is 6.18 million hectares out of which 1.88 is irrigated, which is 33% approximately. Whereas Puri district has 2,64,988 hectares of which 1,88,745 (71% plus) hectares is under cultivation out of which 1,70,658 (90%) hectares is under paddy crop. Rice is the main crop and comprises 70% in the kharif season and accounts for 90% food production. When the rice productivity of the State is dismal 1.7 ton/hectare against the national figure of 2.9 tons/hectare, then why this land shift for other purposes. Therefore the State suffers from food shortage ranging from 9.76 million tons to 38.60 million tonnes. So in these condition why Government is allowing such large area of two or three crops to be left for university.

3.3 Harvard University area is 380 acres, JNU ; 1000 acres, Utkal university of Bhuvaneshwar is about 400 acres, Why 6000 for this university.

3.4 concept of 1 lack student is unviable: That no university of the world has 1,00,000 or anything near to it, and that university of Chicago has 13,700 students, (4000 of it under graduates), even University of Berkeley has 33,000 students and it size has been capped. Best universities or small in its number.

3.5 FORCED MIGRATION; A catch all label for persons forced to leave his home , homeland. In the last 20 years we have seen displacement or resettlement of some two hundred million people as a result of development projects (Cornea 2000:11). A term DIDR is used that means development induced displacement and resettlement. States monopoly over management of force, and most acute ex-pressions of powerlessness because it constitutes a loss of control over one's physical space.

4. *Adjacent area's Right:*

4.1 Providing 4-lane road from Bhubaneshwar city/airport to the project site within a period of two years from the date here and development on both sides of the 4 lane access road shall be under the joint control of government and Vedanta to ensure planned development.

4.2 And MoU further states that land use/zoning plan in the 5 km radius from the university boundary shall be made in consultation with the Vedanta. Moreover it will be free of any charges, stamp duty, Entry tax etc. For next 20 years.

5. *Environmental Effects and Waterbodies:*

5.1 Balukhand Sanctuary. The flora and fauna is marvelous. So it is called eco-fragile area, and therefore under statutory rules and laws of 10 kms margin is to be left around the sanctuary and it is conveniently given go-by and therefor smacks of malafide intentions and extraneous reasons.

5.2 Here a river mouth and a river are being privatised and these are natural bodies wherein every individual can claim utilization.

5.3 The population of Orissa is 4% and water availability is 11% acc. to 2001 census. So everybody is eyeing these resources. And by 2050 it will be reduced to 2218 m per capita from 3359 m in 2001. Reasons for this decline is increase in demand for road and water and with growth in mining and industrial activity. So there will be a water crisis.

5.4. Necessity of Management of Saline Ingress due to tidal effects. Because over exploitation of ground water in coastal areas, brings in its wake a distinct possibility of permanent contamination of the ground water reserves through the saline ingress.

5.5. Prevention of tidal effects: Everyday reports of rising sea levels are coming and receding coastal line and Puri-Konark marine drive was a casualty to that following which the State had to look for methods to counter natural incursions in the coastal areas. So government should not think of tinkering with nature on this coastal front. Sea level is rising by 12 to 14 inches per century.

5.6 The Central Pollution Control Board and Ministry of Environment and Forests in 2000 have identified Chilika lake, the Bhitarkanika forest areas and Beaches, especially the Gahirmatha sea beach and beaches of Puri and Konark as Fragile coastal areas. These sea beaches are considered rare for the diversity of small size crabs and sea turtle's nesting grounds and this beach is already in danger due to tourist access.

5.7 Balukhand-Konark Sanctuary covers 71.72 sq. Kms. of area along with the sea coast and western boundary of the sanctuary has 448 acres of land which is protected as "Sweet Water Zone" as it was identified during the British time. Two rivers namely Nuanai and Kusabhadra which are subject to tidal effects, pass through sanctuary area. It also contributes to recharge of fresh water levels underground in the afore-said 448 acres of protected sweet water zone. This area is called a golden Triangle.

Fact Sheet of Vedanta University

6. *Thorium Deposits and other Rare earths*

6.1 Several other businessmen have also evinced interest in this land and is said to contain several rare deposits of Monazite and other radio-active materials. Anil Aggarwal has the reputation of owning mines in various parts of the globe. A question raised by MP Rudranarain Pani was answered in positive regarding the availability of thorium in this patch of land. If proven true, the land is of strategic and economic importance and as well. So it belongs to the nation and should not be handed over to a business concern when plentiful land is available at alternative places.

Conclusion: We should consider the plight of millions of people who are directly or indirectly affected in this polarization of interests and this model should be nabbed in the bud which provides encouragement to market forces and profit-driven business established to broker/pawn/sale/ and helplessness of the deprived citizen of this country.

7. *Some reasons for the Ultimate Success of this Agitation;*

7.1. The availability of rare earth factor and thorium in particular is one reason that this land cannot be given to a private company of this bad reputation. And SH. Rudranarain Pani standing at the side of this affair, there is all possibility that the land will not be given to Anil Aggarwal.

7.2. The reputation of Advocate Jayant Dass is above board, so far as professional integrity is concerned. Though belonging to Congress and it was due to them that he became Adv Gen at one time, but he belongs to the hierarchy of Gopbandhudas and he will do justice to that legacy, it seems. Moreover the way he took a oath of not entering the Jagannath temple before succeeding in this case also assures us about the ultimate success.

7.3. There is utter disregard for environmental laws here, the mouth of river, nearness to the sanctuary, flood protection area and sweet water zone and other reasons are sufficient to block the efforts of any person on this virgin sea beach or marine drive to be occupied by him. If we will stop any other similar organisation will accept this case and proceed further.

7.4. The nature of this company, section 25 company is such that it is totally illegal for it to acquire land. Uma Ballabh Rath was dead sure that this company will not change itself to a Public limited company with shares, and without it no body can acquire land for it.

7.5. Bhagwan Jagannath Land issue will also be sufficient to evoke response. If some persons like Shankaracharya of Puri or some religious people comes to the side of the agitators, there is sufficient scope for public response against it. Some religious organisations will definitely come in this fray and ultimately the issue will be a big catche. So it is not with the acceptance of 22 villages the company can acquire this land, and every devotee of Bhagwan Jagannath and votary of environment has its stakes in this affair. The Division Bench of the court comprising Chief Justice V. Gopala Gowda and Justice B.P. Das directed the Foundation to return the acquired land to its original owners

8. *Now, What this High Court verdict says:*

THOUGH the full verdict is 100 pages of length, and it is not yet available, the main points according to the media and advocates is as follows.

8.1 The Orissa High Court on 16TH November 2010, Tuesday quashed all the land acquisition procedures for the Vedanta University that was proposed to be established on a sprawling 8,000 acres near the Konark-Puri marine drive.

8.2 Terming the State government's notifications made to acquire and award the land in favour of the Anil Agarwal Foundation (AAF) for the proposed varsity as 'illegal' and 'bad in the eye of law,' a Division Bench of the court comprising Chief Justice V. Gopala Gowda and Justice B.P. Das directed the Foundation to return the acquired land to its original owners.

8.3 The ruling of the High Court came while adjudicating jointly at least two public interest litigation petitions (PILs) and seven individual writ petitions, including one by Umaballav Rath, a former legislator from Puri and Chinmaya Kumar Mishra, a lawyer.

8.4 **Flouted laws** The petitioners challenged the setting up of the proposed university on several grounds including that of the acquisition processes which were made in violation of the provisions of the Land Acquisition Act 1894, Land Acquisition (Amendment) Act 1984 and Land Acquisition (Companies) Rules 1963.

8.5 They also contested the university project submitting that it would have an extreme debilitating impact on the eco-system and varied bio-diversity in the locality. Similarly, they challenged the status of the Anil Agarwal Foundation that was changed to a 'public company' from a 'private company' called

Fact Sheet of Vedanta University

Vedanta Foundation in June, 2006 for the very purpose of acquiring land.

8.6 Urging the High Court to quash the land acquisition notifications, the petitioners also prayed for quashing of the MoU signed by the State government for the proposed University with Vedanta Foundation on July 19, 2006, which subsequently became the Anil Agarwal Foundation on September 6, 2006.

8.6 Taking up the batch of petitions for joint hearings, the court in its more than 100-page judgment framed at least 17 issues and discussing each of them individually found that the proposed project was at fault on all the counts. Sterlite Foundation, a private

limited company which subsequently changed to Vedanta Foundation in 2004 signed the MoU with the State government to set up the University on 15,000 acres near the Konark-Puri marine drive.

8.7 The varsity was to have undergraduate and postgraduate courses in engineering, medicine, management, general science and humanities. Accordingly, the State government confirmed the availability of 8,000 acres of contiguous land for the University and subsequently made notifications to acquire over 6,500 acres, including over 1,300 acres belonging to the Lord Jagannath temple. □

— **Rajeev Kumar**

convince SJM to take up the issue as a priority and ensure that the loot of land in the name of education is not allowed.

All India co-convenor and eminent columnist Sri S. Gurumurthy addressing a state level convention on proposed Vedanta university organised by Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM) in the IDCOL auditorium opposing Vedanta's claim of developing a world class university, said if the state Government was so serious for a world class university instead of sealing the deal with Anil Agrawal's Vedanta singularly, it should have gone for a global bid.

Explaining that Vedanta had no expertise in academics, Mr Gurumurthy said if company on public protest agreed to develop its campus in 6,000 acres instead of its original demand of 10,000 acres, makes it logically correct that the company is interested to grab land for its ulterior motive.

Saying that land is more precious for India than America or China, Mr Gurumurthy said comparatively both the countries have less density of population making per capita land availability much higher than India. SJM had also passed a resolution titled 'Orissa

on Sale' to attract the attention of the people to the public fraud by state government. Now the High Court judgment has not only given credence to what SJM said, but has also put a seal on the nefarious designs of corporate greed.

A visibly upset Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik told the Media persons after the High Court Judgement that the government has not yet received the copy of judgment. After receipt of the Copy

the government will examine what needs to be done.

Higher Education Minister Devi Prasad Mishra expressed that the state government would take a stand on the High Court judgment after verifying it.

It is to be mentioned here that a bill in this regard was also passed in the state assembly on July 31, 2009. However, the Vedanta University Bill yet pending to get the approval of the Governor. □□

Demise of A Crusader

Sh. B.K.Keayla a well known name and face in country who fought for the country and the developing world in the field of Patents and related issues is no more. He passed in New Delhi on November 27, 2010. BK Keayla was a crusader in real sense of the word.

He was founder convenor of the National Working Group on Patent Laws. He participated in large number of national and international conferences. He reviewed Patent Laws of India, Indonesia, Thailand, SriLanka and Myanmar on behalf of WHO. He appeared before a number of Parliamentary Committees for giving evidence on TRIPS Patent Regime, Protection of Trade Marks etc.

Born on November 7, 1925 Keayla ji became a civil servant central government. He was a regular and valued resource person for SJM. SJM and Swadeshipatrika pays humble tributes to the great son of India.

He assisted the People's Commission on GATT in 1995, People's Commission on Intellectual Property Rights in 1998, and Peoples' Commission on Patent Laws for India in 2002 in their deliberations and preparation of their Reports. □

Tsunami of scams & Prime Minister, the “Mr. Clean”



The PM has lost the remaining sheen as ‘Mr Clean’. The condescending certificate of honesty from Sonia, who he had saved from the Bofors case, is his ultimate humiliation, believes S Gurumurthy

It is a disgusting story. Let us begin it in lighter vein. ‘2G’ seems a highly popular name today. Type ‘2G’ in Google search, you will get 55.3 million results in 0.12 seconds! In Google terms, ‘2G’ is 29 times more popular than Shah Rukh Khan; 17 times as popular as Rajnikanth. It is equally as infamous, being the largest scam ever — Rs1.76 lakh crore loot. About something so famous, and at once infamous, the whole nation is asking Manmohan Singh one question: Mr Prime Minister what do you know about ‘2G’? Even as the PM is totally silent, here comes an SMS to all cell phones. “The PM finally breaks his silence and says: “The only ‘2G’

I know are: ‘SoniaG and RahulG’? Laughing? Here is something to cry about.

On November 24, 2010, ‘SoniaG’ certified, “Manmohan Singh is more than 100 per cent honest”. The next day, she proclaimed her ‘zero tolerance’ to corruption. What a tragedy? Certificate of probity from Sonia to Singh! Could anything be more humiliating? For, only five years ago, Manmohan Singh had saved her from the Bofors scam by calling back the red corner notice against her Italian friend Ottavio Quattrocchi (Q), recipient of a third of the pay-off from Bofors. Here is that shameful story in brief. Sten Lindstorm,

who was the head of the National Investigation Bureau, equal to the CBI here, had probed the Bofors pay-off in Sweden. He told Outlook (April 6, 1998) that Sonia must explain how the companies owned by Q got fat pay-offs from Bofors; what was her nexus with Q; who introduced him to Bofors. Lindstorm said that Q got Bofors payoffs was confirmed. Six years later on April 8, 2004, he wrote that Sonia must be questioned on the scam, asserting, “I know what I am saying”.

The diary of Martin Ardbo, managing director of Bofors and the bribe giver, had mentioned his meeting with “Gandhi Trust lawyer”. Finally Q, who came to India long back virtually as Sonia’s baggage from Italy, behaved exactly like a thief when proof against him emerged; he slipped away from India in 1993, thanks to P V Narasimha Rao yielding to pressure from Sonia. In 1999, Sonia defended Q, pleaded he was innocent; she alleged that the NDA government was hounding him. Ten years later Singh chided his own government for harassing Q. Sonia protected the corrupt Q; Singh allowed him to escape prosecution. And Sonia, a suspect in Bofors bribery, is now the president of the Congress, and chair-



person of the National Advisory Council. She condescends to certify Singh's honesty and shamelessly proclaims that she is zero tolerant to corruption. Isn't it a double tragedy?

Tsunami of scams

A tsunami of scams in quick succession in recent months has swamped the public domain. First of course is the 'Raja of Scams', the 2G Spectrum sale involving a loot of Rs 1,76,000 crore; second, how intriguingly the prime minister, now certified by the Bofors scam suspect as 'Mr Clean', silently first and openly later, allowed the scamsters to loot that national asset; third, how the 'Mr. Clean' PM sat on Subramanian Swamy's plea to prosecute A Raja for the scam and is now hiding in legalisms to escape the blame for the delay; fourth, the transcript of the tele-conversation of the high profile PR executive Niira Radia, in which not just the politicians, but many media stars and business magnates stand naked in public for different things, including for having lobbied to make Raja telecom minister; fifth, the Commonwealth Games fraud involving Rs 8,000 crore; sixth, the Adarsh housing scam involving some Rs 600 crore. The gross value of the three loots touches almost Rs1.85 lakh crore, equal to 18.5 per cent of the national budget. Here is a sideshow, the Yeddyurappa scam. Compared to the dacoits who have looted almost Rs1.85 lakh crore, Yeddyurappa, like a frightened pick-pocket who when caught, has returned the purse — the land permits — he had picked. Yet, his corruption, though petty in comparison, does make the BJP guilty

of moral deficit; he has helped the Rs1.85 lakh crore-loot-accused Congress to accuse the BJP.

Fraudulent policy

The first four items relate to the 2G Scam. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) estimates the 2G loot at between '67,000 crore and '1,76,000 crore. That the public lost heavily by the 2G Spectrum loot was evident on day one. Spectrum is the electromagnetic wave through which the wireless calls, SMSes and data travel from one phone or computer to another. Fraud inhered in the very policy to make spectrum available in 2008 at the price set for it in 2001.

What does selling the spectrum in 2008 at 2001 prices mean?

It is not just the inflation difference for eight years. It is like selling land in 2008 in a city (that has also grown 100 times since) at 2001 land prices. In 2008 alone the real estate stock prices rose, believe it, by 20 times. The only reason that Raja cited for this throwaway pricing was that, in 2003, the NDA government did it at 2001 prices. Look at the comparative facts, then and now. In 2003, only five out of 1,000 Indians owned a phone, globally among the lowest; the total telephone owners were 13 million; and telecom companies, in dead losses till 2006, needed support. But, between 2003 and 2008, the picture changed dramatically. The phone owning population grew by 14 times; telephone owners

per thousand population by more than four and half times; telecom revenue by almost four times; telcos stock index by 4.4 times; market capitalisation of telcos by several times. The number of total cell owners was 3 million in 2001; 13 million in 2003, 180 million in 2000; now it is 688 million, 53 times more than in 2003; phone owners per thousand population rose from 3.6 in 2001 to 5 in 2003, and to over 22 in 2008; now it is over 58; Telcos' revenue rose from Rs 48,000 crore in 2003 to 1,69,000 crore in 2008.

These data mean that the profit earning potential of spectrum was several times more in 2008, as compared to 2001. Again, the Indian mobile phone sector grew even faster after 2008. Since 2004 it was, even now it is, the fastest growing one in the world. It now adds every month 20 million phone connections; this is seven times the total all India connections of just 3 million in 2001. There is huge prosperity ahead too. The mobile phone subscriber base is expected to go up to 993 million by 2013. It needs no seer to say that selling licences in 2008 at 2001 prices was like selling gold in 2008, which will become diamond in 2013, at coal prices in 2001.

PM objects, acquiesces, defends

In September 2007, Raja announced policy to sell new mobile licences/spectrum at 2001 prices. On September 24, he announced that the cut-off date for

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new applications would be October 1; 575 applications were received by October 1. But a week later, on November 2, Raja stipulated that the applications received after September 25 would not be considered; that is retrospectively the cut-off date was advanced to September 25. Then, after 100 days, suddenly, at 2.30 pm on January 10, Raja announced that those who had filed their applications before September 25, could depute their representatives by 3.30 pm, that is, within 45 minutes, to collect the response and before the day ended, pay for spectrum on First Come First Served (FCFS) basis. There were skirmishes at the DoT office on January 10 to be first in the queue. This process disqualified 454 of the total of 575 applications. But, the chosen ones knew what would happen on January 10. The CAG report says, “13 applicants were ready with DDs drawn on dates prior to the notification itself” — a clear proof that they had prior information.

As the deal began to stink even earlier, in November 2007 the PM, though a month after September 24, objected to the Raja model and asked him to be transparent. Raja responded to him, within hours, insisting that he was only going by the policy (of the previous government) in force. The PM took one whole month and on January 3, 2008, he, quite intriguingly, just ‘acknowledged’ Raja’s letter — virtually giving a go-ahead to Raja. On January 10, Raja completed his fraudulent mission. But the story doesn’t end.

Finally, 15 months later, on May 24, 2010, the PM admitted that Raja had told him that he was only following the policy laid down previously — virtually approving the fraud. It needs no seer to say that to say the loot was no secret affair. It was daylight robbery; as transparent as the PM had wanted it to be. Not just Raja, the PM also must be questioned on why he objected first; why he fell into silence later; why he acquiesced subsequently and why he defended it finally.

Stench out in three ways

The stench of the scam began leaking out in three different ways. First, even before the licences were issued in January 2008, one of the aspirants for all India licence, STel Limited, made an offer to Raja in November 2007 to pay Rs13,621 crore for the licence which Raja was selling at Rs1,658 crore — that is almost nine times the 2001 price. When its offer was rejected, STel moved the Delhi High Court, which allowed its petition. Then Raja’s ministry appealed to the Supreme Court. At that point, under threats, STel owners backed off from the case. But they had set the benchmark. On the basis of STel’s offer the CAG has estimated the loss to the public at Rs 67,300 crore.

Second, two of the new players — Unitech and Swan — who got licences on FCFS basis, sold off a major chunk of shares in their companies at values which were many times the amount they had paid for the licences. Unitech, which had paid a licence fee of

Rs1,658 crore, sold 67 per cent of its licence for Rs 6,120 crore; this meant that the full licence value was Rs 9,100 crore. Swan, which had paid Rs 1,537 crore, sold 44.7 per cent of the licence at Rs 3,217 crore; it meant that its licence value was Rs 7,192 crore. STel, which got small licences by paying Rs 25 crore, sold 5.61 per cent of its licence for Rs 238.5 crore; it meant that the value of its licences was Rs 4,251 crore. On the basis of these sales of licences the CAG has calculated the loss at between Rs 57,600 and 69,300 crore.

Third, on the basis of the value realised by the government by auctioning of the licences/spectrum for 3G telephony, the CAG has computed the loss in the sale of 2G licences at 2001 rates, without bidding process, at Rs1,76,645 crore. It is the CAG report that has made the stench unbearable. It came just before the Parliament Winter Session was to open. The opposition got a full toss to hit, which it promptly did. The Parliament has become dysfunctional.

What, who made PM U-turn?

The 2G loot took place in the open, to the view of all including ‘Mr Clean’ Singh and zero-corruption-tolerant Sonia. When CBI raided Raja’s ministry on October 28, 2009, and there were demands that Raja resign, he retorted, “why should I resign? I had done everything in consultation with the PM”.

The PM did not deny that statement. But, months later, on May 24, 2010, the PM said that Raja had “discussed” the issue with him. Any difference between Raja asserting that he had “consulted” the PM and the PM admitting that Raja “discussed” with him?

The story is self-evident. The PM's objection in November 2007 turned into no-objection in January 2008 and finally became his approval in May 2010. But, now, with the CAG exposing the fraud, the PM's lips remain zipped despite demands from everyone including the Supreme Court that he speaks. Why? Here is a compelling hypothesis.



Between November 2007 and January 2008, someone must have hinted to the PM not to meddle with Raja. There is no other way PM's November objection could become a meek non-objection in January. Who except Sonia Gandhi could turn the PM's strong objection into a meek non-objection? And who else could make the PM defend Raja in May 2010. Assume this, then everything falls in place; otherwise nothing is explainable.

Raja, Radia, media

But a parallel development also made the stench difficult to contain. The story here is both spicy and serious. The income tax department had legally tapped the telephone lines of Niira Radia, Delhi's most enterprising PR executive, who holds the honourable Tata group, on the one hand and the fearsome RIL group on the other. Her nine telephones were tapped for about 180 days from August 20, 2008 and again from May 11, 2009 to July 11, 2009. On the request of the CBI, which began to probe the scam in October 2009, the IT department provided, on November 20, 2009, not the whole, but a small part of the recordings. This in itself has forced many politicians, businessmen and media stars run for cover.

There are 5,400 telephonic

conversations involving Niira Radia reportedly recorded; available on the Internet are a mere 102, of which only 23 have been transcribed and printed. So one can estimate the bombs still hidden.

According to the IT department's brief to the CBI, the transcripts reveal stunning facts like: one, Niira Radia was very close to Raja and was involved in getting 2G licences for three operators, namely, Unitech, Swan, and Datacom; two, Raja himself has equity stakes in the licences he has issued; three, Radia and Kanimozhi worked through Vir Sanghvi and Barkha Dutt, two famed journalists, for negotiating to get Raja in as telecom minister after the elections in 2009; four, Radia was also close to the auditor of Rajathi Ammal, (Karunanidhi's second wife and Kanimozhi's mother); five, Radia was also involved in advising on the resale of the licences by Swan and Unitech; and so on. It is a shameful account whose full details are not out yet.

The legally recorded phone conversations indicate that it was Radia who first confirmed to Raja on May 24, 2009 that his name has been cleared for the telecom ministry. Go to <http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?268064>, and click for

the tapes, you can hear Raja asking Radia: "My case is clear, yes?" and Radia replying: "Yours is clear, yeah. Your case was cleared last night only." The tapes, running to over a hundred, of which only a small part is out in the open, are said to be both juicy and sensational. For instance Radia narrates to Vir Sanghvi on May 23, 2009, at past 10.26 pm about how Dayanidhi Maran was exerting pressure through Karunanidhi's kin Stalin, Dayalu Ammal and Selvi to get into the Cabinet, and tells, "I believe that Maran has given about 600 crores to Dayalu, Stalin's mother". Interesting — and disturbing — isn't it to hear particularly about sale of ministerial positions within the political family for hundreds of crores? Space constraints cut the shameful long story short for now; more on it later.

The loot is too huge for Raja. The main beneficiaries are obviously hiding behind him. Raja could never have defied the PM on the strength of the DMK alone. The DMK could never have ditched the UPA on this issue. The fear that the DMK would walk out of UPA could not be the reason for the PM to acquiesce. The fraudulent venture must have had the backing of someone more powerful than the PM. That only explains Raja's defiance of the PM; and the PM acquiescence first and finally his defence of the deal itself.

QED: The PM has now lost the remaining sheen as 'Mr Clean'. The condescending certificate of honesty from Sonia, who he had saved from the Bofors case, is his ultimate humiliation. □□

Can We Avoid Present Anarchic Conditions?

The manner, in which social, political and economic affairs of the country are being handled by the government, is frustrating the Common Man. Forced to watch helplessly the entire circus of politicians, bureaucracy, judiciary, and media, He has become aware that he is not figuring anywhere in the development programmes of the country, feels D. G. Bokare

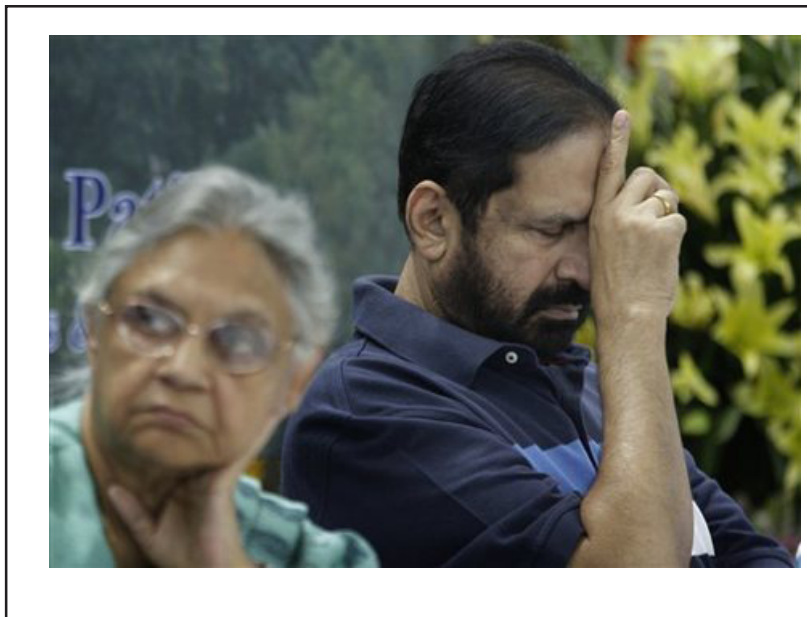
A common man is now getting confused and also disillusioned by the way the social, political and economic affairs are being handled by the government, particularly more after the globalization concept brought in by the present prime minister when he was the finance Minister. There are many types of problems a common man faces today. None of the problems can be isolated and solved independently. They all are interconnected. Food security, unemployment, criminal activities, widening rich - poor gap, corruption at all levels, greedy politicians, law-makers becoming law-breakers, black money economy overtaking white money economy, terrorism from across the

borders, chaos in education field, Naxalism and Maoism revolting against the government for neglecting development in their areas, paid news in media, helplessness of the Prime Minister and his colleagues, un-constitutional authorities getting superior than the government, economic frauds reaching historical heights each year (like- Satyam, Harshad Mehta, Ketan Parekh, bogus stamp papers fraud by Telgi, fodder frauds in Bihar, CW games, 2-G spectrum, etc), parking unaccounted money in tax-haven countries, chaotic urbanization, suicides by farmers and small entrepreneurs, etc. etc. This list can still be lengthened. None of these problems is getting resolved for good. Even former

NDA government could not reverse the trend set by Congress government in these matters. 'India-shining' was more publicized than the Bharat shining. The apex court of India has in frustration said on 10th October this year: Why the government does not officially recognize the corruption spread all over the government machinery? Can we say that the apex court is free from this? What shows impeachment thinking about a judge? There is a charge that CBI has lost its independence in investigating serious political and economic matters. It is criticized that it is being used as a tool of those in power.

All this is showing loss of confidence of common man in the governance of our society. This deterioration has been more prominent since 1990s. The voting percentage of middle class people in urban areas has been hovering around forty percent. This might still go lower in near future. This is the indication of disillusionment of the educated and thinking class of our society.

Today, this same concept and marketing of globalization has put the capitalist countries in irreversible depression. Those economies are struggling to control the economic crises, but they do not find any easy solution. This will get manifested into civil-war-like sit-



uations across the capitalist countries. Greece, Portugal, Spain, Italy, France, Iceland, Ireland, and the USA itself are facing this revolt-like situation. 'Tea Party' movement in the USA is an indication of what would happen there in very near future. However, India is still holding on to the failed economic system imported from the West. The US government is propagating Swadeshi philosophy by saying: "Be American; buy American!" President Obama's visit was to market their products and cut imports from India. Their globalization mantra has now reversed into protectionism. This could happen in European countries too very soon.

Many of our elderly people are questioning themselves why we fought war for our independence from the British Raj? Now we have become slaves of the foreign economic powers. We take pride in getting some service jobs overseas in IT and other related sectors. Even our present Finance Minister is pleading with the USA for continuing the old practice of outsourcing (slavery?) from India. Who are benefitted by this inflow of funds? Answer is simple. Only the elite and higher-middle class, whose number is insignificant, has been the beneficiaries. This is at a huge cost to common people who are paying taxes. Those who fought for independence of our country had some dreams about creating a society of moral, high-value living style, general welfare of all,

economic equity, and ideal governance for maintaining due balance between the man and the Nature. Now they all feel greatly disappointed on all the fronts.

What causes this chaos?

We certainly find some errors in the whole working of our country's affairs. But a common man cannot pin point any specific issue responsible for the present economic, social and political chaos. Everyone is pointing out one issue or another that is mostly dependent on the inputs received from the media. Common man is helplessly watching the entire circus of politicians, bureaucracy, judiciary, and media. The media is presenting him only crimes, corruptions and failure of governance. There is no space left for other social and welfare matters. He is aware that he is not figuring anywhere in the development programmes of the country. Rather, he is being exploited in the process.

The governing state itself is responsible for this chaos and anarchic situation. Unless it is re-organized on the required lines, anarchic situation would never change for better. During Vedic periods, king was blamed for all these chaotic aspects. King himself must be an ideal person and his civil servants should always be faithful to him. Dand Niti must take place whenever the king sees indiscipline and crimes in his kingdom.

Today, the mixing of Western culture with our own metic-

ulously preserved values and culture of thousands of years could be the major reason for the present situation. Additionally, the constitutional provisions for our governance could also contribute to this chaos. Even the social thinkers from Europe, especially after the French Revolution, have contributed to this cause. In brief, we can state:

1. French Revolution has promoted the ethos of equality, freedom, justice and fraternity. These words are now found in all the democratic countries' constitutions. Fraternity depends on first three parameters. The word equality is considered by the constitutional experts as far as political equality is concerned i.e. one-man-one-vote. However, economic equality has never been addressed. As a result, we have two constitutions in our country: political constitution and economic constitution (Company Act). Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has noticed this while drafting the Constitution. He said: "The soul of democracy is the doctrine of one-man-one-vote. Unfortunately, democracy has attempted to give effect to this doctrine only as far as political structure is concerned by adopting the rule of one-man-one-vote. It has left the economic structure to take the shape given to it by those who are in a position to mould it. The constitutional lawyers have never advanced to the conception that the constitutional law of democracy must go beyond adult suffrage and fundamental rights". The results of economic inequality

'Tea Party' movement in the USA is an indication of what would happen there in very near future. However, India is still holding on to the failed economic system imported from the West.

are: creating classes based on economic parameters, poverty, exploitation of poor by privileged class, unequal distribution of wealth of the country, corruption, indebtedness, farmers' suicides, crimes, etc.

2. The position of the President has become decorative only. The President does not have any administrative powers. This position is maintained at a very high cost of tax-payers' money. "The history of the post of President of India reveals the tragedy of democracy in India. The biographies and press reports reveal that the trust (between the President and the Prime Minister) was always transformed into distrust by the end of the term of the President. The Prime Minister selects the name with full trust in the person (the President). After some period, President deviates from the expected behaviour. This is like dialectical in the Hegelian philosophy. By the end of the term, the Prime Minister and the President do not show reconciliation", says Dr. M G Bokare (Hindu Economics, Ed 2009, page 229) He further says: "The process outlined in the Constitution of India causes this distrust. President of India becomes powerless person in the highest position and the Prime Minister is imprisoned in the political goals of his political party. In this process, both the posts have become powerless".

What we are seeing around the world is the crisis of confidence in democratic system. The word 'democracy' has become a joke for many thinkers. Corpo-

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rate-person (unnatural person) is more dominating the society than the natural persons who are the pillars of the democratic system. In the most worshipped country, the USA, one percent of people, mostly corporate-persons, own more than forty percent wealth of the nation. We too are shortly heading towards the same path. Teddy Roosevelt, former President of the USA aptly says: "The things that will destroy America are prosperity at any price, peace at any price, safety first instead of duty first, the love of soft living and to get rich quick theory of life". President Abraham Lincoln has rightly put his finger on the nuisance of corporate person. He says: I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country... Corporations have been enthroned an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until the wealth is aggregated in a few hands and the nation is destroyed". How true it is!

What is the remedy?

It is certain that the present political system is unable to solve the crisis of trust of people. It is taking the nation towards anarchy in shorter duration. The scholars of political science are not in a mood to suggest the changes to 'correct' the present chaotic situ-

ation by recommending the revised system that might sound radical in nature. None of the political parties is interested in such a change as most of the leaders are happy with the ill-gotten wealth collected by them from the present system. These parties are seen to be interested in pushing own cadre into government services by aggressively pressurizing the state for reservation of jobs on the basis of caste, religion, etc. Many of the leaders have been known as criminals, corrupt to the core, having links with underworld economies, etc. How can a common man then trust these leaders for his own development? No leader is at present in a mood to think on these lines. Many chief ministers and central ministers are facing huge corruption charges too. Ashok Chavan, A. Raja, are the latest additions in the list.

The writer of Hindu-economics has spent quite of his energies in finding solutions to these problems leading to anarchy. It is not necessary that there are no options in this regard. Major changes in the present democratic systems with minor changes in the Constitution have been suggested on the following lines:

1. The President and the Prime Minister must be elected by the people directly since they are directly responsible for the welfare and safety of the citizens and the nation.
2. The President should have the power to punish for bad and



corrupt behaviour of all the members of cabinet excluding the Prime Minister, all members of both the Houses (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha), excluding their Chairmen, Governors of all the states and union territories, all the members of all the assemblies and councils excluding the chief ministers, all the supreme court judges excluding the chief justices, and all the gazetted officers across the country.

3. The President should give only one opportunity to the person from the above list in the presence of Jury. If satisfied about the guilt, the person should be removed from the post and prosecuted through legal process. In case of the PM and others who have been excluded as above, resolution in the House alone should finally decide the issue.
4. The President shall develop appropriate spy system by recruiting persons with impeccable character of his/her choice. This will not have any links with the existing CBI, RAW, IB, etc. Rather, it will oversee these existing agencies.

5. Present parliamentary practice should be judged. Today, the party protects the prime minister and his cabinet colleagues. In turn, cabinet protects the senior officers in the government. Opposition parties protect their wicked and undisciplined members. New procedure should weed out such elements to make the process transparent and ethical.
6. Vote of confidence should be removed. Thus giving full term to rule for the party voted by the people. The system of issuing whip should also be done with. Let the members use their conscience and vote for appropriate person in the best interest of the nation. This will bring elegance to the parliamentary democracy, ideal for other nations to copy. This should serve as a warning that no one should be protected.
7. The authority to remove any High court and Supreme Court should be vested in the President alone. Similar will be the procedure for the chiefs of our defense forces.
8. As regards the media, the President sue motto or on receiv-

ing complain decides the punishment for the published or televised material after giving a chance to hear the person so accused. Punishment could be to imprison the person and/or suspend the publication.

9. Similar process could be drafted in respect of state governors having jurisdiction over others in the society, such as, self-government institutions like Panchayat, zilla parishads, municipalities, etc.
10. The president will have to resign if more than half the number of states passes resolutions showing no confidence in the president. Similarly, if a resolution is passed in either of the Houses, the president will resign. In both these cases, no whip will be allowed to be used.

Words of wisdom of Milton and Rose Friedman quoted by the author from “Free to Choose”, may illuminate us in the present situation:

“When the law contradicts what most people regard as moral and proper, they will break the law whether it is enacted in the name of a noble ideal – or in the naked interest of one group at the expense of another. Only fear of punishment, not a sense of justice and morality, will lead people to obey the law.”

The choice is now with us. Either we helplessly wait till anarchy fully takes over and demolishes the civil society; or we move the matter without delay and systematically and democratically destroy the present structure of governance and implement the alternative system through the Constitutional amendments. □□

Manmohan Singh's facade of inclusiveness



World view of Dr Man Mohan Singh is that of a retired bureaucrat. He looks at the world through the files put up by his subordinates. He cannot think outside the files. This will not do, asserts Dr Bharat Jhunjhunwala

Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh deserves credit for having initiated pro-people programs like rural employment guarantee scheme, increased outlays on public health and education and loan waivers for the farmers. Yet the country burns more fiercely with every passing day. An increase in government expenditures in these pro-people programmes is leading to more unrest rather than less. Nearly one-half the country is facing Naxal resistance. Son of the soil movement is rearing its head in Maharashtra. And the youth are restive in Kashmir. There is surely something amiss.

There are two paths to securing economic welfare of the people. One is to first give freedom to large businesses to undertake efficient production even if they kill labour-intensive small industries. Then tax can be imposed upon them to provide education and employment to the people. This is Dr Man Mohan Singh's path. The alternative is to impose heavy tax on selected big industries so that cottage industries become profitable within the market economy. For example, imposition of heavy tax on machine-made textiles would spontaneously lead to the growth of the handloom weavers. The poor people will get employment and would be



able to buy health and education from that income. This is Gandhi's path. People get education and employment through both paths.

The path of Dr Man Mohan Singh is heavily dependent on bureaucracy. Huge revenue is needed to run big welfare programmes by the government departments or NGOs. Many taxes have to be imposed on the businesses for this purpose. Income tax, service tax etc. are imposed in addition to excise duty. The bureaucracy of the revenue departments makes a killing in the collection of these revenues. Then another bureaucracy is empowered in reaching the facilities to the people such as in the Employment Guarantee Scheme and the government schools. Govern-

ment teachers are drawing salaries around Rs 15,000 per month even though the rate of failure is much higher than in private schools where teachers draw a salary of Rs 3,000 pm. It is doubtful whether the people will benefit much in the path being followed by Dr Man Mohan Singh. But it is certain that the bureaucracy will benefit.

The role of bureaucracy is less in Gandhi's path. The imposition of heavy tax on big textile mills spontaneously leads to the generation of jobs. There is no need to impose myriad of taxes to collect huge revenues. On the contrary, revenue is generated as a by-product of taxation of selected capital-intensive industries. There is no need for the government to run

Employment Guarantee Scheme because the market generates employment in response to economic policies. Just as the body cures itself by providing a small dose of Homeopathic medicine; similarly the economy generates jobs by imposition of tax on selected capital-intensive industries.

Another difference in the two approaches is of availability of public money for investment in infrastructure. Much of the revenue is used up in running welfare programmes in the path suggested by Dr Man Mohan Singh. Less revenue is available for investment in river linking, Golden Quadrangle highway and the development of nuclear power and patriot missiles. On the other hand, more revenue for these uses is made available in Gandhi's path of imposing tax on big industries.

The third difference is about the impact on the people. The people are made perpetually dependent on the government machinery in the path of Dr Man Mohan Singh. The patient has to provide bribe to the government doctor to provide the medicines. The common man becomes a meek 'seeker' from the government officers rather than a strong 'buyer' of services from the market. The attitude of subservience and dependence grows in him though he may get the health facilities. In order to draw benefit from the Employment Guarantee Scheme, the poor villager has to first have his name entered into the BPL list by the Pradhan. Then the Pradhan has to make a scheme and have it approved by the District administration. Then the Village Secretary oversees the implementation of the programme. The people are relatively free in Gandhi's path. Gan-

The path of Dr Man Mohan Singh actually seeks to enchain the people but mislead them into believing it to be freedom.

dhi had promoted Khadi so that the people got employment without being dependent upon the government. The expansion of freedom of the people by Employment Guarantee Schemes is like giving the prisoner the freedom to sleep or remain waking in his cell.

The path of Dr Man Mohan Singh actually seeks to enchain the people but mislead them into believing it to be freedom. First Dr Man Mohan Singh renders the people unemployed by giving freedom to large businesses to kill their cottage industries such as Coca Cola has killed the rasvanti and textile mills have killed handlooms. Then selected vocal elements among the people are co-opted by providing them with free facilities through government welfare programmes. The Block Pramukh is treated free in the government hospitals and his voice is muffled. The ordinary people remain helpless as previously-only they may imagine they too will get free treatment like obtained by the Block Pramukh.

It can be argued that people continue to be dependent upon the government in Gandhi's path as well. Jobs in handlooms and rasvanti are made only if the government imposes tax on the big businesses. But the nature of dependence in the two paths is qualitatively different. The people are dependent upon the government machinery at every step in Dr Man Mohan Singh's path such as having to produce a BPL ration card. This dependence on the government is less in Gandhi's path. The imposi-

tion of heavy tax at one critical point automatically leads to the generation of employment.

The role of the government is critical in both paths. The question is regarding its direction. Chief Economist of the International Monetary Fund Raghuram Rajan had studied the civil aviation industry in the United States. He found that the strict rules made by the regulatory authority enabled small companies to grow, intensified competition and led to the development of that industry. The role of the Telecom Regulatory Authority (TRAI) in India has been similar in the telecommunication industry in India. Such regulatory function of the government stands on a qualitatively different footing than running government programmes through government departments. There was a long waiting list for telephones when that service was being departmentally provided by the government. Now phone connections are available on demand by private players. The role of government exists in both paths but the role is much less in the regulatory approach of Gandhi.

World view of Dr Man Mohan Singh is that of a retired bureaucrat. He looks at the world through the files put up by his subordinates. He cannot think outside the files. This will not do. The Congress must install another Prime Minister who can truly empower the people as Gandhi had suggested; instead of empowering the bureaucracy behind the smokescreen of pro-people programmes. □□

The Burgeoning Public Debt & Consequences



One major impact of the increasing government debt is that due to repayment obligations, the government is constrained to spend less on important social sectors such as health, child and women's welfare, explains **Dr. Ashwani Mahajan**

Greece and certain other countries of Europe recently faced a public debt crisis. The government's debt had increased to such an extent that it was unable to repay. Other countries of the European Union have been able to stave off the crisis for the time being. But the problem of sovereign debt persists in several countries, including Greece.

In 1950-51, India's public debt was only Rs. 2054 crore. It is expected to reach Rs. 2,898,799 crore by 2010-11. If we add post office savings and Provident Fund, the total liability of the Centre will reach Rs 3,944,598 crore. The most worrying aspect is that it is increasing by Rs. 3 to

4 lakh crore per annum.

The major reason for the burgeoning public debt is the increase in government spending due to wasteful expenditure. And the impact is severe because of the mounting pressure to repay the huge public debt as government revenue does not match the ever rising liabilities. It is obvious that the government has to take more and more loans to repay the previous loans. India's recent experience points to wasteful government expenditure and the burden of repayment of debt and interest.

In terms of the 2010-11 budget, the government will borrow approximately Rs 2.5 lakh crore just to pay interest on the loans

previously taken. This pressure of debt compels the government to enhance taxation and thereby increase intervention in the economy. As per the economic principles, the governmental intervention should be minimal in order to avoid distortions.

The government resorts to additional taxation to overcome additional borrowing. It borrows from the Reserve Bank, which in turn prints more currency notes to meet the government's demand. In the recent past, this action of the government, has triggered inflation almost to uncontrollable rates. And it is the common man who has to bear the brunt.

The rise in government debt has brought the world to the brink. The intensity of the problem can be gauged by its ratio to GDP or by the rate of growth of public debt. In its examination of the crisis, The Economist features a 'clock' on its website. It shows that public debt is rising every second.



By 2011, the world's total government debt is expected to reach \$ 42.5 trillion. The world's total GDP is \$ 58 trillion.

By 2011, the world's total government debt is expected to reach \$ 42.5 trillion. The world's total GDP is \$ 58 trillion. Government debt is much higher in rich countries. Despite much higher GDP, the ratio of public debt to GDP is 63 per cent in the USA, 80 per cent in the UK, 82 per cent in France, 77 per cent in Germany and 82 per cent



in Canada. To meet the growing public expectation over populist measures, public spending is multiplying even in developing countries. And due to their inability to raise sufficient revenues, public debt is also on the rise. In countries where it was 53 per cent of the GDP, it has now increased to 56 per cent. The major issue of concern is that public debt is growing at the rate of 15 per cent per annum; ten years ago, it was increasing by only 6 per cent.

In India, the increasing government debt can have several repercussions on the economy. One major impact is that due to repayment obligations, the government is constrained to spend less on important social sectors such as health, child and women's welfare. The Union Budget allocates Rs 2.5 lakh crore for interest repayment. Obviously with a budget size of nearly Rs 11 lakh crore, the options for government expenditure are very limited, more so when the fiscal deficit is at about Rs 4 lakh crore.

For the past several years spending on social sectors has been limited to only 8 to 9 per cent of the budget. Health and education are the worst victims. Due to inadequate expenditure on education, the government sector institutions could not expand in keeping with the needs of the population. This has facilitated the expansion of private educational institutions. Private schools, private medical and engineering colleges and private educational institutions, and the increasing number of management institutes charge exorbitant fees. The poor are the worst sufferers. They are deprived of education, and the development of human resources suffers a setback.

Public health is another victim of insufficient public expenditure. Once again it is the poor who are the worst sufferers. The facilities in government hospitals are decrepit. Hence the boom in private hospitals and nursing homes. The poor are selling off their assets to afford the cost of treatment in private hos-

pitals. The Prime Minister has said that farmers in Vidarbha often commit suicide when they run into debt to get their family members treated.

Apart from the social sector, the expenditure on roads, power, ports, and drinking water is also affected by the increase in government debt. Expenditure on agricultural and irrigation development, which used to be around 27 per cent of the government's budget, has come down to merely 5 per cent. This has reinforced the dominance of the private sector in the infrastructure and agricultural sectors.

As a result of the wasteful expenditure by the past and present regimes, the future generations will be compelled to face the exploitation of private corporations in the infrastructural sector. To keep in check the growing public debt, it is imperative to keep wasteful government expenditure and populist spending under control. Some years ago, the government enacted the FRBM Act and placed a limit on the fiscal deficit under 2.5 per cent of the GDP. But the government has itself reneged on its own commitment and has reconciled itself to a fiscal deficit of 5.5 per cent of the GDP in the 2010-11 budget. In 2009-10, it was even higher at 6.7 per cent of the GDP.

The FRBM Act should seriously be enforced. The fiscal deficit should not be allowed to exceed 2.5 per cent of the GDP. In case it is marginally higher, it should help facilitate higher expenditure on education, health and other social sectors, and on infrastructure or agricultural development. □□

With a budget size of nearly Rs 11 lakh crore, the options for government expenditure are very limited, more so when the fiscal deficit is at about Rs 4 lakh crore.

Saving Indian Agriculture & Agriculturists from Impending total Subjugation by the Corporates

Ecologically sustainable holistic farming, total rejection of genetically modified crops, promoting biodiversity and use of locally adapted cultivars and adapting all possible methods of natural resource management with emphasis on conservation of all resources only will ensure food security of the people without jeopardizing food sovereignty of the country, pleads Prof. R. N. Basu

The crisis in Indian Agriculture is of utmost seriousness as increase in production and productivity has virtually stopped (last year overall production was -0.2% vis-à-vis the previous year) while population increase is around 2% per year. Global climate change as manifested by slow but steady temperature rise is sure to adversely affect agriculture in the low latitudes. The situation would be further exacerbated by weather uncertainties and extremes in the form of prolonged drought, flood, more frequent cyclones and tornadoes damaging coastal ecosystems, agriculture and confined brackish water fisheries in particular via serious damage to river embankments and ingress of salt water.

The path-finding World Agriculture report released by the UN-sponsored International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for development (IAAKSTD/IAASTD) in April 2008 has suggested a natural resource management based ecologically sustainable agriculture to mitigate the adverse effects of a nearly 31% contribution to anthropogenic greenhouse gas (GHG) emission by present day industrial agriculture and associated land use changes. According to IAASTD, "Business as usual", if



Indian farmer Ushant Singh examines his wheat crop in a field on the outskirts of Amritsar on March 9, 2010. (Photo: Anand/AFP/Getty Images)

continued as such, would put human civilization at stake by 2050 AD. Incidentally, India is among the first group of signatories along with 59 countries (that includes European and Asian; African and Latin American countries; USA, Canada and Australia expressed their reservations). But who will come forward for implementation (or rather "who will stop the Goliath?") is the most important matter from the point of view of livelihood and survival of our small and marginal farmers.

Green revolution initiated by the US agribusiness corporates with high input requiring seeds has, however, been a temporary relief or respite for the small and mar-

ginal farmer dominated developing countries like India and even at its peak covered only about one-third of our irrigated crop land, the rest two-third was broadly outside the scope of the green revolution technology (GRT). It has been estimated that during the active period of green revolution namely, 1970-71 to 1993-94, the percentage increase in output was 89% in food grains and 92% in all commodities while the increase in major inputs such as irrigation, chemical fertilizers, chemical pesticides were 69, 616, 242 percent respectively; the use of electricity went up by 742% and institutional credit by a staggering 1128%. Besides these, the hidden costs in

terms of environmental damage, disruption of ecosystem services and health related costs have been enormous. Unfortunately, there has not been any attempt in India to include such costs in the actual cost of production; in fact that has been deliberately avoided by the proponents of GRT and also by popular media with the result that more than a quarter (rather close to one-third) of our fertile soils have been allowed to degrade which now would fail to respond to added inputs making agriculture even in the most agriculturally advanced states non remunerative as a profession. The cradle of green revolution, Punjab, stands as an example of how high production at any cost for short term gains would demolish a long term future. The land of five rivers is now genuinely thirsty because of its continued dependence on wheat and rice; with 1.5% of land area of the nation it would grow 20% of wheat and 12% of rice – the latter a truly water-thirsty crop and farmers now find it necessary to pump out as much water from steadily depleting aquifers, nitrates from excess N fertilizers (two-third of which would be unavailable to the standing crop) are polluting ground water along with toxic pesticide residues. Cancer is now as common as ordinary diseases. The Bathinda–Bikaner Express (now

locally known as the Cancer Express) is reported to carry around 60 cancer patients everyday to a relatively cheap cancer treatment centre in Bikaner in Rajasthan. Socioeconomic scenario of rural Punjab is most disturbing with 48% of farmers and farm labours (40% of states 'youth' in general) are now drug addicts, being utterly disenchanted with non remunerative farming. Acute indebtedness and suicides are often the last resort of the hard pressed Punjabi farmers.

The recent Suresh Tendulkar Committee's report to the Planning Commission on people in the below poverty line (BPL) category cannot simply be ignored. It shows a big rise of 10% increase from the previous 27% BPL people to the present 37% level nationwide, with 42% of rural people (in some states over 50%) going to bed with a hungry stomach. The debate over provision of 25 kg food grain per month per family at Rs.3 per kg vis-à-vis 35 kg at the same price may have to be reviewed annually if the current trend continues.

The First Green Revolution was allowed to drag on for an unnecessarily long period but the so-called Second Green Revolution has been literally thrust on an unsuspecting nation through Indo-US Knowledge Initiative in Agriculture (KIA) by US President George Bush and Indian Prime

Minister Manmohan Singh during the latter's visit to the USA in 2005. The major objective has been to ensure US corporate control of Indian food and agriculture sector through demolition of small and marginal farmer dominated agriculture initially by capturing the seed market that is still primarily under the control of farmers who sow 80% of their fields with seeds saved by them – a practice that goes directly against the interest of the corporate seed giants. Further, the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) on seeds (and other living organisms) was not enough for total corporate control, it required the genetically modified crops (GMCs) to ensure absolute control over seeds and associated inputs to capture the food and agriculture market and to effectively dispossess the small and marginal farmers.

IAASTD has very rightly and categorically pointed out that genetically modified crop are no answer to poverty and hunger. In fact, even before the GATT initiative WTO, IMF and World Bank have been making well planned synchronized advances towards corporate control of global food and agriculture market. The trap was laid out very cunningly and effectively and India with a horde of corrupt politicians and scientists has been callous enough to swallow the bait with unusual greed and lust. Why after all these years, was there a necessity of a so called knowledge initiative in agriculture is unclear except for US commercial interests/linkages.

So far as agriculture in India and USA is concerned, we have very little in common socio-economically and technologically. The US farming system is the biggest

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chemical intensive highly mechanized farming system in the world with huge farms each spread over thousands of acres requiring the minimum use of very expensive human labour (as such, maximum possible use of farm machineries dependent on fossil fuels) that costs between 10-14 US dollars per hour. It is no wonder that on an average a hectare (2.5 acres) of wheat requires only 7.5 hr (less than one man day) of human labour against an average of 180 man days in India that includes all operations for land preparation, sowing and all post sowing operations till the harvested grain is bagged and stored. If 180 labours were used per hectare in the USA, the cost (at \$10 per hour for 8 hours) of labour alone would be 14,400 dollars (about Rs.6.48 lakh) for a hectare of wheat with an average yield of 2.67 metric tonnes, which would indeed be an absurd proposition. Industrial chemical intensive but highly mechanized labour exclusive production system based on highly subsidized fossil fuel energy use (besides huge general subsidy to motivate a meagre 2% of the population to remain in farm-

Second Green Revolution has been literally thrust on an unsuspecting nation through Indo-US Knowledge Initiative in Agriculture (KIA) by US President George Bush and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

ing) has enabled US farmers to keep the cost of production of wheat below 200 dollars per tonne. Such a system by necessity has to be a monoculture of uniformly growing and maturing crop and farm size very large to enable efficient and economic use of large machineries. Polyculture or mixed cropping would not fit in the cropping system; after all a combine harvester cannot be operated in a mixed farming stand. Even biodiversity of crops in different plots may not be welcomed for technological reasons.

Most of our holdings in this country are small and marginal and with population pressure they are being further fragmented. For majority of holdings large machineries are not necessary. Nevertheless, power tillers and small tractors, water pumps, threshers, etc. are being increasingly used to save

time, reduce hard physical labour and on economic grounds. Still 65-70% people in rural areas depend on agriculture as a source of livelihood and a vast majority of able bodied men and women look forward to employment generation in agriculture more so because of lack of expertise and experience in other jobs requiring in education and necessary training. Employment generation in different fields, especially in agriculture and allied sectors is essential for socioeconomic as well as political stability.

The marginalization of small holder farmers would be inevitable with the growing corporate influence on Indian agriculture and would suit the main purpose of KIA – which is nothing but a shrewd strategy of US multinationals to dump their huge globally rejected GMO products on a food deficit country. For that, India's significant public opposition to GMOs needs to be countered. KIA through various maneuvers managed to get the support of a large section of scientists in the ICAR and its chain of national level institutions and also state agricultural universities; many scientists of general universities, institutes and academies of science were on the GMO bandwagon for obvious reasons. The national funding agencies have been overgenerous with hefty funds for GM crop research and in a short while over 50 GM crop events are being tested – all



with borrowed patented technology vying for commercial release and associated financial benefits. It is an interesting rat race to make ready money from poor farmers (and unsuspecting future consumers) but the real but hidden strategy is to pollute all our germplasm with either toxin producing genes as in Bt for insect control or to insert genes that favour greater use of toxic synthetic chemicals as in HT, all in the name of environment protection. A GM crop can never be recalled once released in the environment. One and a half decade after the first GM crop was commercially released in the USA, the safety issues of GM crops, the contaminations of native germplasms, the failure to increase intrinsic yield (with only a few instances of a marginal operational yield increase) and evidences of harming beneficial soil microbes mounting, and so far only an insignificant 10% of around 200 countries of the world opting for GM technology championed by USA (that country alone accounting for over 50% of global crop area), the future appears to be bleak. The negative effects on environment has started bothering the judiciary in the homeland of the GM crops and anything may happen on that front in the coming couple of years. Not only the crop developers but also the regulators who are supposed to be impartial have been charged with irregularities, lies, deception and serious conflicts of interest (the regulators acting as promoters) in a number of countries.

India presently has neither food security (lacking in availability of food for all, 37% of Indians are in the BPL category), nor food

sovereignty (lacks full freedom to take independent decisions on all food related issues). In the last couple of fiscal years, it imported 40% of the nitrogenous chemical fertilizer requirements, 97% of phosphorus and 100% of potash at very high cost. The country is greatly dependent on fossil fuel imports for energy necessary for transport and other activities including agriculture. It is becoming increasingly amenable to external pressures, specifically by the USA and US corporates regarding agricultural policies related to seeds, GM crops, environmental issues and biodiversity, seed saving by farm-



ers, entry of processed US foods, vis-à-vis labeling issue for GMOs, and dumping of cheap highly subsidized food from abroad, and has been consistently diluting the countries previous stand on the sensitive food and agriculture related issues sacrificing the interests of poor farming community in particular, all for the sake of its renewed love and benevolence for the corporate sector.

It is high time that all concerned and right minded people from all walks of life should come forward to stem the rot and take a pledge to save our poor farmers from the corporate onslaught with the active support of a section of

motivated politicians in the government and their agents and stooges. Even legislative measures via introduction of obnoxious articles in bills (for enactment by the Parliament) are being contemplated to prevent access to information and stop expression of genuine concerns and criticisms in public fora. It is indeed most shameful for a country like India that boasts of a free press and freedom of expression of opposing views that happened to be cornerstone of a democracy.

Ecologically sustainable holistic farming incorporating wherever possible crop-livestock farming systems, land shaping and water harvesting methods, micro watershed development programs specifically in rain-fed drought prone areas, community managed non-pesticidal management (NPM) eliminating altogether the use of synthetic chemical pesticides, total rejection of genetically modified crops, promoting biodiversity and use of locally adapted cultivars (using more varieties, 2-4 or more, of some crops in alternate rows) or mixtures of seeds of cultivars of similar duration, sown by broadcasting, or mixed cropping of different crops would act as natural insurance against biotic and abiotic stresses, and adapting all possible methods of natural resource management with emphasis on conservation of all resources are the major options that would ensure food security of the people without jeopardizing food sovereignty of the country and safeguard the total well being of our future generations, may be for all time to come. □□

(Writer is Ex-Khaira Professor of Agriculture & Ex-Vice-Chancellor, University of Calcutta)

Remunerative diversification of land use in Himachal Pradesh

Horticulture acts as a force multiplier in the farming sector of the Himachal Pradesh. With precision farming techniques like poly houses and micro-irrigation more farmers are reaping the benefits of crop diversification, reports V. Shanmuganathan

Agriculture is the main occupation of the people of Himachal Pradesh. It provides direct employment to 70% of the state's population. Rice, wheat and maize constitute the important cereal crops in the state. The BJP government is giving top priority to agricultural production to increase income of the farmers. The emphasis is on production of off season vegetables, fruits & flowers.

Horticulture has proved to be the most remunerative diversification of land use in the hills. The state has an elaborate department of Horticulture with offices spread across HP. During the last few years, the government has brought 20431.4 hectare under fruits, 262 hectare under flowers, and 584.3 hectare under medicinal and aromatic plants. In total 8,25,922 sq m has been brought under protected cultivation of horticultural crops. The horticulture annually contributes around Rs. 2000 crores towards the state GDP. The thrust is on mushroom cultivation, bee keeping, floriculture, hops cultivation, fruit processing etc.

We went to a village called Kufri in Shimla district. It is also a famed hill station, 13 kilometers away from Shimla. On climbing the hills we reached a hamlet called Santhal (in Theog Tehsil). There we met a farmer called Om



Prakash, who was producing capsicum (or Shimla Mirch). I wanted to know whether it was profitable, and he informed it indeed was. The credit was due, he said, to the poly house which facilitates growing high value agricultural products under protective conditions. He showed us his poly house. A poly house is a protective shade made of polythene. It would be circular, square or elongated in shape. Tempera-

In total 8,25,922 sq m has been brought under protected cultivation of horticultural crops.

ture, humidity and ventilation are controlled by the equipments fixed in the poly house. Crops grown in the poly house are protected from intense heat, bright sunlight, strong winds, hail storms and cold waves. Poly houses are ideal for growing vegetable and flowers in the off-season. Om Prakash constructed his poly house, spanning 800 sq m, under Horticulture Technology Mission of HP government. An amount of Rs. 2.5 lakhs was provided by the state government as subsidy.

Though protected from the vagaries of weather, his first crop of capsicum was destroyed by disease. Not discouraged, however, he tried capsicum again. He planted 3000 plants, incurring a

cost of Rs. 9,000. Besides this he spent about Rs. 20,000 for fertilizer and Rs. 10,000 for pesticides. Till date he could produce 400 boxes of capsicum. He spent Rs. 60 per box as transportation to sell it in the markets. The total expenditure came to around Rs. 53,000. He is utterly confident of earning Rs. 1,00,000 from it. But how did he get the subsidy of Rs. 2.5 lakhs, I asked him. He informed he had applied to the Agriculture Department of HP government for construction of poly house under Pt. Deendayal Kisan Bagwan Samridhhi Yojana. He received the sanction to construct the poly house after fulfilling the necessary conditions.

We met another farmer Aryadeep cultivating cabbage under open conditions in one acre area. The crop is planted in the month of June and completes its lifecycle in October. The cultivation expenses starts with Rs. 25,000 for purchasing seeds. Upon this, he has to spend, Rs. 15,000 towards fertilizer and Rs. 5,000 for pesticides. Then he has to pay for water, labour, packaging, transportation to the market. The total cost of production is around Rs.90,000. A total return from the crop is around Rs.1,60,000 within a period of 5 months.

Then we met Mukund Lal, a farmer cultivating Pea in the village dhbech (Manjhar block of Theog Tehsil). He grew of Pea of Arkal variety during the month of July on 10 bigha (3.33 acres) of land. He spent about Rs. 20,000 including procurement of seeds, ploughing of land, manure, fertilizers, plucking & packing and transportation etc. About 40 bags of 50 kg each were produced are



Himachal is famous for its floriculture. Chrysanthemum, Gerbera, roses, marigold, carnation flowers are generally grown in the mountains.

sold at an average rate of Rs.30/- per kg. With a period of four months he could get Rs. 60,000 as return. He seems to be happy with it. In general farmers of the area grow capsicum, cabbages, beans, cauliflowers, tomatoes and pea.

Himachal is famous for its floriculture. Chrysanthemum, Gerbera, roses, marigold, carnation flowers are generally grown in the mountains. Fresh flowers worth crores of rupees are produced and sent to Punjab, Haryana and Delhi markets. There are seven floricultural nurseries and stations under Department of Horticulture in Solon, Shimla and Kangra and Kullu districts. The department has published a number of free and priced publications for guiding the cultivators.

We visited a village called Puach, where we met a floriculturist called Hemraj. He appeared to be around 50, and had a poly house measuring 288 sq m. He had planted 7800 carnation flower plants, each of which cost him Rs. 10/-. This crop has a life cycle of three years. Once planted it starts blossoming after three

months. The plucking is done after every two days in summer and after every 4 days during the winter. The plucked sticks are tied in a bunch of 20 each. Then roughly 50 bunches are packed in a box. This flower mainly finds its market in Delhi. The transportation cost is Rs. 200/- per box from Theog to Delhi. It is one of the best selling flowers. The farmer is happy earning a minimum of Rs. 1.5 lakh per year.

Thus, horticulture, in its various manifestations, has proved to be the most remunerative venture in the hills. It has the potential of bringing economic prosperity to this mountain state of India. In order to strengthen the economy of the farmers thousands of poly houses are constructed under Pt. Deen Dayal Ksian Bagwan Samriddhi Yojana. Subsidy to the tune of 80 percent is being provided to construct poly houses and irrigation process. The state government is trying to bring a sea change in the economic condition of the farmers by way of crop diversification and ensuring better infrastructural facilities. □□

Obama's India visit and protest Against FDI in Retail Trade

American President Obama's visit to India generated mixed feelings among Indians. Some celebrated it like a festival; others viewed it as a bad omen and arranged protest marches and the like. There is a third version too, the middle path, for example in Mumbai, the traders associations had put hoardings and wall posters claiming: "Welcome Obama but not FDI". Swadeshi Jagaran Manch falls in this category. Though we recalled the Indian ethos of Atithi devobhav (our guest is like god) we also protested at several places against his imperialistic policies and anti-retailer stance. Though SJM zeroed on one topic i.e. FDI in retail, but all other issues detrimental for the country and which were being promoted by American lobby, was also the part of its overall protest. Here is a brief description of how the protest programmes were held at various places spread in various parts of the country. The beauty of the programmes (sorry for using 'beauty' epithet with ugly thing like protests) is that while these were held in the metropolitan places like Jantar Mantar in Delhi and Nagpur, it were also held in the remotest places like Hinganghat in Vidarbha and Jamui in Bihar. Moreover, at certain places like Nagpur, the local police interrupted and



took away the effigy of Mr. Obama, in Delhi, on the other hand, when our Karyakartas were trying to remove the ashes of burnt effigy and cleaning the 'burial place', local police were quite cooperative and asked our activists "Don't waste time on it, we will get it done ourselves, don't worry"! While at Jamshedpur in Jharkhand it was a two-days affair: on the first day a mock public hearing against Obama and Mr. Michel Duke, CEO of Wal-Mart, was conducted and the judges (again mock) passed a verdict that the two should be hanged to death, and next day both were executed in full public glare. As the reporting from different places suggest, the biggest gathering on this issue was held in far off Trivandrum in Kerala where

a gathering of a thousand people was held in a public park as the protest marches had been banned there by High Court. Sh. Biju reported that four programmes of the type were held in Kerala. Good news of course! The same number of programme was also held in Odisha, where at present jubilant activists are celebrating their victory in the case of Anti-Vedanta University case.

Actually, in the beginning, only one big protest march was planned in Amritsar where it was in the rumour that Mr. Obama will visit the Wal-mart store, the first of its type in India. Sh. Gobindacharya, Murlidharrao and other activists of that stature were to address the proposed mammoth rally there. But, as you all know that in the last

legs of the preparations, the American lobby dropped Amritsar from the itinerary of Mr. Obama, for reasons best known to them till now, we too changed our strategy and thought of doing protests at several places. In brief, four programmes were held in Odisha and Kerala each, three in Punjab, and Maharashtra, two each in Bihar and Jharkhand, and one in western UP. Some noteworthy details of selected programmes are given below.

Nagppur and Hinganghat:

First of all a press conference was held in Nagpur wherein Sh. Ajay Patki ji introduced several trader leaders of name to the press who were supporting the SJM protest march. In the programmes where effigy of Mr. Obama and Wal-Mart was to be burnt, the local police acted hastily and took away the effigies with them. However the press published photos of effigies and the number of women participants, seventy plus was very encouraging. Sh. BC Bhartiya, CA and prominent trade union and Madan Thum, president of Hair saloon organisation, Gyaneshwar Rakshak, president Kirana retailer association were prominent among the participants. Similarly in remote area of Hinganghat a silent protest march was held from the local Karanja (Fountain) Chowk to the office of the SDM lead by Sh. Jethanand Rajput, Pradeep Nagpurkar, Ramesh Gangadhar Dharkar.

Kerala: On sixth programmes were held in Thiruanantapuram and Pallakhad. Two more conventions on this topic of FDI in retail were also held in the later part of this month. The prominent person to attend the conventions and protest programmes were Mr. Alex, General Secretary of the trad-

ers' association, Prof. Kumaraswami and other activists like Gopal ji, Biju and Jannardan Reddy. We should know that traders' association or Retailer association of Kerala is considered one of the best organised in the country. More than one lakh people assemble at the call of

this association. At Pattanamthitta convention and Palakkhad (25th Nov) and Kollam convention a large number of people of other traders and retailer associations participated in full vigour. However the three programmes were held indoor and intellectual aspect was predominant than activism.

Jharkhand and Bihar: The protest march of Jamshedpur is reported to the best of the four programmes held in these two states. On the K-Road crossing of Bishnupur locality senior advocate JKM Raju acted as judge to listen to the charges against Mr Obama and Michel Duke, CEO of Wal-Mart who was lobbying for a week in India just before the arrival of President Obama, in the presence of a huge gathering. This presented a very interesting scenario as public were listening with rapt attention to the charges levelled against American lobby. The next day effigies of both were hanged with the shouting of slogans against Wal-Mart. Sh. Kaushal Kishor reported the same type from Bokaro where prominent among the participants were Vibhag Baudhik Pramukh Arvind Tripathi and others. In Bhagalpur Sh Dalip Nirala and in Jamui Sh. Murari Jha were



the main speakers.

Punjab: Punjab which burnt the biggest effigy of Wal-Mart on the eve of All India Conference in Jalandhar last month, again witnessed protest programmes against Sh. Obama and Walmart at three places namely Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur and Amritsar. At Amritsar, where the first Wal-Mart was opened with collaboration on Bharti Mittal traders and retailers were already feeling the ill effects of Wal-Mart. Sh. Subash Sharma in Amritsar, Sh. Krishan Sharma from Hoshiarpur and Ashu Sampla from Jalandhar were the main organisers of the programmes.

Odisha: At four places namely Balangir, Angul, Balasore and Rourkela protest marches, effigy burning and other programmes were held. In Rourkela about 300 plus people listened to the speeches of Sh. Annada Panigrahi, Shubh Patnaik, State leader and Brijmohan Aggarwal, Jharkhand and Odisha president of Retailers Association.

In **Moradabad** Dr. Rajeev lead the protest march to SDM office and submitted the memorandum against FDI in retail. These are some of the reports and others are still arriving. □□

The other side of Mr. OBAMA's visit

Though, what our hypermedia termed as a Obamamania is over, so now, after the visit of President Obama from 6th to 9th November, it is time to see the other aspect of his visit. Of course Left parties had protested against his agenda at Jantar Mantar, but remained all the time mum and dumb in Parliament when others were clapping their hands red at the end of every sentence in the speech of Mr. Obama in packed or say over-packed Parliament. Other major opposition parties remained sacrosanct to their vow of not uttering a single word until that Grand Guest was on our land, upholding the age-old tradition of Atithi Devobhav. But fortunately for Mr. Obama, even after his visit no political parties have criticised him because they could not find time to ponder over his visit. Perhaps just minutes after the departure of Obama from this country two big bosses were suspended, Sh Kalmadi and Maharashtra CM, and then Spectrum scam, and then Karnataka CM row, and then Punjab National Bank scam and others. So Opposition has virtually not found any time to discuss and dissect Obama's visit even after his departure.

In brief, whatever he took away with him, whether in the form of selling business deals worth US \$10 billions or securing 50,000 jobs for American – these achievements are all real, factual and huge. On the contrary what India gained, whether a promise of securing a permanent seat in UN

Security Council, or removal of curbs on certain Indian organizations from the Entity List, and promise of supporting India's membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group – all these are mere promises, mirages or say bird in the bush. American gains are real, our gains are imaginary or in promise form.

Let's first analyze his speech. Instead of 20 minutes as scheduled, he addressed for about 45 minutes.



The Moving Pen

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Perhaps in the 25 extra minutes he was using the anesthesia in the form of such words as Namaste, bahut dhanyavaad, mentioning twice the name of Gandhi ji, and other national heroes like Dr. BR Ambedkar, Swami Vivekanand, Rabindernath Tagore and quoting Panchtantra as well. He even went to the extent of saying "It may not have been possible for me to stand here as the President of the United States had it not been for Gandhiji and the message he passed on to the world." It is incredible that he used the word "incredible or incredibly" at least 19 times during his visit.

More incredible is the fact that one wonders if he is the same Obama who has taken such a hard stance in the matter of outsourcing to India? We feel difficulty in realizing that had he uttered the words "No to Bangalore and yes to Buffalo regarding IT industry purchase. Furthermore if he is the same Obama who took the anti-India stance in August this year and signed into law a legislation to se-

cure the US-Mexica border by massively hiking work visa fees, ignoring concerns over a "discriminatory" provision will largely hit Indian IT firms. He was giving preference to India over Pakistan directly and indirectly, OK. But surprisingly, or perhaps not so surprisingly, the approval rating of Obama as improved in Pakistan where the rating has almost doubled from 10% in 2008 to 18% in 2010, all thanks to the \$7.5 billion

Kerry-Lugar-Berman bill and massive flood relief work. Moreover how the Wikileaks and other docu-

ments can be belied wherein Obama is shown confident that Pakistan's nuclear arsenal would remain secure and had said that, "Primarily, initially. Because the Pakistani army, I think, recognizes the hazards of those weapons falling into the wrong hands". He has himself accepted in western media that multi-million packages to Pakistan were used for redirecting and funding terror plots against India. Which Obama we should believe, what he is speaking in India or what he has spoken abroad.

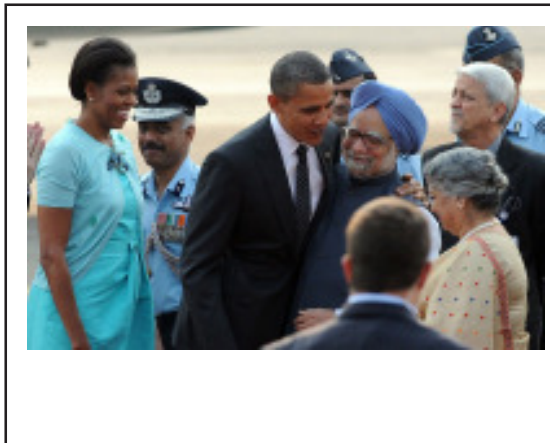
Ganga Gaye Ganga Ram, Jamuna Gaye Jamuna Dass: Moreover, if it is not a sufficient example of his double speak; let us consider his speeches regarding China. Here, during his visit, politicians and general public to some extent are thinking that because of our democratic leanings, as he has uttered time and again that we are world's two largest democracies. We have to remember his only one month's earlier statement regarding China on September 20, 2010 that rapid growth of China is in

the interest of the US economy. He added “It’s good for us that China has done well. “ We should keep in mind the fact that US exports to China was worth \$69.6 billion while imports was a whopping \$296.4 billion in 2009 alone. So the trade volume of \$366 billion is quite significant. China’s indispensability fo US has grown to an extent that, in order to appease and please Beijing, Obama transformed his Strategic Economic Dialogue into the Strategic and Economic Dialogue, thus silently taking off human rights issues from the ilateral agenda. He also appointed China as the monitor of Asia in his last visit of Asia and asked China to look into the Kashmir issue as well. It is not a question of Kaun Bane-ga Krolepati that more than 5000 sq miles of land of Kashmir has been illegally occupied by China through Pakistan. This Grand, Great friend of India, Mr. Obama appointed that China to ‘monitor’ Kashmir issue! Let us remember that Obama has

said in unequivocal words “The rise of a strong, prosperous China can be the source of strength for the community of nations.” We were full of euphoria to listen his words in Parliament that India is the country which gave zero to the world, and he was in a way zeroing us by helping China and Pakistan as we have quoted him above. Wherever he goes, he speaks eulogizing that nation: Ganga Gaye, Ganga Dass Yamuna Gaye to Yamuna Dass.

His recent Unpopularity at Home: Perhaps people of US have started realizing his real personality. Before his arrival here, the ap-

proval rating of Obama has dropped by 13 per cent, from 31% in 2008 to 18% in 2010 – as per the latest Gallup Poll. The same Obama was awarded a Nobel for Peace a few years ago. Now what the WikiLeaks has exposed in its recent expose has revealed his nation’s stand regarding atrocities on Iraqi soldiers and civilians what can one conclude. Harbinger of peace or atrocities. Now on October 25,2010 the same Nobel laureate for Peace Obama has waived off sections of a law meant to prevent the recruitment of child soldiers in Africa to facilitate underage troops. Everybody knows that recruiting



underage soldiers is a human rights abuse in most of the nations and Obama is facilitating it. Even Noam Chhomsky stated in an interview last month that President Obama “is involved in war crimes right now. For example, targeted assassinations are war crimes. That’s escalated quite sharply under Obama. If you look at Wikileaks, there are a lot of examples of attacks on civilians.” Remember this is same Obama, with the tag of Nobel Prize for Peace, who was remembering Gandhiji again and again for his peace efforts! Sh. Murlimanohar Joshi was right when he was suggesting in a TV

interview that somebody should ask Mr. Obama that you are invoking Gandhiji time and again in you speeches, have you ever tried to practice Gandhiji in your actions? Definitely Not.

Global Senario: Difference between his words and Actions: As a candidate, Obama talked about green jobs and climate change policy. Today. The President talks about oil, gas and bio-fuels. In 2008 he projected himself as a “citizen of the world” now he blames developing nations for global warming. He has failed to keep his promises of closure of Guantanamo Bay prison, and providing relief for illegal immigrants. Gimto is still active and no concrete steps have been crafted for illegal migrants. Some months back PolitiFact found that Obama has kept around 91 of his promises out of 500! Perhaps 20% marks may be a failure mark in India but may be first class in America. Actually breaking proises is a trend with American presidents, and

Obama is no difference! Once Woodrow Wilson promised to keep the US out of World War I and ended up pushing the US into the same war. Herbert Hoover in 1928 one the Presdency with pledge to end poverty and eventually gifted America with Great Depression. Similarly Roosevelt failed to take a balanced stand and bombed Japan to disaster. George Bush Senior promised in 1988 “Read my lips; No new taxes!” and increased taxes. So we should not forget this legacy of Mr. Obama. We should not only remember the other side of Obama but his nation as well. □□

Nitish sweeps Bihar polls; Cong crushed, Lalu eclipsed

The Janata Dal (United)-BJP combine steamrolled its way to a four-fifths majority in one of India's poorest states in what is being interpreted as the triumph of development and governance over caste politics, and a body blow to identity-based leaders Lalu Prasad and Ramvilas Paswan as well as Congress's efforts at revival in the Hindi heartland. "This is Bihar's nayi kahani... Voters had to choose between progress and antiquated politics. They have chosen to surge ahead," Nitish said, echoing the general refrain that hope had won over fear.

It is the biggest-ever sweep in Indian politics by a coalition, barring the Left Front's victories. BJP also turned in a stunning performance, winning 91 seats of 102 seats contested, which actually translates into an even better strike rate than JD(U)'s - 90% against 82%.

All other contenders have suffered a huge humiliation. Lalu Prasad managed only 22 seats, a full 32 short

of the previous tally, despite his alliance with Paswan. Lalu's wife, former chief minister Rabri Devi, lost in the family stronghold of Raghapur, and even lost Sonepur, the seat she contested as insurance.

Paswan has fared worse, securing just 3 out of the 75 seats he wrested in seat-sharing negotiations with a weakened Lalu. The dismal showing belies his claim to be a national leader and leaves him with little leverage in the future.

More importantly, Bihar has dealt a knockout punch to Congress's plans for a revival and exposed the limits of Rahul Gandhi's appeal. The party had won 9 of the 51 seats it contested five years ago. This time it contested all 243 and managed to get only four partymen into the assembly. It will clearly have to go back to the drawing board for a new plan for the Hindi heartland. (Bihar elections a victory of merit over dynastic politics: BJP) □

Media-lobbyist nexus may go to House panel

The government has hinted at the possibility of the media-lobbyist nexus being examined by either the ethics or privileges committee of Parliament. According to media reports either of the two committees could go into the whole gamut of corporate lobbyist Niira Radia's telephonic conversations with media personalities.

This was the first government response to the Opposition's demand that the media's role in corporate lobbying come under the JPC scrutiny. While the matter needs to be referred to the privileges committee by the House, the ethics committee could take note of it on its own.

Two high-profile journalists, Barkha Dutt and Vir Sanghvi, whose names figure in the tapes, have also been internet and TV celebrities of sorts. But their images have taken a severe battering online since the Open and Outlook magazines published on their websites the tapes of their separate conversations with corporate lobbyist Niira Radia.

In the tapes, the journalists are heard promising Radia help for her cause of getting A Raja the telecom portfolio again in the UPA 2 government by talking to their Congress contacts. The tapes, said to be phone taps made by the income tax department, contain conversations that Radia, whose clients include two leading telecom companies, had with NDTV group editor Barkha Dutt and Hin-

dustan Times columnist and advisory editorial director Vir Sanghvi, among others, in the runup to government formation at the Centre in 2009. The tapes are now annexures in a Supreme Court petition filed by lawyer Prashant Bhushan seeking the prosecution of Raja, who was forced to quit as telecom minister .

Pranab plays down housing loan scam

Finance minister Pranab Mukherjee sought to play down the magnitude of the kickbacks-for loan scandal involving senior executives of state-run financial institutions saying that so far, no instances of insider trading have been found. Mukherjee, finance ministry officials as well as the CBI tried to comfort depositors and investors, saying banks were safe and the case was a simple one of bribery. "You know, I have already instructed banking and financial institutions to look into all these issues and they should ensure that institutions' money is safe," the minister told reporters. CBI officials have indicated that the size of the scandal could be worth over Rs 1,000 crore.

However, finance ministry officials said LIC Housing Finance, whose CEO R R Nair was arrested, had an exposure of Rs 388 crore to the eight real estate companies being probed by CBI—which is 0.9% of its total loan book of Rs 43,300 crore at the end of September 2010. Of this, an exposure of Rs 180 crore was to DB Realty, which is being investigated separately in the 2G scam. LIC, the country's largest insurance company, had an expo-

sure of around Rs 1,300 crore to real estate firms.

Bank of India, whose general manager R N Tayal was among those arrested by CBI has an exposure of Rs 646 crore to three companies, which are among the 21 under the scanner .

Trai seeks SC directive on TDSAT power

Telecom regulator Trai has sought directions from the Supreme Court on whether sectoral tribunal TDSAT has powers to hear appeal against regulations framed by it. In a petition seeking the transfer of a case from the Delhi High Court to the apex court, Trai has submitted that TDSAT is not authorised to hear appeal against its regulation. It said, however, that TDSAT can decide only against a direction, decision or an order passed by it. A bench issued notices to tribunal asking it to file a reply.

Konkan projects worry Ramesh

An agreement between Areva and NCPIL is expected to be signed during French President Nicholas Sarkozy's visit to India. While approving the project, MoEF has prescribed 35 stringent conditions and safeguards, of which 23 specific conditions would have to be met within a year's time. These include the preparation of a comprehensive biodiversity conservation plan, with the BNHS and the state forest department, to maintain the health of 150 hectares of mangroves in the area.

Stressing the need for cleaner technology, Ramesh said nuclear energy was a cleaner option compared to coal. "From the environment point of view, a nuclear project is land-intensive and greener. Today 38% of India's greenhouse gas emissions come from the electricity generation sector. If we wish to maintain a GDP growth rate of 9% every year, then our power sector needs to grow at 7% annually," he said.

However, Ramesh admitted that there were serious concerns about the large number of coal-based and mining projects that are coming up in the eco-fragile Konkan belt.

Clinical trials zoom in India

A study of the trials recorded in the registry, done by the Centre for Studies in Ethics and Rights, Mumbai, and published in the Indian Journal of Medical Ethics, reveals that the number of trials has been growing at an astounding 36% annually, from

2006-07 to 2010-11. If India is becoming a favourite destination for clinical trials, Maharashtra is the hub with Mumbai and Pune accounting for the largest number of clinical trials in the country. Maharashtra alone accounted for well over a quarter of all the clinical trials registered with the clinical trials registry of India till 2010.

Even this may be an underestimation. This is despite the fact that the clinical registry could be an under-representation of the trials happening in the country as registration was made mandatory only in June 2009. The largest proportion of the drug trials is for cancer drugs, at 13.4% of all trials. Cancer is not among the top ten killers in India. But it is definitely among the top ten in developed countries. Trials on perinatal conditions, a major cause for deaths in India, constitute just 2.9%. Similarly, though tuberculosis is a major reason for morbidity and mortality in the developing countries, only 0.6% of the clinical trials or seven in number are TB related, said Ravindran presenting the results of the study at the National Bioethics Conference in Delhi. Only 16 out of 1,078 clinical trials were on lower respiratory tract infections though they are among the biggest killers both in India and other developing countries.

Wikileaks' latest release includes 3,038 cables from New Delhi

Of the quarter million top secret US documents released by the whistleblower website Wikileaks, as many as 3,038 classified cables are from the US Embassy in New Delhi. Out of the total, 3,038 classified cables are from the US Embassy in New Delhi. A breakdown indicates that as many as 2,278 cables are from the US mission in Kathmandu, 3,325 from Colombo, and 2,220 from Islamabad. These cables are often candid and some time personal assessment of the day to day events, functioning and meetings of US diplomats.

American cables from the past three years which were procured by WikiLeaks provide an unprecedented look into secret diplomatic episodes and behind-the-stage bargainings like the standoff with Pakistan over nuclear fuel. One cable reveals that since 2007, the US has mounted a highly secret effort, so far unsuccessful, to remove from a Pakistani research reactor highly enriched uranium that American officials fear could be diverted for use in an illicit nuclear device. □□

30,000 Indian students have left Australia: Student federation

A spate of attacks, tough visa norms and denial of permanent residency have caused around 30,000 Indian students, mostly based in Melbourne, to leave Australia in the past year, claims the Federation of Indian Students in Australia (FISA).

The figure is quoted in the latest issue of Indian Student, published from Melbourne. The magazine in its editorial says it appears Australia is no more a favourite destination for Indian students with this huge exodus in a year's time.

The magazine quoting Gautam Gupta, spokesperson of FISA, said race attacks is one of the major reasons behind the exodus. "Other significant factors include that there are no jobs & students can't survive without that.

Denying permanent residency to many Indians despite fulfilment of conditions has also been a reason," says Gupta. There have been a spate of attacks on Indian students in Australia since last year. □

WikiLeaks flood of US cables

Governments around the world braced for the release of millions of potentially embarrassing US diplomatic cables by WikiLeaks as Washington raced to contain the fallout. The whistle-blower website is expected to put online three million leaked cables covering US dealings and confidential views of countries including Australia, Britain, Canada, Israel, Russia and Turkey.

US diplomats skipped their Thanksgiving holiday weekend and headed to foreign ministries hoping to stave off anger over the cables, which are internal messages that often lack the niceties diplomats voice in public. Secretary of state Hillary Clinton had contacted leaders in Germany, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Britain, France and Afghanistan over the issue, he added.

WikiLeaks has not specified the documents' contents or when they would be put online, but Pentagon spokesman Colonel Dave Lapan said officials were expecting a release "late this week or early next week." The website has said there would be "seven times" as many secret documents as the 400,000 Iraq war logs it published last month.

Stalin ordered massacre

The Russian parliament agreed in principle a declaration that Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin personally ordered the Katyn massacre of Polish officers in World War II, media reported. The lower house, the State Duma, agreed a text that breaks several years of official reluctance to admit that Stalin and the Soviet leadership ordered the killing of thousands of Polish officers in 1940, the Interfax news agency said.

"Materials that for many years have been kept in secret archives and have now been published not only show the extent of this terrible tragedy but show that the Katyn crime was carried out on the direct orders of Stalin and other Soviet leaders," the declaration stated. The text was agreed at an unusually stormy session of the Duma, despite virulent opposition from the minority Communist Party, many of whose officials still insist the massacre was carried out by the Nazis.

"This declaration is, without exaggeration, of historic importance," the head of the Russian Duma's foreign affairs committee Konstantin Kosachev was quoted as saying on the website of ruling party United Russia.

Non-immigrant population in the US

People from India account for the maximum number of the resident non-immigrant population in the United States, latest governmental figures have revealed. Of the total number of 1.83 million resident non-immigrants in the US in the year 2008, as many as 400,000 were from India, followed by 150,000 from Canada and 140,000 from South Korea, the department of homeland security (DHS) said.

Slightly more than half (53 per cent) of resident non-immigrant were citizens of Asian countries, including India (22 per cent), South Korea (8 per cent), China (7 per cent), Japan (6 per cent), and Taiwan (2 per cent), DHS said in its report based on the figures available till September 2008.

Europe and North America comprised another 17 per cent each, lead by Canada (8 per cent) and Mexico (7 per cent). The five leading countries accounted for over 50 per cent of the total, it said.

U.S. tries to suppress evidence of human rights: Assange

The WikiLeaks has alleged that the U.S. had rejected its offer for constructive dialogue and accused it of trying to suppress evidence of human rights abuses and other criminal behaviour, saying Washington's concerns were "entirely fanciful". "I understand that the United States government would prefer not to have the information that will be published in the public domain and is not in favour of openness," WikiLeaks Editor-in-Chief, Julian Assange, said in a letter to Louis B Susman, the U.S. Ambassador to Britain.

The letter was in response to the one written by

the State Department to WikiLeaks on Saturday asking it not to publish classified U.S. documents. "You have chosen to respond in a manner which leads me to conclude that the supposed risks are entirely fanciful and you are instead concerned to suppress evidence of human rights abuse and other criminal behaviour," Mr. Assange said.

"WikiLeaks has absolutely no desire to put individual persons at significant risk of harm, nor do we wish to harm the national security of the United States," Mr. Assange said in his letter. □

The resident non-immigrant population includes temporary workers, students, exchange visitors and diplomats, who were legally admitted for specific and temporary purposes with long stays.

Continent-wise Asia tops the list with 970,000, followed by Europe (320,000), North America (310,000) and South America (100,000).

Surrender of Indian passport mandatory

Persons of Indian origin (PIOs) will now have to formally renounce their citizenship and surrender their Indian passport after acquiring foreign citizenship, according to new rules circulated by the Indian high commission here. Canadian PIOs will have to pay a fee of \$168 to get their Indian passport cancelled by the country's mission here.

"New rules require that Indian citizens acquiring foreign citizenship on or after June 1, 2010, must formally renounce Indian citizenship," the mission statement said. But those who have acquired foreign citizenship before June 1, 2010, will be exempted from paying the so-called renunciation fee of \$168.

On surrender of their Indian passport, PIOs will be issued a 'surrender certificate' which they will have to produce when seeking Indian visa or PIO card or OCI (overseas citizenship of India) card, according to the new rules.

Koreans Tension

South Korean President Lee Myung-Bak vowed to make North Korea "pay the price" for its "inhuman" artillery attack on a frontline island that killed four people and sparked global outrage. Lee has come under pressure to take a tougher line against Pyongyang after his military's counter-fire following

North Korea's deadly artillery strike on a border island last week was seen as feeble.

A day after China, North Korea's last major ally, called for emergency talks with Pyongyang, Lee said that it is "difficult to expect North Korea to abandon military brinkmanship and nuclear weapons". His speech comes as the US and South Korean navies stage a potent show of force against North Korea, carrying out a four-day joint naval exercise led by the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS George Washington.

As tensions escalated across the region, with North Korea threatening another "merciless" attack, China belatedly jumped into the fray. Beijing's top nuclear envoy, Wu Dawei, called for an emergency meeting in early December among regional powers involved in nuclear disarmament talks, including North Korea.

Saudi king urged US to attack Iran

King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia urged the United States to attack Iran to destroy its nuclear programme, according to US documents revealed by WikiLeaks, published by the Guardian newspaper.

A cable to Washington from the US embassy in Riyadh recorded the king's "frequent exhortations to the US to attack Iran and so put an end to its nuclear weapons program." The memo said that the king told the Americans to "cut off the head of the snake," and said that working with the US to roll back Iranian influence in Iraq was "a strategic priority for the king and his government."

The document, taken from WikiLeaks and published by Britain's Guardian newspaper, said that Washington believed Saudi attitudes towards Iraq were "marked by skepticism and suspicion." □□

EU pushes for review of Information Technology Agreement

At the meeting of the Information Technology Agreement (ITA) Committee on 11 November 2010, the European Union reiterated its proposal for a review of the ITA, which would cover negotiations on non-tariff barriers and expansion of product coverage and membership.

The EU updated the Committee on its proposal on non-tariff barriers on electronics which it had tabled in the non-agriculture market access (NAMA) negotiations. It said that this proposal was based on the ITA Committee's work on non-tariff measures, in particular that on electromagnetic compatibility (EMC) and electromagnetic interference (EMI) conformity assessment procedures.

The Committee continued discussions on differences of view between participants on the tariff classification of some ITA products.

WTO envoys ready for Doha trade deal push in 2011

Leaders of the G20 rich and emerging economies in Seoul this month called for a conclusion of the Doha round to bolster economic recovery and resist protectionism, saying 2011 offered a narrow window of opportunity for a deal. Leaders of the Asia-Pacific group APEC issued a similar call a few days later.

That followed several months in which ambassadors at the WTO got together in small groups to brainstorm on the issues holding up a deal in Doha, launched in November 2001 to open up global commerce and help poor countries prosper through trade.

"There is a marked change in atmosphere," said Hamid Mamdouh, the WTO official in charge of services such as banking and telecoms.

An outline agreement, known in trade jargon as "modalities", by summer would leave the rest of the year for the details to be filled in, so that an overall deal could be signed at the WTO's next ministerial conference in December 2011. Negotiators know that if they miss 2011, agreement would be almost impossible in 2012 as the United States heads for a presidential election, so a readiness to deal now is vital.

"If we don't, then by default it fails," said the rich economy ambassador.

WTO chief warns against currency wars

The head of the WTO has warned countries against keeping their currencies undervalued to create jobs, saying such policies could spark a return to 1930s-style protectionism. Pascal Lamy, WTO director general, said the fight over currency values — in a reference to the United States and China — could upset global financial stability.

Generating employment "is at the heart of the strategy of some countries to keep their currencies undervalued," Lamy said in New Delhi. "Just as it is also at the heart of other countries' loose monetary policies." Competitive devaluations, which have raised fears of a global currency war, could trigger "tit-for-tat protectionism", he told a business audience.

Lamy singled out "unsustainable and socially unacceptable unemployment" levels around the world as the most serious challenge facing the global economy. But "uncoordinated 'beggar thy neighbour' policies will not result in increased employment," he said. Lamy also said he was aiming for a preliminary deal in the stalled Doha round of WTO trade talks by mid-2011. Lamy warned against efforts by nations to achieve a trading advantage similar to moves that worsened the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Firms still lack basic knowledge of WTO

Up to 66 percent of Vietnamese export businesses admitted that they failed to understand the basic content of WTO rules, in a recent survey by the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry, while 50 percent of businesses were unaware of the WTO commitments related to their sectors or business areas. Since 1994, Vietnam has been involved in 42 trade disputes, 35 of which were anti-dumping actions.

In order to avoid the imposition of measures by other trading partners on domestic exporters, Nguyen Thi Thu Trang from the chamber's Trade Remedies Council urged domestic firms to sharpen their competitiveness by increasing the quality of their products rather than by reducing prices, as well as to perfect their accounting and financial systems in accordance with international standards. Exporters also needed to retain professional legal services to advise them on complex WTO-related legal issues, Trang said. □□