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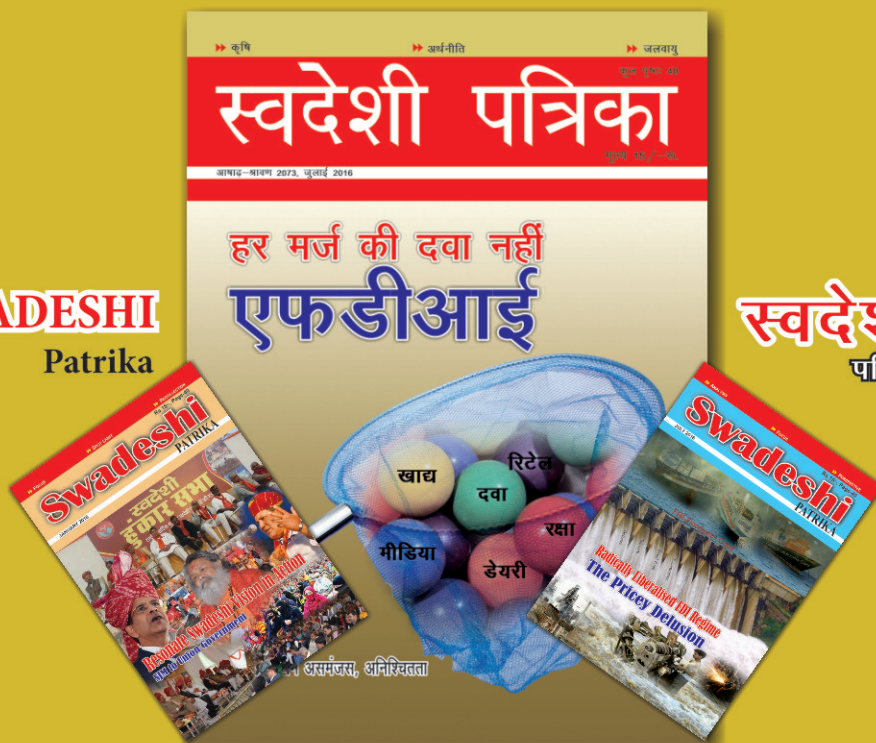
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World Dumping China

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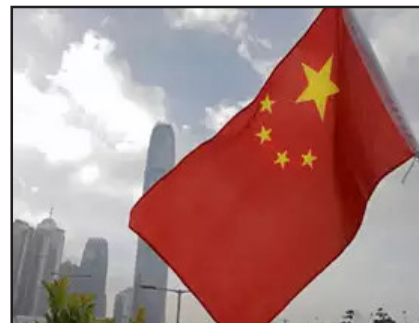


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Online Education in India

The schools across India have remained closed since mid-March due to Coronavirus. Many schools specifically in private ownership have started providing online, live and recorded classes to students using different apps and tools like Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, Skype, WhatsApp, YouTube, etc. However, there are also many schools in the Government sector that have not taken any such initiatives.

There are challenges like poor internet connectivity and the availability of devices in many parts of the country. Some of these like poor internet connectivity can be overcome by sending scanned copies of texts over email or sending short recorded videos over WhatsApp. But it is also true that in upcoming years, online learning will become a new normal instead of choice because of its flexibility with regard to time and location. One can take online classes from own home. The teachers or students do not have to travel to school and the classes can be paced and personalized according to time and needs. The teachers, as well as students, can be automatically monitored. But the offline education cannot be altogether discarded, it is necessary to impart practical knowledge of subjects and for the assessment of the students.

In the present, almost all the tools needed to deliver online education are from foreign companies. The Government has taken different initiatives in recent years like e-Pathshala, NDL, NROER, SWAYAM and it should bring its own unified online platform for teaching to ensure uniformity, security, and accountability. There is a need to create a hybrid learning model where online learning supplements offline learning provided in-school classes. We have to deliver it fast to match the demand of COVID-19 constraints.

— Kumar Gaurav, Delhi

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Quote-Unquote



A new model of development has to be made. The country will have to go to the indigenous based model. India has to reduce its dependence on other countries.

Dr. Mohan Bhagwat
Sarsanghchalak, RSS



India's fight against COVID-19 is people-driven. Every Indian is a soldier in this fight.

Narendra Modi,
Prime Minister, India



Our relationship with China was good until they did this.

Donald Trump
President, USA



A new way of lobbying in the name of start-ups. We need to understand that Chinese don't help, start ups, they create monopolies for ultimately benefit Chinese. Moreover, there is no dearth of domestic funds.

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan
Co-convenor, SJM

Technology Day: Resolve for Self-Reliance

On May 11, 1998, when the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, stunned the whole world by conducting nuclear tests in Pokhran Rajasthan, dodging the vigil of US's satellites, and exhibited India's nuclear capabilities. That day, the pride of all Indians was suddenly elated. Since then India has become a superpower equipped with nuclear weapons. In this context, India did not bother about how the US or other countries of the world would react to this endeavor. After that, when US imposed economic sanctions on India; the Indian government didn't even ask US to lift those economic sanctions, either directly or indirectly. The issue was that of honour of the country, to establish the country as a nuclear superpower and to prove its capabilities. The objective of India to become nuclear power was not to attack any country or invade any country; its objective was world peace. India defined India's nuclear capabilities as 'nuclear deterrent'.

There are 9 countries in the world that have nuclear weapons. If a country does not have the capability of nuclear weapons, then it has to live in an atmosphere of fear that other countries may not attack it with their nuclear weapons. Terrible destruction occurs in the event of a nuclear attack. But if our country also has nuclear weapons, then no country can threaten to attack us with nuclear bomb. When India conducted a nuclear test, other nuclear powers, including the US, criticized India for its breach of peace. There are 8 countries that have declared nuclear weapons in the world. US, Russia, Britain, France and China are the 5 countries that are part of the 'NPT' treaty, while three countries India, Pakistan and North Korea are countries that have declared nuclear weapons, however they are not part of the NPT. Another nuclear-armed country is Israel, which has kept its nuclear program a secret. Based on the available information, Israel has 90 nuclear warheads, the US has 6185 nuclear warheads, while Russia has 6500, Britain has 215 France with 300, China has 250 and India has 140 nuclear warheads. It is said that North Korea has 30 nuclear warheads. In such a situation, when the United States and other countries have a huge stock of nuclear weapons and they want to maintain their dominance over the world, we need to show a greater resolve to be strong strategically. Our nuclear capabilities would serve as deterrent to others to attack us.

On 11th May 1998, India did not only carry out nuclear explosions, but also attacked at the arrogance of these countries. India did not pay any heed to economic sanctions imposed by US, after these tests; and after about 6 months, the US government was forced to withdraw all economic sanctions under pressure from its own companies. And after this, many more steps were taken by the Government of India for its strategic interests like space program, missile program etc.; but post 1998, America could not dare to show the same type of arrogance, as it showed in 1998 and then was forced to eat its words. It can be said that this was the first step towards a stronger India. It is not that the opportunity for Pokhran test came only in 1998. In fact our scientists had made preparations for this type of test much earlier. But may be the governments prior to Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government could not muster that courage.

Today, when America and China have been trying to bully us, based on their strategic strength, India needs to be strong from the strategic point of view to protect its sovereignty. Atal Bihari Vajpayee had shown the courage to carry out an independent strategic policy through the Pokhran blasts. In later years, during the Congress rule, the nuclear treaty under pressure from the US compromised our strategic strength to some extent.

In recent years, India has exhibited its strategic and diplomatic power, once again. India's exit from the RCEP treaty despite all the pressures from China and Japan, outright boycotting of China's OBOR plan, rejecting proposals for amending e-commerce, not accepting India-US trade treaty and amendments in patent laws, despite US pressure; there are numerous such decisions, that point to the political will of the government and independent diplomacy and economic policy.

Today, the India and the world are suffering under the havoc of the Chinese virus. In countries around the world, there is a trend towards 'self-reliance' by ending dependence on China. Efforts are being made to run the economies of the countries according to the talent and ability of the countries. In this context Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also said that this virus has taught us the most important lesson, and that is, self-reliance.

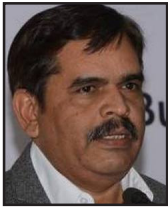
May 11 is the day of pledge and resolve to constantly step up our independent economic policy, diplomacy and technology policy without any pressure. There are also signs of increasing tensions between America and China due to today's pandemic. We must build strategic power free from international pressure in the interest of our country, while maintaining our sovereignty. The goal of Swadeshi, self-reliance and self-sufficiency will also have to be achieved through independent economic policy and diplomacy. Today, based on our youth power, entrepreneurship, scientific advancement and skills, we will have to move forward towards this goal. India will become the manufacturing hub of the world by virtue of its strength, our youth will get gainful employment, and development of our agriculture will also be possible by following this path.

World Dumping China

According to recently released data, by China's Statistics Department, China's economy shrunk by 8.1 percent during the first quarter of the year 2020 over the previous year. This decline is seen for the first time in the last three decades. This has happened firstly due to the corona pandemic, compelling China to shut its production centers initially, while later after the outbreak of this pandemic world over, demand for Chinese goods has come down drastically. It is understood that even after the opening of the lockdown in China there is no visible uptrend in demand. Overseas customers of Chinese goods have either postponed or canceled their orders. Payments for new and previous orders are also not forthcoming. It can be concluded that after the decline in the Chinese economy in the last quarter, there is no visible sign of its revival even in the next quarter.

The US has already been on war path with China so far as trade is concerned, even before the pandemic. The US President had started curbing imports from China by increasing import duties. After the Corona pandemic, many allegations are also being made by the US about China; that either China did intentionally spread the virus or has deliberately hide the threats to the rest of the world, after the same had spread in China. The US is also said to have started investigating this matter. Naturally, all this will affect exports from China to the US. Meanwhile, during this crisis, most of the countries of the world are still dependent on China for the supply of essential commodities. Many items, including medical equipments, test kits, masks and sanitizers are being imported from China. But due to poor quality of Chinese goods, countries including India, are unhappy with China and in many cases due to poor quality, consignments have also been rejected and sent back to China.

Various countries believe that China is responsible for the outbreak of the Corona pandemic. In many places, there are also talks of claiming compensation from



Companies are getting alienated from China and they are keen to establish their production units in India after shifting from China.

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan



China, of the losses caused to these countries due to this pandemic.

It is worth noting that for the last 20 years, there was a glut of Chinese goods in the India and the world. Not only this, large amounts of Chinese government and private sector companies had been investing in different countries. Due to increasing mistrust against China in the world, many countries of the world have started rethinking about their relationship with China. The US has even said that if corona virus infection was delivered accidentally or by design, it will be investigated and if found guilty, China will have to bear the consequences. As a result of the uncertainties caused by the pandemic, prices of the shares of companies around the world are declining; and Chinese government and private companies are said to be taking undue advantage and they are trying to acquire companies around the world. Many countries have invalidated such investments by changing their foreign investment rules and are trying to prevent this unfair attempt. Recently, India too has changed its foreign direct investment (FDI) rules and it will be mandatory to get the government's permission for any investment coming from all countries including China, who are sharing border with India.

Companies are getting alienated from China

Around 1000 companies of the world are keen to establish their production units in India after shifting from China, and they are in talks with the central government, state governments and other authorities. Of these, 300 companies are engaged in the production of mobile phones,

The manner in which this crisis is being dealt with prudence and civic cooperation... successfully bringing not only the trapped Indians but also the foreign nationals, India has successfully accomplished the hill task.

electronics, medical devices and textiles. These companies are finding India as the most suitable destination. It's notable that, the companies from US, Japan and South Korea and many others had established their production units in China.

These companies are seeing favorable environment in India for investment. It is worth noting that in the last few years, India's ranking in 'Ease of Doing Business' has steadily improved and India has moved forward, moving from 142nd place to 63rd in the global rankings in the last 5 years. Not only this, the corporate tax for new companies has been reduced to only 15 percent to attract new investment. It can be assumed that this corporate tax rate is the lowest as compared to the other competing countries of South Asia. Not only this, the corporate tax rate of the companies currently working is 22 percent, which again is comparable to many countries. The benefit of this change in corporate tax regime, some time ago will be that, on the one hand, new investors will be motivated to invest in India and those already invested will

be discouraged to go elsewhere from India, because there is no country with tax lower than India.

India's credibility is fast increasing

Today India is being given great respect due to the steps of the Indian leadership in the recent past. From US to the Gulf countries, our diplomatic efforts are yielding results. Even mighty powers of the world are looking helpless at the time of this crisis caused by the Chinese virus. They are seemingly clueless about how to deal with this crisis. The manner in which this crisis is being dealt with prudence and civic cooperation; also supplying medicines to many countries including America, England and Brazil at the time of need; successfully bringing not only the trapped Indians but also the foreign nationals, India has successfully accomplished the hill task with its limited resources.

It is the result of this increasing credibility of India that for the first time in the history of America, many Indian medicines have been given approval, which itself is a record. India has won the heart of the world by supplying India's medicines even in times of crisis. Taking advantage of this favorable environment, India is poised to take a major leap forward in the production of many products including medicines, medical devices, electronics, telecom, chemicals and many others, on its land.

It is believed that the Chinese virus though has caused crisis; it has also brought opportunities for India. The Minister for Medium, Small and Micro Industries (MSME) Nitin Gadkari has said and probably rightly, that this situation should be seen as a disguised boon for MSMEs.

Checking China

China's foreign direct investment into India has grown fivefold between 2014-2019, the cumulative investment estimated at more than 8 billion dollar. A Brookings India paper pegs the total current and planned Chinese investment in India at over 26 billion dollar. Chinese have put in about 4 billion dollar into Indian start-ups. Between 2014-2019 out of 30 unicorns in India, 18 are Chinese funded. An additional 3.5 billion dollar came to other companies. These investments have come in partly because India has been greedily inviting FDI, treating it as an engine of economic growth. Moreover, Indian manufacturers find China as source to earn fatty margins, rather than manufacturing locally and supporting domestic economy. But the huge dependence on China has led to massive disruption in supply chains. In any case, Chinese investments have huge price tag attached to them.

Whenever China pumps in money, like in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, it sets up projects at grossly inflated prices, captures the local market through cheap exports and steadily ensures the host country's deindustrialization. Since Sri Lanka could not pay interest costs the port of Hambantota is now a Chinese township in Sri Lanka! The story is being repeated in Maldives, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal and other nations with huge geopolitical implications for India and the world as a whole. The rise of China in our neighbourhood means it will be a looming factor in each of our neighbour's interface with us. China's economic progress acts as a kind of magnet for these small nations. At the end of 1970s, GDP per capita for India and China were comparable. By 2019, the difference grew to a multiple of 4-5.



Unlike what many protagonist of free market would like us to believe, Chinese trade and investment game plan is very nuanced, aiming at fulfilling its geopolitical ambition of becoming a super power.

K.K. Srivastava



Ingress into India

Start Up	Chinese Investors	Investment (\$ mn)
Snapdeal	Alibaba, Foxconn arm	700
Paytm	Alibaba	550
Ola	Tencent	500
Swiggy	Meituan, Tencent	500
Big Basket	Alibaba, TR Capital	250
Zomato	Alibaba	200
Dream 11	Tencent	150
Hike	Tencent	150

When America and EU turned inward, China stepped in with the ambition of becoming a super global power. On one hand it constructed new supply chains and trade routes to control the sources of raw material and supply finished products to the rest of the world, while, on the other, it is trying to control and leverage the global data economy. Through technological dominance it wants to have both its geo-economic and geo-political interests served. China—an authoritarian, one party state—wishes to spear head a new wave of globalization. Imports from China of toys, steel, aluminum, bulk drugs, etc. have hurt Indian producers and exposed their vulnerability. More dangerously, China is making invasion into technologically dense areas. Xiaomi, Vivo, Tik Tok, UC Browser and others have access to data of millions of users on a real time basis, data which could be accessed by Chinese authorities.

China realizes the importance of economic survival, domestically and geo-politically, to achieve the Chinese dream of becoming a major world power with pioneering global influence. As the current trends are unfolding, in the post COVID world China will recover faster than the US, Japan,

and Western Europe. It is striving to acquire capabilities to outshine the US and influence and create a new world order. But all this has to happen in the background of growing US-China rift, recessionary world economy, limited trade, a relook at current trade and investment policies, shifting global supply chains with focus on reducing dependence on dominant suppliers, and suspicion about China relating to facts about biological weapons.

But China is not only an aggressive player, it does not mind playing it rough. Even earlier China forced hundreds of Western and Japanese firms to surrender technological knowhow and pass on management secrets to the Chinese partners in return for Chinese market access. India could never bargain as much. It has merely shown its desperation for foreign investment. Government of India

has recently put investments from China under lens. Of course, China says that these restrictions violate a free, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent, predictable, and stable trade and investment environment. But from Indian perspective the new rules will not only stall China's intent to dominate Indian markets, but they will also impact Indian companies that excessively rely on Chinese investments and inputs. India says that these measures don't forbid investments; only the approval route is being changed to prevent opportunistic takeovers. This route is anyway not new since already many sectors are subjected to such scrutiny. Nor India is unique – many other countries are also taking such measures including EU, Australia, US and others, with the aim to preserve strategic assets, notably in areas like health, medical research, biotechnology, infrastructure, etc. which are essential for public order and security. Indeed, India should go one step further. It should set up a regulatory body like the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) which reviews and acts against national security concerns arising from 'harmful' investments. It should be a permanent body intervening whenever threat to national security would loom large.

Chinese clutch: Dependence on China

Sector	Percent Import from China
Auto	18% auto components, 30% tyres
Agriculture	50% pesticide input
Electronics	67% electronic components
Mobile Phones	75% sale by Oppo and Xiaomi
Pharma	69% bulk drug intermediaries, 65% inputs in medicines under essential medicines
Solar panels	70% solar panels
Toys	85% by value

No doubt some Indian companies will get hurt. But we must look at the long term benefits of reducing excessive dependence on China. This can be done by changing the structure of our trading and investment relationship with China on one hand to creating the right policies to boost domestic manufacturing on the other. We need to address the asymmetry of relationship with China. Otherwise China will use both economic and political leverage as pressure points. The risk of opportunistic takeovers by Chinese entities is indeed real, not imaginary.

In fact we should think even beyond. It is time to let domestic demand rise. India needs to produce what Indians can afford and consume, rather than aiming at foreign markets. A cut in GST is perhaps more desirable than a cut in corporate tax which is aimed at at-

India needs to produce what Indians can afford and consume, rather than aiming at foreign markets.

tracting MNCs to invest in India. We must design our infrastructure to look more inward (healthcare, education) and less outward (export processing zones). In any case the global economy is likely to go into recession and recovery will be painfully slow. India cannot, and should not, depend on global trade to be the only growth driver. Instead, it should look inward. The pandemic should spur us to introduce the second wave of reforms, including in manufacturing. And these must not

be mere policy tweaks. The phased manufacturing program (PMP) introduced in 2015-16 budget, aimed of creating a domestic manufacturing eco-system in mobile phones. The local production did go up from \$ 3.1 billion to 2014-15 to \$24.3 billion in 2018-19. But the import of mobile phone components also went up. The aim should not be to introduce screwdriver assembly but add higher value. Let us adopt make for India policy through comprehensive reforms in factors (land and labour) markets along with streamlines tax and regulatory policies. Infrastructure needs to be built up. Now is the time.

Let us defeat the dragon at its own game. India must deal its hand carefully while managing its relationship with China. We cannot shun Chinese investment. But a greater scrutiny and reduced dependence is certainly in order. □□

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Post-Covid a nationalist world!

Sea change likely in global finance, Home production to sustain India

An unknown disease, corona, has put the world in lockdown. India is competing with others to force its people at home. Where it fails, the cop becomes the bad boy. No nation rich or poor know how to check it. None ever tried either.

It is almost a month. People, rulers, administration all want a way out. "Knowledgeable" people like me are asked, "Would it open on April 14? Or tell me when I could go to Vellore for a check-up". I can't disappoint them so tell them, "Do you know the government itself is concerned. They have to open up" But replies of "these experts" do not solve problems. Neither lockdown was easy nor ending it.

Despite all pessimism, the nation can remain assured that lockdown is unnatural and nation would open up gradually, in phases from transport to tea gardens to farm goods sell, for survival. Even highway *dhabas*, the largest consumers of potato have to open up to boost potato cultivators, says Ravindra Kumar Srivastava, one of the biggest Kannauj, UP, potato grower.

Panic can put one off for some time but not all. Hope floats from ending of the 76-day-lockdown of the worst corona-hit Wuhan in China. Others are also seeing the disease at a plateau or recovery rates increasing. But caution may be applied here as ICMR points to possible community spread.

The latest RBI assessments are not rosy either for the globe or for home. There are reports that growth may succumb to 1.6 percent predicting not an easy future. But goods and capital globalization started sliding since 61 percent in 2008 to 59 percent in 2018 and is likely to slump further.

What may be positive for India is revival of domestic production a la late 1970s. It may boost local economy in the next two years. Similarly many other manufacturing of goods now being imported from China has also to be made



It could be Made in India, much more than what Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been trying at Make in India.
Shivaji Sarkar



here – one reason the latest Chinese imports becoming expensive.

That is vital to create jobs. And this opening up reminds the world of its problems – joblessness, 17 million (1.7 crore) in the US to over 5 crore in India as migrant population is out job and industrial workers remain in uncertainty.

The CMIE says it has shot up from 8.7 percent in early March to 23.8 percent by month end. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) says India's urban joblessness is at 31 percent and rural 20 percent – staggering 50 percent. The salaried employees are a mere 10 percent. They also are facing huge wage cuts. It virtually may wipe out India's seven decades record of poverty alleviation. The ILO says that 40 crore people to slip deeper into poverty with a share of 90 percent of people working in the informal sector. The delivery man, the loaders, vendors, couriers and small earners are all hit

That remains an official concern. A new package of at least Rs 75000 crore is being mulled over for the informal sector, MSMEs and the most distressed. The factories are also supposed to open in phases with reduced workforce to maintain physical distancing to keep corona under check.

Even IT sector has its problems. About one million in business process management (BPM) are in trouble. Most of them have been benched – an euphemism for not having work. NAASSCOM has sought help for them. It wants government pays 50 percent wages for the benched workers as also bear their provident fund obligations. Not an easy order for the government suffering severe revenue crunch.

As imports come down, substitutes have to be manufactured nationally. It may be return of the swadeshi.

As hordes of migrants holding H1 B visas are ordered to leave US, the domestic market may see wage drop too. The rural markets have seen it partially during the last two weeks as rural workers return home from cities.

That is a problem and may be a solution in the next few years. As imports come down, substitutes have to be manufactured nationally. It may be return of the swadeshi. If it happens it could be Made in India, much more than what Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been trying at Make in India.

Experts see the possibility in the post-Covid 19, revival of nationalism as opposed to three decades of globalization. It may reflect first in tourism. The number of international tourists globally touched 1.4 billion in 2018, rising from 900 million in 2008. National governments may weigh risks of infectious/contagious diseases vis a vis free travel and put restrictions.

As more workers go back home internationally and nationally, the global finance model, in many cases dependent on remittances is like to have a sea change.

Incentivisation at home, partially now being seen in India too, may check international or transnational capital flows. The interna-

tional migrant population that increased to 243 million in 2018 from 190 million a decade back may see sizeable drop as big nations turn protectionist.

They have reasons to be. Their economy is at worst, New York governor Andrew Cuomo says that the corona crisis is worse than 9/11 World trade tower attack. Staggering unemployment figures and production losses in the US and Europe would see drop in labour demand, poor finance and structural problems. The lockdown may lead to many lock-outs. Protectionist trends are natural.

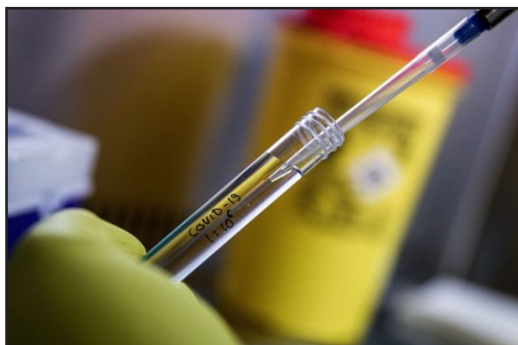
Re-nationalisation may be the global cry. India will have problems as PIO returns as they did after 9/11 and 2008 Lehman crises. It will also bring in opportunities like India emerging global drug supplier in a Gandhian swadeshi in a new jacket. It may not be rigid but strong enough to create a new India, if planned in perspective.

Indian transport sector is in difficult situation. As truckers are locked up, essential commodity supplies are drying up raising the prices. Supplies have to smoothen to help the sagging economy.

The highways have become source of exploiting irrational tolls. In a flailing global market even as crude hovers around \$ 30 a barrel or less (sharp drop from \$ 69), to give boost to the sector, the cess and other duties on petroleum must be cut.

India also has to realise that 10-year old car junking is not a solution to fight supposed pollution. This is the time people cannot give up their hard earned lifetime purchases. Empathy in decisions is must. India has to adopt pro-people, pro-society policies. □□

Vaccines and Protecting the Interests of Developing Countries



The discussion on COVID-19 has been increasingly dominated by the progress relating to the development and manufacture of a vaccine for this disease. However as the international scene regarding development and manufacture of vaccine has become increasingly dominated by multinational companies and private billionaires and networks controlled by them in recent years, it is important also to raise questions regarding to what extent interests of developing countries and the poorer people of these countries will be protected under this system.

This is a very relevant concern as in recent years several very tragic episodes have been highlighted in which safety concerns were violated and neglected in several trials and introductions of vaccines in several developing countries (including India) by multinational companies, or organizations led by billionaires, or international networks promoted by them. There were cases of big multinational companies and their allies getting so concentrated on maximization of their profits that they neglected crucial health interests. There have been cases of developing and poor countries being forced to foot a high bill and that too for high-risk products.

Hence it is important to raise the concerns of safety and protecting the health and economic interests of developing and poor countries. Normally the development of a vaccine takes 10 to 15 years but now large-scale world-level efforts are on to develop a vaccine for COVID-19 within 12 to 18 months. So safety concerns are going to be very, very important in such a very hurriedly developed vaccine in record time. In the past it is mostly people of poor countries who have been used in risky trials. In fact there have been angry reports in newspapers of some African countries that people there have been used as guinea pigs in vaccine trials and introductions. Hence concerns of safety should get adequate attention. In addition stronger developing countries like India should expand and strengthen their own public-sector vaccine production facilities.

The health sector of developing countries like India functions in a situation of severe fund constraints. Even if the demands for significantly increasing the health budget are met, so immense is the task of providing satisfactory health care to all that we need maximum efforts to keep costs (particularly costs of medicines and equipment) low. The tendency of most drug companies to keep medicine prices high and fleece even poor countries is well-known. Therefore self-reliance in the production of low-cost medicines and vaccines is extremely important for these countries. What is more, some critical areas and certain levels of production of medicines have to be retained in the public sector, so that the country is capable of meeting critical and emergency needs as well as retain the ability to keep the costs of essential medicines within reasonable limits.

All this should be seen within the wider framework of how various vested



The methods used by economically well-off nations to gain control over economically poor countries by accessing their markets and creating demand for medical technologies/ vaccines, irrespective of local needs, have been documented extensively.

Bharat Dogra

Consideration

interests have tried to dominate vaccine production and research to carve out markets and maximize profits. This is explained well in an editorial of the Indian Journal of Medical Research (written by Jacob M. Puliyl and Yennapu Madhavi.

“The methods used by economically well-off nations to gain control over economically poor countries by accessing their markets and creating demand for medical technologies/vaccines, irrespective of local needs, have been documented extensively. As a new product is being readied, research is published to highlight the number of deaths in the country caused due to the absence of that vaccine. The estimates are often outright exaggerations or reflect poor research design. The limitations of such models have been pointed out previously.

“In the face of burgeoning and aggressive marketing of vaccines of doubtful utility, we have a widening demands-supply gap in Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) vaccines. Over the last few decades, due to the decline of the public sector and the growing disinterest of the private sector, the number of firms supplying EPI vaccines has declined drastically both in India and abroad, prompting the UNICEF to express its serious concerns about the short supply of EPI vaccines. Private manufacturers prefer to sell them as ‘value-added cocktail vaccines’ at exorbitant prices in the open market, rather than supply to EPI. The universal tendency to combine EPI vaccines with non-EPI vaccines not only creates an artificial scarcity for affordable EPI vaccines, but also creates a back-door method for the entry of ex-

pensive and perhaps unnecessary non-EPI vaccines into the universal immunization programme, riding piggyback on the EPI vaccines.... Only a ban against combinations of EPI and non-EPI vaccines, and a stipulation that only those private manufacturers who supply EPI vaccines to the government will be allowed to sell them in any form in the open market will save the EPI as well as the consumers. Dire situations call for drastic action.... Within the emerging scenario where expensive vaccines swallow up the less expensive options, India could emerge as the ethical EPI vaccine supplier to the world.”

For India to be able to play such a noble role, we should first defeat the nefarious designs of those who seek to sabotage the indigenous production and R and D in the area of vaccines, as several such steps have been taken in recent decades and these have damaged the national interest in this important sector badly.

In the rush for combination vaccines preferred by marketing campaigns of some multinational companies it is sometimes forgotten that some of the benefits of single vaccines may be partially lost. Quoting several studies, Dr. Y. Madhavi, former Principal Scientist at the National Institute of Science, Technology and Development Studies, wrote in her paper, “Vaccines and Vaccine Policy for Universal Health Care”, (Social Change, June 2013), , “Scientific literature show that in general the safety and efficacy aspects of combination vaccines are not proven beyond doubt, and it is reported that they are less protective when compared to their individual com-

ponents. In pentavalent vaccine (DPT-HB-Hib), lower immunological responses to Hep-B and Hib were observed when compared to their separate administration.”

Dr. Madhavi also raises the question whether the universal immunisation programme (UIP) is being used to provide huge markets for those vaccines of dubious benefits to India which can not find a significant market on their own merit - “Why is it that every combinations vaccine is a product of a combination of a UIP vaccine and a non-UIP vaccine? Is it because lack of demand-pull for individual new vaccines (for example, Hepatitis B, Hib) is sought to be covered up by the UIP vaccines that enjoy higher legitimacy? Virtually all combinations are a means by which new vaccines are gaining a back-door entry through the captive UIP market by riding piggyback on UIP vaccines such as DPT, measles, IPV, OPV etc. If a new vaccine can stand on its own merits (especially epidemiological merit), why does it need a piggyback ride?”

It is clear that the existing ownership pattern of the vaccine sector at world level and its strong tendency to be guided by profit maximization is not conducive to the protection of health and welfare objectives and strong efforts have to be made in particular to protect the national interests of developing and poor countries in this increasingly important sector. Public sector of developing countries like India should be strengthened to meet the national vaccine needs in a rational way, keeping in view the real needs while not permitting any manipulation. □□

The writer is Honorary Convener of Campaign to Save Earth Now, a non-funded campaign to protect the life-nurturing conditions of our planet. His recent books include Protecting Earth for Children and Planet in Peril.

Wary of Aarogya Setu? What about TikTok: Swadeshi Jagran Manch



Interview of Dr Ashwani Mahajan to LANS —

Q: You seem to be backing the government's Aarogya Setu app being made compulsory even when you raised concern over TikTok. Why?

A: First of all, I want to know, where were these critics who seem to have huge knowledge about privacy laws when TikTok was expanding its market share and Facebook was selling users data? I want to ask Rahul Gandhi, why did he maintain an almost criminal silence all this while the apps like that were ruling the market. As far as Aarogya Setu app is concerned, it has been brought with a clear intent for contact tracing which otherwise would incur huge cost to the government. The intent is to save lives. Many of the critics seem to have no problem with this foreign app but their concern arises when it is an indigenous app brought to contain a pandemic.

Q: PM Modi has been stressing on self sustenance post COVID-19 outbreak. Do you think, finally, the government and SJM are on the same page when it comes to "Swadeshi"?

A: It has not been a sudden change of heart. The government for the last three years have started

to realize the importance of self sustenance and have been working towards it. But today, it makes all the more sense amid a growing anti-China feeling internationally. China killed our manufacturing business which creates jobs. So how else will you create jobs? Service sector can't do that. The anti-dumping duty and raising import tariffs were moved in that direction. Today, the importance of Swadeshi has become apparent to all.

There were many who had asked to forget agriculture and instead focus on importing vegetables. Had that been the situation, we would not be able to feed our population during this lockdown. Even the US, Britain are also talking about protectionism.

Here onwards, Swadeshi will be the new reality.

Q: You spoke about jobs in manufacturing. There have been innumerable job losses and the economy is in bad shape. What's the way forward?

A: Yes, the economy has taken a hit due to the lockdown, but so have the economies of all countries across the globe. But let me give you the silver lining. We are self sufficient with agricultural produce that addresses the main concern of food. Secondly, Indian by virtue of being empathetic, wherever there is news of people going hungry, help is reaching out.

But it's a fact that joblessness is there but it has brought the much needed attention of the government to certain areas like the MSME. Moreover, now increasingly FDIs are coming that are not brown field investment but green field investment which will eventually create jobs. Taking over pharma companies in India doesn't create jobs. When FDI coming to India starts to export from here without disturbing its domestic market, India benefits. In the current scenario, many companies have approached the government of India and state governments.

[Continued on page no. 18]

In Post- Covid India, Save Farmers by Protecting Seeds

The Novel Coronavirus crisis has seeded a deep rot within the globalised industrial system. The corporatist Mecca, Wall Street, is deserted as shares and stocks plummet. The ILO predicts that over 25 million jobs will be lost globally, much higher than 2008 recession which cost 22 million jobs. Meanwhile, another report says over 400 million or 40 crore workers may sink into poverty in India.

No sector remains unscathed by Covid-19, especially not Indian agriculture. But this is only the beginning of Trouble 3.0 for our agriculture. The agrarian sector—the farmers, their seeds, the farm inputs sector, etc—were already in dismal state. Now, a plangent requiem for small and medium Indian companies is also underway, as profits fall and the threat of takeovers by corporate behemoths grow more real each day.

Additionally, our rural economy is stressed due violent exodus from India's cities to the hinterlands. The result: our frugal rural systems now have to sustain many more people. Which, mind you, is near impossible. It is only a matter of time before rural India breaks down under the weight of its fragility and the hinterlands completely collapse too.

India needs to galvanise the agriculture sector in the national interest and prioritise this sector, as it is a matter of national security. The government must begin this reform within India to empower her people.

Despite being an economic power, India lags behind in research and development (R&D) and infrastructure, especially within the seed sector. Even within the government system, R&D is taking a hit. The budgetary allocation for agricul-



Seed security is synonymous with food security: one cannot exist without control over the other.
Indra Shekhar Singh



tural research across hundreds of public institutions is at a mere 8% for 2020-21 and senior agriculture scientists have expressed disappointment over it. A lion's share of our budget is currently being used up for salaries and running the system. Agricultural R&D needs many more resources. If Indian farmers have to be ready for climate change, we need a robust and well-funded system.

The current crisis opens a synergistic window for the Indian seed sector to work in sync for the greater benefit of the nation and our farmers. Adequate low-interest working capital and soft loans for building infrastructure and investments in R&D should be made available. We need to classify all loans to seed companies (especially of small and medium scale) as agriculture and prioritise them. As without good seed, a good harvest is a distant dream. India needs to aim for seed sovereignty, and for this capital subsidy for seed infrastructure can be provided, to the extent of 25%, to encourage Indian companies to invest in the sector. We need these efforts to be directed towards rural India and across states.

Creating R&D hubs all across India will require that we adopt a uniform and simpler regulatory mechanism. India needs to have central licensing for seed producers having operations of R&D, production, processing and marketing seeds in multiple states. Plus, there should be uniform procedure and requirements for getting seed licenses or new variety (inclusion) licenses throughout the country.

The next decision will be tough, but evermore necessary: India needs to learn from China



***Indian farmers
and all our
ancestors have
collectively
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PGR for over
10,000 years.***

and other countries and not allow 100% FDI in the seed sector. Indian citizens should have controlling stake in a seed company with foreign investments. Such restrictions exist in China and many Southeast Asian countries. Seed security is synonymous with food security, we cannot have our seeds and Indian plant genetic material (PGR) under foreign control. After all, Indian farmers and all our ancestors have collectively evolved Indian PGR for over 10,000 years. We should have the highest regard and protection for it. Trading it in for a few shillings would be a national calamity, comparable only to the great pirate, the East India Company.

And to complete the seed link, SMEs in the seed sector should be encouraged for quality seed production by providing free access to seed quality testing, and through government-supported drives for establishing third party seed testing laboratories accredited by the NABL. This would ease the dependence on other international protocols and strengthen our national testing protocol, and build more testing infrastructure within the country. This in turn will ensure that farmers get the better qualities of seeds as spurious seeds

and producers will be more easily apprehended. This is how India can ensure that the price of quality seeds is reduced as the testing mechanism will become more reasonable.

Going back to R&D, instead of depending on MNCs we need to strengthen the Indian seed sector, both public and private. One such measure is investments by SME companies, with 100% shareholding by Indian citizens, which may be given financial assistance of up to 50% by the government for R&D activities. The governments can devise their own parameters for scrutiny and thus build a robust indigenous system, much like China has. This will persuade more Indian companies to engage in R&D and hire more people. We need more PPP models with the government involved, both in the states and at the Centre.

Moreover, agri-research institutes such as ICAR and state agricultural universities need to be encouraged to partner with Indian companies across regions of the country, to as to combine the resources required to breed better varieties. Research students within these institutes can find more funding for their research projects and also have a larger exposure to in-

dustry. A special program can be introduced to encourage seed entrepreneurs from rural areas by allowing them to work in tandem with state agricultural universities or private agricultural colleges. Such an effort should be geared to engage in research and produce new varieties to meet the challenges of climate change within their own micro-agro-climatic zones.

A simpler mechanism is needed to encourage evolutionary participatory breeding by farmers, assisted by such universities. The government needs to look at all avenues for R&D, as India cannot afford to depend on foreign technology forever. We need to look at our strengths of biodiversity to feed our nation.

But we need to ensure also that trade does not suffer through our reforms. Hence it is imperative that the government identify special economic zones for seed production and export. India's agro-climate and seeds are well suited to cater to the needs of farmers from the ASEAN region to the African nations. This move should go hand in hand with post-Covid-19 economic diplomacy and food/seed aid programs. The government should also create a policy for custom seed production of foreign varieties, exclusively for export. This way, Indian farmers and seed producers will increase their incomes while helping farmers all over the world.

As the industry is going through a trough, varietal testing fees in ICAR AICRIP trials should be reduced and rationalised (for seed companies with 100% local ownership) so that a large number of seed companies can test their varieties at maximum locations.

Further, to ensure that fresh agriculture graduates find dignified jobs post this epidemic, ICAR and state agri-universities must try to address the human resource requirements of the industry. They can consult with the seed sector and update their syllabi and courses to align with the emerging challenges. The government needs to treat the seed sector on par with the tea and coffee sectors, providing the necessary income-tax reliefs, for the post-Covid-19 world is going to be a difficult one for all of us.

In the field of seed production, another challenge looms: intellectual property rights (IPR) and how India should proceed about them. To begin, India has one of the world's most progressive IPR laws which empowers farmers,

breeders, researchers and seed companies, while respecting the rights of Mother Earth. We should stand by our laws and under no circumstances surrender to international pressures to adopt UPOV (i.e. private patent treaty, which has been rejected by the Indian Parliament).

IPR protection is available for seeds and plant varieties, including transgenic plant varieties (GMOs), under PPVFRA. All trait-licensing including GM traits shall be as per section 26 of the PPVFRA. Plus, Section 3(j) of the Indian Patent Act (which excludes seeds and plant varieties) needs to be enforced to stop monopolies in the seed industry, which is detrimental to farmers and Indian agriculture. □□

The author is director, policy and outreach, National Seed Association of India. The views are personal.
<https://www.newsclick.in/Agricultural-Crisis-COVID-19-Indian-Seed-Industry>

[Continued from page no. 15]

Wary of Aarogya Setu? What about TikTok: Swadeshi Jagran Manch

Q: You have always been against market monopoly. But as and when a vaccine for COVID-19 comes into the market, it is tipped to be priced at a premium.

A: Going by the current infection rate in India, I don't think India can be much exploited. Anyway Indian Patent Act allows any drug to be given compulsory licence in public interest. India has the power to do that after giving reasonable profit. This is to safeguard our interests. Interestingly, the US cannot do the same.

Q: But the role of the World Health Organization itself has come under scrutiny. Do you see the organization taking a pro-people stand on pricing of the COVID vaccine, once it comes out?

A: I have once said that WHO should be shut. Today its role is being publicly debated and even the US has brazenly criticised it. Many pharmaceutical companies have been financing the WHO. That's why they should be audited. Then people will come to know how WHO has been misleading the world about vaccines, eating habits and so on.

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<https://www.outlookindia.com/newsclick/wary-of-aarogya-setu-what-about-tiktok-rss-co-wing-ians-interview/1823582>

Why Punjab farmers are missing migrant labourers



As farmers from Ajnala in Amritsar, Punjab to Shekpura in Jhajjar, Haryana are busy harvesting their crops; they are missing migrant workers. This Rabi season, when the country is under lockdown to check the outbreak of COVID-19 and the labourers from eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha who used to travel to Punjab and Haryana to assist farmers in harvesting, clearing straw from grains, loading the grains on tractor trolleys and later when the farmers reached the mandi or market, the migrant labourer with the procurement agencies used to unload these grains and then pack them in the sacks to

move them to warehouses of marketing companies. The season, which starts with the harvest of the Rabi crop and goes till the sowing of the Kharif, both in Punjab and Haryana deploys roughly 16 lakh farm hands.

In addition to this, 10 lakh labourers are needed for the procurement by the procurement agents in these two states. There are two set of migrant farm labourers —permanent, who stay at farms and assist the farmers across the year and seasonal, who come for shorter spans when the intensity is higher especially in this part of the year from mid-March to July.

After the March 23 curfew in Punjab and later the nationwide lockdown were imposed, many permanent labourers too went back home. And seasonal labourers who had come from eastern India could not travel because trains and public transport were shut. Both Punjab and Haryana made efforts to mobilise the industrial labourers or those doing daily wage work in the cities for many of these jobs. But you just have to speak to the farmers to understand that this simply didn't work.

The industrial labourers require different skill-sets and don't want to work in the fields. The farmers tell us, the local labourers —getting free grain under welfare schemes, run by respective states as well as from the Centre and are getting money from various safety nets—are not ready to work in the fields either.

In fact, officials in Punjab tried to use labourers registered under MNREGA. On an average, there are roughly 70 registered labourers in every village of the state. But after a week of a procurement cycle, they realised many of them either can't work or don't have the skill set and aptitude to work in the fields.

There is an aspirational mismatch as well. Farmers used to pay Rs 3,000 to Rs 4,000 to a group of 10 labourers to harvest an acre of wheat farm. But in the lockdown, freelance labourers are asking for Rs 500 per person for a day's job. Mechanisation is the only saviour for farmers, but the challenge for procurement continues.

(Courtesy of Mail Today)



The season, which starts with the harvest of the Rabi crop and goes till the sowing of the Kharif, both in Punjab and Haryana deploys roughly 16 lakh farm hands.

Anilesh S. Mahajan

Management of lockdown, its aftermath, will shape balance of power between Centre and states



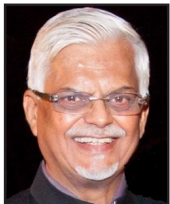
The Telugu Desam supremo, N T Rama Rao, once famously declared, “the Centre is a conceptual myth.” If Prime Minister Narendra Modi had not made his repeated post-lockdown appearances on television, most citizens dealing with the threat of COVID-19 and the challenge of the lockdown may well have felt the same way. From ensuring supply of water, food, electricity and health care to law and order, the government that a citizen deals with is the state government. Only in Delhi the police are under the Centre’s charge. The management of a sub-continental lockdown has brought into focus the role of state governments, their uneven capacities and capabilities and varying quality of

provincial leadership — both political and bureaucratic.

There is a growing body of opinion that in the post-COVID world most countries will see governments playing a larger role in shaping people’s lives and determining their livelihoods. The return of big government and the prospect of a potentially larger role for the state in the economy raises the question, certainly in India, of what it would mean for Centre-state relations, and for national and provincial politics. The central government’s role will no doubt be important in the handling of the economic and financial aftermath, in reviving inter-state movement of people and goods, in re-negotiating international economic treaties to make them relevant to the new situation and so on. However, the immediate challenge of public health and medical care, as well as the continued supply of necessities, will remain the responsibility of state governments.

The manner in which the central and state governments resolve the problem of inadequate fiscal resources, given falling revenues due to the slowdown and rising claims on the public exchequer, will be a key issue in Centre-state relations. Several chief ministers have been complaining about the Centre’s lack of fiscal nerve, resolve and imagination in helping states. Kerala Finance Minister Thomas Isaac has dubbed it “crazy macroeconomics” (‘Ahead of the Covid curve’, IE, April 17). The Fifteenth Finance Commission, already given an extension and saddled with additional terms of reference, may have to look de novo at many new issues in federal finance given the fiscal imperatives of a post-COVID economy.

Given the constitutional division of responsibilities between the Centre and states, one issue that has fallen between two stools is the entire question of internal migration and the economic and social interests of domestic migrant labour. Historically, both home and host states have not acted responsibly in dealing with the welfare of migrant labour. Many states have, in fact, discriminated against



The return of big government and the prospect of a potentially larger role for the state in the economy raises the question, certainly in India, of what it would mean for Centre-state relations, and for national and provincial politics.
Sanjaya Baru

migrant labour. The COVID lockdown has brought their welfare to the fore. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has ill-advisedly dissolved the National Development Council, but the problem of migration and migrant labour, especially in the current context, is a fit subject for a federal forum like the NDC to discuss.

Indian politics today presents a balance between the centripetal pull of the BJP's Hindu nationalism and the centrifugal pull of regionalism. The management of the lockdown and its aftermath will determine the balance of power not just between Centre and the states, but between alternative political platforms. If chief ministers succeed in demonstrating their competence and compassion to their constituents, they can weaken the national base of a populist PM. Modi would surely be aware of this. In part, his media outreach may well be defined by his need to occupy public mind space at a time when most citizens are, in fact, turning to local political leadership for liberation from the lockdown.

In his first term, Prime Minister Modi was able to keep national attention focused on his foreign and economic policy initiatives as well as on national security and defence — all areas within the purview of the Centre and offering the PM the space to act. Modi's second term got off to a wrong start with public attention focused on law and order, questions of citizenship and personal health. These issues have opened up political space for provincial leadership. Not only has the profile of non-BJP chief ministers like K Chandrashekar Rao and Pinarayi Vijayan gone up, but even BJP chief

The only way in which the central government can re-assert its developmental role would be through massive public spending and investment.

ministers like Yogi Adityanath seem to have acquired a political personality of their own. At the same time, the unsure start of PM Modi's second term, damaged by a variety of factors, has made a PM with more numbers less sure of himself, mimicking the experience of the second Manmohan Singh government.

Ideally, at a time like this, any PM would want to shift public attention back to foreign affairs and national security to burnish his national image. However, the current economic and fiscal situation at home and globally offers little space for significant diplomatic initiatives. Most governments will remain focused on domestic affairs and policies. This policy context opens up the space for provincial leaders.

During the "era of coalitions" — from 1989 to 2014 — Centre-state relations were shaped by the decentralised politics of that period in which prime ministers were dependent on chief ministers both for their survival in office and to ensure delivery of public services and national initiatives. The arrival in office of a single party govern-

ment, that too one headed by a domineering personality who has centralised governance while advocating "cooperative federalism", suggested for a while that Indian politics was moving in the direction of greater centralisation of policy initiative.

Ironically, however, the ability of regional parties to retain their base and the resurgence of the Congress party in some states, thanks to provincial leaders rather than the party's First Family, has created a dual power structure wherein chief ministers have become powerful functionaries once again. It used to be like this in the early 1950s and later in the early 1970s when, first under Jawaharlal Nehru and then under Indira Gandhi, the country saw a powerful PM working with powerful CMs. Since the 1990s, a succession of relatively weak PMs have had to work with relatively powerful CMs. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh handled this situation by frequently interacting with CMs and regularly convening CMs' conferences. It was the COVID crisis that finally forced Modi to engage the CMs in an organised manner.

In the coming months, the focus of public policy will perforce shift to areas where state governments and provincial leaders will have to play a larger role. The only way in which the central government can re-assert its developmental role would be through massive public spending and investment. How competently that is done will have its own consequences for economic growth, political stability and Centre-state relations. □□

This article first appeared in the print edition on April 21, 2020 under the title 'Spotlight on the states'. The writer is a policy analyst and former media advisor to Prime Minister of India. <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/coronavirus-covid-19-federalism-states-narendra-modi-chief-ministers-6371517/>

Perils and Benefits of Fiscal Deficit

The cycle of economic activity starts from production. Workers get salaries and use this money to buy goods from the market. Businesses then establish factories to supply to the market. The cycle can be written as production > wages > demand > investment. This cycle has got broken at present. Production has been stopped, workers are not getting salaries and there is no demand in the market. There are two points from where we can try to restart this cycle. One point is to focus on restarting production. The Government can reduce corporate taxes and defer payment of loans to encourage businesses to restart production as has been demanded by big business organizations like Confederation of Indian Industries and Assocham. The problem here is that the numbers of workers employed by big businesses is less. Accordingly, less money will flow to workers and less demand will be generated in the economy. This effort will be like the cricket ball sent into a sixer but falling into a mud pool. It will not bounce. Reliefs to big businesses will only lead to an increase in their inventories.

The second point of intervention to try to restart the economy would be to focus on wages in the cycle of production > wages > demand > investment. The Government can put purchasing power in the hands of the people so that they buy cloth, paper and shoes. Rest assured, the businesses will start manufacturing these goods on their own—reliefs or not—once they see the demand. However, this will still not be sufficient to restart the economy. Let us say, the Government pays monies to the people and demand is generated in the market. Now, let us say, this demand is fulfilled by big businesses. The cloth will be sold but that is where the cycle will come to a halt because few wages are paid by the big businesses that produced the cloth. The second cycle of placing money in the hands of the people will not take place. The cricket ball will be brought back only to be



We need to restart the economy by focusing on wages in the cycle of production leading to wages, consequently increasing demand and investment.

Dr. Bharat Jhunjunwala



shot again into the mud pool.

The results will be altogether different if the same demand is met by small businesses. Let us say, the Government pays monies to the people and demand is generated in the market. The cloth manufactured by small businesses will be sold as previously but in the process more wages will be paid. The workers receiving the wages will come back to the market with these wage-monies. The cricket ball will be brought back and shot within the field for two runs, come back and be shot again and again. The economy will rev up slowly but this will sustain. More importantly, the cars, bikes and TVs produced by big businesses will also start to sell. The Ayurveda Doctors sometimes starve a patient for a while to revive the appetite. Similarly, the Government will assist the big businesses by starving them of relief.

So how does the Government generate demand in the market? The first route is to increase Government investment in electricity generation, highways and other infrastructure. This will not succeed because the number of trucks plying on the highways is less. Also, most such investment is capital intensive and does not employ large numbers of workers. Hence demand will not be generated in the market in the next cycle. Second route is to give relief in corporate tax and defer loan payments by big businesses. Once again, this will not restart production because they pay less wages. Third route is to increase welfare expenditures such as the provision of 5 kilograms free grains and advance payment of pensions to senior citizens. This is in the right direction but still does

How does the Govt generate demand in the market? The first route is to increase Government investment in electricity generation, highways and other infrastructure.

not create *additional* demand. Such measures only advance in future demand to present.

The question then is this: how to place purchasing power in the hands of the people? President Trump has issued cheques of US Dollars 1,000, or about Rs 75,000 to all the citizens of the country to generate demand. We have about 30 crore households. I propose that the Government pays Rs 2,000 per month as Universal Basic Income (UBI) to each household for the next three months. This will require about Rs 2 lakh crores. The Government should allow fiscal deficit to increase, borrow and make this expenditure. Many economists hold that fiscal deficit can be allowed to increase to 10 percent of GDP in times of crisis such as at present. Our fiscal deficit was about 4 percent in the last year. We have leeway of borrowing an additional 6 percent or about Rs 12 lakh crore since our GDP is about Rs 200 lakh crore. I reckon that there will be a reduction in the tax revenues of the Union Government by 50 percent for six months leading to a loss of revenue of about Rs 3 lakh crore. That would still leave the scope of using Rs 9

lakh crore for distribution to the people. The Government can start with borrowing Rs 2 lakh crore and distributing to the 30 crore households. If required more can be borrowed to extend the period of payment. These payments will generate demand for cloth, paper and shoes in the market and restart the economy—provided the demand is met by small industries. For, in that case, more wages will be paid and a fresh cycle of wages-demand-investment-production will be initiated. The danger is that if the same demand is fulfilled by large businesses then few wages will be paid and the cricket ball will once again fall into the mud pool.

Another way to raise the money is to double the excise duty collected by the Union Government on fuel oil. The Union Government is collecting about Rs 4 lakh crore per year from this source. This additional burden will fall disproportionately on the large businesses who undertake more interstate transport; and the rich who consume more energy. Conclusion is to increase demand by increasing welfare payments and simultaneously providing relief to small industries.

There is no doubt that the Government will allow fiscal deficit to increase, borrow heavily and make expenditures. The danger is that this effort will fall flat if this money is used for giving tax reliefs to large businesses because few wages will be paid and the next cycle of production > wages > demand > investment will not be established. Fiscal deficit is permissible only if the money sets such a fortuitous cycle in motion. □□

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A dubious propaganda

In an interview to German television Deutsche Welle (DW) on April 17, writer-activist Arundhati Roy accused the Government of India “of exploiting the Coronavirus outbreak to inflame tensions between the Hindus and the Muslims”, adding dramatically, “the situation is approaching genocidal.” Given their experience with a democratically-elected leader in 1933, one expected the Germans to show better sense in their reportage and choice of guests. Still, we remain grateful for the submarine ride that helped Netaji get to Japan.

Roy’s nauseating statements may please a certain audience but with no evidence to even tangentially support her wild allegations, DW has tarnished its journalistic standards by inviting her bilge against India at such a sensitive time. In reality, several South Asian nations hold the Tablighi Jamaat responsible for the rise of Coronavirus hotspots within their borders. Sensible Muslims are embarrassed by the Nizamuddin event, which led to the extension of the national lockdown; hopefully, it will end on May 3.

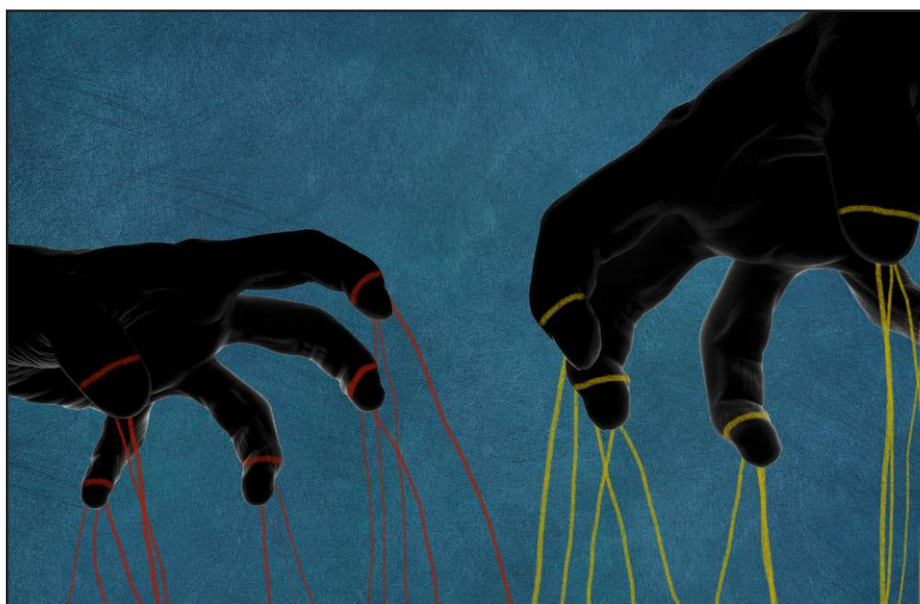
Recent weeks have also seen reports of a temple yatra and one high-profile wedding where none of the guests wore masks. In South Korea, a little known church emerged as a hotspot linked to nearly 5,200 confirmed cases in February. Singapore banned the local activities of this sect. Further, a high-profile election guru was recently smuggled from Delhi to an Opposition-ruled State in a transport plane. As he was visiting a State regarded as a Coronavirus hotspot, one expected the authorities to enforce the 14-day quarantine at the airport, on his return. Hopefully, he will not be allowed to smuggle himself back.

To return to the Tablighi Jamaat, around 250,000 people attended a five-day Ijtema in Raiwind, Lahore, Pakistan, on March 10. Authorities say over 2,258 people, who attended the event, were found positive for Coronavirus. On April



In times when the world is facing an existential crisis, the Western media must look closer home than build false narratives about India and its handling of the Corona pandemic.

Sandhya Jain



16, Maulana Suhaib Rumi, 69, head of the sect's Faisalabad branch, who attended the Raiwind Ijtema, died of Coronavirus; five members of his family were also infected. Pakistan's Science and Technology Minister Fawad Chaudhry held the "stubbornness of the clergy" responsible for the spread of the contagion. Pakistan's first set of cases came with Shia pilgrims returning from Iran, one of the worst-affected nations, but the problem was then less known.

In Malaysia, nearly 16,000 Tablighis attended a meeting at Jamek Mosque, Sri Petaling, Kuala Lumpur (February 27-March 1) and spread the disease in Southeast Asia. Only half the Malaysian participants reported for testing, despite requests from the authorities. The guests included 1,500 foreigners from Brunei, Thailand, Canada, Nigeria, India, Cambodia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, Australia, China and South Korea. The authorities in Brunei (50 cases), Singapore (5), Cambodia (13) and Thailand (2) have confirmed the link between the meeting and the disease. One Filipino man, who attended the event and was being probed for suspected Coronavirus infection, died in the city of Marawi.

The India-baiting New York Times published an article, In India, Coronavirus Fans Religious Hatred, on April 12 and said that the Delhi Government had banned meetings of more than 50 people on March 16, but on March 19, Maulana Saad Khandalvi, the head of the Tablighi Jamaat, announced that Coronavirus was "god's punishment" and not to fear it. Days after the nationwide lockdown began on March 24, after two

deaths at the Markaz, doctors found nearly 1,300 people at the centre without masks or protective gear. By then, hundreds had moved and spread the virus to many States, including the Andaman Islands. Quick action by the authorities intercepted the Malaysian guests at the airport before they could leave the country.

The Ijtema undeniably led to a spurt in India's Coronavirus cases. Medical staff dealing with patients and quarantine cases also suffered very difficult situations, even as they risked their lives to save lives. In a related development, the Union Home Ministry has asked State Governments to help trace Rohingya migrants from different States, who attended the Ijtema in Delhi (March 25) as they might have contracted the Coronavirus. It appears that the incubation period of the virus varies and sometimes takes longer than the projected two weeks to manifest. The Delhi Police has reportedly charged Saad with culpable homicide, but he is untraceable. Worse, it appears that a meeting was also held in Mewat (Haryana).

For foreigners, to find a mote in the Indian eye and not look at the beam in their own, has given pain to a nation that has always prided itself for adhering to the most exacting and challenging civilisational values. Bigotry does not come naturally to Indians; Western journalists should look closer home.

If I may show the mirror, George Packer writes, "When the virus came here, it found a country with serious underlying conditions and it exploited them ruthlessly. Chronic ills — a corrupt political class, a sclerotic bureaucracy, a heartless economy and a divided and

distracted public — had gone untreated for years.... It took the scale and intimacy of a pandemic to expose their severity — to shock Americans with the recognition that we are in the high-risk category." (We Are Living In A Failed State, The Atlantic, June 2020 issue)

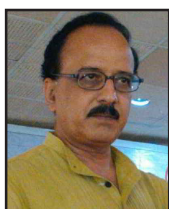
The analysis of American preparedness to cope with the crisis is crisp: "When test kits, masks, gowns and ventilators were found to be in desperately short supply, Governors pleaded for them from the White House, which stalled, then called on private enterprise, which couldn't deliver. States and cities were forced into bidding wars that left them prey to price gouging and corporate profiteering. Civilians took out their sewing machines to try to keep ill-equipped hospital workers healthy and their patients alive. Russia, Taiwan, and the United Nations sent humanitarian aid to the world's richest power — a beggar nation in utter chaos."

In India, First Lady Savita Kovind and thousands of women across the country are stitching masks to ensure that every citizen has at least one. In America: "A few Senators and corporate executives acted quickly — not to prevent the coming disaster but to profit from it."

Above all, the virus, George Packer laments, exposed the inequality rampant in America: The wealthy and connected managed to get tested, though most had no symptoms, while "ordinary people with fevers and chills had to wait in long and possibly infectious lines, only to be turned away because they weren't actually suffocating." Unsurprisingly, most victims were poor, Black and Brown. □□

(The author is a senior journalist. Views expressed are personal)

Agriculture offers lifeline amid pandemic



With food stocks totalling 77 million tonnes, three times the PDS requirement, India is comfortably placed. Market-driven economic reforms have sought to dismantle public procurement, limiting it to food needs of only 20% of the population, but the redeeming feature is that India's food supplies can last for over a year.
Devinder Sharma

This was unexpected. The world's leading global business publication, the Financial Times, wrote in an editorial: 'Radical reforms — reversing the policy direction of the last four decades — will need to be put on the table.' After four decades of following a policy direction that relies extensively on free markets, it took a brutal assault by the coronavirus pandemic for the world to realise that it wasn't working well. The fault lines are clearly visible.

Historically, the aftermath of pandemics has led to a changed eco-system. Once the coronavirus pandemic reduces in intensity, and the world returns back to its daily routine, it is expected that the government will be back on the table with renewed emphasis on human welfare. With markets tottering in the wake of the pandemic, decades of underfunding of public health and education, for instance, will now receive priority. It may also radically overhaul the urban landscape with working from home becoming increasingly becoming the norm, more because it reduces the overhead costs for the companies.

But whether the post Covid-19 period will see a perceptible change in the neoliberal economic policies that the world has continuously followed for four decades, which has acerbated income inequality and led to a massive destruction of natural resources, is something that we will have to wait and watch. More importantly, whether the reduction in air pollution levels leading to clear blue skies, the cleaning of Ganga and Yamuna rivers which seemed almost impossible, the return of the birds in our balcony we had almost forgotten about, and numerous other subtle but substantial changes that people had begun to cherish during the lockdown, will disappear once it is back to business as usual, is again a question that only time can answer.



The coronavirus outbreak has brought economies to a virtual standstill, with only agriculture serving as the lifeline. At a time when aggressive consumerism the world has witnessed over the past few decades was down to a trickle, it is the abundance of global food reserves — and more importantly in India — that kept the war against the pandemic focused. With overflowing food stocks, totalling 77 million tonnes, three times the public distribution system requirement, India is in a much comfortable position. Despite the efforts, as part of the market-driven economic reforms, to dismantle public procurement, limiting it to the food needs of only 20 per cent of the population (from 67 per cent served under the National Food Security Act), the redeeming feature is that India's food supplies can last for over a year.

At a time of burgeoning food stocks, the tragic images of lakhs of migrant workers, carrying their children in laps and their meagre possession on their head, trudging back to their villages had filled media spaces. Walking hundreds of kilometres at a stretch, and that too without any assurance of food, these migrant workers are in reality agricultural refugees, who were driven out of their villages when agriculture failed to provide them enough to survive. Migrating to the cities with the hope of making a decent living, these workers were in reality living only by their daily wages; whatever they earned, they spent. And when the cities disowned them after the lockdown was imposed, they were desperate to return home because that is where they belonged to.

Again, a fall out of the faulty

The coronavirus outbreak has brought economies to a virtual standstill, with only agriculture serving as the lifeline... it is the abundance of global food reserves – more importantly in India – that kept the war against the pandemic focused.

economic policies. Agriculture has been deliberately kept impoverished to enable farmers to abandon farming and move to the cities. Over the years, agriculture is being sacrificed to keep the economic reforms viable. This is what the World Bank had prescribed. At a conference I attended in 1996 at the MS Swaminathan Research Foundation in Chennai, the then vice president of the World Bank, Dr Ismail Serageldin had said that the bank estimates the number of people migrating from the rural to urban areas in India in the next 20 years, which meant by 2015, to be equal to twice the combined population of the UK, France and Germany.

Given that the combined population of the three countries is at 200 million, 400 million people were expected to move out of rural areas in India. This is the price the poor were made to pay to keep the economic reforms viable. And when even that didn't work for them, they preferred to return home.

Now that the avalanche of migrant workers returning home has struck a strong visual in our minds of the large number of ag-

ricultural refugees walking home, Covid-19 provides an opportunity to re-imagine a New Normal — where agriculture becomes economically viable and sustainable, where farming is not stifled to prepare a workforce for the industry, where agriculture becomes the pivot of the economy, providing the rightful income into the hands of farmers. This will only be possible if along with public health and education, revival of agriculture too receives a priority in policy planning. A regenerating agriculture alone has the ability to reboot the economy, protect nature, bring back birds and butterflies, and save the planet from the catastrophic effects of climate change that awaits us.

Reversing the policy direction of the past four decades, as the Financial Times had said, is an urgent necessity. It requires bold decision making along with the courage to redraw a new development pathway. It also requires immense political backing to thwart the lobbying pressure from the market players, both in the media as well as academia. It requires an exceptional ability to challenge the dominant economic thinking, to disband the model of economic growth which has relied solely on wealth creation. It has sucked income from the bottom to the top, enabling the rich to amass wealth. But to expect the present dispensation of mainline economists to make an attempt towards an everlasting change — so as to prepare for a new normal — is perhaps asking for the impossible.

There is no dearth of saner voices. It is time to find them, and acknowledge their role. After all, as someone rightly said, it is the normal we don't want to return to. □□

Remembering Tagore and his pan-Asian Dream

Born on May 7, 1861, 'Gurudev' Rabindranath Tagore, as he was popularly known, was an epitome of Indian literature and an ardent believer of the idea of intra-Asian solidarity and widening pan-Asian cooperation. As we mark his birth anniversary this month, it is essential to acknowledge his belief in the mutually beneficial interactive relationship between the two great civilisations of China and India. Tagore had travelled across the Himalayas and was, perhaps, the first of the modern Indian thinkers to cherish the significance of long-standing "civilisational links" between India and China in the early 20th century. In one of his poems written in 1932, he reiterated, "The Great morning, which is for all, appears in the East; Let its Light reveal us to each other that walk on the same path of pilgrimage." There are certain key features attached to Tagore's understanding of China, which hold great significance for contemporary scholars of both nations. Much before his visit to China, expressing solidarity with the feeling of "colonial cousins", Tagore, criticised the British imposition of opium trade upon China in 1881 at the age of 18.

Much before he went to China, his work drew interest and recognition among the scholars there. Tagore's speeches, writings and visit to China have been well chronicled by Sun Yixue, famous literary scholar, who noticed that Tagore came to China with a "world-saving messianic message." Much before his visit in 1924, Chen Duxiu, one of the founding members of the Communist Party of



In post-Covid world, China must endorse Tagore's vision of an open and peaceful Asia as the 'guiding spirit'.

Abhishek Pratap Singh



China (CPC), had already translated his most notable work *Gitanjali* into Chinese in the early 1915s. His poem, *The Crescent Moon*, was also translated and published in Chinese journals around the same time. Tagore's *Kabuliwala*, a short story, was published at least six times in China.

More importantly, Tagore successfully made deep impressions during his two visits in 1924 and 1928. The first was set around the 'May Fourth Movement' in China at the invitation of the Beijing Lecture Association. At this point, India was also coming out of colonial resistance. To mark his birthday during his visit to the Peking Normal University, young Chinese actors performed his play *Chitra* in English. During his speeches, he emphasised the true virtues of close interaction among various Asian cultures like India and China.

In 1916, Chinese Journal *Dongfang Zazhi* published Tagore's speech in Japan, noting his sharp criticism of modern Western civilisation and its materialism. Tagore's critique of nationalism was a fine combination of his anti-colonial ideas and patriotic poetry. In his view, there was no fundamental contradiction between India and China as both emphasized the concept of harmonious development in the spirit of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (the world is one family) and *Shijie Datong* (world in grand harmony).

Around the corona crisis, China has been facing severe criticism and challenge from many states in the world. The play of Chinese 'hard power' to face up and hide up the questions on the Corona outbreak has raised serious limitations on China's growth



China's offensive diplomacy and military posturing has often drawn criticism from its neighboring states in Asia. The economic and political backlash against China is intensifying and many states have joined a growing list of countries to clamp down on Chinese investments.

model and its effectiveness. Its role as a 'responsible stakeholder' in the contemporary global politics has come in question. China's offensive diplomacy and military posturing has often drawn criticism from its neighboring states in Asia. The economic and political backlash against China is intensifying and many states have joined a growing list of countries to clamp down on Chinese investments.

To face up these challenges, China needs a sincere and well-calibrated approach based on its 'civ-

ilizational wisdom' and rooted in Tagore's vision of pan-Asian unity. It must strive for coherence and coordination among Asian states rather pursuing any confrontational political approach and mercantilist economic policies.

At a time when the 21st century is witnessing the reinvention of Asia's global position in world politics, it must be recalled that Tagore was one of the most creative exponents of 'Asian universalism' and propagated an 'Asian identity'. Tagore's ideas and vision are important for the establishment of a peaceful world order. He downplayed the role of any kind of 'military aggression' and highlighted the role of 'cultural exchange' among nations. He also noticed the centrality of Indic cultural spirits as an active force of tolerance and acceptance in Asia.

The dream of 'Asian Century', as propagated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping, reinvigorates the spirit of Tagore's 'Asian Universalism', and much of its success depends on how China responds to the post Corona Asian world. □□

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The 'local to local' E-commerce

E-commerce as a platform to consumers and sellers feeds on the idea to demolish the boundaries of the location of the consumer and the seller. In this idea, there are many advantages but the context is more important. For example, it's an exceptional advantage for someone sitting in rural India to book a rail ticket on the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) website. Without this facility, the seller, in this case, IRCTC and Indian railway, either would have lost a customer or would have got lesser time to get information regarding the passengers travelling on a particular date on a particular journey route and hence lesser time to optimize plan. If the seller or the service provider knows in advance about the job it has to perform then it enhances their productivity and the idle time derived through the process can be used to do something else, or think for something new, or anything else. This convenience of ticket booking saves time as well as money for the customer. Without this platform, the customer would have to travel to the nearest railway ticket counter and then wait there in a long queue followed by the additional inconvenience of carrying cash and all other expenses and in the process loss of significant productive time which would have been engaged to add value to work through which the customer earns living expenses. In this application of e-commerce- no traditional job is killed, no one is at loss, it's not a zero-sum game, rather it's a win-win situation for everyone, and no one is complaining. That who book through the older channel, i.e. through the ticket counter is also happy as their waiting time in the queue has reduced significantly.



The consumers will get the convenience of e-commerce and the local businesses will receive a better level playing field. The government should own such infrastructure to execute 'local to local' e-commerce.

Alok Singh



The application e-commerce in the retail sector as practiced by Amazon and Flipkart-Walmart is of utmost concern. These companies are exploiting the technology to make customers happy by offering the cheapest price, deepest discount, the least lead time or the quick delivery, and 'no questions asked' return policy. Everything seems to be good as it makes 'customer the king' or satisfies the philosophy that the 'customer is god'. The concern is that such companies are on the radar of tax violators, selling fake products, following inventory-based model, and many more. Apart from that it has created a lot of unhappy customers and has wounded the traditional business ecosystem. During the COVID pandemic, the consumers are served well only by the colony retailers and the colony vegetable vendors- satisfying all the parameters of making the customer a king- resembling quick delivery, quality, and price (as acceptable during a pandemic) – and attempting that all essential supplies are uninterrupted during the pandemic. These big e-commerce culprits were missing from the scene, when their registered customers needed those companies most and were having a good sleep on the assumption that Amazon and like will serve them. But these companies failed, and these are the same companies who were killing the established ecosystem during normal days by practicing many tools in their quiver including the price war, deep discount, money burning model, and many more.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed Ola and Oyo - the two other companies exploiting the notion of e-commerce. Both the

entities started as a platform to bring together the buyer and the seller without owning anything, neither taxi in case of Ola and nor hotel in case of Oyo. Later on both, these companies started investing in ownership of the taxi in the case of Ola and in the ownership of hotels in the case of Oyo. So, it's obvious that the platform operated by Ola will always prefer the taxi owned by Ola itself and in case of Oyo, the hotels owned by Oyo will get more customers from the platform which is owned by Oyo. Ola wounded the traditional taxi business by first luring customers for cheap rides, later partnering with the taxi owners, and finally by owing the taxi itself and making the survival of other independent taxi owners tough. Oyo initially partnered with the hotel owners and offered customers cheap hotel rooms. The overall business model of Oyo was designed to substitute the hotel business gradually. Oyo initially offered cheap rooms to the customer and increased occupancy to hotel owners. Later it wounded the hotel owners by owning hotels itself and directing all the profitable customers to its own hotel and the unprofitable customers to none-Oyo owned hotels. This design aspired to capture the hotel business and establish a monopoly by buying loss-making hotels at cheap price or at any price sometimes to suit its bigger goals. But the COVID came as a final nail in the coffin of the immoral business model of Oyo. Oyo has sent a lot of its staff to furlough and many are being laid off. The tourism industry is worst affected by the pandemic and survival of Oyo as it originally planned is negligible.

Companies like Amazon, Ola, and Oyo could do whatever they did because of the lack of concrete e-commerce policy of the government. The government should urgently develop an e-commerce policy in plain language which is understood by everyone in the same way (without multiple interpretation) to safeguard the business system and make those businesses sustainable which are serving the customers and the nation during the pandemic. It is a local service to local buyers. It is a local colony grocery shop, local vegetable seller, and all the stakeholders in the supply chain of this local to local business.

E-commerce is here to stay. The 'local to local' e-commerce is the way ahead, to move towards 'win-win' the situation from the 'zero-sum game' business model. The illiterates are conveniently using the Whatsapp voice message despite the inability to use text messages. Such experiences are a strong motivation to expect that the government comes up with a program which impanel each and every local vegetable seller, local grocery shop owner and other local business providers- whether literate or illiterate, whether big business or small business- on a common platform with the end-user consumers. The consumers will get the convenience of e-commerce and the local businesses will receive a better level playing field. The government should own such infrastructure to execute 'local to local' e-commerce. At the end of the day, the most important thing that matters is a satisfied customer and a sustainable seller including all the members of the local supply chain. □□

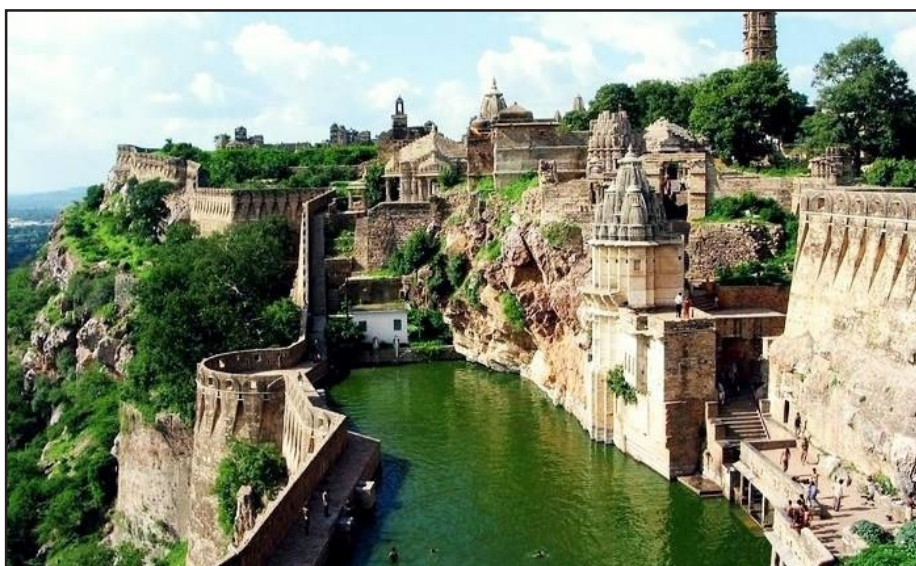
Bhils in the state Formation of Mewar (Southern Rajasthan), Part-2

The Guhilas formed a state in a predominantly Bhil area. Bhil predominance in the Mewar hills and northeast Gujarat is evident from the tribal grant of village to Guhadatta. In the killing of the Bhil chief, the Bhils point out the ingratitude of the Rajputs. In reality, the killing of the tribal chief signifies the military conquest of the hills by the Guhilas. The fact that the transfer of power from the Bhils to the Guhilas was not smooth is symbolized by the Bhils' revolt and the killing of the Guhila king Nagaditya. But it became essential for the Guhilas to forge an alliance with the local Bhils in their base area of operation, to facilitate territorial integration of the tribal regions, especially those of the core area. The ruling lineage had to turn them into allies as they formed important political components of the state because of their numerical significance. The alliance is reflected in the legendary association of Bappa Rawal with the Bhils of Oghna-Panarwa and Oondri. The acknowledgement of the fact that Bhils were the original masters of the land is expressed in the rika ceremony, marking the royal coronations in Mewar. In this ceremony the Bhil chief of Oghna-Panarwa had the honour of drawing of the tika of sovereignty with his own blood on the forehead of the succeeding prince while the chief of Oondri held the salver of spices and sacred grains of rice used in making the tika.

The relationship between the Guhilas and the Bhils of Oghna-Panarwa and the Oondri seems to have reached significant stage in the period between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. The latter part of the period seems to have coincided with the incorporation of the local Bhil chiefs into the political structure of the Guhila state. The problems of integration demanded that the Bhil chiefs



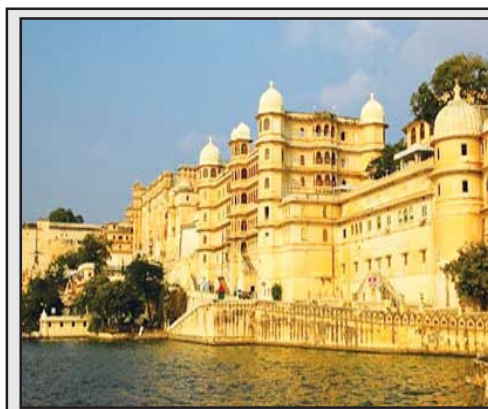
Bhil chiefs of Mewar specially those of Oghna-Panarwa and Oondri who participated in the royal coronation ceremony were important political, administrative and military components of the state of Mewar.
Prof. Nandini Sinha Kapur



of the core area be conferred with a suitable political rank. The prestigious title of *n* (status equivalent to the royal kinsmen) was conferred upon the Bhil chief of Panarwa. This Bhil chief was one of the autochthonous chiefs. The earliest documented evidence of the title of *rind* for the chief of Panarwa comes from the Sisodiya history of the seventeenth century. Nainsi refers to RoaDayaldas BN the chief of Panarwa. It is equally significant that Nainsi also refers to Rawat-Narsinhadas, the Bhil chief of Nahesar in the area of Jura (south-west of Panarwa).

Since different Bhil chiefs bore different titles and hence the possibility that these political titles were conferred on them by the state is strong. Nainsi also reports that Panarwa, the place of refuge for the Bhils, belonged to the Maharana. Hence, an important historical source of the seventeenth century points to traditions of close alliance between the Bhils of Panarwa and the Guhilas.

What was accepted at the level of ritual was not officially proclaimed. This truth is evident from the thirteenth century epigraphical records of the Guhilas. Both the Achaleswar (AD 1258) and Chittorgarh (AD 1281) inscriptions which speak of the foundation of the state of Mewar are completely silent about the Bhils in the formation of the State in Mewar. These two records mention the BappaRawal (legendary founder of Guhila state in Mewar)-Haritarasi-Eklingji-Medapata legends as the only factors in foundation of Mewar state. Neither is there any mention of the Bhils of Oghna-Panarwa or Oondri in EkaTingamalumya, the St-



The process of state formation demanded that the tribal areas be brought under the state structure.

halaPurana of Mewar (stated to be composed in fifteenth century in the royal court of Mewar) was natural for the official records to be silent about the Bhils for obvious reasons. After all, the state of Mewar grew and emerged as a Rajput state under the Guhilas.

The discrepancy of claims between the legends and official records of Mewar remind us of the case of Mallabhum-state. In spite of Brahmanical accounts of the origin of the Mallas, the Bagdi (a lower-caste community) association of the Malla rajas predominates the chronicles as the latter constitute a substantial population in the eastern part of Mallabhum. But the problems of integration demanded that chiefship and a suitable political rank be conferred on the Bhil leader of Oghna-Panarwa. The chief of Oghna-Panarwa carries the title of *rand* and belongs to the category of *Bhumia* chiefs. It is an instance of the political process of state formation in which the important local political components are integrated through their incorporation into the samant hierarchy. Tod describes the estate of Oghna-Panarwa in Mewar as the sole spot in India which enjoyed a natural freedom. Attached to no state, having no foreign communication, it lived under its own

head, a chief with title of "Rana", head of five thousand bows.

The process of state formation demanded that the tribal areas be brought under the state structure. Therefore, the nature and extent of interaction between the Bhils and the Guhila state in early medieval period is significantly different from earlier periods.

The fact that there was not much contact between the Bhils and the local communities before the rise of the local states is evident from ShereenAhara. Only six six blade tools Ahada even though Late Ratnagar have Stone study of chalcolithic in chalcolithic been found was only about Age Bagor was 80 km away. But the early medieval period presents different scenario as it as witnessed the process of local state formation in Mewar. The link routes connecting Chittor-Malwa trade route to the main artery route of Palanpur gap in the Gujarat-Sirohi belt passed through Bhomat country, the Bhil dominion of Mewar hills."

The hills and forests restricted the capacity of the government to move men and goods throughout their territories. The Bhils of the core area once integrated could be expected to facilitate communications throughout the Bhil-country. □□

Swadeshi Jagran Manch calls for ban on Chinese products

The Swadeshi Jagran Manch will kick start a campaign from Sunday to boycott Chinese products, it said. Though it has been a stated position of the organisation for long, but it assumes new significance in view of worldwide allegations against China for not doing enough to warn about the coronavirus outbreak, besides sending out faulty testing kits.

The organisation said, all the supporters and activists of Swadeshi Jagran Manch will observe April 25 as Swadeshi Sankalp Diwas.

“On this day Swadeshi supporters and activists will light lamp at their respective homes between 6.30pm and 6.40 pm...and take a pledge that they will take all possible steps to boycott Chinese products by Indians,” a statement by Ashwani Mahajan, the National co-convenor of SJM read.

Blaming the whole world’s “agony of disease and deaths caused by the coronavirus” on China, SJM said the lockdown and subsequent economic hardship as well as job losses are a result of the “Chinese virus”. “...Economic activities of all types are getting impacted, causing huge loss to our economy and economies all around the world”, SJM added.

“India will take pledge on Sunday that during lockdown and after the same is lifted, we will work towards encouraging Bhartiya industries, big and small by boycotting Chinese product and purchasing Bhartiya products and bring prosperity back to our country,” the SJM said which has always advocated for Indian products. They feel Chinese products have been killing the small and medium industry of India.

<https://www.sentinelclassam.com/top-headlines/rss-economic-wing-swadeshi-jagran-manch-calls-for-ban-on-chinese-products/>

Time to re-negotiate equations with China: Swadeshi organisations to govt

The Centre is reaching out to different units of the Sanghparivar on changes essential for post COVID-19 economy, even as the labour and economic wings of the RSS have firmed up their pressure strategy to urge the government to “rethink its policy of Chinese investments.”

This comes a day after the government brought in stricter measures to curb the ‘opportunistic take-over’ of Indian companies by firms in neighbouring



countries, including China. The government has said that an entity of a country which shares a land border with India can invest only after receiving government approval. Both Swadeshi Jagran Manch and Laghu Udhayog Bharti of the Sanghparivar that look into economic issues, have asked for tighter scrutiny of investments from China, curbs on angel investments from China and specific markers for Chinese investments in green field projects. The organisations have also said notwithstanding the possibility of Japanese and American firms looking at India for shifting their companies from China to India, potential investors should not be promised royalties and the Indian market should be used as their export hub for supply to other markets.

Sanghparivar leaders, ET has learnt, have also held talks about the need for Chinese companies, particularly those in the mobile electronics sector, to contribute more at a time like this even as they rake in revenues in thousands of crores. In internal meetings, it was also discussed how China has not been particularly helpful to India on political issues, be it in terms of India’s permanent membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) or raising issues at the UN Security Council, and how India should even check on its immediate dependency on China for PPEs and APIs.

Speaking with ET, SJM said, it was important to understand the accountability of the pandemic today was largely with China. “The pandemic has given us an opportunity to re-negotiate our terms with China and make it clear that our priority is to safeguard our domestic interests.” Lauding the government for move taken on Saturday, he said, “it has made its intent clear.”

“What we want the government to do is to be careful about domestic interests. As far as green field investments go, there was no opposition to them...That needs to change as we need some distinguishing fac-

tors between investments that come from China and those that come from elsewhere. The global supply chain management system needs a massive overhaul so that our dependence on China is significantly reduced. We should also look at anti-dumping duties and the scope we have to increase tariffs.”

The government has not singled out Chinese products or imports in the past but has levied duties on imports of mobile phones and a variety of components used in mobile manufacturing - most of which are sourced from China - to boost local manufacturing. The focus has been also to increase local component manufacturing. The BJP on the other hand says the party and the government is looking at the issue, and that informal consultations have already started.

Many wings of the Sanghparivar, in their internal meetings, have also sought to call the COVID-19, the Chinese virus. In 2014, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat himself had called for a boycott of Chinese products. Several organisations affiliated to the RSS have been organising door-to-door campaigns asking people not to use Chinese rakhis or lamps for decades.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/time-to-re-negotiate-equations-with-china-swadeshi-organisations-to-govt/articleshow/75242555.cms>

SJM wants ‘Swadeshi’ Zoom, lauds crackdown on Chinese app

Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM) has welcomed the “crackdown” on the virtual meeting platform Zoom, and has sought a similar action against Tiktok and Helo. It has urged the Centre to help develop similar indigenous platforms here.

“Globally, there are allegations that the Zoom’s critical encryption goes to their servers in China. And, there is no clarity on how much access the PLA or other Chinese government agencies have on this information. SJM understands that these encrypted keys along with data, can be used to unlock the virtual-meetings and in some cases debar the legitimate participants,” the SJM said in a statement.

While asking for a “thorough investigation”, the SJM urged the government to incentivise the domestic players to develop products like Zoom. It said that there is a need for such products enabling virtual meetings. Many top ministers, including Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and top opposition leaders, including Congress interim President Sonia Gandhi have been using the platform to hold meetings.

Upping it’s ante against Tiktok and Helo, the SJM

said, “There are series of reports and information on how they are indulging in the personal data thefts and the data being used in the events leading to threatening national security, communal and social disharmony. This is a fit case to be investigated for their transfer of data, and what happens to the data after it reaches the servers in China”.

The SJM has also welcomed the Home Ministry decision to exclude the e-commerce and movement of their supply vehicles from the list of relaxations in their previous guidelines. The guidelines would have been applicable from Monday. This would exclude the supplies of the non-essential goods by the e-commerce players for the rest of the period of the Lockdown 2.0.

“SJM firmly believes that this exemption would have led to non level playing field for offline retailers. Moreover, e-commerce players can neither keep their own inventory nor can indulge in the sale of private labels. The exemption would have only helped them to use their own network of retailers. This would not only have been unfair to the local retailers, but would have given unfair advantage to the giant e-commerce players,” said SJM.

Swadeshi Jagran Manch has been extremely vocal against the e-commerce platform for a long time now. In January, the SJM had strongly recommended that the Centre bring ecommerce companies under the tax net in the Budget, to meet its revenue shortfall. In February, it asked government to find mechanism to ‘regulate’ e-commerce platforms.

“In the fight against the pandemic, the grocery stores or Kirana traders did exemplary work and used their skills to not only ensure the supplies to the their consumers, but also shown maturity in maintain social distancing and hygiene practice. The services of small traders and grocers are appreciated by one and all. We also hope that the state governments which have issued guidelines for e-commerce would also withdraw their permissions.”, said SJM

Meanwhile, it has also lauded the government for one of its long standing demands — the amendment that changes the Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) norms. The RSS affiliate says, it became necessary after the reports surfaced of Chinese funds and banks started picking up stocks of various Indian or India based critical companies.

The new rules make it mandatory for the Chinese companies, like those from Pakistan and Bangladesh, require mandatory clearances from the Indian

government. Earlier, they were allowed via automatic route. The SJM also demand that similar provisions must be added to the Chinese investments coming from other shores like Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, etc.

<https://www.cnbc18.com/politics/rss-affiliate-wants-swadeshi-zoom-lands-crackdown-on-chinese-app-5729751.htm>

Centre set to provide up to 100% credit guarantees for MSME loans: Sources



India's government has firmed up a proposal to guarantee loans given to small businesses by financial institutions, as it seeks to kick-start business when the coronavirus lockdown starts to ease, a government source and two bank officials said.

"Up to 100% of loans given to MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) would be sovereign-backed under the new scheme so that national credit pours into MSMEs," said a top government official familiar with the plan.

The size of the fund is likely to be based on immediate needs, and the guarantee could be between 25% and 100%, depending on the size of the company or the risks undertaken, said two bankers.

None of the officials wanted to be identified as the discussions are still private. It was not immediately clear what the total of the loans could be. The scheme is set to be rolled out "soon," the government official said, without giving more details.

The Finance ministry did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

The government is weighing several measures to kick-start the economy, with a drop in economic growth expected because of the coronavirus pandemic and a nationwide lockdown.

Small businesses account for nearly a quarter of India's \$2.9 trillion economy and employ more than 500 million workers, according to government estimates. To ensure growth resumes in the sector, New

Delhi has been nudging banks to lend more to the MSMEs, a government official said. But banks have made clear to the government that they are unwilling to lend to small businesses without a government guarantee, as fears of defaults increase.

Banks had a total exposure of over 4.91 trillion rupees as of the end of March, according to central bank data. Bad loans in the MSME sector have been on an upswing and accounted for around 12.6% of total loans as of December 2019.

"The risk of lending to small businesses is very high because the future is uncertain and so we have asked for up to a 100% guarantee on new loans to MSMEs. We believe that incremental demand can be up to 10% of the existing loan amount," said a senior public sector banker.

Shadow banks have also asked that the loans they receive from banks be guaranteed by the government, according to a letter sent by an association of shadow banks to the government and reviewed by Reuters. The letter argues that will further foment loans to MSMEs.

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/centre-set-to-provide-up-to-100-credit-guarantees-for-msme-loans-sources-11588266958172.html>

India maps out post-Covid export plan to take on China

India has begun work on a continuity plan to kick-start exports once the country emerges from the shadows of the Covid-19 pandemic. The plan includes cutting down import dependence, especially from China, by focussing aggressively on substitution while improving safety compliance and quality goods to gain global market share. The commerce and industry ministry is mulling setting up groups to draw up strategies for sectors where China has vacated space and countries are looking to diversify suppliers.

As per an analysis done by the commerce department, medical textiles, electronics, plastics and toys are some sectors whose exports can be promoted in the next three months or phase one while phase two exports include gems and jewellery, pharmaceuticals and steel, in the next six months.

Commerce and industry ministry Piyush Goyal is likely to discuss these plans with the external affairs minister and Indian missions abroad on Thursday.

"There are geographical issues of some countries because they don't want to put all their eggs in one basket, which is China. We are looking at sectors where we can improve capacity and reduce costs especially



where dumping is happening,” said one official.

As part of the strategy, India will look at areas where it has capability but continues to import and focus on the areas of core competence. Piyush Goyal on Wednesday told exporters that with shortage of food items in several countries due to supply chain disruptions, it is a good opportunity for export of agricultural and processed food items. He told exporters that incentives can be given, but they have to be “justified, reasonable, and WTO compliant”.

“Covid-19 will emerge as a non-tariff barrier as countries would insist on various certifications. We need to maintain those SOPs and provide digital certificates,” said Ajay Sahai, director general, Federation of Indian Export Organisations.

Goods exports shrank 35% in March, the biggest contraction in almost a decade while full-year shipments declined in 2019-20 for the first time after 2015-16, at 4.8% to \$314.31 billion in FY20 from \$330.08 in FY19. The ministry has suggested forming groups of thinkers to brainstorm on what should be done after the pandemic for world dominance with a humanitarian approach.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-maps-out-post-covid-export-plan-to-take-on-china/articleshow/75457477.cms>

Indian decision to cancel the order for Chinese ‘Testing Kits’, irresponsible, Chinese tantrum

China has become restless because of the Indian decision to cancel the order for testing Kits, found to be defective, placed with the Chinese companies. China has levelled a counter allegation that the people who are claiming that the Kits are defective have mishandled the kits. Ji Rong, the spokesperson of the Chinese embassy in India, said that degrading the Chi-

nese products is irresponsible and biased.

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) had said that the Rapid Testing kits, imported from the Chinese companies Guangzhou Wondfo Biotech and Zhuhai Livzon Diagnostics, were substandard. India also announced the cancellation of the order for testing kits, placed with these two companies. Earlier, the Union Health Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, had clarified that not a single Rupee would be paid to the companies supplying defective and substandard kits, irrespective of the country they belong.

China has reacted to this. China has expressed concerns over the Indian decision to cancel the order for testing kits. Ji Rong, the spokesperson of the Chinese embassy in India, said that quality products have always been a priority for China. The kits supplied the Chinese companies Guangzhou Wondfo Biotech and Zhuhai Livzon Diagnostics had received a certificate of quality from the National Medical Product Administration of China. Pointing out that even the Indian Institute of Virology had certified the quality of the kits, Ji Rong tried to defend the Chinese companies. Rong levelled counter-allegations against India, saying that experts and trained personnel did not handle the kits.



Moreover, some people saying that Chinese products lack quality are having a biased attitude. Rong said that this is wrong and irresponsible. But Rong avoided clarifying, which people were being referred. Rong also pointed out that the same two companies have supplied kits to countries from Europe, Asia and Latin America. But Rong did not speak a word regarding the European companies making a similar claim like India, about the quality of the kits and returning the kits to China.

Analysts have warned that testing kits could become a new point of contention between India and China. Only last week, the Indian government amend-

ed the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) norms to thwart the China attempt of acquiring major stakes in the Indian companies, taking advantage of the reduced market valuation of the companies, due to the current crisis. Thereafter, India has delivered one more telling blow to China by cancelling the order for testing kits.

<https://www.newscast-pratyaksha.com/english/indian-decision-to-cancel-the-order-for-chinese-testing-kits-irresponsible-chinese-lantrum/>

SJM slams Facebook-Jio deal, says it's a bigger threat than Amazon, Flipkart

The Swadeshi Jagran Manch has condemned Facebook's Rs 43,574 crore purchase of a 9.99 per cent stake in Reliance Industries' digital arm, saying it raises many concerns about privacy and net neutrality.

The deal, it said, poses a bigger threat to local interests than US tech giant Amazon and Flipkart, which is majority-owned by the American retail major Walmart. The concerns have been echoed by the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), the largest body representing retail traders, and the Laghu Udyog Bharati, another RSS affiliate.

The organisations have pointed to the fact that Facebook and Jio are both market leaders in their respective fields, with access to massive amounts of data, which they claim might set the stage for "digital colonisation".

Global social media giant Facebook, which also owns WhatsApp and Instagram, purchased a minority stake in Reliance Industries' digital arm Jio Platforms as part of an all-cash deal earlier this week. The deal pairs WhatsApp with Jio Platforms, which includes the telecom venture Reliance JioInfocomm, and is expected to fuel the growth of the Ambani e-commerce portal JioMart, through which the company aims to empower the neighbourhood grocery stores.

Reliance Jio is India's biggest telecom service with a subscriber base of 33.13 crore users as of July last year, while Facebook and WhatsApp are by far the biggest social media players in the country, with 32.8 crore and 40 crore subscribers, respectively.

<https://theprint.in/india/rss-affiliate-slams-facebook-jio-deal-says-its-a-bigger-threat-than-amazon-flipkart/408599/>

Coronavirus: SJM says RBI's measures in right direction

Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) has welcomed the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s decision to push financial and lending institutions to extend more credit to

businesses to deal with the economic disruption caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. "The steps are in the right direction, and may prove instrumental in tiding the pandemic's impact on our economy", the nationalist lobby group said.

In a statement, Ashwani Mahajan, national co-convenor, SJM said that many of the RBI's moves like strengthening lending institutions and cutting down on reverse repo rate will allow banks and lending institutions to extend more debt rather than depositing funds with RBI or looking for expensive capital from the markets. The group also agrees with RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das' assessment that the inflation trajectory is likely to fall below its target in next month or two. "This space, as Governor Das said, is required to be used effectively and at an appropriate time. We expect a further cut in the benchmark repo rates. This can actually flow more credit in the market and pent up demand", SJM said.

According to the group, RBI's decision to allow states to raise the Ways and Means Advances (WMA) by 600 bps is a welcome step. "This will help the states to gain access to liquidity to meet the expenditures in short term; without going to markets to borrow," they said, as a result, there will be no increase in the yields of the debt raised through existing bonds by states, which in turn will allow the states to retain capacity to raise more debt in the medium term, they explained.

SJM also welcomed RBI's clarification that the 90-day non-performing assets (NPAs) norm would not apply on moratorium granted on the existing loans by banks as well as other lending institutions. "This dispelled the fear of micro and small enterprises," they said.

On the Rs 50,000 crore Targeted Long-Term Repo Operation (TLTRO) 2.0, SJM said the operations will rush the fresh blood in the NBFCs, especially since half of this is targeted to the small and medium-size NBFCs along with and Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs). "We also appreciate the cutting down of the reverse repo rate by 25 bps — from 4 per cent to 3.75 per cent — as this will push the banks to extend more debt.

The RBI's special finance facilities for the NABARD, SIDBI and NHB worth Rs 50,000 crore is a good step, especially when they were not able to raise fresh resources from the market. These funds can have a spiral impact on the economy," Mahajan said. □□

<https://www.businesstoday.in/current/economy-politics/coronavirus-rss-affiliate-sjm-says-rbi-measures-in-right-direction/story/401388.html>

Swadeshi Activities

Service work by SJM during the Corona Epidemic

Pictorial Glimpses



Swadeshi Activities

Swadeshi Sankalp Diwas (25 April 2020)

Pictorial Glimpses

