

Swadeshi

PATRIKA

DECEMBER 2023



Erupting
troubles
in
China

Swadeshi Activities

Swavlambi Bharat Abhiyan Meetings

Pictorial Glimpses



Kannur, Kerala



Rashtriya Rishi Dattapan Thendagi Birth Jyanti Program



Swadeshi Sandesh Yatra



Garhwa, Jharkhand



Gaya, Bihar



Godda, Jharkhand



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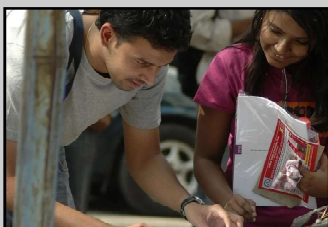
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Earn while you learn

The education system of the country is going through a transition state. The new education policy is an extensive document to meet the talent supply and necessary mindset of the students of the future. The core of the new education policy is to make the education system stand on its feet so that post-education the students are employable and start earning. The earnings can happen either through a job or through self-employment. The startups are getting promoted throughout the country. Many campuses have their incubators operational and are showing favorable results.

The philosophy of earning while you learn was recommended by Rashtra Risbi Dattopant Thengdi ji as an education philosophy of the country many decades ago. The top-ranked educational institutions of the world have produced the wealthiest people in the world on their campuses. The list includes companies like Dell Computers, Microsoft, Facebook, and so on. There is little correlation between earning money and years of higher education. Within the country, many college dropouts have created wealth as well as jobs for society.

The concern is that many of our startups are getting trapped in the technological as well as financial games of foreign companies. We need to create awareness among our startups to be truly local through local capital, local research and development of products, and services as well as engaging local talent and local resources in innovation.

The world knows Bhartiya people are good at frugal innovation i.e. Jugad, there is little effort required to convert this frugal innovation into excellence using systematic research and documentation. The mindset of Earn While You Learn needs to be incorporated to our youth to harness demographic dividend.

— Ankit Sharma, Datia, MP

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Quote-Unquote



Protection of India's borders and internal security are essential for peace, stability and prosperity. We follow the tradition of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', but our forces are fully capable and ready to face any external or internal situation that hurts the unity and integrity of the country.

Droupadi Murmu

President, Bharat



Impressed with a remarkable feat of India's Yuva Shakti that will boost the innovation ecosystem in our Nation.

Narendra Modi

Prime Minister, Bharat



Declining manufacturing gave rise to the problem of unemployment. Thus, the decline in China's exports to the US over the last four years, and the increase in India's exports to the country, is good news for Indian manufacturing, and indicates that Indian products have become more competitive than China's.

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan

National Co-convenor, SJM

Robust GDP growth brightens India's chances to surpass Germany by 2026

Data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation show India's GDP at constant prices, grew at the rate of 7.6 percent annually, during the second quarter of the year 2023-24, faster than the 6.2 percent growth recorded for the second quarter of 2022-23. India's GDP at current prices in the second quarter was Rs 71.66 lakh crore, and that raised India's per capita annual income to Rs 2.01 lakh during the quarter or \$2,436 (\$1=Rs 82.5, average September market price). In the first half of fiscal year 2023-24, the economy expanded by 7.7 percent. If this pace of GDP growth continues, then India's per capita income may reach \$3,600 by September 2030. The per capita income was hardly \$1,560 in the year 2014.

Although all sectors have contributed to the growth of GDP this quarter, the largest share of growth in value addition was from manufacturing, which grew by 13.9 percent. The second biggest growth sector was construction, which grew by 13.3 percent. The third sector was electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services, where 10.1 percent growth was recorded. Mining contributed with 10 percent growth. The growth in the service sector was not very remarkable. A matter of concern in this quarter was the performance of the agriculture sector which recorded a low 1.2 percent growth. But this is not due to any fundamental flaw but due to uncertain and insufficient monsoons.

Growth in manufacturing indicates the success of the Union government's Atmanirbhar Bharat policy. A large number of new production units are coming up in every sector. These include various types of products including electronics, telecom, machinery, solar equipment, defence equipment, chemicals, toys, textiles and so on. Due to the production-linked incentive (PLI) policy, the production of laptops and semiconductors may also start soon. If we look at some specific indicators, a significant growth rate was visible in coal, steel, cement, mining and power generation. Coal production registered an increase of 16.3 percent, while cement output grew by 10.2 percent. Steel production grew 19.5 percent. The 11.5 percent growth in mining is also remarkable. The number of airline passengers increased by 22.7 percent and railway passenger figures are also showing growth. Deposits in banks grew by 11.5 percent, while loans given by banks rose at a faster rate of 13 percent. All these figures point towards an improving economic environment in the country. It has to be understood that the growth of manufacturing has a direct impact on employment. It's beyond doubt that employment opportunities in manufacturing are much greater than in the service sector.

While India's economy grew by 7.6 percent in the July-September quarter, China saw only 4.9 percent expansion, Russia 5.5 percent growth and the United States 5.2 percent. In Germany, which is currently two places ahead of India in terms of the size of GDP, growth declined by 0.4 percent. In such a situation, if India's economy grows at the current rate, its annual GDP will reach \$3.5 trillion by the end of the present financial year and if Germany's current GDP of \$4.1 trillion declines by 0.4 percent, then the European nation's GDP will decline to \$4.08 trillion. India's GDP will then be smaller by only \$600 billion, and if the present rate of growth sustains, India can surpass the German GDP in less than two and a half years.

This growth being driven by manufacturing, opens new vistas for employment generation. In the last couple of years, due to encouragement given to manufacturing, some offshoots have been seen in this sector. According to the new series of GDP, the share of manufacturing has marginally increased from 18.3 percent in 2020-21 to 18.7 percent by the second quarter of 2023-24. During this period, the unemployment rate in urban areas decreased from 7.7 percent in July-September 2022 to 6.6 percent in July-September 2023, the National Sample Survey Office of the Government of India data show. The proportion of workers population has also increased from 44.5 percent to 46 percent in urban areas. The increasing employment figures in urban areas are pointing towards the gains emanating from manufacturing growth.

Erupting troubles in China

China has grown, both politically and economically, amidst the league of nations at an unparalleled scale during the last four decades. Many factors and judicious decisions by the state contributed to this fast paced and prolonged advance. However, now the growth spurt is a bit faltering. Question is, why? And, whether China will regain its momentum? If yes, how?

For well over 30 years, Chinese model produced high economic growth, urbanisation and poverty reduction. But this has led to massive environmental degradation, corruption, rising inequalities, an enormous debt burden, growing youth unemployment, and lately muted protests. Consumption of domestic users was deliberately suppressed in the interests of generating export surplus on one hand and capital formation on the other. This led to the economy being (in the words of then premier Wen Jiabao's words) unstable, unbalanced, uncoordinated, and unsustainable. This was in 2007. China decided to take note.

For example, it focussed on science and technology. Here either a country can achieve break throughs in the basic sciences and foundational technologies or, another way, it can adapt existing technologies to better applications. China adopted the second route, sometimes (allegedly) even stealing the technology from other nations. Result: of the 25 most valuable technology companies China owns nine. In emerging areas like green energy and electric vehicles, the downside has been, however, that while China has deployed resources, money and human, to advance in the domain of science, it never created institutional infrastructure to promote scientific creativity. For example, the education system has cultivated rote learning, and not original thinking, among the students. Likewise the research bodies lacked much autonomy, so much so that Chinese scientists never formed the part of global scientific community and exchange ideas at the



China is in a pincer like grip, from domestic woes on one hand and foreign hostilities on other. It is stuck in a middle income trap.

KK Srivastava



fraternity level. This could be, one guesses, due to the communist regime's distrust of the 'other world' in general, and capitalist economies in specific.

On the other hand due to its 'closed' system, China's financial sector (equity and bond markets) are underdeveloped. There are very few independent market players, including financial intermediaries. Here too foreign institutions are highly distrusted. But this has led to two setbacks. One, China has not been able to channel funds for its own development through a vibrant and well regulated stock market. And, two, even though China carries a considerable weight in world trade, its currency is not 'hard' enough; it does not play a commensurate role on world trade and commerce stage. This weakness of the financial system again stems from the communist party's distrust of open market system which presumably can lead to the possible turbulence on one hand and loss of party's grip on the system, on the other.

While one can cite other examples of demographic policies, the party's distrust of private sector, etc. the basic idea is clear. It is time the party takes an assessment of opportunities arising from and risks involved in, the exercise of political power. Paradoxically the system wants to dominate the world economy and polity and yet won't integrate with the global set up beyond a point.

China is definitely a very influential and with considerable weight, player on the world arena. Hence its problems are not its alone. So while it should not and cannot take a 180 degree about turn and work along the liberal

western economic development model, it need to pause and design a new playbook. Notable, now the original 'global village' concept is being abandoned; many countries (India included) are re-designing their industrial policies (Atmanirbharta, In India) and preferring economic controls over the free play of markets – all of this to ensure welfare of their subjects and grow economically at the targeted pace. However, a return to socialism/communism is neither feasible nor desirable, more so in face of three very important developments – geopolitical upheavals (the likes of Russia – Ukraine war, Israel-Hamas conflict), climate change (global warming), and disruptive technologies (artificial intelligence).

China thus needs to convince the world that it poses no threat to other nations by being hegemonic – economically, politically, or otherwise. China ofcourse does not conceal its ambition of aiming for a global leadership image. But an ageing China faces economic slowdown, since a rapid supply of labour force at very low real wages will no more be available. Therefore future growth rate would not be in the vicinity of 8-10%, as was the case earlier. It is likely to be stuck in the 'middle income' trap. To add to the woes there exist both local government debt and corporate debt which leave adverse implications for both financial stability and economic growth.

But this syndrome is not confined merely to the Chinese economy losing pace at home. At the international level, America and many other countries are turning openly hostile. One very visible example of this is 'China plus one'

policy adopted by the Western World. The other one is 'non co-operation' in technology transfer. For example, during 2018 eighty percent of Walmart's shipment came from China; this figure has reduced to only 60% for the period January-August 2023. Incidentally a major gainer has been India. The shift by Walmart and other Western companies away from China is on account of escalating political tensions on one hand and rising import costs (from China) on the other. To be sure, however, America (as also India) remains a significant importer from China both in terms of final goods and as part of supply chain arrangements. 'Friend shoring' is no alternative to a cheap source of import.

Then the US led coalitions and China are at war in the domain of technology. US wants to considerably restrict China's access to semiconductors and high tech intellectual property. If successfully executed this will hinder China's technical advancement. Again, to be sure, China is trying to gain access to supply of critical minerals deployed in chip making.

In short, China is facing problems both domestically (demographics, debt issue, social unrest, unsettled symbiotic relationship between public and private sector, growth vs equality issue) and on world stage (tech restrictions, China plus one policy, cold war with Western World). This, however, does not mean that the rest of the world, including India, can disengage from China. It is a low cost exporter, and its economy is mouth drooling for Western exporters. So we need to tread cautiously. □□

Growing popularity of India's exports



We have to understand that although our GDP in 2022-23, on the basis of Rupee-US dollar exchange rate was 3.5 trillion dollars, but on the basis of purchasing power parity our GDP was 13 trillion dollars, i.e. almost 4 times more. This means that the Indian Rupee, on purchasing power parity (PPP), is worth about 4 times the market price of the Dollar. This means our production costs can be further lowered.

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan

Recently, a global consulting firm, Boston Consulting Group (BCG), has revealed in its research that between 2018 and 2022, India's exports to USA have increased by 44 percent, while China's exports to US have declined by 10 percent. Although US imports from Mexico and ASEAN countries have also increased, the important point is that Indian products are definitely making inroads into the US markets, replacing Chinese products. This growth in Indian exports is visible in various products ranging from machinery to food items, health and wellness products, clothing, shoes, toys etc. Global retail chain, Walmart alone aims to buy goods worth \$10 billion from India every year by 2027.

Since the beginning of this century, China has continuously made inroads into the world markets. It is noteworthy that China's total exports to the world had increased from just 253 billion US dollars in the year 2000 to 3730 billion US dollars by the year 2022. China's exports to India alone increased from just \$1.47 billion in 2000 to \$102 billion by 2022. During this period, China's exports to US increased from \$100 billion to reach \$536.3 billion. India suffered huge losses due to increasing imports from China and the contribution of manufacturing in our total GDP declined from nearly 21.3 percent in the year 1995-96 to 16.3 percent by the year 2018-19. Similarly, manufacturing declined across the world and China directly benefited from the same.

Declining manufacturing gave rise to the problem of unemployment in the rest of the world. The decline in China's exports to the US, over the last four years and the increase in India's exports to the US, is a good news for Indian manufacturing. This is indicative of the fact that Indian products have become more competitive than China. It is true that the US government has taken several measures to reduce imports from India and China, including raising of import duties. In order to reduce imports from India, the US government has not only withdrawn the concessions, namely, General System of Preference (GSP), given earlier, but has also increased the import duties on imports from India. It is noteworthy that under the WTO agreement, US is the only country that can impose country specific import duties.

But despite all US sanctions, 44 percent increase in exports from India to the US, assumes significance. Boston Consulting Group (BSG) says that this has happened because landed cost of Indian goods is 15 percent lower as compared to US goods, whereas landed cost of Chinese goods is only 4 percent lower than US goods. That is why the American market gives priority to Indian goods over Chinese goods. It has to be understood that while US is also trying to promote manufacturing, despite this, the tremendous competitive strength of Indian products indicates at the chances of expansion of the market for Indian goods all over the world, especially in developed countries. It is well known that cost competitiveness plays a major role in today's world.

Export target of \$2 trillion

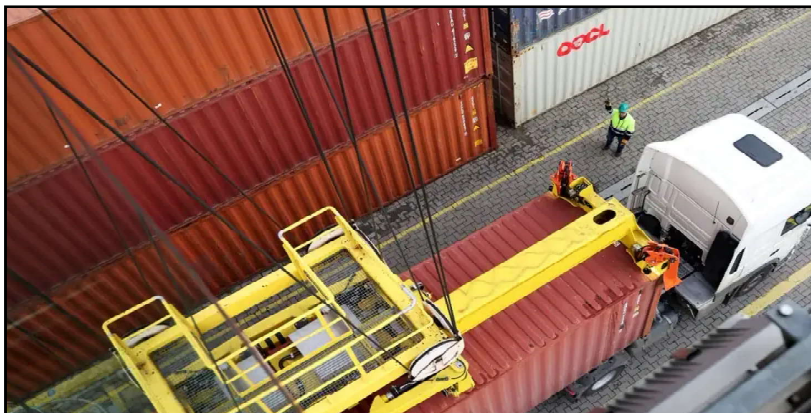
The new foreign trade policy was announced by the Government of India

on March 31, 2023. In this policy, the target of export of total goods and services from India by the year 2030 has been set at \$2 trillion i.e. 2000 billion dollars. It is noteworthy that India's total goods and services exports in the year 2022-23 were \$770.2 billion, increasing these exports to 2000 billion dollars by the year 2030 is being seen as a big challenge. While the pace of export growth in the last 10 years has been extremely slow, the challenge appears even greater. But last year in 2022-23, exports of goods and services have increased by 11.3 percent. Therefore, if this growth rate is taken to 14.81 percent, then it does not seem impossible to reach the target of exports of 2000 billion dollars by the year 2030.

How will exports from the country increase?

First of all, to increase exports, it is necessary that production and GDP in the country increases. It is noteworthy that in 2013-14, India's total GDP was equivalent to 2 trillion dollars i.e. \$2000 billion. At that time the country's total exports were a little less than \$500 billion. In 2022-23, when India's GDP was 3.5 trillion dollars, India's exports were 770.2 billion dollars and in 2030, when India's GDP becomes 7 trillion dollars as per the target, then it will not be impossible for the country's total exports to be 2 trillion dollars.

India's agricultural exports had reached \$50.3 billion in 2021-22. These exports reached \$53.3 billion in 2022-23. Shortage of food products in the world and surplus of food products in India point towards scope in food exports from the country. In the last one or two years, India has established itself as saviour of many



countries of the world, from hunger, by exporting food products.

Today, India fulfils 68 percent of its defense requirements from within the country. Not only this, our defense exports were only Rs 1521 crore in 2016-17, which have increased to Rs 15920 crore by 2022-23. Given orders from rest of the world, a large increase in defense exports is expected in the future.

Exports of toys have registered a growth of 60 percent between 2018-19 and 2022-23. It is noteworthy that under Aatmnirbhar Bharat campaign, production linked incentives (PLIs) are being given to increase the production of various types of products, for which country was excessively depended on China, which included toys, solar panels, garments, machinery products, defense equipment, electronics, telecom, mobile phones and laptops etc. Due to increase in production of all these items, exports, especially of mobile phones, machinery, solar panels, electronics goods and telecom etc. are increasing fast.

It is clear from the Boston Consulting Group's research that Indian exports to US have increased and retail chains like Walmart are also shifting towards India. All this is happening due to the

competitiveness of our products. PLI scheme has not only contributed in increasing the competitiveness, the cost is also getting reduced due to economies of scale, thanks to increasing production capacity in the country. At the same time, digitalization has a special contribution in reducing the logistics cost in the country. Not only this, the cost of freight and transportation is also coming down due to the construction of various types of infrastructure including roads, domestic water transport and sea ports in the country. It is well established that the labor cost in India is much lower than many countries including China.

We have to understand that although our GDP in 2022-23, on the basis of Rupee-US dollar exchange rate was 3.5 trillion dollars, but on the basis of purchasing power parity our GDP was 13 trillion dollars, i.e. almost 4 times more. This means that the Indian Rupee, on purchasing power parity (PPP), is worth about 4 times the market price of the Dollar. This means our production costs can be further lowered. Therefore, there is good possibility of increasing exports from India but for this continuous efforts would be required from industry, governments and the society. □□

COP-28 and The Trilemma of Energy

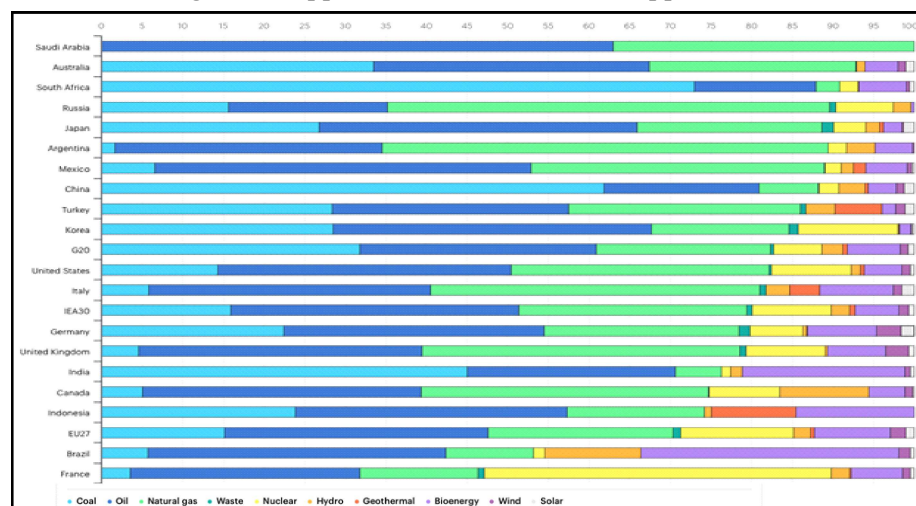


The emphasis should be on circular economy by solid waste management and by minimizing the wastage in day to day life so that the mother earth can be saved from the vagaries of global warming and the pollution in air, water, and soil for a qualitative life for the future generations.

Dr. Dhanpat Ram Agarwal

United Nations International Conference on Climate Change is an annual event of 197 countries which dwell upon various issues on the challenges of global warming on human life for a sustainable development by striking a balance between development and environment conservation. The process started in 1972 Earth Summit at Stockholm and then culminated into formation of United Nations Framework for Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 at Rio De Janeiro earth summit.

COP28 stands for the 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP). It is taking place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates from 30 November to 12 December 2023. The first COP meeting was held in Berlin, Germany in March 1995, the second in Geneva in 1996 and the third in Kyoto, Japan where Kyoto Protocol was signed. The main decision at the Kyoto Protocol was that the 37 developed countries including EU should reduce their carbon emissions as their commitment for the historical damage caused to the atmosphere in the post-industrial era. US was not agreeable to this and withdrew itself from COP -7 following the decision for mandatory reduction in carbon emissions as per COP 6. In 2009, at COP 15, the developed countries promised to contribute US\$100 Billion as climate finance towards combating the damages for mitigation and adaptation for the developing countries which remains a pipe dream even today. In the meantime, the COP21 decided to sign Paris Agreement in 2015 with a roadmap to reduce the carbon emission in the atmosphere by 50 percent from the level of 2019 in order to restrict the earth temperature below 2 per cent by the end of the century and to arrive at net zero emission level by 2050 and maintaining the earth temperature below 1.5 degree Celsius as compared to the average temperature of pre- industrial era up to 1850. Carbon dioxide concentrations have increased substantially since the beginning of the industrial era, rising from an annual average of 280 ppm in the late 1700s to 414 ppm in 2021.



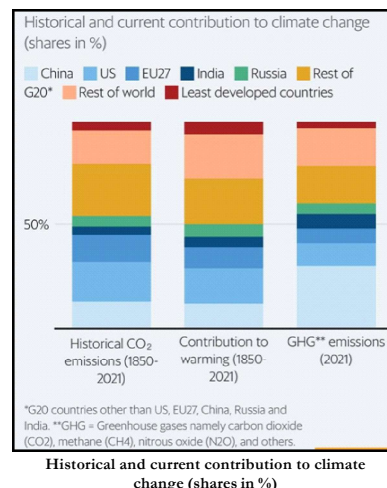
Total energy supply by source, G20 countries, 2019

It is worth noting that the historical accumulation of 2400 gigatons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere since the mid 19th century is primarily by the developed countries. South Asian countries emit just over 1.5 tons of CO₂ per capita per year and Africans about 0.8 tons, while North Americas emit 17 tons per capita per year and Europeans around 8 tons per capita per year. Therefore, it is the primary obligation of the industrialized countries to reduce their emissions and compensate the developing countries and the least developed countries and allowing them special and differential treatment towards their obligations for GHG gas emissions. This transition from carbon economy to green economy will cost US\$275 trillion beginning 2021 to 2050 as per a report prepared by McKinsey.

However, USA is always playing a double game and in COP -25 in 2019 again withdrew from Paris Agreement under Trump Era but has rejoined in 2021 under Biden Administration. There is a five year plan to review the National Determined Commitment (NDC) and India has been fulfilling its obligations as per our commitment and is rather a little ahead and our Prime Minister reiterated in COP 2026 at Glasgow and again in COP -28 in Dubai on the opening day that our Carbon emission intensity in our GDP has come down by 45% and We are committed to use non fossil-fuel for our electricity generation up to 50 percent by 2030. It should be noted that the use of energy from renewable sources such as wind, solar and other biological resources is our priority, and we can achieve the Net Zero target by 2070. Prime Minister Modi has

also announced a Green Credit Initiative through people's participation which will have a positive impact in creating carbon sink across the world which is a little different from carbon credit which is purely on monetary incentives. Carbon sinks are essentially anything that absorbs more carbon from the atmosphere than it releases.

It is also very important to understand that the use of fossil-fuels cannot be equated amongst the countries as per single yardstick. There is difference in the per capita emission in each country and particularly the developed countries' emissions are more than 60% even though their population is less than 15% (please refer Figure 1). Secondly our natural resources are mainly from Coal (approximately 50% of India's energy consumption and 60% by China) and therefore even though we are dependent on oil and gas from imports, we must maintain our Energy Security with our local resources of coal and imported oil and gas to provide the energy for development at affordable prices keeping in mind our obligations for environment and sustainability (please refer Figure 2). This is called the Energy Trilemma, which requires a balance between energy security, energy safety and sustainability. The World Energy



Trilemma Index ("WETT") basically means sustainable development for meeting human needs with the end goal of ensuring well-being and improving quality of life. In brief, the three ingredients of the energy trilemma can be briefly understood as below:

- Energy security: implies the methodology and policy to meet the current and future energy demand of the people in a particular country taking into account management, efficiency, reliability and resilience to shocks that entail supply disruptions.
- Energy equity: implies ability of a nation to provide the population with access to an energy supply with a focus on the affordability of the supply at a reasonable price.
- Energy sustainability: basically means avoiding environmental degradation and the impacts of climate change, thereby, enhancing the productivity and efficiency of generation and distribution of energy through a process of decarbonization and healthy air quality.

Our Prime Minister has stated at COP 28 for maintaining a balance between mitigation and adaptation and said that energy

transition across the world must be “just and inclusive.” He also urged rich countries to transfer technologies to help developing nations combat climate change.

COP28 has operationalized the loss and damage which was initiated at COP27, and Dubai has made a beginning with US\$475 million loss and damage fund with contribution from various countries. The “loss and damage” refers to the estimated economic, non-economic and ecological losses caused due to ongoing and future impacts of climate change.

The major important agenda for COP28 should be as below:

- Dealing with the issues of climate finance;
- Dealing with the critical issues arising from global warming such as melting of glaciers, increasing sea level, drought, floods, landslides, wildfire, changes in

the agroclimatic zones;

- Issues of mitigation that is by adapting technologies and other methods for reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases including methane which is 80 times more dangerous than CO₂ and which contributes to almost 50% of the global warming today;
- Dealing with the issues relation to adaptation to the climate change by providing requisite infrastructure to the climate refugees affected by floods and cyclone in the coastal areas and for building conducive infrastructure and for gradual transition from carbon economy to green economy such as use of renewable energy and use of electrical vehicles and so on;
- Investment in the areas of new technology such as CCUS – Carbon capture, utilization and stor-

age. Reaching net zero will be virtually impossible without CCUS, as per the report of IEA in 2021;

- Dealing with the problem of permafrost thawing.

In summary, the findings of the sixth assessment report of IPCC (International Panel on Climate Change) should be adhered to in true spirits by all the member countries as per the rules and standards set out in the Paris agreement and above all the society should follow the path of sustainable consumption by adapting the environment friendly lifestyle. The emphasis should be on circular economy by solid waste management and by minimizing the wastage in day to day life so that the mother earth can be saved from the vagaries of global warming and the pollution in air, water, and soil for a qualitative life for the future generations. □□

The author is Director, Swadeshi Research Institute & National Co-Convenor, Swadeshi Jagaran Manch.

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The 1937 Act divided India. Will UCC integrate it?

After the 1937 Act was passed, the Muslim League emerged as a Muslim mass party and began challenging the unchallenged Gandhi-led Congress, which had till then total mobilising power over the Indian masses. The 1937 Act triggered powerful forces of Islamic religious and communal passions outside the Congress's influence. As the British and the League had intended, the Act helped the massive shift of the Muslims from the Gandhi-led Congress. The shift was so huge and so swift that even the League, which had till then thought of a federal government for Hindus and Muslims with separation of powers, suddenly shifted gears and asked for partition. The 1937 Act was passed in October 1937 and within just two-and-a-half years, in March 1940, Jinnah passed the Lahore partition resolution.

Article 44 as reaction to the 1937 Act

The UCC will not be written on a clean slate, it will be overwritten on the 1937 Shariat Act. What divided the Hindu and Muslim relations by a jhatka and eventually India itself, was the 1937 Act. The partition could not bridge the divide, and the continuance of the 1937 Act post Independence continues to make the Hindu-Muslim relations drift towards a greater split. The UCC is an attempt to arrest that drift. The BJP's response to the Congress charge that the UCC divides is, "Look at the Constitution, it says pass the UCC." This is a poor response given the seriousness of the UCC to arrest the drift caused by the 1937 Act. The BJP's articulators' understanding of the UCC doesn't seem to go to the deep, sordid historical origins of the UCC.

They do not seem to ask themselves the most obvious question — why did the Founding Fathers of the Constitution engage in strenuous discourse on the need for a Uniform Civil Code for India, which was after all within the legislative power of the Parliament? Had the 1937 Act not been passed and subsisted, the Constituent Assembly would not have wasted its time on the UCC. They could not allow a separate religious law, that too a law that divided India, to subsist. Any keen student of the history of the idea of the UCC in India would have known that the very thought of the UCC in the Constituent Assembly was clearly to undo the 1937 Shariat Act. The trigger for Article 44 mandating UCC under the Directive Principles was the 1937 Act, which divided India. The Founding Fathers did not want to leave it to the political discretion of the lawmakers later to pass or not to pass the UCC, but made it their constitutional duty. The BJP should be pointing to the 1937 Act as the cause that split India and that was why the Founding Fathers had to mandate the UCC as a stitch on the split. The BJP should be charging those who ruled the country for 70 years with having kept the split and wound open, which made Hindu-Muslim relations deteriorate instead of improve in secular India. If the BJP can't tell the nation about the historical background of the UCC, which is the 1937 Act, why will the detractors of the



The BJP's articulators' understanding of the UCC doesn't seem to go to the deep, sordid historical origins of the UCC.

S. Gurumurthy

UCC not ask what is the need for a Uniform Civil Code now when there are scores of other problems facing the nation?

Ambedkar's challenge to Muslim League

The man who fought the case for the UCC in the Constituent Assembly was Dr B R Ambedkar. He lambasted the League members who argued in the Constituent Assembly against a common civil code saying Sharia was immutable for Muslims. He challenged them to deny that up to 1935, the North-West Frontier Province followed not the Sharia Law, but the Hindu Law, and up to 1937 in the rest of India, the United Provinces, the Central Provinces and Bombay, Muslims were largely governed by the Hindu Law in matters of succession. He cited that the Muslims in North Malabar were till that day following the Hindu Marumakkathayam (matrilineal) law. He concluded that no Muslim could say that the framers of the idea of a common civil code had done great violence to the sentiments of the Muslim community. Here are the details of the common bases of civil code among Hindus and Muslims which Dr Ambedkar spoke about.

Common civil law base of Hindu-Muslim society till Oct. 1937

Go back to 1937. From Kerala to UP, from Bengal to North-West Province, whether it was the Hindu-ruled Ajmer-Merwara or Muslim-ruled Awad (Ayodhya), the rules of Inheritance, Succession, Adoption, or Wills were common for Hindus and Muslims. See the list.

In Kerala, the local Hindu law of Marumakkathayam prevailed over the Sharia among



Moplah Muslims. In the succession to Tarawad in Malabar in Kerala, in Muslim families that followed Hindu customs, the Sharia was not applied.

In Punjab and the North-Western Province, now part of Pakistan, local Hindu customs prevailed over the Sharia. In Punjab, the heart of today's Pakistan, the Hindu custom of allowing widows life estate in property prevailed over the Sharia that gave her an absolute share. The customary law of East and West Punjab did not recognise the Sharia on Iddat, which provided for a divorced wife's maintenance only for three months.

In Oudh (Ayodhya) — Muslim-ruled province till 1856 — the custom among the Muslims for the widows to take a life interest as per Hindu law prevailed over the Sharia that gave her specific, absolute share. In East and West Punjab, the custom of adoption prevalent among the Muslims that was contrary to the Sharia, was recognised by courts. The custom of writing Wills among the Muslims in East and West Punjab, which was contrary to the Sharia, too, was recognised by courts. In East Punjab, customs having the force of law were expressly allowed to prevail over the Shariat.

The Oudh Estates Act passed by Muslim rulers expressly exempted Muslims from the application of the Sharia. The Nawab of Oudh legislated local customs to prevail over the Sharia, as in East Punjab. It was identical in Ajmer-Merwara also. In Madhya Pradesh, too, local customs conflicting with the Sharia prevailed. Kambojis of Malerkotla state who were predominantly agricultural, were governed by local custom and not the Sharia in matters of inheritance.

When a large section of people converted from Hinduism to Islam, like the Kutchi Memons and the Khojas, they continued to be governed by Hindu laws. The same principle of Hindu law, as in the case of Memons and the Khojas, was applied to the Sunni Bohras and Molisalam Girisias in Gujarat. Halai Memons, like the Kutchi Memons, were governed by Hindu law.

In Madras province, courts refused to apply the Sharia principle that mandated Muslims to sell their properties only to Muslims. In the Presidency towns of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, local Hindu customs prevailed over the Shariat. In the mofussil areas of Madras, local customs and usages were allowed to prevail over the Shariat.

An interesting tailpiece. Despite the Shariat Act 1937, the Muslims of Cooch Behar were governed only by the Hindu law till, believe it, as recently as July 1, 1980. Only from that date did the government of West Bengal notify the application of the Shariat Act.

Can anyone deny that the aim of the 1937 Act was to cut off the umbilical links that existed between the Hindus and the converts?

Economic integration, social diversity

It was this commonality between Hindus and converted Muslims at the local levels that made them feel like each other was the target of the 1937 Act. The Islamic Sharia consists of two broad aspects. One, the religious and cultural part; and two, the economic part. That part of Sharia which consisted of marriage, divorce and other cultural and social aspects was followed by the converted Muslims even before 1937. So, cultural diversity that enabled the converts to follow their own religious rules existed even before 1937. But the second part, the economic part, consisted of property rights and inheritance rules. As in almost the whole of India, local Hindu customs and usage laws of property and property rights were common to Hindus and Muslims till 1937, which acted as a powerful social and economic link and kept the converted Muslims integrated with their ancestral Hindu society. The idea behind the 1937 Act besides giving separate and formal communal and religious identity to the Muslims, was psychologically to snap the common rules of property and property rights. The strategy behind the Shariat Act 1937 was to break that societal bond.

The 1937 Act turned two brothers with differences into enemies without a common base in just under a decade. See the most powerful example of how this transformation worked.

1937 Act turned brothers into enemies

Jinnah belonged to the Khoja Muslim community, also known as Ismailis. Who were Khojas? Even as late as just a few decades before Jinnah sounded the Islamic partition bugle, the Holy Book of the Khojas, was not the Quran but Dashavatara. In Dashavatara, nine Avatars up to Krishna were common between Khoja Muslims and Hindus. Only the 10th Avatar is different. The tenth Avatar for the Khojas was Ali, the son-in-law of Prophet Mohammed. In their work, *The Aga Khan Case: Religion and Identity in Colonial India* [p55] Purohit, Teena (2001) citing the famous Aga Khan succession case [1866] in the Mumbai High Court confirm that fact. In Dashavatara, part of the Ismaili devotional hymns known as Ginans was the work of Pir Sadrudin, founder of the Khojas and descendent of Prophet's son-in-law, Ali. This was cited as Aga Khan's previous connection with the Prophet through Ali Pir Sadruddin. As Khojas converted, not as individuals, but as a community, it was the Hindu law of succession that applied to them, not the Sharia.

Jinnah, who was born within 10 years of the Bombay High Court judgment that Khojas did not have Quran as their Holy Text, might not have read the Quran but perhaps only Dashavatara as he grew up. He himself followed only the Hindu law till 1937. He ensured

even in the 1937 Act he would have the rights of a Hindu to adopt and also to write a Will. And yet he turned the bitterest enemy of the Hindus and unleashed a bloodbath when he called for direct action in 1946 to achieve partition. Like Jinnah, later the grandson of Aga Khan [Aga Khan III] played a prominent part in the Muslim League and in the creation of Pakistan. Like in the case of Khojas, Kutchi Memon Muslims who, too, were similarly converted as a group, the Hindu law, not the Islamic one, applied. Tiger Memon and Yakub Memon, whose parents and grandparents would have only followed the Hindu laws, bombed and killed as many as 900 innocents and maimed 2000 in 1993. The trigger for this massive shift to hostility and enmity was the 1937 Shariat Act.

The UCC was conceptualised by the Founding Fathers to ensure that post Independence, Hindu-Muslim relations are not ruined like in the pre-partition days by the continuation of the 1937 Act. Contrary to the constitutional mandate, the 1937 law has been allowed to fester for too long. The law that divided Bharat into India and Pakistan and which the Constitution makers wanted undone, is now being glorified by pseudo-seculars as integral to the religious rights of Muslims. This is an utter perversion. The UCC is an attempt – a belated one though – to right that historic wrong. It calls for deep national introspection dating back to 1937. Undoubtedly the 1937 Act divided India. Will the UCC integrate it? □□

S Gurumurthy: Editor, Thuglak, and commentator on economic and political affairs
<https://www.newindianexpress.com/opinions/columnists/s-gurumurthy/2023/jul/07/the-1937-act-divided-india-will-mc-integrate-it-2592189.html>

West Africa strives for sovereignty



African nations are increasingly turning towards Russia and China for complementary skills and services, in lieu of the European nations and the United States, a development that could potentially inaugurate a new chapter for African nations.
Sandhya Jain

Showcasing its new-found autonomy after July's military coup which led to a tense standoff with France and threats of military intervention by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Niger has commissioned a 2,000 km-long crude oil pipeline linking the country's oilfield at Agadem to the Benin port of Seme. The pipeline will allow Niger to sell its crude on the international market for the first time.

Gabon, another former French colony, ended the nearly six-decade-long dictatorship of the Bongo family on August 30, 2023. Gen. Brice Oligui Nguema, head of the Republican Guard, cancelled the results of the disputed national elections and closed the borders. The ousted Ali Bongo was President for 14 years (2009-2023), succeeding his father, Omar Bongo, who ruled for 42 years (1967-2009). The coup followed growing frustration over authoritarian rule, capture of resources by predatory elites, and deep inequalities despite the country's wealth.

Nguema, who became interim president, is reputedly backed by the United States as Washington feels that France can no longer protect Western interests in its former colonies. Gabon is rich in gold, diamonds, uranium, oil, gas, manganese, niobium, iron ore, timber, and hydropower. The military reinstated foreign media that had been banned by Ali Bongo's government during the recent election.

The United States, European Union and France condemned the coup; Nigerian President Bola Tinubu lamented the "autocratic contagion" spreading across the continent. The Commonwealth partially suspended Gabon and asked the country to hold credible elections within two years. The African Union condemned the coup, called for a peaceful return to constitutional order and the safety of the ousted President Ali Bongo. China urged peaceful dialogue and the security of President Ali Bongo; Russia called for stability. The French mining company, Eramet, suspended operations in Gabon, but Orano continues to operate its uranium mine in Niger.

In Niger, events took an interesting turn in September 2023 with the US Air Force commander for Europe and Africa revealing that Washington has resumed intelligence and surveillance missions in the country after talks with the military authorities. The Agadez base is critical to spy on Sahel and especially Libya. The Acting Deputy Secretary of State Victoria Nuland had visited Niamey in early August. This signalled that the threatened invasion by ECOWAS would be called off in exchange for the US retaining its two drone bases, thus also indirectly curtailing Russian influence.

Libya became critical for the West when Col. Muammar Gaddafi mooted a pan-African currency pegged to gold (gold dinar) in lieu of the CFA franc, after

the 2008 global financial crisis. Libya then had nearly 150 tons of gold, in its own vaults. This was anathema to the West and in 2011, the country was bombed to smithereens and Gaddafi killed; in March 2011, France recognized the rebel National Transitional Council as the legitimate government of Libya.

Niger's coup had deeply divided the ECOWAS as members opposed invading members of the regional bloc, fearing it could set a precedent for future interventions against them; they also feared that failing to act against military-led members could embolden potential plotters within their own armed forces. Equally, there were apprehensions that extra-regional players (France and the US) could make ECOWAS a New Cold War proxy for enforcing their "rules-based order". The African Union did not want a repetition of events in Libya, or entrenchment of extra-regional players.

However, plans for intervention fizzled out as Algeria denied France's request to use its airspace (August 22, 2022). In Ghana, head of ECOWAS, the Trades Union Congress (TUC), the largest trade union body, warned against military intervention to reverse the coup in Niger (August 21, 2023). Mali leader Assimi Goïta warned that if ECOWAS dared to invade Niamey, then Mali would simultaneously "militarily invade Abuja, the capital of Nigeria, to reinstate the rightful winner of the 2023 elections. We are fully aware of the true victor of the Presidential elections."

Eventually, France toned down its confrontation by asking its ambassador to leave Niamey as requested by the junta (September 27) and withdrew French troops. This

signals the end of French influence in West Africa with Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger and now Gabon, run by army officers after coups.

Niger proposes to build State wealth, as opposed to extraction by foreign agencies and comprador elites. It has raised the export prices of uranium from 0.8 euros to €200 (\$185) per kilogram. Forty per cent of all raw materials for the French nuclear industry come from Niger.

The Algerian company Sonatrach had found oil in Al-Kafra region in 2022, which could take the volume of Niger's oil production to above 100,000 barrels per day, from the current 20,000. Niger plans to reach 200,000 barrels by 2025. The two oil wells, KFR-1 and KFRN-1, have proven oil reserves of 168 million barrels and 100 million barrels respectively, according to a statement by Sonatrach.

A critical issue regarding Niger pertains to the Trans-Sahara gas pipeline. Europe, especially Germany, desperately needs an alternative to Russian gas. Nigeria has reserves of 5.7 trillion cubic meters, but cannot supply countries across the Mediterranean without Niger providing transit.

Burkina Faso

Russian Deputy Defense Minister Yunus-Bek Yevkurov visited Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on August 31, 2023, for cooperation in the fields of economy, military and nuclear energy. Plans to train Burkinabe cadets, officers and pilots in Russia have been initiated. The visit was a follow-up to talks between President Ibrahim Traore and Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Russia-Africa summit in St. Petersburg in July. The Russian mercenary group, Wagner, has

a presence in many African nations, including Mali.

African nations are increasingly turning towards Russia and China for complementary skills and services, in lieu of the European nations and the United States, a development that could potentially inaugurate a new chapter for African nations.

In September, Burkina Faso announced building a new international airport in the capital city of Ouagadougou, to replace the current one built by France. It has begun nationalising all French 'owned' industries and sectors to ensure it benefits the people of Burkina Faso.

On September 26, 2023, Burkina Faso's security and intelligence agencies repulsed an attempted coup backed by NATO, according to a statement by the military regime. No details were given, and the alleged plotters were not identified, though some arrests were made. The attempt came soon after Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali signed an agreement to create the "Union of Sahel States" for defense and mutual assistance in the interests of the citizens of the member states. It may be recalled that Burkina Faso's charismatic anti-colonial leader Thomas Sankara was assassinated in 1987.

Burkina Faso asked the French security advisor to the French embassy, Mr Emmanuel Pasquier, and all the military personnel to leave the country in September, accusing them of subversive activities. It informed Paris that it was ending and closing its military mission to train its military in France with immediate effect (September 14, 2023).

[Continued on page no. 30]

Dattopant Thengadi: The man whose ideas inspired PM Modi's economic platforms



The Modi government's economic programmes of Atmanirbhar Bharat, universal healthcare, and poverty alleviation through economic empowerment all owe a great deal to the economic tenets of one of the tallest RSS pracharakas.
Anilesh S. Mahajan

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses back-to-back rallies in the battle-intense campaigns of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Rajasthan, elaborating on his regime's promise of providing universal healthcare and energy access, as well as poverty alleviation based on economic empowerment. Over his two tenures, PM Modi may have executed many of these programmes—unified under the motto Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Prayas. However, all this have its roots in the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's life-time pracharak, the hugely influential Dattopant Thengadi's (1920-2004) economic ideas. This November 10, the Sangh Parivar celebrates the 103rd birth anniversary of Thengadi.

Though in its first term the Modi government maintained some distance from RSS affiliates Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) and Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS)—Thengadi had a hand in setting them up—in his second term Modi adopted as policy Thengadi's ideas of Atmanirbhar Bharat as well as exhorted Indians to embrace the 'vocal on local' movement that promotes the adoption of local products. However, a lot needs to be done to improve the lives and working conditions of local entrepreneurs. There also needs to be a push for rural entrepreneurship by reforming cooperative institutions. Thengadi's ideas can also be traced in the Modi government's method of disinvestment, where most Public Sector Units are sometimes listed on the stock market rather than strategically sold to corporate houses.

In his works, Thengadi never opposed private investment but pushed for a larger role for MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises). He also vehemently opposed crony capitalism as well as the government's getting into businesses. On these principles, he opposed PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee's push for FDI in retail, media, insurance and other vital sectors along with disinvestment of public sector enterprises. All this separated the Sangh Parivar's economic worldview, as propagated by Thengadi and termed the 'Third Way' by him, from the capitalism of the West as well as from Communist economic principles.

Dattopant Thengadi was a key RSS pracharak—fit to be mentioned alongside Eknath Ranade, H.V. Sheshadri, Bhaurao Deoras, Nana Palkar and Nanaji Deshmukh who shaped the Sangh's philosophy.

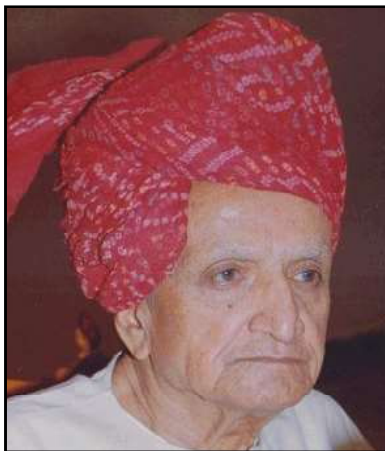
In 1998, after the BJP-led NDA attained power at the Centre, organisations like the BKS, SJM and BMS wanted to implement their economic principles. However, this was thwarted by Vajpayee, who was running a coalition government with socialist allies as well as those with a deep anti-RSS stand. This created open rifts. The Thengadi-led RSS affiliates opposed Vajpayee's economic policies.

Dattopant Thengadi held firmly on to economic ideas that he had fashioned and refined over a lifetime. Likewise, he chose to confront PM Vajpayee—who was taking strides to further open up the economy for foreign capital—multiple times. The most famous instance of this came at a rally held in Delhi's Ram Leela Ground and organised by the RSS affiliate Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh. Then in his

80s, Thengadi challenged the government's free market approach and took on then finance minister Yashwant Sinha, calling his acts 'criminal'. "Woh arth mantri nahi hai, anarth mantri hai (He's not the finance minister, but a minister for disaster)," Thengadi had said as he tore into the Centre's policies. Sinha immediately went to Vajpayee to offer his resignation, but it was rejected. However, Thengadi didn't relent and kept on exerting pressure. Sinha eventually had to be removed from the finance ministry a year later. Sinha, along with the then disinvestment minister Arun Shourie, were in Thengadi's hit-list for pushing the strategic sales of PSUs as disinvestment, rather than listing them in the stock market.

Devoting his entire life to honing the RSS's economic philosophy, Dattopant Thengadi never turned himself into an urbanite, as many trade unionists of his time did, nor did he espouse a 'village versus city' approach. In his recent attack on 'wokeism' at his Vijaya Dashami speech, Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat tried to evoke a similar philosophy when he attacked 'cultural Marxists'. In his works, which many of his contemporaries validate, Thengadi never believed in the distinction between classes, or between the rich and the poor, but stood for collective national interests. Thus, he privileged nationalism over 'class hatred' and 'class struggle'. His idea of a convergence, not conflict, of classes, came from Hindutva and nationalism, and thus stood diametrically opposite Marxist theories' insistence on a class struggle.

In 1955, when Vajpayee, Lal Krishna Advani and Balraj Madhok were working with Thengadi and



Deen Dayal Upadhyay to set up the Bharatiya Jana Sangh—predecessor of the BJP—Thengadi was tasked to set up the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh based on the principles of Hindutva and nationalism and eschewing Marxist-Lenninist ideas. Today, with a strength of over 10 million members, it outnumbers their rival trade unions INTUC, CITU and AITUC put together.

At a time when Marxist ideas held sway among trade union leaders, to be followed by a period of Naxalism, Thengadi held firm to the idea that the fight is against injustice, not a particular class. This builder of institutions and shaper of ideas built the largest union of agriculturists in India—the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh. Later, in the 1990s, when the country decided to open its economy up, he floated another platform, the Swadeshi Jagran Manch, to speak up on behalf of indigenous economic players and continually keep a nationalist economic philosophy relevant.

Thengadi was a member of Rajya Sabha for two tenures, from 1964 to 1976. During the Emergency, after the arrests of RSS stalwarts and secretaries of the anti-Emergency Struggle Committee Nanaji Deshmukh and Ravindra Verma, Thengadi took up the chal-

lenge of stitching together the Janata Party. Along with BMS, BKS and SJM, he was a founding member of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, Akhil Bharatiya Adhivakta Parishad, Grahak Panchayat and Bharatiya Vichara Kendra. Today, all these outfits provide cadre to the BJP and mobilise policy implementation.

RSS affiliates believe that currently communication with the Centre is better in comparison to the Vajpayee era and that the Modi government is giving more space to their leaders—mostly Thengadi's protégés—in policy making, their implementation and even as critics.

In 2021, Union minister for Telecom, IT and Railways, Ashwani Vaishnaw released a postal stamp of this RSS ideologue. In 2019, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat gave a special lecture at Delhi's Ambedkar Bhawan to start the centenary celebrations of Thengadi.

The BJP, in more than four decades of its existence, had faced criticism for not been able to clearly determine its economic philosophy. It has led to open disagreement with the RSS and its affiliate organisations, who follow the trajectory set by Dattopant Thengadi. That conflict seems to have been largely settled, as the Modi government is largely in concurrence with Thengadi's beliefs. After the pandemic, PM Modi officially adopted Dattopant's vision of swadeshi, as the government's motto of self-reliance. The good thing about Thengadi's ideas was that he allowed them to evolve over time, along with global developments. In the post-pandemic world, his beliefs are holding their own. □□

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india-today-insight/story/dattopant-thengadi-the-man-whose-ideas-inspired-pm-modis-economic-platforms-2461075-2023-11-09>

Higher Education: New import

Of late the Indian education system at the higher education is rapidly evolving. This is on account of a number of catalytic factors. Thus students have begun to expect more, evolving competition in this sector among existing public and new private sector players, availability of global collaborations, sharper focus on research, especially quality research, increased assessment of these institutions by bodies like NAAC, NIRF, AICTE, UGC, etc., complaints from the employers about unemployability of the graduating class, etc. etc.

In pursuit of greener pastures (better education and consequent employment opportunities abroad) increasing number of students have been emigrating for higher education. Over 7.5 lakh Indians migrated for education in 2022; this number was nearly 5.86 lakh in 2019. And this despite foreign degrees becoming more expensive. Notably, the lure of foreign education among Chinese students is dwindling while for Indian students there is no looking inward.

In this background foreign higher educational institutions opening campuses in India is an exciting moment for our education system. They could certainly offer new stimulus to studies here. Indian students would receive the education available in some of the best universities abroad sans pinching of pockets or change of location. Presumably it would also turn India into an educational hub with international staff and students from all over the world – in pursuit of quality education which is more accessible, financially and geographically.

Thus this may be the beginning of a new phase in the Indian higher education space. Over time, marquee institutions will aim at setting up Indian campus to not only accommodate Indian students (who currently disproportionately sit on benches occupied by all foreign students) but also students from nearby countries. Indian faculty will gain in terms of getting opportunity to learn from best practices adopted by these institutions. Not only this, while these institutions are



While in principle welcome to FHEIs in India should receive an applause, the real gains will be dependent on their working to mutual advantage.

Dr. Jaya Kakkar



here, they will collaborate with their Indian counterparts as also Indian industry and produce research and innovation relevant to Indian setting. In short the gains would be to students, academia, industry, economy, and society. There is a real potential that India begins to ascend in the global higher education landscape.

And yet, this excitement needs to be tempered with worlds of caution. There are many unanswered questions and debatable issues.

For example, the regulations say that a foreign higher education institution (FHEI) would have to be among the 500 best in global rankings, or in subject wise ranks. But there is not one ranking agency. In the event, due to this vagueness it is quite possible that less than the best universities gain entry with the sole motive of mining money. Surely that is not what NEP has bargained for.

There is a possibility that average fee for higher education may increase in India. If FHEIs can repatriate money to their principals, they can engage in profiteering. Not only this, this will also motivate the domestic institutions directly competing with them (NITs, IITs, IIMs, best law schools) to hike their fees. And if these foreign universities are not allowed to make money, why should they be interested in setting up campuses in India?

The government has tried to ensure that only serious players enter India through this route. Thus it has been mandated that franchisees, study or learning centres may not be permitted since they operate with the sole purpose of marketing for enrolling students for the main campus. But then if these 'se-

rious' players poach on domestically available competitive and competent faculty members the complete autonomy given to these FHEIs will tantamount to little gain in terms of 'additional' intellectual gain. But, on the other hand, the local talent will face indirect competition from the foreign faculty members and will aspire to train better. What will be the 'new normal', it is difficult to predict.

On paper UGC (alone) will scrutinize applications for setting up a campus. The FHEIs will have their own recruitment and admission policies, fee structures, courses, will award their own degree, and will conduct research. UGC will have the power to monitor the courses, quality of education, its suitability, the number of awarded degree, and graduating students. In general the best foreign institutions feel diffident in setting up overseas campuses since they find it difficult to import (into the host country) their desired ethos and traditions. In addition, the UGC scrutiny might not be welcome for them. UGC will have the power to suspend or withdraw permission if, say, for example, it opines that the course hurts India's sovereignty and security. But this is a very subjective assessment. Likewise it is not clear how the UGC will ascertain the 'quality' of the course taught – what will be the parameters to judge and who will be appointed to judge this 'quality'.

Perhaps a collaborative model could benefit both India and the foreign countries partners. These foreign institutions are being invited under regulation (by the UGC) to set up and operate campuses of FHEIs in India. This regulation insists that an FHEI should have an

independent campus with physical, academic and research infrastructure and facilities to conduct academic and research programs. But why would a FHEI do so, other than when it is doubly assured on its return on investment? That is why it would have been better if the government would have allowed a collaborative campus model which would have benefited both partners.

One aim behind inviting these institutions – there are only 333 FHEIs in the world, according to one estimate – is to eventually make India an attractive global study destination. Will it happen? Well, it depends on many imponderables. One, which FHEIs accept our invitation? Two, what programs do they decide to offer? Three, whether they would engage internationally acclaimed faculty or local talent? Four, how would the students be selected? Five, what quality parameters will be deployed? Six, how will be the quality maintained? The list is rather long.

At the end of it all, there is no denying the fact that the country needs considerable inputs and investment in education to ensure world class education. Similarly research output will certainly get a quantum boost with foreign help. The regulation to invite FHEIs would help if Indian students get quality education at significantly lower cost. At the same time if it would mean poaching of students (who could have gone to IITs/IIMs, etc.) and faculty (who would have taught there) by these institutions, it is debatable how much of a net gain would occur to Indian education.

Well, it is early days to pronounce a verdict. □□

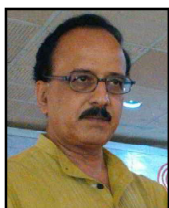
Formulate strategy to move away from paddy

Even as Delhi has deferred the implementation of the odd-even scheme, there is no end to the political slugfest over air pollution in the national capital. Farmers have been caught in the crossfire. “There cannot be a political battle every time... Delhi cannot be made to go through this year after year,” the Supreme Court observed.

While the anger is justified in view of the high level of air toxicity in the National Capital Region, the vexed problem cannot be addressed simply by strict policing and deployment of flying squads to check farm fires. It requires a better understanding of the reasons behind the farm crisis and appropriate steps that need to be taken to tackle the menace of stubble burning. Considering that Punjab alone produces 220 lakh tonnes of paddy stubble every year, which is too huge a volume to be taken care of either by the government or the private sector or both, there is no way to avert the public health crisis created by farm fires without involving the farming community. Farmers are not the villains of the story, as shrieking TV anchors have tried to convey; instead, they can be partners in extinguishing the fires.

In this openly played-out tug of war, with political accusations intensifying, the biggest casualty is the sidelining of crop diversification. Despite all the talk and efforts being made for crop diversification, the area under paddy in Punjab has, in fact, expanded, reaching almost 32 lakh hectares.

At this critical juncture, as several experts advocate for a shift away from paddy in the long run, it requires an effective policy design that outlines the diversification roadmap. Casually demanding the cessation of paddy procurement in Punjab, with the thought that farmers will be compelled to stop paddy cultivation if they don't receive the minimum support price (MSP), is myopic. Those who



Farmers are not opposed to any move to diversify from the cropping pattern. Give them a viable alternative and they will surely adopt it.

Devinder Sharma



If Rs 15 lakh crore of bad corporate loans in the past 10 years can be written off, and another Rs 3.45 lakh crore outstanding with 16,000 wilful defaulters (people who have the money but don't pay back) can be practically waived under a compromise formula with the banks, there is no reason why financial constraints should come in the way of helping the farming community.

make such statements have little idea that an anticipated decrease in rice production this year by 3-4 million tonnes has already compelled the Centre to ban the export of non-basmati rice and impose duties on basmati exports. The phase-out strategy must, therefore, be carefully considered.

Unlike the industry, it should be clear that agriculture cannot be expected to close its operations one day and start afresh after a few months. It requires a well-thought-out policy mix and an action plan that the Centre and the state governments have to collectively implement. It isn't as easy as saying: stop paddy procurement and provide MSP for millets. Agriculture doesn't operate that way. Let it also be clear that farmers are not opposed to any move to diversify from the existing cropping pattern. Give them a viable alternative and they will surely adopt it.

Meanwhile, the management of crop residue through industrial consumption has already led to the establishment of a significant number of biomass and fuel plants. Approximately 50 per cent of the total crop residue, roughly about 110 lakh tonnes, is claimed to be taken care of by ex-situ management. Further, the Punjab Pollution Control Board is under pressure to set up more fuel-based industries to incorporate

available biomass. The planning of more such industries in the years to come implies an increasing dependence on paddy straw.

Similarly, Punjab already has 1.37 lakh machines for stubble management. On an average, for every 24 hectares under paddy, a machine is available. The plan is to make available one machine for every hectare. A number of machines that were supplied earlier on subsidy have now become redundant. Now, the demand is for the baler, which costs at least Rs 18 lakh. This begs the question: Why were the balers not promoted earlier? After all, this machine is not a new invention.

With more than 5 lakh tractors, along with their accessory implements, in operation, against the actual need for 1 lakh tractors, the introduction of new farm machinery for stubble management has added to the machine load. This has already transformed Punjab into a junkyard for machines, and in the years to come, the state may face another problem. Farm manufacturers as well as the biomass-driven fuel and energy units will need a continuous flow of raw material. No industry would like the raw material to be in short supply. Simply put, stubble management practices do pose a setback to crop diversification.

Going beyond politics, I think the time has come to devise a two-point strategy to stop farm fires in the immediate future and draw out an environmentally sustainable, diversified crop plan for the long run.

Firstly, although the number of farm fires is decreasing, farmers themselves have been saying that they would be able to manage stubble in situ if a small incentive covering the additional costs is provided to them, and that too well in time. The request by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann to provide farmers with an incentive of Rs 2,500 per acre — with the Centre contributing Rs 1,500, and

Rs 1,000 to be borne together by the Punjab and Delhi governments — makes economic sense. If the incentive is distributed among farmers in advance in August and implemented effectively, it can put a stop to farm fires from the next year.

If Rs 15 lakh crore of bad corporate loans in the past 10 years can be written off, and another Rs 3.45 lakh crore outstanding with 16,000 wilful defaulters (people who have the money but don't pay back) can be practically waived under a compromise formula with the banks, there is no reason why financial constraints should come in the way of helping the farming community.

Secondly, the Centre and the state should formulate a time-bound strategy to move away from paddy. This strategy must include an economic design, procurement policy and adequate infrastructure to make it not only sustainable but also profitable and economically viable for farmers. □□

Devinder Sharma: Food & Agriculture Specialist
<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/formulate-strategy-to-move-away-from-paddy-561467/>

In-house resource Development for Emerging Organizations

The Bharat has the highest number of youths today in the world. It's a paradox that on the one hand the companies look for talent and other hand our youth struggle for work. The job providers look for talent with having higher learning curve. This is because there is a gap between the talent required for a specific job profile and the training provided in academic institutions.

The New Education Policy has incorporated these fallacies and it will take decades before the efforts of these changes will start bearing fruits. Currently employers rely heavily on the learning curve and the selection is based on aptitude tests and other psychometric tests. An individual having a higher learning curve is easier and more economical to train, i.e., such people learn fast. In the technology-driven economy, companies need people with higher learning curves to adapt fast. But this civilization is a blessing in disguise. It means that despite having poor performance of our educational institutions in world ranking we can cope well by harnessing our talents with higher learning curve. Even illiterate who use WhatsApp to do voice message and participate in financial transactions using BHIM UPI supports the belief that Bhartiya has a higher learning curve. Moreover, the learning curve has little to do with the educational qualification.

We can see the success story of Zoho Corporation. It succeeded as it strategized to tap the high learning curve of rural youths, trained them well for a software company in their own ZOHO School, employed them at their home location, and this way earned favorable human resources at a comparatively cheaper rate. This business model is a win-win situation for the organization, for the youths with higher learning curves, for society, and for the environment. It is helpful to the environment as it reduces the burden on city utilities. The Zoho Corporation has offices at several locations worldwide but the most talked about office is run



In today's boundary-less economics, the policymakers and the business leaders have to consistently think to preserve economic democracy and business democracy apart from other varieties of extensive list of democracies.
Alok Singh



from a village in Tamil Nadu. The portfolio of human resources associated with this organization is a ray of hope for other companies and organizations that can't compete with deep-pocket competitors to hire the best-educated talent in their respective sectors.

The other business model is collaborating either with the financial support providers or with the technology providers. Providing equity in the business to the financial support providers is a costly business model. The deep-pocket individuals do not allow others to survive. Such entities can afford to offer deep discounts and kill the small players. There is a lack of law with sufficient teeth to check such businesses who aim to kill small businesses despite having regulating bodies like the Competition Commission. These small companies and new startups can't provision fees for the costly lawyers and legal firms to defend them and hence the regulators need to develop more teeth to defend startups and small businesses. We have seen that many of our successful startups slowly fall into the trap of foreign technology providers or foreign financiers.

Today technology-driven companies like e-commerce or social media platforms have become a nightmare to regulate, and even their influence on democratic processes is a threat to democracy itself. The business model to collaborate with the technology providers is like hand-holding and should be welcomed with proper due diligence.

There is another success story of the Indian Institute of Ahmedabad (IIMA) to grow on its own. There was a time when IIM A

The IIM A has been successful on its own, the Bharat Biotech has been successful on its own, the Zoho Corporation is successful on its own and these are sufficient illustrations that we need to train our own in-house talent to meet our own requirements.

roped in Harvard Business School to establish its management education. But the experience was not healthy. People from these foreign institutes visited Bharat as a holiday trip and spent most of their time on non-value-adding activities to IIM A, all at the cost of domestic taxpayer's money. The experience of IIMA in its success and the way the foreign institutes affiliated people treated it is well documented in the book titled: Brick by Red Brick: Ravi J. Matthai and the Making of IIM Ahmedabad, authored by T.T. Ram Mohan. The leadership of Vikram Sarabhai and Ravi J. Matthai realized sixty years ago that foreigners won't help us stand on our own feet even for establishing an academic institute. We have to rely on our own talent and slowly but steadily we will achieve what we aspire for.

The dependency on foreign capital, foreign technology, and foreign training can be considered for temporary survival but not for a sustainable future. The charity is rooted in our tradition only and no other tradition believes in one world, one family, one earth. We

have started educating the world but we have to be careful for our own people. The out-of-the-box business strategy of Zoho Corporation is learning for such startups and small companies. That is rely on local talent, train them, provide them work at their location and hence retain them, and grow together.

The IIM A has been successful on its own, the Bharat Biotech has been successful on its own, the Zoho Corporation is successful on its own and these are sufficient illustrations that we need to train our own in-house talent to meet our own requirements.

Small, new, and aspiring organizations should rely on trustful business partners to move ahead. Once the trust is gained the strength to challenge the troubles in the path to sustainability becomes doable. The role of financial equity, sweat equity, technology equity, marketability equity, supply chain, human resource equity, and other stakeholders need to be assured that the business in which they are participating will be trustful to them all. Such business models can be labeled with many names, one name can be the cooperativities of corporates, i.e., cooperative culture to replace the corporate culture. It will take care of environment, social, and governance (ESG) and we won't need a separate framework and exclusive regulator for ESG.

In today's boundary-less economics, the policymakers and the business leaders have to consistently think to preserve economic democracy and business democracy apart from other varieties of extensive list of democracies. □□

(Alok Singh is a Fellow of the Indian Institute of Management Indore and a freelancer academician).

Role of India in Shaping Global Dynamics



India's growth is not just an economic phenomenon; it is a transformation that will shape the geopolitical landscape of the 21st century. With its growing economic clout, strategic location, and soft power, India is poised to play a leading role in shaping a more peaceful, prosperous, and equitable world.

Dr. Sunita Dahiya

In recent times, the confluence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and the ongoing Israel-Hamas war has set off a chain reaction worldwide, leading to inflation, hunger, and economic slowdown. Many nations find themselves grappling with debt and financial instability, while supply chain issues have prompted strategic shifts such as decoupling, friend-shoring, relocating, and de-risking. Concurrently, major powers are embroiled in prolonged conflicts of various intensities, witnessing a resurgence in nuclear concerns. Amidst this complex global landscape, India's emergence has become a focal point of international discourse.

India, the biggest democracy in the world and a rapidly growing economic powerhouse, is getting ready to become more important globally. Because of its huge population, strategic location, and growing economic strength, India is going to change how the world works in the 21st century.

For the past 20 years, India's economy has been growing at more than 7% every year, making it one of the fastest-growing economies globally. This growth has led to more international trade, investment, and technological progress, solidifying India's role as a major player in the world economy. Now, India's economy is larger than that of France and Britain, and it's the fifth largest in the world, only behind the US, China, Japan, and Germany. Unlike these countries, India faced many challenges since gaining independence. It was poor and divided due to colonialism and religious differences. India also had to deal with natural disasters, unfriendly neighbors, sanctions, technology restrictions, and being isolated on the world stage. Despite all these difficulties, India overcame them with resilience, its democratic system, and hard work. It embraced economic reforms and technology at the right times, becoming self-sufficient in food, space, and nuclear capabilities. India reached a point of significant growth and development that makes it unstoppable.

India's future looks promising and is moving forward quickly. The only question now is how fast it will continue to grow. The world needs to recognize India as a new and important player in the global arena.

India faced significant security challenges that hindered its growth for a long time. Pakistan was a persistent troublemaker, attempting to destabilize and harm India. Countering Pakistan's threats and terrorism required a considerable investment of resources and energy. However, India changed its strategy at the beginning of the century, choosing to focus on its own development and ignoring Pakistan. The internal problems of Pakistan will likely keep it occupied for an extended period, freeing India from the burden of constant security concerns.

Another factor in India's security landscape was China, viewed as a formidable

ble rival capable of obstructing India's progress. However, events in 2020, such as border tensions and the pandemic, boosted India's confidence to face China. China's demographic decline and aging population will diminish its power and potential, making it a threat but not a barrier to India's growth. India is now prepared to take on global challenges.

India's ascent is often compared to China's, but it's crucial to recognise that a democratic India cannot emulate an autocratic China, nor should it try to. India's rise will happen on its own terms, shaped by its diverse culture, values, ethics, norms, and democratic traditions. Despite criticism, India's democracy is robust, demonstrated by leaders campaigning in remote areas for local elections, reflecting the vibrancy of Indian democracy. Political parties, including the current ruling party, must deliver results or face replacement, emphasising a focus on competitive economics, growth, and social justice.

However, India faces its share of challenges, including divisive politics, ethnic and religious tensions, inadequate education, poverty, and energy deficiency. It remains vulnerable to climate change and disasters, with disparities in resource distribution. The world must accept this complex reality rather than confront or lecture India. The optimistic trend is that India is changing at its own pace, emerging as a potential economic superpower. While some areas have advanced, others lag behind, but the overall trajectory is positive.

Reports suggest that India's rise may be seen as a threat, sparking speculation about the kind of power it will become. The answer

lies within the people of India, not in international corridors of power. Every Indian government will adopt a geopolitical stance aligned with its people, circumstances, and interests, shaped by past experiences and future prospects. India's ties with China will always be hostile until the border dispute is settled. Moreover, as per my estimate, the border dispute will not be resolved in this century at least. Therefore, the rivalry and antagonism between India and China will persist. In terms of size and scale, India is the only country that can compete with China. China is aware of that. Its actions and behaviour towards India have a clear motive of eroding India's strategic confidence. Its aggression and assertiveness along the Line of Actual Control or in the Indian Ocean Region clearly show this intention. India is ready for this mentally and otherwise. It also understands that it has to deal with the Chinese threat on its own when the situation demands. It is working towards that firmly. However, it also recognises that China is too big to be restrained by any single country. Hence, a strategic partnership with the USA and other like-minded countries is essential. The outcome is QUAD. QUAD is the only group that can curb China and its growing influence in the Indo Pacific region and beyond. Similarly, if Russia becomes too close to China, India will keep some distance from it. In all this, one should also remember that India is a key member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. It gives India an insider role in countering/containing China on a platform that many see as the launch pad for Xi Jinping's attempt to create a Sino Centric world order. India is

the pillar for establishing and maintaining a rules based order.

Another significant factor to consider is that India is not aiming to be a dominant power. Its strength lies in earning trust from other nations. Recent feedback from ASEAN nations and Africa suggests that they trust India to make the right decisions. Even in the Middle East, despite internal differences among nations, there has been unconditional acceptance of India. The Indian Diaspora in these regions has played a crucial role in building trust for India. Additionally, Indian troops serving under the UN flag have contributed to this trust through successful operations worldwide over the past 75 years. India's legacy of non-alignment further sets it apart, creating a unique level of trust in the Global South. Look at it from any angle, as India rises, it will be at the crossroads of critical geopolitical issues that include global food security, climate change, supply chain stability, maintaining global peace and a rules based international order. A rising India has a huge role to play in this scenario. India's geo-strategic location, professional military, huge labour force, a vast consumer market and a stable political climate along with the genuine aspirations of its people make it a great stabilising power as it rises.

India's growth is not just an economic phenomenon; it is a transformation that will shape the geopolitical landscape of the 21st century. With its growing economic clout, strategic location, and soft power, India is poised to play a leading role in shaping a more peaceful, prosperous, and equitable world. □□

Dr. Sunita Dahiya: Founder, AAINA Foundation

Embracing Swadeshi: The Tale of Toys

As we travel through the corridors of our memories, the kaleidoscope of childhood unveils a myriad of toys that colored our early years. Do you recall the simplicity and joy encapsulated in those toys? Take a moment to ponder over the toys that adorned your youthful days. Think about the toys your parents and grandparents cherished during their childhood. What stories do these toys whisper about our heritage, culture, and values? The answer is probably nil. Remarkably, in just 2 to 3 decades, our toy landscape underwent a seismic shift, inundated by foreign imports. This is not solely about trade; it deeply affects our children's cognitive, physical, social, and emotional growth.

Often overlooked is the profound impact of these imports on fostering a cultural disconnection and instilling an early sense of inferiority toward our heritage during a child's formative years. It's unsurprising when a child proudly displays their assortment of Barbie dolls while concealing the beautifully crafted wooden *Mokshapatha/Mokshapata* (loosely translated as snake and ladder game). Who is responsible for this? There can be many held responsible for this.

The World of Toy Making in India

India holds a rich heritage in toy-making, spanning back 5000 years. Unearthed artifacts from Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro reveal ancient toys—miniature carts, dancing women—reflecting our enduring legacy. Our toys serve as custodians of storytelling, humbly carrying forward life perspectives and values from our ancestors. These toys beautifully depict tales from Ramayana, Mahabharata, and many other Puranas. The most unique feature of the traditional indigenous toys of India is that they meet all standards of sustainability and eco-friendliness. Indigenous toys are made locally by artisans and the skills of making toys are transferred from one generation to another in the family or community.

Promoting the purchase of locally-made toys is vital. Additionally, actively selecting toys that honor our Bharateeya traditions is equally significant.

Dr. Shivkumar M. Belli



Across India, each state has a unique heritage in toy crafting, showcasing local cultures. For instance, Handwai, a toy kitchen set from Punjab, mirrors traditional Punjabi kitchens, while Choppu Saman from Tamil Nadu embodies the essence of Tamil kitchen culture. It's disheartening that our children are often unfamiliar with these toys and their rich cultural connections.

Lately, it's become common to use handcrafted toys as mere decorations in our homes, displayed on shelves but keep them out of reach for our children. It's regrettable that these attractive indigenous toys often remain untouched by the very kids they're meant for. It's crucial to move away from this trend of turning toys into showpieces or museum artifacts. Instead, we should actively encourage children to engage and play with these beautifully crafted toys.

Toys and Trade

When examining toy trade statistics, there's both positive and concerning news. First, positive news: In 2018-19, toys worth Rs 2,960 crore were imported into India. With Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi's call to 'vocal for local', the government took several steps to promote indigenous toys designed on Indian culture and history. The overall import of toys in India reduced by 70 percent to Rs 870 crore in 2021-22. In February 2020, import duty on toys was raised from 20 percent to 60 percent and now this year to 70 percent, to discourage imports. The government is also considering rolling out a fiscal incentive scheme -- PLI -- for toys. According to a tweet (Feb 11, 2023) from

the Union Commerce and Industry Minister Shri. Piyush Goyal, India's toy exports rose to more than 6 times in April-December 2022 as compared to the same period in 2013.

However, there is also a piece of concerning news: Union Minister Ashwini Kumar Choubey in a written reply in Rajya Sabha mentioned that 29 licenses were issued to foreign toy manufacturing units from Hungary, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and the Czech Republic under the BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) foreign manufacturers' certification scheme. It's noteworthy that no licenses were granted to units from China.

In 2020, the government issued a Toys (Quality Control) Order. As per the order, toys have to conform to the requirements of relevant Indian standards and bear the standard mark under a license. It applies to both domestic as well as foreign manufacturers who intend to export their toys to India. This policy poses newer challenges to local traditional artisans and toy-making families. BIS certification process is online and local artisans are not computer-savvy. To get BIS certification, the samples are to be pre-tested and certified by empaneled laboratories and they are very less in number. It is a stressful and time-consuming process for the artisans. Though the BIS intends to raise the bar of quality of toys, it is not a level playing field. The level of stress (financial and time) will be incomparable for a local artisan and an organized enterprise. For instance, toys in Channarayana (a famous toy town in Karnataka) are manufactured by family members and they can not

afford to spend their time or money to get these certifications. Experts feel that when GI tags are in place for such clusters, such additional certifications may be avoided or at least simplify the certification process.

Is there a bigger problem?

Yes, there is a bigger elephant in the room. There is a significant issue or fact that we usually tend to ignore. Regardless of whether they're made by local artisans, Swadeshi companies, or foreign firms, toys often share common themes and concepts. Unfortunately, these themes and concepts do not have any connection with Bharateeya Sanskriti and Parampara. Foreign companies showing a lack of this connection is understandable. Swadeshi start-ups following the suit of foreign icons, concepts, and designs are harder fact to digest. When asked the reason for this necessity to the Swadeshi firms, the answer lies in both the demand and supply side.

Today, parents and kids are heavily influenced by the media and their acceptance is always towards foreign designs and icons in toys. It is quite common to find toy characters such as Barbie, Mickey & Minnie, Spider-Man, Baby Shark et cetera rather than *Chacha-Chachi Gudiya* or Etikoppakka Bommalu (Etikoppakka Toys).

We frequently attribute the lack of toys reflecting Bharateeya Sanskriti and Parampara to market demand. Yet, we mustn't remain silent about the supply-side shortages in this sector. While it's believed that demand sparks supply, it's equally true that supply stimulates its own demand. Thus, it's crucial to address these supply-

side concerns.

Fewer firms are attempting to revive Bharateeya-themed toys. In such attempts, there is another upsetting trend that we notice. That is lack of required knowledge about Bharateeya Jnana Parampara (Indian Knowledge System) among suppliers and toy designers. Without reading a Ramayana, if you only rely upon some unauthentic secondary texts and translations of Ramayana, you end up creating Rama having looks like any other foreign icon. Creating any Bharateeya icon using AI can be even more disastrous. A simple way

to understand these problems is to learn the lessons from a flop movie called 'Adipurush'. Movie makers of Adipurush said that the movie has modeled a few characters to look Arabic, and declared that it did not have any agenda to Sanskritise. This is not just a sickular mindset and hypocrisy but also another level of infringement of intellectual property rights.

Way forward?

It's imperative to break free from our colonial hangover and redefine our perception of hand-crafted toys made by skilled arti-

sans. Instead of just keeping them as fancy things for display, like museum items, we should give them to kids to play and learn. Cultivating a profound appreciation for the beauty and craftsmanship of local artisans is crucial. Instilling this sense of connoisseurship among our children becomes equally significant—allowing them to cherish and value these treasures of indigenous craftsmanship. Promoting the purchase of locally-made toys is vital. Additionally, actively selecting toys that honor our Bharateeya traditions is equally significant. □□

Dr. Shivkumar M. Belli: Associate Professor, Dept. of Management Studies, Central University of Karnataka.

[Continued from page no. 17]

West Africa strives for sovereignty

Mali

The United Nations sanctions on Mali expired on August 31, 2023 after Russia vetoed a renewal of measures that targeted anyone violating or obstructing a 2015 peace deal, hindering aid delivery, committing rights abuses or recruiting child soldiers. The sanctions were imposed in 2017, and involved travel bans and asset freezes.

Mali passed a mining code allowing the State to take up to 30 per cent stakes in new mineral projects and collect more revenues from its gold industry. Mali is one of Africa's leading gold producers, and has huge reserves of manganese and lithium, two minerals critical for green energy, though these are as yet under-explored. Gold accounts for 25 per cent of the national budget, 75 per cent of export earnings and 10 per cent of GDP.

The mining sector is dominat-

ed by Canadian firms Barrick Gold and B2Gold, Australia's Resolute Mining and Britain's Hummingbird Resources. The mining code reform could boost the national budget by 500 billion CFA francs (\$820 million), and eventually contribute up to 15 and 20 per cent of GDP.

Terrorism in Sahel

Niger is fighting against Boko Haram in the southeast and against ISIS in the Tri-Border region.

Analyst Pepe Escobar points out that the African Sahel had no Arab "terrorists" before 9/11. Thereafter, locals converted to Salafism online and set up an Islamic State to control the ancient trade routes across the Sahel. Thus, the salt caravans plying the Sahel from Mali to southern Europe and West Asia became caravans of drugs, diamonds, and gold. This funded Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which

was supported by Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf.

After NATO destroyed Libya in early 2011, the West-backed Salafi-jihadis who had fought against Gaddafi offered the Sahel smugglers protection and weapons. Mali tribes smuggle anything and AQIM extracts a share. ISIS in Libya thrives on human and narcotics trafficking, while Boko Haram dominates the cocaine and heroin market.

Africa, especially the G5 Sahel, tried to destroy these outfits. But after Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, and Chad underwent coups, the priority shifted to regaining national autonomy from France.

Hitherto, France prevented intra-Africa trade. In March 2018, 44 Heads of State launched the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA). In January 2022, they set up the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS) for payments for companies in Africa in local currencies. But it is a long road to financial and political autonomy. □□

<https://www.sandhyajainarchive.org/2023/11/16/west-africa-strives-for-sovereignty/>

Horror of Israel – Hamas war continues...

The horror of 53 days old Israel-Hamas war continues after 7 days fragile truce for release of hostages abducted on 7th October 2023 when Hamas militants broke through Gaza's militarised border into southern Israel, killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and kidnapped about 240, according to an Israeli count. Israel hit back with a relentless military campaign in Gaza that authorities in the Hamas-ruled territory say has killed nearly 15,000 people, also mostly civilians.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog asked the President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, to use his political weight to help free all of the Israeli hostages the Palestinian militant group Hamas holds in Gaza and promote and speed up the return home of the hostages. The UAE is a regional power, although fellow Gulf state Qatar and Egypt have been mediating between Israel and Hamas for the release of hostages, which has so far led to 99 Israelis' and foreigners' being freed. The truce had led to the release of 80 Israeli hostages in exchange for 240 Palestinian prisoners. Another 25 hostages, mostly Thais, were freed outside the scope of the truce agreement. Another 25 hostages, mostly Thais, were freed outside the scope of the truce agreement.

The office of Israel's prime minister Friday (1st December 2023) accused Hamas of violating the terms of a cease-fire by firing at Israeli territory and said it was still committed to what it called its goals of the war. It said Hamas "has violated the outline." The statement alleged that Hamas had not met its obligation to release all of the women hostages today and has launched rockets at Israeli citizens. Israel's military said Friday (1st Dec. 2023) morning that it has resumed fighting in Gaza after accusing Hamas of violating the terms and firing toward Israeli territory. Three people were killed in a shooting attack at a bus stop in Jerusalem during rush hour Thursday morning (30th Nov. 2023), Israeli authorities said, as fears of spiralling violence beyond the Gaza Strip grew.



The Government of Israel is stated as committed to achieving the goals of the war i.e. releasing the hostages, eliminating Hamas and ensuring that Gaza never again constitutes a threat to the residents of Israel.

Vinod Johri



The Government of Israel is stated as committed to achieving the goals of the war i.e. releasing the hostages, eliminating Hamas and ensuring that Gaza never again constitutes a threat to the residents of Israel.

An Israeli government spokesperson has said that Hamas “will now take the mother of all thumpings” after a truce in the Gaza Strip expired and hostilities resumed. “Unfortunately, Hamas decided to terminate the pause by failing to release all the kidnapped women,” government spokesperson Eylon Levy told a briefing.

“Having chosen to hold onto our women, Hamas will now take the mother of all thumpings.”

Levy said the week-long agreement could have been extended, with the Israeli government having already approved a list of Palestinian prisoners for release. It would have meant the prisoner and hostage exchanges would have continued for another two days.

Hamas said the blame for failure to agree a truce extension lies with Israel which had “persistently” rejected offers of hostage releases. Levy said Hamas was still holding 137 hostages, 10 of them aged 75 or older. That number included 117 males and 20 females, comprising 126 Israelis and 11 foreign nationals, eight Thais, one Nepalese citizen, one Tanzanian and one French-Mexican. The Israel Prison Service said early on Friday (1st Dec. 2023) it had released 30 Palestinians from Israeli jails as part of the latest exchange for hostages under the truce deal with Hamas. The prison service said the Palestinians were released from prisons in Israel, the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem under the seventh

swap, Reuters reported.

US secretary of state Antony Blinken said in Tel Aviv on Thursday (30th Nov. 2023): “Clearly, we want to see this process continue to move forward.” Blinken also stepped up calls for Israel to comply with international law and spare civilians in the war against Hamas in Gaza. Blinken also said Israel “must put in place humanitarian civilian protection plans that minimise further casualties of innocent Palestinians, including by clearly and precisely designating areas and places in southern and central Gaza, where they can be safe and out of the line of fire”. International pressure has risen for a lasting halt to the war. The White House said it was “working on it literally by the hour” to try to extend the temporary ceasefire.

On the sidelines of UN’s COP 28, France regretted the end of a truce between Israel and Hamas, and called for its restoration because it brings no solution and complicates the resolution of all questions that arise stated by the French foreign minister, Catherine Colonna.

Germany’s foreign ministry says the diplomatic efforts must be redoubled to try to restore the truce in Gaza.

Background of Israel – Hamas hostility (Contd...from previous issue)

In the summer of 2014, clashes/in the Palestinian territories precipitated a/military confrontation/between the Israeli military and Hamas in which Hamas fired nearly three thousand rockets at Israel, and Israel retaliated with a major offensive in Gaza. The skirmish ended in late August 2014 with a/cease-fire/ deal brokered by Egypt, but only after 73/ Is-

raelis and 2,251/Palestinians were/killed. After a wave of violence between Israelis and Palestinians in 2015, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah/announced/that Palestinians would no longer be bound by the territorial divisions created by the/Oslo Accords. In March and May of 2018, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip conducted weekly demonstrations/at the border between the Gaza Strip and Israel. The final protest coincided with the seventieth anniversary of the/Nakba, the Palestinian exodus that accompanied Israeli independence. While most of the protesters were peaceful, some stormed the perimeter fence and threw rocks and other objects. According to the United Nations, 183 demonstrators were killed and more than 6,000 were wounded by live ammunition. The tense political atmosphere resulted in a return to disunity between Fatah and Hamas, with Mahmoud Abbas’ Fatah party controlling the Palestinian Authority from the West Bank and Hamas de facto ruling the Gaza Strip. This remained largely true throughout the late 2010s and early 2020s, despite Abbas’ efforts to bring the Palestinian people together under the Palestinian Authority.

In May of 2018, fighting once again broke out between Hamas and the IDF in what became the worst period of violence since 2014. Before reaching a/cease-fire, militants in Gaza fired over one hundred rockets into Israel; Israel/responded/with strikes on more than fifty targets in Gaza during the twenty-four-hour/ flare-up.

The Donald J. Trump administration set/ achieving an Israeli-Palestinian deal as a foreign policy

priority. In 2018, the Trump administration/cancelled/ funding for the UN Relief and Works Agency, which provides aid to Palestinian refugees, and/relocated/ the U.S. embassy/ from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, a reversal of a long-standing U.S. policy. The decision to move the U.S. embassy was met with applause from the Israeli leadership but was/condemned/by Palestinian leaders and others in the Middle East and Europe. Israel considers the “complete and united Jerusalem” its capital, while Palestinians/ claim/ East Jerusalem/ as the capital of a future Palestinian state. In January 2020, the Trump administration released its long-awaited “Peace to Prosperity” plan, which was/rejected by Palestinians due to its support for future Israeli/annexation/of settlements in the West Bank and control over an “undivided” Jerusalem.

In August and September 2020, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and then Bahrain/ agreed/ to normalize relations with Israel, making them only the third and fourth countries in the region—following Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994—to do so. The agreements, named the/Abraham Accords, came more than eighteen months after the United States/ hosted/Israel and several Arab states for/ ministerial talks/ in Warsaw, Poland, about the future of peace in the Middle East. Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah/rejected/the accords, as did Hamas.

In October 2020, an Israeli court/ ruled/ that several Palestinian families living in Sheikh Jarrah—a neighbourhood in East Jerusalem—were to be evicted by May 2021 with their land/ handed over/ to Jewish families. In Feb-

ruary 2021, several Palestinian families from Sheikh Jarrah filed an appeal to the court ruling,/ prompting/protests/around the appeal hearings, the/ongoing/ legal battle around property ownership, and the forcible displacement of Palestinians from their homes in Jerusalem.

In late April 2021, Palestinians began demonstrating in the streets of Jerusalem to protest the pending evictions, and residents of Sheikh Jarrah—along with other activists—began to host nightly/sit-ins. In early May, after a court/ruled/in favour of the evictions, the protests expanded, with Israeli police/deploying/force against demonstrators. On May 7, following weeks of daily demonstrations and rising tensions between protesters, Israeli settlers, and police during the month of Ramadan, violence broke out at the al-Aqsa Mosque/compound/in Jerusalem, with Israeli police/using/ stun grenades, rubber bullets, and water cannons in a clash with protestors that left hundreds of Palestinians/ wounded.

After the clashes in Jerusalem’s Old City, tensions increased throughout East Jerusalem, compounded by the celebration of/ Jerusalem Day. On May 10, after several consecutive days of violence throughout Jerusalem and the use of lethal and nonlethal force by Israeli police, Hamas, the militant group which governs Gaza, and other Palestinian/militant groups/launched/ hundreds of/ rockets/into Israeli territory.

Israel responded with artillery bombardments and airstrikes, several of which killed more than twenty Palestinians, against targets in Gaza. While claiming to target Hamas, other militants (such as

those from Palestinian Islamic Jihad), and their/ infrastructure—including tunnels and rocket launchers—Israel/expanded its aerial campaign and struck non-military infrastructure/ including residential buildings,/ media headquarters, and/ refugee/ and/ healthcare facilities.

On May 21, 2021, Israel and Hamas agreed to a/ cease-fire, brokered by Egypt, with both sides claiming victory. More than 250 Palestinians were/ killed/ and nearly 2,000 others wounded, and at least 13 Israelis were killed over the eleven days of fighting. Authorities in Gaza estimate that tens of millions of dollars of/ damage/ was done, and the United Nations estimates that more than 72,000 Palestinians were/ displaced/ by the fighting.

Israel has struggled for its existence for centuries. Jews have faced annihilation. Hamas or Hezbollah or Arab countries will never be able to bring about extinction of Jews. The sanctity of international conventions have been eroded severally by the warring Arab countries against Israel in the façade of terrorist organisations. Obviously UNO treaties and agreements, truce and peace initiatives don’t apply to terrorists. Terrorism is the biggest menace to the world peace but terrorist organisations like Hamas, Hezbollah, ISIS, Boko Haram, Taliban, Lashkar e Tayyaiba etc. don’t follow any international conventions for inflicting cruel atrocities and death to their haunted prey.

The consequences and scale of losses are already devastating, and the recent attack – and the war that now follows – is likely to shape global politics for years to come. □□

Mewar as Focus of Guhila State (Part-XVII)

The Annals understandably highlight the importance of the early fifteenth century rulers of Mewar since by being pitted against old Rajput elements in the polity, including royal kinsmen, they greatly furthered the consolidation of Guhila royal power.

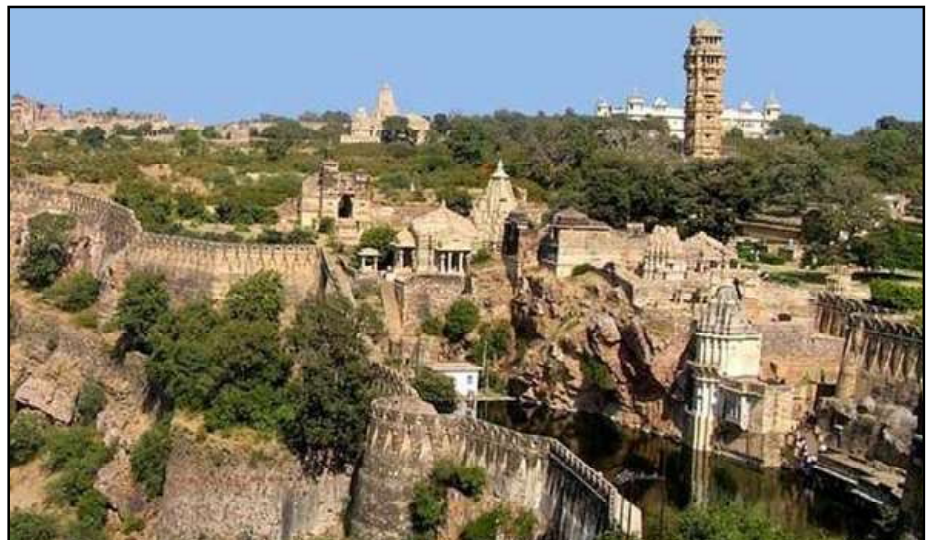
Hence, it was essential of the Rathaur in the early stage of their rise to establish close links with the Guhilas of Mewar. The fact that the traditions of Mewar do not list Rathaur queens till Rana Raimalla's period except for Lakha, testifies to the fact that the rise of the Rathaur took place sometime in the fifteenth century. It is well-known that Rao Jodha (Rao Ranamala's son and successor) could found the Rathaur capital Jodhpur only in AD 1459. More Rathaur had lived in Mewar before AD 1459. After their expulsion from Mewar in AD 1444, they acquired land in the Marwar region. For instance, Jodha obtained Sojat in AD 1455. No Rathaur queen is listed for Mahârânâ Kumbha, but Badvâdev-idan Khyat lists six Rathaur queens for Mahârânâ Râimalla as well as for Mahârânâ Sānga. However, the historically known three sons of Râimalla, Prthviraj, Jayamal and Sāngā are traditionally assigned to his Jhali Queen Rajdhar Ratankanwar. Although the historicity of the names of the Rathaur chiefs, their daughters and their contemporaneity with the Guhila kings of Mewar are questionable, the list helps in comparing the number of Guhila queens that were Rathaur with that of those queens who were non-Rathaur.

Duda, the founder of the Mertiyâ Râthaur, established his seat in the locality of Mertâ in the Marwar region. His son Viramdeva and grandson Jaimal are known to have united the region under the banner of the Mertiya Râthaur. Beginning with Merta, they brought under their control Parbatsar, Nava, Marot,



In this period the Guhila State of Mewar had to forge close socio-political linkages with the Mertiya Rathaur and Jains of Mewar.

Prof. Nandini Kapur Sinha



Jaitarana Kaulia, Daulatpura and held some estate in Nagaur as well. Thus they made their presence felt in a larger part of Marwar. They ruled over buffer-states situated between Mewar and Marwar and it became strategically necessary for the Guhilas to establish political and social links with the Mertiya Rathours. On their part, the Mertiya Rathours who were in the process of expansion looked towards bigger powers for political and military alliances. This led to the incorporation of a number of Mertiya Rathours in the political structure of Mewar through service-grants. This is evident from the following list of the estates granted to Mertiya Rathours in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Mewar.

1. Badnor: Mahārānā Udaisimha-II had granted Badnor to Rāo Jaimal. It continued to be in possession of his son Mukunddas and his successors.
2. Chand Maharani Raimalla granted Chanod to his grandson (by daughter) Pratapsimha
3. Ghanerds. This locality was granted to Thakkur Pratapsimha's (Chanod) son Gopaldas by Mahārānā Udaisimha (II). It has remained in the possession of his successors.

The estate of Chanod dates to the period I am discussing (the late fifteenth century) since Mahārānā Rāimalla granted this locality to the Mertiya Rathours in Mewar. Even more Mertiya Rathour personalities figure in the political structure of Mewar in the sixteenth century. Sundardas, son of Mertiya Kisansimha (Jaimalot), was granted the estate of Dasalana. Kisansimha died at the battle of Haldighati. Manohardas, grandson of Jaimal and son of Vittal-

das, was in the service of Mahārāna Pratap.

Thus, Guhila links with the Mertiya Rathours further strengthened the political advantages that the Guhilas derived from the existence of a buffer Rajput power. In AD 1496, a daughter of Mahārānā Rāimalla was married to the crown prince of Mertiya, Viramdev, son of Rāo Duda. Mirabai, granddaughter of Rāo Duda and daughter of Ratnasimha was married to Bhojarāja, son of Rana Sangramsimha (Sānga). Thus by the early sixteenth century the Guhilas had established reciprocal marital exchange (Bevra) with the Mertiya Rathours.

Before I finish my discussion of the political and social linkages of the Guhilas with other political powers, I must mention the fort of Jajpur (modern Jahazpur) which was probably the stronghold of the Kherādās in the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries. Although no contemporary Kherādā record has been discovered, Amarakavyam (seventeenth century) refers to the conquest of Kherādākula of Jajpur by Rāo Khetā. It is significant that Rānā Kumbha claims the conquest of Yagpur (Jajpur) since it indicates that it was a non-Guhila fortress.

The Jains and the Royal family in Mewar

The majority of western Indian merchants were Jains and the study of political links between the Jains and the Guhila dynasty between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries reveals the story of the induction of Jain merchants into the political structure of Mewar. The state depended greatly upon this wealthy community be-

cause it was the Jain merchants who were responsible for generating more and more resources. This was especially so because the Guhilas were engaged in many wars during this period. Jains were equally interested in seeking political links with the Guhilas because they sought state support to carry on with that but not thus, the state often actively contributed to further commercial activities in

There is a vast corpus of inscriptional and literary sources which throw light on the elite Jain families of Mewar and the extent of their resources. A brief survey of these families and the circuit of the pilgrim age centres is necessary before the political linkages between the Jains and the Guhilas can be understood

Chittaurgarh was the most popular Jain pilgrimage centre in Mewar. Acariya Haribhadra Suri, the great reformer, operated from Chittaurgarh in the eighth century. His literary works indicate the popular patronage enjoyed by Haribhadra Suri. The continuing presence of Jain acaryas at Chittaurgarh is evident from records and indicates increasing patronage by the Jain laity and points to the considerable influence that the dearyas wielded. For instance, a Digambar Jain inscription of the reign of Guhila Jaitrasimha from Chittaur contains a prasasti of Acarya Subhacandra. Who was venerated by the Paramaras, the Cahamanas and the Gurjara rulers. Citrakōra became an important reference point for the Jains and a pilgrimage-cum-monastic centre. The Kharataragaccha pandvall vividly describes the acaryas and the training of disciples at Citrakuta.

(to be continued ...)

Arm-Twisting' by Western Countries on Climate Change



Ashwani Mahajan, the co-convenor of Indian economic advocacy group Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM), told Sputnik India that the rich countries have for long sought to exploit the climate change to their own economic and political benefits.

According to data visualisation website Our World in Data, the US has emitted nearly 400 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide since 1751, and bears responsibility for a quarter of historical emissions.

The EU, on the other hand, is responsible for 22 percent of the emissions since 1751.

“The technologically-advanced rich nations have for decades possessed technological know-how towards transitioning to innovative and renewable sources of energy. They have possessed edge over the developing nations of Global South and have been seeking to leverage this to their advantage in the dealings with the developing countries,” the Indian activist remarked.

“However, the era of arm-twisting by the West is behind us now. We are now witnessing countries like India taking a leadership role in developing and sharing green technologies, be it in Green Hydrogen, solar technology or Electronic Vehicles (EVs),” Mahajan noted.

<https://ashwanimahajan.wordpress.com/2023/11/30/arm-twisting-by-western-countries-on-climate-change/>

India Already Discouraging Immigration to Canada: SJM

Prof. Ashwani Mahajan, an economist and the co-convenor of economic advocacy group Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM), told Sputnik India that recent travel warnings issued by New Delhi were already seen as discouraging people from travelling to Canada.

“We are a democratic country and people are free to travel where they want to. But Indians are a wise people and they don’t support terrorism direct-

ed against their own country,” Mahajan stated.

Mahajan noted that the “sentiment” towards Canada as an immigration destination had “sourred” among Indian public due to Trudeau’s perceived support for anti-India activities.

The economist echoed the view that Canada would lose “significantly” if it continued to support terrorism against India for the sake of vote-bank politics.

“The incumbent Canadian PM is pandering to a few fringe elements in Canadian polity. But large sections of Canadian-Indians and the Canadian population don’t seem to appreciate Trudeau’s backing of terrorists at the expense of relations with India,” the expert underscored.

Mahajan noted that even Canadian opposition Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) didn’t agree with Trudeau on his policy towards India.

An advisory issued by India in September urged its citizens in or travelling to Canada to “exercise utmost caution” in view of “growing anti-India activities and politically-condoned hate crimes”.

New Delhi also temporarily suspended consular services at its missions in Canada citing in the wake of violent protests at Indian missions and attacks against Indian diplomatic staff by pro-Khalistan groups.

Jaishankar reasoned at the time that it was “no longer safe” for Indian diplomats posted in Canada to travel to work. New Delhi resumed visa services for certain category of visas in the last week of October after closed-door negotiations between Jaishankar and his Canadian number Melanie Joly.

Why Indian Immigrants are Critical for Canada’s Economy

According to official statistics by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), over 226,000 international students enrolling in Canadian universities last year were from India, the highest number for any country.

In fact, Indian student arrivals in Canada outpaced those from China, the second-biggest source of foreign students, by almost five times in 2022.

Similarly, India dominates as the primary source of immigration to Canada, accounting for nearly 30 percent of the Permanent Residency (PR) granted last year, according to IRCC.

Canada also hosts the biggest Sikh diaspora globally outside the Indian state of Punjab. In fact, the

Sikh community forms a higher share of overall population in Canada than in India.

According to experts, immigration is critical to sustain economic growth in Canada, which has one of the world's oldest populations.

India and Canada carried out over \$15 billion worth of trade in goods and services in 2022.

Negotiations to pursue a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) were put on hold last month in the wake of the diplomatic row between the two nations.

<https://ashwanimahajan.wordpress.com/2023/11/14/india-already-discounting-immigration-to-canada-sjm/>

Aatmanirbhar Bharat different from Nehru's model: SJM



Amid the laptop import restriction debate, a new book edited by Dr. Ashwani Mahajan (National Co-convenor, SJM) has argued that the Modi dispensation's 'aatmanirbharta' approach is radically different from the Nehruvian approach which slowed down growth.

He argues that while many feared that the current government's aatmanirbharta move of 2020 would be a return to the Nehruvian era license raj, it is now clear that the former is strategically positioned and clearly thought out.

He holds that while the Nehruvian vision aimed at 'self reliance through restrictive measures' constraining the private sector and 'strangling' R&D and slowing growth, the Modi government's Mission 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' looks at encouraging domestic efficiency along with protection from unfair practices.

"It's all about bringing efficiency and competitiveness. It is a policy aimed at producing things which are currently being imported, and in the process building the capacity to produce for the world", Mahajan writes.

"Low rate of growth, caused by these restrictive policies, was mischievously termed as 'Hindu Rate

of Growth', which should be termed as 'Nehruvian Rate of Growth'", Mahajan writes on the Nehruvian self reliance model, in an introduction to the book 'Aatmanirbhar-A Swadeshi paradigm'.

Mohan Bhagwat in a foreword to the book has called for a 'Bhartiya vision' on self reliance centric development to replace the 'materialistic, fragmentary and consumerist approach' of the western discourse on progress.

The book is a compilation of 18 essays on Aatmanirbhar Bharat from the likes of economist Prof Ashok Kumar Lahiri to Dr V Anantha Nageswaran, Chief Economic Advisor to the Government of India, 15th Finance Commission Chairperson N K Singh, Bibek Debroy, Chairman of the PM's Economic Advisory Council, Members PM-EAC Sanjeev Sanyal and Shamika Ravi and former Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar among others.

The Director General of Research & Information Systems (RIS) for Developing Countries, Sachin Chaturvedi holds that the current approach is distinctive as it also protects industry from unfair competition while using a 'judicious mix of tariff and non-tariff measures' compliant with signing of Free Trade Agreements.

Ashima Goyal, professor emeritus of Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research agrees and terms the Modi government's self reliance model as 'export competition' which nudges manufacturing to compete internationally but also protects from unfair competition so that economies of scale can develop domestically.

Ashok Lahiri, on the other hand, has pointed to the 'root causes of lack of competitiveness' of Indian industry that need to be addressed to achieve the goals of Aatmanirbhar Bharat- lack of logistical infrastructure, high cost of power subsidy for agriculture and households, land acquisition problems, high railway freight cost, inflexibilities in labour markets and absence of scale economies.

Shamika Ravi, member of the PM-EAC has held that the new aatmanirbhar bharat approach is not autarky and while market efficiency and privatization should be encouraged, sufficient safeguards and social safety nets must be ensured to prevent concentration of wealth and perpetuation of inequality. She calls for greater self-reliance in food, energy and defence sectors and the need to address domestic development issues.

Rajiv Kumar calls for self-reliance in non-fossil energy to reduce dependence on imported oil while Prof Abhijit Das of Centre for WTO Studies the new approach is about 'using international trade strategically for securing its objectives'.

He also cautions on certain 'onerous obligations' in FTAs of Canada and EU that may be detrimental to India's resolve for self reliance. □□

<https://ashwanimahajan.wordpress.com/2023/11/07/aatmanirbhar-bharat-different-from-nchru-model-sjm-chief-ashwani-mahajan/>

Indian economy to exceed growth estimates after strong Q2 beat: economists



The Indian economy is projected to grow at a 6.7% -7% rate in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024, several economists said, upping their projections after the country blew past growth estimates for the July-September quarter. The country's economy expanded 7.6% in the July-September quarter, trouncing estimates of a 6.8% rise, data released on Thursday showed. Stronger-than-expected growth in the first half of the year, along with continued government spending and some revival in private investment has prompted economists to raise their growth forecast to higher than the government's estimate of 6.5%.

"With 7.7% real GDP growth in the first half of 2023-24, the overall growth for full fiscal would be around 7%...though there are chances that it may cross the 7% mark," said Saumya Kanti Ghosh, chief economist at State Bank of India. He had an earlier forecast growth at 6.7%.

The government stuck to its 6.5% growth forecast for the year, but chief economic advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran said he was "more comfortable with an upside to this projection than before". Citigroup revised its growth forecast for the financial year upwards by 50 basis points to 6.7% citing a pick-up in investment activity. Gross fixed capital formation, an indicator of investment, rose 11% in the July-September quarter.

"This reaffirms our view of sustained investment recovery," the Wall Street bank's chief India economist Samiran Chakraborty said in a note.

"While the 13.3% growth in construction gross value added indicates public infrastructure/residential capex led investment growth – such strong gross fixed capital formation data might also suggest an element of private capex recovery," Chakraborty said.

DBS now sees growth in the current financial year at 6.8% from 6.4% earlier. "There was a broad-based improvement in investments, reflecting higher state and centre spending alongside recovery in the real estate sector and inventory demand ahead of festivities," said economist Radhika Rao in a note.

"This made up for the softness in consumption spending and a negative contribution by net exports".

Consumption remained weak, growing just 3.1% in the second quarter of the year signalling that parts of the economy are still to recover.

"Rural demand remains weak, reflecting low real wage growth and uneven monsoon," said Gaura Sen Gupta, economist at IDFC First Bank Economics Research, which has upped its growth forecast for the year to 6.7% from 6.2% earlier.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/indian-economy-exceed-growth-estimates-after-strong-q2-beat-economists-2023-12-01/>

Avg monthly GST mop-up at Rs 1.66 lakh cr so far this fiscal: FM

The GST collection has been showing an upward trend on an annual basis since its rollout on July 1, 2017, and the average gross monthly mop-up in the current fiscal so far is Rs 1.66 lakh crore, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday. In a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha, she said the GST collection crossed Rs 1.50 lakh crore mark in every month of the current fiscal and had touched a record high of Rs 1.87 lakh crore in April 2023.

"GST collection has been showing an upward trend on year-on-year basis since the implementation of GST w.e.f. 1st July, 2017... The average gross monthly GST collection in FY 2023-24 now stands at Rs 1.66 lakh crore and is 11 per cent more than that in the same period in the previous financial year," Sitharaman said.

The average monthly Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection in 2022-23 was over Rs 1.50 lakh crore, higher than Rs 1.23 lakh crore in 2021-22. In 2020-21, the average monthly mop-up was Rs 94,734 crore. □□

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/avg-monthly-gst-mop-up-at-rs-1-66-lakh-cr-so-far-this-fiscal-fm-nirmala-sitharaman/articleshow/105724592.cms>

Swadeshi Activities

Swavlambi Bharat Abhiyan Meetings

Pictorial Glimpses



Mehsana, Gujarat



Patna, Bihar



Kottayam, Kerala



Kurukshetra, Haryana



Swadeshi Activities **Swavlambi Bharat Abhiyan** Meetings

Pictorial Glimpses



Ahmedabad, Gujarat



Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat



Chandigarh University, Punjab



Manali, Himachal Pradesh

