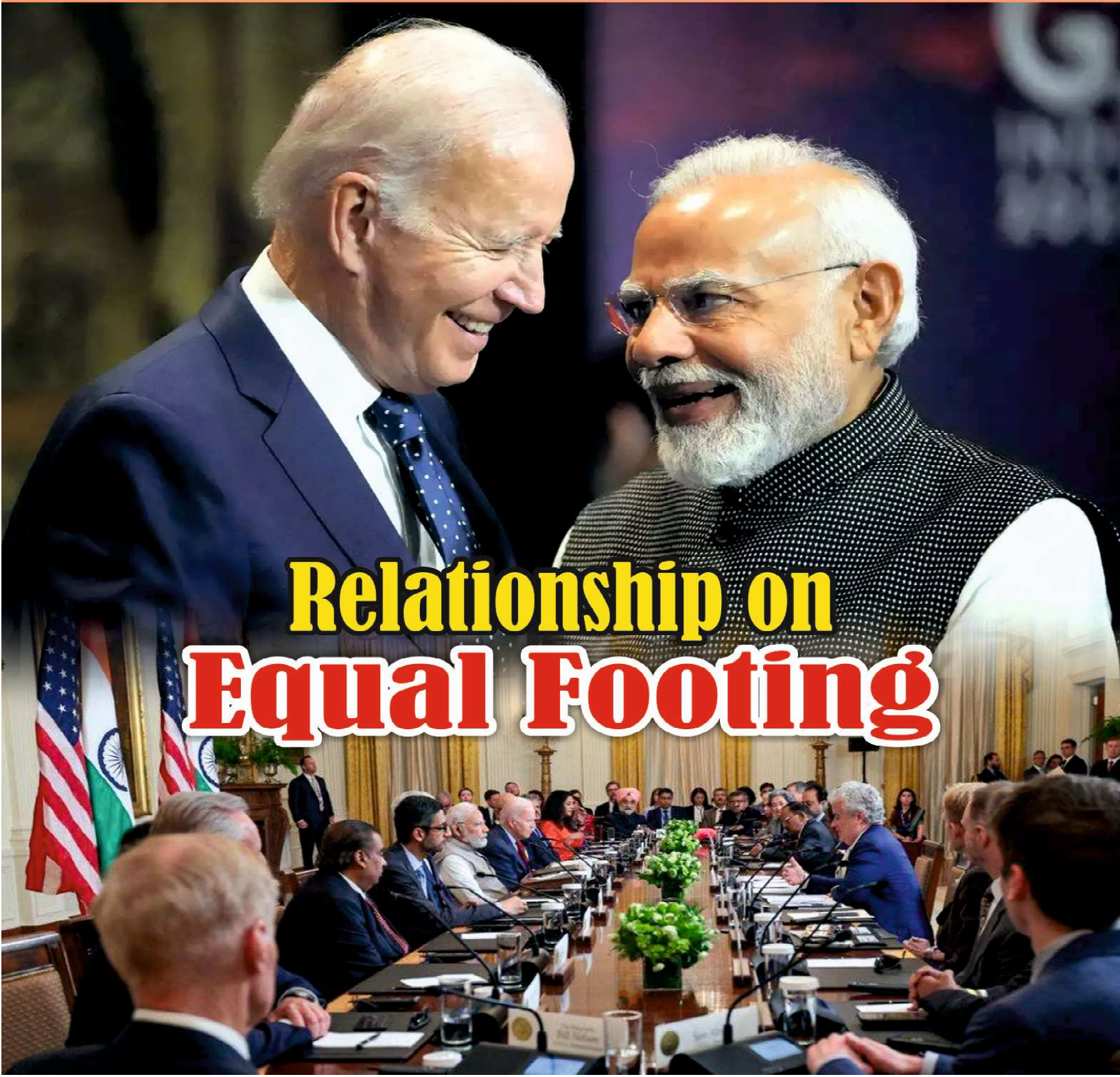


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JULY 2023



**Relationship on
Equal Footing**

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Swavlambi Bharat Abhiyan - Meetings

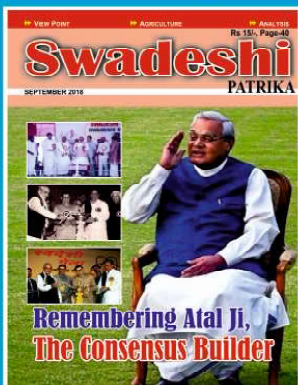
Pictorial Glimpses



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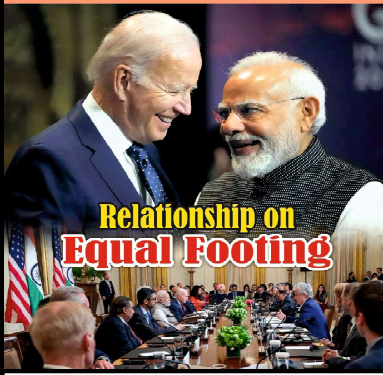
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JULY 2023



Relationship on Equal Footing

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Uniform Civil Code (UCC)

With the recent push for a Uniform Civil Code by the Central Government with all parties eyeing the 2024 general election, the UCC is again in the news. The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is the idea of having a common code of personal laws for people of all religions. Personal law includes inheritance, marriage, divorce, child custody, and alimony. This issue is a subject matter of constant political narrative and debate for over a century.

The UCC is part of the Directive Principles of the State Policy in part 4th Article 44 of the Constitution according to which "The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India". The Supreme Court's various judgments in the Shah Bano case (1985), Sarla Mudgal judgement (1995), and Paulo Coutinho vs Maria Luiza Valentina Pereira case (2019) have called for the implementation of the UCC. The Uttarakhand government last year formed a panel for the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code in the state. The Goa Civil Code that came into force during Portuguese times is considered a uniform Civil Code. Hindu Personal laws are mostly codified in the 1950s.

The personal laws of all religions whether Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs or Christians find their source and authority in their religious ancient texts. The UCC aims to protect vulnerable sections as envisaged by Ambedkar including women and religious minorities. When enacted, the UCC code will work to simplify laws that are segregated presently based on religious beliefs like the Hindu code bill, Shariat law, and others.

— Kumar Gaurav, Samastipur, Bihar

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Quote-Unquote



The world hopes that India will provide solutions to all its problems.

Dr. Mohan Bhagwat, Sarsanghchalak, RSS



If the house is not run by two laws, how will the country run? People are only being instigated in the name of the Uniform Civil Code. Two types of laws cannot run the country. The Constitution of India also talks about equal rights for the citizens.

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister, Bharat



We are bringing new vehicles that will run entirely on ethanol ... scooters will run 100% on ethanol. I would launch a car in August, which will run 100% on ethanol and it will also generate 40% electricity.

Nitin Gadkari

Road transport & Highways Minister, Bharat



In India, we treat all living beings, including humans, as equals. This has been our culture.

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan, National Co-convenor, SJM

SCO: Economics and Diplomacy of Multipolar World Order

Nowadays Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is once again in discussion. Significantly, an online Summit of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was held on July 4, 2023. This year the responsibility of the presidency of this organization is in the hands of India. This is the first time that India is chairing the Organization after its birth (2001) and especially after India's admission in SCO as its full fledged member, in 2016. Originally this organization was established for economic and defense cooperation between the countries of Europe and Asia (also known as Eurasia). Before the establishment of SCO, except Uzbekistan, a group of 5 countries called 'Shanghai Five Group' was working since 1996. Later Uzbekistan was also included in this group, and SCO was formally established. The meeting, which was scheduled to be held in New Delhi, was suddenly changed to video conferencing. Some experts believe that this was an opportunity for India to showcase its independent foreign policy, and it would have amply be demonstrated in two days physical summit. Though there is a point in this argument but events show that the change in mode of this meeting didn't have much impact on the outcome of the summit.

On the invitation of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, the current Prime Minister of Pakistan and others heads of state attended the meeting. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was formally established in the year 2001 by 6 countries namely China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In the year 2016, India and Pakistan were admitted as full fledged members of SCO, although the decision to include them was made on 10 July 2015. This year Iran has also been granted membership of SCO. India has special interest in Iran due to Chabahar Port. Since 2016, as part of a trilateral agreement with Iran and Afghanistan, India has committed a sizeable investment for the development of Chabahar Port and its connecting train connection. India has invested \$85 million in the development of the port, and has pledged to invest a further \$8 billion in the Chabahar Special Economic Zone. The project has been facing rough weather since beginning. Russia also has special interest in the development of this port and related infrastructure, since Chabahar port is located outside the Strait of Hormuz, it would provide Russia with an alternative route for shipping goods to and from the Middle East. Admission of Iran in SCO, will pave way for this project to go ahead, with Russia and India cooperation.

At the end of the Summit, though a declaration namely New Delhi Declaration was made, underling the broad consensus was issued, but it was carefully worded, to indicate differences on two major issues, namely Belt Road Initiative (BRI) and Development Strategy. Apart from New Delhi Declaration, some signed agreements included the Memorandum of Obligations of the Republic of Belarus, and two statements on deradicalisation and digital transformation, among others. It's important to understand that India has been opposed to BRI on the issue of sovereignty. It's notable that China is building China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK), and India is opposed to the same. Moreover, according to India, BRI is proving to be a debt trap for many developing countries and BRI has jeopardised many economies, including Pakistan, Srilanka and many more. China has been forcibly taking over strategic locations, by trapping many countries into debt trap and therefore proving to be a threat for global peace. Another, issue on which India didn't agree was the document on Development Strategy 2030. India had already flagged her concerns about of Chinese influence on the document, similar to the Global Development Initiative previously, and has objected to retaining the language of the document.

Today Russia and Iran are the victims of sanctions imposed by US and its allies. Out of SCO membership, India and China have not only continued to purchase oil from Russia and Iran, but have increased it manifold. This has been irritating US and the West, but India has adopted a balanced approach, continuing its friendly relation with the US, alongside. PM Narendra Modi's recent visit to US in an indication of India's independent approach. On the other hand, though, Russia and China have been deepening their cooperation in economic and strategic affairs. But India's all season friendship with Russia is proving to be a boon for India and Russia both. India has chosen to remain neutral with regard to Russia-Ukraine conflict as well. Though, online summit of SCO did demonstrate attitude of Russia and China, who vocally disapproved US sanctions. But at the same time India's disapproval of China led BRI and China dominated Development Strategy 2030, made India stand apart. Message from SCO is very clear, international diplomacy is never black and white, but SCO underlines the reality of multi-polar world. With lot of churning taking place globally, SCO like groupings have a great importance for maintenance of power balance.

Relationship on equal footing



India will withdraw the retaliatory tariffs on American products and on the other hand, America will withdraw its disputes against India in the World Trade Organization. This agreement is being considered as a new chapter of equal treatment in the relations between India and America, where no decision is one-sided.

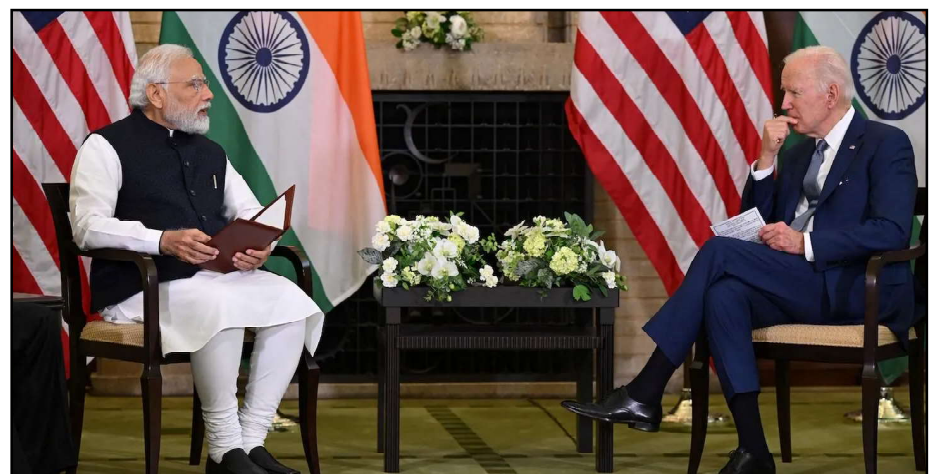
Dr. Ashwani Mahajan

Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to America was in limelight. Although all the visits of Indian Prime Ministers had been a matter of great curiosity and attraction for the news media of that time, but Prime Minister Narendra Modi's latest visit to America, and decisions between India and America, regarding economic and trade relations, strategic purchases, technology collaborations and a warm welcome to the Prime Minister at the White House, all have sent a pleasant feeling back home in India.

Relationship between these two great democracies had not been very cool in the history. And even today, there are some elements in United States, who keep on raising fingers on India on the fake narratives of freedom of expression, freedom of press, protection of ethnic minorities, democracy etc. And in the past these elements had been successful in casting shadows on the official statements, utterances and public postures in official proceedings. The success of PM Modi's visit is seen in the fact that it was perhaps pre-decided diplomatically that no such utterances will be made during PM Modi's state visit. This is clear manifestation of equality in relationships between two nations.

Joint statement of two leaders says that two nations will "facilitate greater technology sharing, co-development, and co-production opportunities between U.S. and Indian industry, government, and academic institutions." It's notable that India has made marked progress in the field of upcoming technologies like artificial intelligence, quantum computing, space and telecommunications among others. India and US have decided to work together in these fields. This depicts stronger relationship between two great economic and technology superpowers.

PM Modi's US visit assumes greater significance also due to the fact that today US is facing huge challenges- economic, diplomatic and strategic. World sees India to be an important player, which has a role to play in present world economy. There was a time in the history when US Dollar (USD) was dominating the world, with USD occupying 70 percent of global reserve currency; today it has come down to nearly 54 percent. US is amidst worst inflation of the century at present. Status of



world's 'Dada' has been significantly eroded after its abrupt withdrawal from Afghanistan, and rise of fundamentalist government there. Utter failure in Russia-Ukraine conflict, and constant losses of Ukraine and resulting energy and general inflation and disruption of supply chain impacting the production world over has exposed hollowness of US posture as a superpower.

Under these conditions, it's imperative for US to find partners who are capable and trustworthy. Partners, whose leaders have influence on other world leaders. Democracy has always been the main plank of US and the country which US thinks to be a main adversary, namely China, also has autocratic rule. India being the neighbour of China and a super democracy, can help US in establishing a balance. Technology collaborations along with Quad are the natural outcomes of that thinking. Recent statement of a US diplomat that India can play the role of a mediator in the ongoing Russia Ukraine war is an indication of increasing clout of Indian leadership in resolving even the complex conflicts.

In the past, US had been living with the hangover of being great and mighty nation. Therefore, Indo-US relations could not come out of that hangover. In international trade negotiations, we have also seen the haughty attitude of the United States Trade Representatives (USTRs), of a status just equivalent to the Commerce Minister of India. But recently, before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to US, coming and going of USTR in India was not much noticed.

We should not see Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to America from the point of view

of his reception at the White House or the pomp of the celebrations. We have to analyze the meaning and consequences of this visit, only then we will be able to better understand the new chapter in India-US relations.

Significantly, in the past, the relations between India and America have generally been unequal. Not only this, strategically, America has mostly been a supporter of Pakistan. Overall, if there was no bitterness in the relations between India and America since the time of Cold War, there was no harmony either. But with the collapse of Soviet Russia, the economic emergence of China and the steady progress in the Indian economy, new chapters were added in the relations between India and America. In the year 2000, the then US President Bill Clinton visited India and also signed a historic agreement on civil nuclear cooperation, which opened a new chapter in trade and investment between India and US; and started a strategic partnership between the two countries. During Modi's visit this time, a historic technology transfer in fighter jet's engine by GE is being seen as a big departure from earlier policy of the US.

On the other hand, due to the growing clout of China and its challenge to America as a superpower, India emerged as a natural strategic partner of America. India, America, Japan and Australia's Quad was its natural outcome.

At present, if we talk about Indo-American relations, then these relations are economic, strategic, technology cooperation and also of growing relations between the people of the two countries. It is believed that these relations between India and America will become more intense in the coming years and

it is also important in the context of global challenges for both the countries to move forward together.

In the last almost a decade, a new warmth is being seen in the relations between India and America. Although there has been bitterness between India and America on many issues. India has emerged as its important partner country. It has to be understood that India has emerged more powerful than before. In the last few years, first under 'Make in India' and later 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' scheme, India is moving towards self-reliance in strategic equipment. Due to this, not only India's imports of defence goods from Russia as well as the west including US is decreasing, India has also started exporting defense goods to different parts of the world. India's remarkable progress is being seen in the field of various types of technologies, including space, software, computing and payments.

Relations in the field of trade were somewhat strained due to the US raising tariffs on many products imported from India in response to their own self-reliance efforts, and India retaliating by increasing import duties on many American products. Both India and America have decided to end their trade disputes in view of their economic interests. During the current US visit of the Prime Minister, it has been decided that India will withdraw the retaliatory tariffs on American products and on the other hand, America will withdraw its disputes against India in the World Trade Organization. This agreement is being considered as a new chapter of equal treatment in the relations between India and America, where no decision is one-sided. □□

INDO-US Tango: Strategic underpinnings

Modi's recently concluded visit to US was certainly historic, a watershed moment in establishing harmonies ties between the two democracies which are large economies too. It underlined the convergence of commercial, economic, strategic, technological, and defence interest between the two nations. More importantly, the visit and its fall outs are clear pointers towards India's ascension as a rising economic and strategic power, in addition to its soft power as a pluralistic, democratic society.

Thus, at 4.5 million Indians our Diaspora constitutes the second largest immigrant community in the US. It has made a mark for itself everywhere in the US – scientific institutions, universities, tech hub, politics, government, and other businesses. Modi's visit deepened the level of engagement between the two largest democracies and their people, governments, business and establishments. There was high voltage optics in the form of Modi's meetings with the top shots of American business from Tesla, Apple, Google, Microsoft – you name it. This led to some serious deal being signed with both the government and private business, spread across technology health, defence, high end manufacturing. All this signals a strategic alignment of the two nations at a deeper level.

Thus in a major defence deal involving technology transfer GE will produce jet engines in India for HAL's Tejas aircraft. There is Micron which will invest more than \$800 million towards a \$2.75 billion semi conductor assembly and test facility in India. This is a work in progress towards developing alternative supply chains to the China-Taiwan duo. 60,000 Indian engineers will be trained for this. Then a critical minerals partnership will diversify and secure critical mineral supply chains for EV batteries – again to mitigates Chinese dominance. The underlying underpinning of course is that it suits both nations that India has a bigger role in the Indo-pacific and acts as a countervailing force against a 'menacing' China. And to achieve this goal, US decided to downplay the differences between India and US on the Ukraine-Russia conflict.

Also, the six outstanding WTO disputes, three from US side and other three initiated by India, were resolved too; these will help India's steel, aluminums and



India's desire to protect its border and sovereignty on one hand and grow its economic interests aligns with US interests, it knows that too. The new dawn of mutual trust and accommodation should lead to a symbiotic growth of the two large democracies.

KK Srivastava



renewable energy industries. New US consulates will be opened in Bengaluru and Ahmedabad. And HIB and L visa holders now will be able to renew their visas in the US without returning to India. All this has meant that some leading western publications started playing new tunes on India. Certainly deals like massive orders for killer drones and commercial aircrafts by India constituted a great deal in this change of heart of western media, business, and government. Inescapable should be the fact to any discerning observer that both soft and hard power played their respective roles. Thus Economist ran a cover on 'indispensable' India which is America's 'new best friend'. Not only that, it declared Modi to be the world's most popular leader. It emphasized, the influence of Indian Diaspora on American affairs. Even Jai Shankar, the Indian External affairs Minister, occupied a lot of prime space in the Economist issue. All this from a publication which generally fails to have a few kind words for India.

However, more noteworthy now is the growing hard power of India that is at the base of recently Found interest in strengthening bilateral ties between India and US. Don't forget the India's growing military and economic heft, and a mouth drooling size of Indian market for everything. As such it is the only 'democratic' nation that can counter the challenges faced from Chinese expansionist policies and designs in all spheres – commerce, economic, political influence, diplomacy, etc. China, in purchasing power parity terms, is already the largest economy at \$30 trillion with a per capita GDP in PPP terms of about \$18200 (year

2022). Even in current US dollar terms its economy is second largest in the world. Herein comes the importance of India for US and US for India. Look at hundreds of commercial aircraft deals signed between Indigo and Air India with Boeing, and you get the picture of a mutually beneficial relationship. India is world's fifth largest economy, soon to ascend to third largest, is nothing to scoff at. Don't forget that while Indian economy is only 15% of the US economy size, India contributes 60% (to world growth) of the US contribution since India's GDP growth annually is nearly four times as fast, compared to that of the US.

India is the only nation in the Indian Ocean which can thwart the sinister designs of China there. India's military is being reinforced by order of American Poseidon aircrafts and drones that will help in surveillance and thwarting attack from an enemy. Indeed, US defence product manufacturers drool over Indian market since India is world's biggest defence importer with its defence budget being the world's fourth largest. Not to miss the GE deal.

The Indo-US ties are monumental in their implications for the rest of the world. The rest of the world is searching for clues about as to how a deepening US-India engagement is likely to influence the world order being reshaped, a global order which may soon lead to Asian dominance, India and China both included, than US. Biden has termed the challenge to the current global order as one of democracy vs autocracy. Thus he knows that friction had to be kept minimal. So India's ties with Russia did not come in the way; focus instead was

on 'no-limits' friendship between Russia and China which means Indo-Pacific region has to be secured. So what if in the process New Delhi's purchases of Russian oils or anti-missile firepowers (in the face of US sanctions) had to be side stepped. A closer embrace between the two nations, consigning hesitations to history, needed ample dose of pragmatism.

Geostrategic agenda set by both the nations had of course commercial agreements entwined with it. India's economic rise would help America since the former would provide a potential market; in turn US technology transfer would act as an enabler in transitioning of India to migrate to being the world's third largest economy. Strained Sino-US ties, talks of China plus one, and of course kinks free bilateral trade between India and US all can contribute. That both the nations are steadily working in this direction is evident from resolving of the six trade disputes that we mentioned above. Both the countries here understood that a zero-sum game is not possible; it is a question of give and take.

But while its clasp with the US is getting deeper, stronger, and more comprehensive, India has not lost sight of the objective of not compromising its strategic autonomy. US still wants a bipolar world (at best) idea with which India is not comfortable. And yet, India's desire to protect its border and sovereignty on one hand and grow its economic interests aligns with US interests, it knows that too. The new dawn of mutual trust and accommodation should lead to a symbiotic growth of the two large democracies. □□

UCC: Civil Treatment to All

No sane person can challenge the viewpoint that uniform laws in matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption, etc. are desirable, indeed imperative, in a civil society. Our constitution itself puts the objective of formulating a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in the list of the directive principles of state policy. Only the multiplicity of interests and needs in India has so far come in the way of having a UCC. There were three core electoral promises of the Bharatiya Janata Party – abrogation of article 370, building of Ram Mandir, and having a uniform civil code. Having fulfilled the other two now the govt. has articulated the need for the third loudly and clearly. It is unfortunate that some – though only some – believe that it will lead to erasure of customs and practices of certain – majority and minority both – segments; this in turn, these protesters allege, would destroy the sense of identity and independence. But this is an ironical fallacy.

India is a declared secular country. So all of us should welcome Modi's call for a UCC which aims of governing the personal law of all religious groups, not excluding Hindus and including Muslims and Christians, in a uniform manner. Remember the first aim was taken in 1950, when Nehru reformed Hindu Personal Law. He should have worked in the direction of implementing a UCC then itself. But better late than never. It is ironical that most 'secular' parties have been dragging their feet on the issue – ostensibly to appease the minority segments; both Congress and Communist parties were having in mind the valuable Muslim votes. While progressive Muslims would have supported reforms in their traditional laws, these parties never worked in the direction since in their thinking traditional mullahs (and their followers) counted for more favourable votes. Muslim women be damned in the process! Only the BJP has advocated for UCC. Lest it should be forgotten Indian constitution is a secular document and does not allow any religious discrimination. That's why it favours a secular code. No one can



One objection against UCC is that it will lead to abandoning of traditional beliefs and practices. But this is a very facetious arguments.

Dr. Jaya Kakkar



deny that in this debate the BJP is on the secular side.

Uttarakhand has recently made the draft UCC (for the state) public. This panel – which prepared the draft – went through the practices followed in other nations on family laws as also the related reports of the law commission. According to Justice Ranjana Desai, head of the drafting committee, the draft, if implemented, will strengthen the secular fabric of the country. This draft includes proposals to raise the marriageable age for women, legitimizing live in relationships, issue of inheritance laws, discouragement of practice of polygamy and polyandry, among others. To take one example, the objective of increasing the marriageable age of women across religion is to bring uniformly across religions and faiths to ensure greater women empowerment. Now who can find fault with such a code, barring perhaps the orthodox practitioners of religious practices that frown upon such attempts to uplift the lots of women. The time has indeed come to pursue the desire expressed in Article 44 of the constitution of India that we must have a UCC. The matter needs to be supported wholeheartedly. Though admittedly it needs to be discussed rationally too so as to avoid it to be given unnecessary political dimension.

One objection against UCC is that it will lead to abandoning of traditional beliefs and practices. But this is a very facetious arguments. All traditions (sati pratha, female infanticide, etc. – among Hindus) are not necessarily worth following. Similarly, at one time sharia governed not only personal

(civil) law but also criminal laws of Muslims. Under this law the punishment for theft was chopping off of thief's fingers, and a person could be stoned to death for adultery. Now we have a uniform criminal law where such barbaric practices have no place. On the same lines why can't be abhorrent traditions abandoned; in their place instead we can have a uniform civil code which ensures, irrespective of religion and other dividing lines, a fair and equal treatment to each living being – male or female, of whatever sexual orientation, from whatever religion?

The UCC debate itself has a long history. Its origin lies in the perfectly logical desire that all citizens in a country should be governed by a single civil code – just as they are governed by a single criminal code. When in the mid-1950s the then Congress government brought about changes in Hindu laws of marriage, divorce and succession to property, it stepped back from bringing similar reforms in other religious laws, mainly to preserve the Muslim vote bank, though ostensibly the argument put forward was that India did not want to be a majoritarian state and wanted to reassure its minorities. However, millions of Muslims staying in many other countries (US, UK ...) face uniform civil laws, and don't agitate for a separate personal law. Then why not in India? In fact our constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of caste, gender, religion or place of birth. Only a UCC can actually ensure that religious discrimination practices of all – Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Parsi – religious vanish. In a state like Goa, which gained indepen-

dence from Portugal (which had implemented Portuguese codes while in power) uniform civil laws, as practiced during Portuguese rule, and not Muslim personal law, apply. If there the Muslims have accepted such laws of inheritance and property rights, why not elsewhere?

Two factors – BJP's alleged with Hindutva politics and the conservative Muslim leadership's resistance to reform have given the debate an unnecessary political colour. The UCC does not affect Muslim alone. It affects the Hindu majority (example, the provision for Hindu Undivided family) as well as other minorities. Fundamental issue is that of ensuring gender equality and justice. Certainly it is a thorny issue with lots of constitutional, legal social, political, and economic ramifications. It touches all citizens, bar none, and reaches deep inside their ways of life for generations, even their personal spaces. There are no easy answers to the complex issue. The idea of a UCC has always polarized the nation right from the days of the Constituent Assembly debates. But we cannot turn our eyes away from the fact that there is a constitutional direction on having such a code; now is the time to catch the bull by horns. Article 44, as a Directive Principle of state policy – as all other such directives – forms the compass envisioned by the makers of the constitution to guide us. That's why the Supreme Court too has upheld the idea of such codification in many of its rulings. But as the Court said UCC can come into effect only when "statesmen amongst leaders who instead of gaining personal mileage rise above to accept the changes." □□

Sengol – Obliterate history, deny after discovery

“The most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history,” said George Orwell. The latest Indian example of how Orwell’s dictum works is the obliteration of the Sengol ceremony from the history of India’s freedom at midnight and the denial that it ever happened, after the truth that it did happen after all came out. The 75-year-old history of the Sengol was revealed four years back spontaneously, accidentally, and by no design. Who revealed it? Tamil media. Surprising? Read on.

Tamil media’s revelation

It does not need a seer to say why the Tamil media got excited when it got the lead about the Sengol history. The Sengol was the Chola empire’s sacred symbol for ‘Aram’ – the Tamil equivalent for dharma. That Chola’s Sengol symbolised India’s Independence was itself a news of high value and a matter of pride for the Tamil audience. It was enough for the Tamil media to probe deep into the Sengol history.

Different Tamil magazines reported from around 2019 that Mountbatten asked Nehru what was the Indian symbolism for the transfer of power from the British to India. Confused, Nehru looked to Rajaji, the elder statesman with traditional knowledge. Rajaji suggested the Chola model of vesting Sengol in the new ruler be adopted for the August 14-15 midnight ceremony. With Nehru okaying, Rajaji arranged for the Tiruvavaduthurai Adheenam to come over to Delhi to perform the Sengol ceremony.

Tamil magazines described the transfer of power ceremony graphically. They reported that the Adheenam saint gave the Sengol to Mountbatten, got it back, gave Gangajal abhishekam to it, recited the Thevaram verses invoking the blessings of Lord Shiva for Independent India’s rule to last forever and vested the Sengol in Nehru’s hands. Photos of Pundit Nehru holding the Sengol with reverence after receiving it from the Adheenam were also published. The magazines



The Modi government on a mission mode to trace and discover the forgotten heroes and pieces of history under its Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav project, began probing the Sengol issue.

S. Gurumurthy



also traced and found the Sengol physically in Allahabad Museum. Tamil media reports were brought to the Modi government's notice by Dr Padma Subrahmaniam, the famous scholar and artiste.

If the Tamil media had not dug out the Sengol history and subsequently if those reports had not been brought to the government's notice, its history would have been buried forever. The Modi government on a mission mode to trace and discover the forgotten heroes and pieces of history under its Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav project, began probing the Sengol issue. It ended up unearthing testimonies that proved the Tamil media reports were beyond doubt.

Sengol – “Officially announced”, “to be taken to Constituent Assembly house”

The Sengol ceremony was no secret or personal religious ritual of Nehru. It was an officially announced function that made it to national news long before the August 14-15 midnight. Here is a sample of the media reports on the Sengol in the second week of August 1947. “In connection with Independence Day, Tiruvavaduthurai Adheenam has arranged to perform special puja to Shiva and to confer the lord's blessings on Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The puja prasadams and a Sceptre made of gold will be presented to Pandit Nehru at his residence in New Delhi at 11 p.m. on August 14.” This was The Hindu – three days ahead of the ceremony [Aug 11, 1947].

A day before the ceremony The Indian Express [Aug 13, 1947] reported that the Sceptre ceremony was “officially announced” adding that the Adheenam would

“It was traditional in ancient India to derive power and authority from the holy men. Pandit Nehru yielded to all this religious ceremony because it was said of the kings of India that this was the traditional way of assuming power,” wrote Karaka.

present and Nehru would accept. Saying that Nehru had accepted to receive the Sengol exactly at 11.5 [?] pm, it reported that the Sengol would be “taken to the Constituent Assembly Hall in procession”. “The Sceptre ceremony will be preceded by a procession from the South India Boarding House, Connaught Circus,” reported Hindustan Times on the same date [13th].

The reports that the ceremony was “officially announced”, and that the Sengol would be taken in procession to Constituent Assembly Hall – which became Parliament later – made it clear that the Sengol vesting was part of the August 14-15 government protocol. Did the Tamil Adheenam go in a procession for the Sengol ceremony under government protocol to present a memento or as a personal gift, as some intellectuals are trying to morph the Sengol? Now come to the testimonies that the “intellectuals” are sidestepping. Globally reputed authors saw in the Sengol ceremony an Indian civilisational expression.

Symbol of assumption of power, say reputed authors

Time magazine [27.8.1947], D F Karaka, the famous journalist and editor of the Current magazine, in his book Betrayal of India, Dominique Lapierre and Larry Col-

lins in their famous book, Freedom at Midnight – all described the Sengol ceremony as symbolising the traditional Indian way of a new ruler assuming power. “On the eve of Independence, even the agnostic Nehru fell into religious spirit,” said the Time. Karaka wrote, “The mood of New Delhi had become almost superstitious.”

“From Tanjore came Hindu ascetics who thought that Nehru as the first head of the Indian state ought, like the ancient Indian kings, to receive the symbol of power and authority,” wrote the Time. “It was traditional in ancient India to derive power and authority from the holy men. Pandit Nehru yielded to all this religious ceremony because it was said of the kings of India that this was the traditional way of assuming power,” wrote Karaka. “As once Hindu holy men had conferred upon ancient India's kings their symbols of power, so the sannyasin had come to bestow their antique emblems of authority on the man about to assume the leadership of a modern Indian nation,” wrote Dominique Lapierre and Larry Collins.

Time magazine said, on the evening of August 14, the Adheenam team went in a slow procession in an ancient Ford car to Nehru's home; an escort bore a large silver platter on which there was peethambaram; they carried a gold-

en spectre wrapped in a peethambaram, opened and took the spectre, spilled holy water on it, and smeared Nehru's forehead with holy ash.

The Hindu priests, who according to Karaka, arrived post haste from Tanjore for the ritual, chanted hymns and sprinkled holy water over them; the Adheenam wrapped Nehru with peethambaram and handed over the spectre to Nehru. The Adheenam team and prasadams from Nataraja Temple were flown by plane to Delhi. Blind to these testimonies, the “intellectuals” keep contending that the Sengol was just a memento. No need to waste further time on them.

Symbolised transfer of power, say six independent testimonies

“That Sengol symbolised the transfer of power is a bogus story spun by the BJP's faking factory” — repeatedly howled Congress spokesman Jairam Ramesh. He had no evidence other than the claims of the intellectuals who were themselves blind to facts. It became like the proverbial blind leading the blind. Jairam said that in the absence of any proof that the Sengol was first presented to Mountbatten and taken back and vested in Nehru after rituals, the story that the Sengol symbolised the transfer of power was bogus. Overworked perhaps, he did not fully read the 35-page long government docket on the August 14-15 Sengol ceremony nor look at the government's website on Sengol.

The government had cited five independent testimonies which, while corroborating one another, said explicitly that the Sengol indeed “symbolised the transfer of

power”. One, the Adheenams' recorded institutional memory; two, the institutional memory of the Vummi Jewellers recorded on their website; three, personal testimony of the 96-year-old Vummi Bangaru Chetty who made the Sengol; four, the Policy Report of 2021-22 Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department submitted to the Tamil Nadu Assembly by the DMK government that came to power in May 2021; and five, the totally independent recollection of the universally revered Kanchi Mahaswami decades before in 1978.

All of them, including the Tamil Nadu government's report, independently testified that the Sengol was the symbol of the transfer of power to which Mountbatten and Nehru were parties. All except the Tamil Nadu government's brief policy report corroborated the Tamil media description of the details of the Sengol ceremony, including Gangajal abhishekam to the Sengol and mentioned Rajaji as the intermediary between Nehru and the Adheenam. After Prime Minister Narendra Modi installed the Sengol in Parliament on May 28, Masilamani (96 years), the secretary of the Adheenam who had arranged the Sengol vesting, and two of his successors, gave an interview to a news channel. He recollected even the minutest details of the chain of events associated with the ceremony, including that the then governor of Madras and the collector of Tanjore were also involved in organising the ceremony. His was the sixth testimony.

Obliterate, now deny

How did the evidence of Sengol ceremony which existed out-

side was not found inside the government? The answer is obvious. After adopting the Sengol as symbolic of the transfer of power, at some point, those in power must have felt that the August 14-15 history would be an inconvenient truth, inconsistent with the new idea of India they began expounding post Independence. Result, all in-house evidence of the Sengol ceremony history, including the photos taken at that time — which the Adheenam must have got only from the government — was obliterated.

The Sengol itself was first turned into a “brass stick” and recorded as a “memento” at the Nehru Gallery in the Allahabad Museum. Later, in the glass case in which the 5-ft long Sengol was exhibited, it was marked as a “Walking Stick presented to Pandit Nehru” completing its obliteration from history. With tons of proof emerging and establishing the Sengol as the symbol of the transfer of power in 1947, the very ideological players who must explain its records and history, are the ones now asking for proof of the Sengol ceremony.

Is this not, as Orwell would say, obliterating the Sengol history and the Sengol itself, to destroy the pre-Independence identity of India, deny it ever happened, and even ask for evidence that it had done away with?

If the vesting of the Sengol in 1947 symbolised the transfer of power, what does its installation in Parliament 75 years signify? □□

S. Gurumurthy: Editor, Thuglak, and commentator on economic and political affairs

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/opinions/columns/s-gurumurthy/2023/jun/21/sengol-nadash-obliterate-history-deny-after-discovery-2587116.html>

Rupee as International Currency

Internationalization of the rupee is a process that involves increasing use of the local currency in cross-border transactions. It refers to the process of increasing the use and acceptance of the rupee outside Bharat, for trade, investment, reserve and other purposes. It can have several benefits; however, it also entails several challenges and risks. One of the major hindrances is the currency's partial convertibility. Full convertibility would mean the rupee exchange rate would be left to market factors without any regulatory intervention. Convertibility will depend on the level of a country's economic development and how mature its financial markets are. It provides more certainty to residents, who can denominate foreign transactions in their home currency. They can also borrow in foreign markets without incurring exchange rate risk, potentially enabling them to find cheaper funding.

Currently, the US dollar, the Euro, the Japanese yen and the pound sterling are the leading reserve currencies in the world. China's efforts to make its currency renminbi has met with only limited success so far.

Bharat is aiming to make the rupee a global currency. Pushing for a roadmap towards the internationalisation of the rupee, the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Inter-departmental group (IDG) said with Bharat remaining one of the fastest-growing countries and showing remarkable resilience in the face of major headwinds, the rupee has the potential to become an internationalised currency.

These recommendations are significant, in light of the economic sanctions imposed by the US on Russia for invading Ukraine and the growing clamour for finding an alternative to the US dollar for international transactions.

It involves promoting the rupee for import and export trade and then other current account transactions, followed by its use in capital account transactions. These are all transactions between residents in Bharat and non-residents. The internationalisation of the currency, which is closely interlinked with the nation's



India as the fifth largest economy deserves rupee as international currency. There are many lessons to learn from the USA, Russia, Europe and China.

Vinod Johri



economic progress, requires further opening up of the currency settlement and a strong swap and forex market.

More importantly, it will require full convertibility of the currency on the capital account and cross-border transfer of funds without any restrictions. Bharat has allowed only full convertibility on the current account as of now.

Currently, the US dollar is said to enjoy an 'Exorbitant Privilege', which refers to the innumerable benefits that accrue to the US on account of all other countries of the world using the US dollar as their currency in most of their international transactions, among global currencies. The dollar's position is supported by a range of factors, including the size of the US economy, the reach of its trade and financial networks, the depth and liquidity of US financial markets, and a history of macroeconomic stability and currency convertibility. Dollar dominance has also benefited from the lack of viable alternatives.

According to the RBI's working group, the obvious challenger to the US dollar dominance is the Chinese Renminbi. However, its ability to rival the US dollar will depend on future policies in both the US and China and the ability of the Chinese economy and its financial system to demonstrate the same long-term resilience, integrity, transparency, openness and stability, which are characteristics of the US economy.

In the wake of the sanctions imposed on the Russian government, its public sector and even individuals linked to the government, many countries have become cautious of the price they may have

Currently, The US dollar is said to enjoy an 'Exorbitant Privilege', which refers to the innumerable benefits that accrue to the US on account of all other countries of the world using the US dollar as their currency in most of their international transactions, among global currencies.

to pay if they are subjected to similar sanctions by the Western governments. China, Russia and a few other countries have become more vocal in questioning the US dollar-dominated global currency system.

They would like to reduce their reliance on the US dollar and its financial markets as well as their dependence on dominant international payment mechanisms based on the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT) messaging system.

While reserves help manage exchange rate volatility and project external stability, they impose a cost on the economy. Internationalisation of the rupee reduces the need for holding foreign exchange reserves. Reducing dependence on foreign currency will make Bharat less vulnerable to external shocks. As the use of the rupee becomes significant, the bargaining power of our businesses would improve, adding weight to the economy and enhancing our global stature and respect.

The working group, headed

by RBI has recommended a slew of short to long term measures to accelerate the pace of internationalisation of the rupee. For the short term, the group has suggested adoption of a standardised approach for examining the proposals on bilateral and multilateral trade arrangements for invoicing, settlement and payment in the rupee and local currencies, encouraging the opening of the rupee accounts for non-residents both in Bharat and outside Bharat and integrating our payment systems with other countries for cross-border transactions. It suggested strengthening the financial market by fostering a global five-day round-the-clock global rupee market and recalibration of the FPI regime. Over the next two to five years, the group has recommended a review of taxes on masala (rupee-denominated bonds issued outside Bharat by our entities) bonds, international use of RTGS for cross-border trade transactions and inclusion of our Government Bonds in global bond indices. For the long term, the group has recommended that efforts should be made for the inclusion of the rupee in IMF's SDR. The SDR is an international reserve asset created by the IMF to supplement the official reserves of its member countries. The value of the SDR is based on a basket of five currencies — the U.S. dollar, the euro, the Chinese renminbi, the Japanese yen, and the British pound sterling.

With regard to medium-term strategy, the panel said, there is a need to review taxes on Masala bonds and international use of Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) for cross-border trade transactions and inclusion of INR

as a direct settlement currency in the Continuous Linked Settlement (CLS) system.

Examination of taxation issues in financial markets to harmonise our tax regimes and other financial centres and allowing banking services in INR outside Bharat through off-shore branches of our banks were part of medium-term suggestion given by the Reserve Bank panel.

Promoting international trade in the domestic currency will help in protecting the rupee from volatility and reduce cost of doing business in the global markets, Economic Survey said. The survey suggested that it could assist our exporters in getting advance payments in rupee from overseas clients and in the longer term promote the domestic currency as an international currency once the rupee settlement mechanism gains traction. In July 2022, the Reserve Bank issued a circular permitting an additional arrangement for invoicing, payment, and settlement of exports/imports in Indian rupees (INR) to promote the growth of global trade with emphasis on exports from Bharat and to support the increasing interest in the global trading community in rupee as an international currency.

The framework involves invoicing of exports and imports in rupee, market-determined exchange rates between the currencies of the trading partner countries, and settlement through special rupee vostro accounts opened with authorised dealer banks in Bharat. International settlement in rupee acquires significance against the backdrop of the US Federal Reserve aggressively hiking the policy rates and its combative

stand. The framework could largely reduce the net demand for foreign exchange, the US dollar in particular, for the settlement of current account related trade flows. Further, the use of INR in cross-border trade is expected to mitigate currency risk for our businesses. Following the Russia-Ukraine war and the sanctions imposed by the West, we have been trying to promote rupee trade. Protection from currency volatility not only reduces the cost of doing business but also enables better business growth, improving the chances for our businesses to grow globally. The survey said that it also reduces the need for holding foreign exchange reserves and dependence on foreign currency, making the our economy less vulnerable to external shocks.

In terms of foreign exchange market turnover (daily averages), as per the BIS Triennial Central Bank Survey 2022, the US dollar is the dominant vehicle currency accounting for 88 per cent of the global forex turnover. The rupee accounted for only 1.6 per cent. If the INR turnover rises to equal the share of non-US, non-Euro currencies in global forex turnover of 4 per cent, INR could be regarded as an international currency, reflecting Bharat's position in the global economy.

Our banks have already opened special vostro rupee accounts (SVRA) with banks of these three nations, operationalising the rupee trade arrangement.

Recently, SBI Mauritius Ltd and People's Bank of Sri Lanka opened an SVRA with State Bank of Bharat (SBI). In addition, Bank of Ceylon opened an account in its Indian subsidiary in Chennai.

In all, 18 such special rupee accounts have been opened by 11 banks, including 2 of Russia and one of Sri Lanka, following approval from the RBI.

The Reserve Bank of Bharat has allowed more than a dozen banks to settle trades in rupees with 18 countries since last year and is encouraging big oil exporters such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia to South Asian nations to accept the our currency for trade.

The group recommended enabling the rupee as an additional settlement currency in multilateral mechanisms such as the Asian Clearing Union.

It also encouraged the opening of rupee accounts for non-residents both in Bharat and outside the country, and integrating the Rupee payment systems with other countries for cross-border transactions.

India as the fifth largest economy deserves rupee as international currency. There are many lessons to learn from the USA, Russia, Europe and China. Weaponing currencies and trade and sanctions oriented global trade has boomeranged on such countries as the survival instincts of developing countries have immensely grown over past decade. The long and short term steps taken by RBI in endeavour to establish Rupee as global currency either through measures like RTGS, convertibility, foreigners allowed to hold rupee account, Indian securities in global bond indices, rupee banking services abroad besides cross border rupee trade and SDRs in IMF will surely succeed with appropriate time frame but no haste is solicited. □□

(Source : Economic Times, Financial Express, Times of India)

Vinod Johri: Retd. Additional Commissioner of Income Tax, Delhi

India makes \$1.5 billion toys, Replace China by 2028

India is poised to replace Chinese toys with indigenous manufacturing touching \$ 1.5 billion. It is likely to double to \$ 3.3 billion by 2028, according to International Market Analysis Research and Consulting Group (IMARC Group). India's toy imports, according to official figures, have declined by more than 70 per cent in the past 3.5 year, while exports have jumped by 61.3 per cent. It is expected to grow at 12 percent compound annual growth rate (CAGR). The world's leading toymaker Mattel recalled over 21 million Chinese-made toys worldwide in 2007 due to excessive levels of lead paint and other unsafe components.

India first banned toy imports from China mainly for its toxicity on 23 Jan, 2009 but again eased it on 6 March 2009. The Narendra Modi government has put restrictions again on September 1, 2017.

Despite all this as per WTO norms a complete ban on toy imports is unlikely. A new government initiative promises to help Indian toymakers scale up production capacity to compete internationally, further shrinking China's share in the domestic market. The government is considering a special scheme for the toy industry, according to Ajay Aggarwal, president of the Toy Association of India. It is likely to be a production-linked incentive. It will spur the activities of the toy industry.

India is home to 25 per cent of world's children aged between 0 and 12 years. Domestic demand is huge. It also has a rich history and culture when it comes to toy making. India's toy industry has been a rare bright spot in the country's drive to cut import reliance on China in recent years. Various policies to reduce dependence on Chinese goods and boost local manufacturing has been initiated, while taking advantage of Western efforts to diversify from the world's No 2 economy, says International Labour Organisation study.

India's share in the global toy market, estimated at \$90 billion, is 0.5 per cent (\$500 million). The toy manufacturers are mostly located in NCR, Maharashtra,



The ministry of commerce is of the opinion that in the next few years Indian toy industry would compete with China and have a niche in the world market.
Shivaji Sarkar



Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and clusters in some other states.

Chitrakoot in Uttar Pradesh, Kondapalli in Andhra Pradesh, Tanjore dolls, Ghurni clay dolls, Rajasthani puppets and Chennapatna on the Bengaluru-Mysuru highway have age old tradition of toy making but are unable to keep up with modern scale and trends. The traditional craft is protected as a geographical indication (GI) under the World Trade Organization. These are in demand in the West as exquisite pieces of art.

India's domestic toy industry comprises 4,000 micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and is primarily in the unorganized sector.

The increasing population catalyses the demand for toys. In addition, inflating income levels and the rising awareness among individuals about the benefits of toys in improving the cognitive capabilities of children are positively influencing the market in the country. Apart from this, a shifting preference from conventional toys towards modern and hi-tech electronic toys is strengthening the market growth. In line with this, the escalating demand for sensory toys for kids with special needs is driving the market in India, the ILO notes.

Advanced technology and machinery encourage manufacturers to produce innovative toys and boosting market outlook. The rising sales of smartphones, laptops, and personal computers (PCs), along with the increasing influence of social media, are propelling market growth.

The Amazon sold \$ 6292 million worth toys, Walmart \$ 4645 million and Target \$ 1621 million through e-commerce. India's im-

A shifting preference from conventional toys towards modern and hi-tech electronic toys is strengthening the market growth. In line with this, the escalating demand for sensory toys for kids with special needs is driving the market in India, the ILO notes.

port of toys in financial year 2018-2019 stood at \$1.4 billion (Rs10,000 crore). Almost 85 per cent of the toys till 2020 sold in India are imported, with China being the top source, followed by Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Germany, Hong Kong and the US.

A large variety of toys are available within the Indian market, they can be broadly classified into two very distinct categories on the basis of their application & purpose - educational and recreational toys. Amongst these two categories, under educational toys various toys and games made out of plastics and cardboard materials are prominent, while recreational toys, including electronic toys - remote controls, video games, battery operated toys, cars, plastic toys, dolls, soft toys and mechanical pull back toys are not popular amongst modern parents. However, out of all of these toys, the electronic toys & games as well as the battery-operated toys are being manufactured less in India.

The markets still sell Chinese products as still these are considered to have beheld the buyer. The Indian toys, despite being less ex-

pensive, are supposedly of better quality have yet to carve out a niche in the market. There is perception that the imported are technologically better. Manufacturers say that at initial stages the reactions are normal but as the indigenous products proliferate the perception would change.

Manufacturers find that while they have started mainly plastic toys as it is easier, they face different kinds of problems. It is just not the kind of metals and plastics but many toys need different kinds of textiles and other accessories. The ancillaries are yet to come up. Some require particular kind of durable, light and special fabric. That too is not locally available. China has also advanced low-cost electronics industry.

However, they are expecting more government support for banning imports to sustain production. A KPMG-FICCI report is hopeful that the country's market size would be doubling to \$ 2 billion shortly. Electronic toys comprise about ten percent of the toy segment, it is hoped that even without it the rest of the segment would grow and gradually critical areas would also be covered.

The ministry of commerce and industry is trying to understand the dynamics and shortcomings. It is also looking at the experience of other countries. It is working with the Toy Association of India.

Overall a good import substitution move has been made and the government expects the sector to take a leap by 2028. The ministry of commerce is of the opinion that in the next few years Indian toy industry would compete with China and have a niche in the world market. □□

A prescription for debt-free agriculture



If the banks have the resources to write off corporate bad loans to the tune of Rs 13 lakh crore in 10 years, and are able to provide huge 'haircuts' to the defaulting units under the insolvency proceedings, it is time to put the profits where they belong. This surely is the prescription for a debt-free agriculture.

Devinder Sharma

IT leaves you dumbstruck. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has directed banks to go in for a 'compromise settlement' with 16,044 fraudsters, crooks and wilful defaulters — people who can pay but give a damn — who had collectively defrauded the banks to the tune of

Rs 3.46 lakh crore by the end of December 2022. After a cooling period of 12 months, the defaulters will be eligible for fresh loans.

This comes at a time when banks in Rajasthan have launched an exercise to impound the cultivable land of 19,422 farmers who have defaulted on loan repayments in the past four years.

A year ago, the Punjab State Cooperative Agricultural Development Bank had planned to issue arrest warrants to speed up the recovery process against 71,000 defaulting farmers. The unpaid amount was Rs 3,200 crore — a fraction of what the wilful defaulters collectively owe. The bank had, in fact, served legal notices to 2,000 farmers with landholding exceeding five acres, which the state government subsequently withdrew.

While a majority of the wilful defaulters, including a number of crooks who have run away with public money, will get the banks to write off their outstanding amount as part of the 'settlement', defaulting Rajasthan farmers have no such choice. A majority of the farmers will lose their only source of livelihood. With the RBI throwing a 'raksha kavach' around the crony capitalists, it is only the poor farmers (and defaulters in other categories) who are left to fend for themselves. This shows how the banking system actually helps the rich become richer and the poor to be driven against the wall.

A few months back, a pregnant daughter of a farmer in Jharkhand was mowed down by the goons of a non-banking firm under the tractor that they were forcibly trying to drive away with. In the past, there have been reports of auctions of tractors and other machines that are seized by the banks. Not only



confiscating the movable property of farmers, but also impounding their arable land and even putting farmers in jail for dishonouring the cheques (that are taken blank from farmers) are routine tactics. Across the country, such stories abound where high-handedness against the defaulting farmers adds to the agrarian distress, pushing them to survive at the margins.

Non-payment of dues eventually turns out to be a torture for the defaulting farmers. They may have genuine reasons, such as crop failures and a sudden crash in the prices, but for the banking system, even if the defaulting amount is petty, they are an easy target. Much of the farm suicides that happen and the agrarian distress that exists are because of the indebtedness, which are mounting with each passing year.

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) has often recorded this as the primary reason behind farm suicides and the latest Situational Assessment Survey for Agricultural Households, released in 2021, has worked out that every farmer carries an average debt of Rs 74,121. With nearly 70 per cent of the farmers indebted, the average debt has steadily increased by 57 per cent since 2013.

Knowing that farmers have been denied their rightful income over the decades and considering that not more than 14 per cent of the entire harvest is procured at Minimum Support Price (MSP), for the farmers producing the remaining 86 per cent of the crops, the distress price they often get does not even cover the cost of production and, thereby, entails great pain, suffering, sorrow and mental distress. And finally, when the

If the banks can put to public auction the seized tractors or the impounded cultivable lands (for which they have no inbuilt expertise), they can also plan to put the harvested crop for sale. The banks will need to rent storage space or enter into an arrangement with Mother Dairy and other organised retailers like Reliance Fresh, Big Basket and Big Bazaar.

farmers fail to repay a bank instalment, even their lands are taken away. Imagine the mental strain the defaulting Rajasthan farmers must be under with the sword of Damocles hanging over their head.

This is the worry of a Karnataka farmer, Echaghatta Siddaveerappa. Hailing from Chitradurga district, he invited me a few days back to visit his village to see how they had found an ingenious solution to the vexed crisis. When a few farmers in his taluka received a bank notice asking them to pay the pending dues before the recovery proceedings were launched, these farmers came up with an innovative idea. Using the Swaminathan Commission's formula to estimate the comprehensive cost of production plus 50 per cent profit, they packed their crop produce (equal to the amount pending against their name) and reached the bank's office. They approached four banks, and asked the banks to accept their pending dues in kind.

"We took a crop loan from the bank. We produced a bountiful harvest. But with market prices remaining low, we are unable to recover even what we had spent. In that case, how do the banks expect us to pay back in time?" an anguished Siddaveerappa asked me, adding: "Sir, why should the

banks take away our tractor and machinery or seek court's orders to put us in jail? Why don't they instead take our crops?"

Well, all said and done, there is certainly merit in what the angry farmers say. After all, they produced the crops for which the loans were taken. And they were willing to pay it back in kind.

To the question as to what the banks would do with the crop harvest, the answer is simple. If the banks can put to public auction the seized tractors or the impounded cultivable lands (for which they have no inbuilt expertise), they can also plan to put the harvested crop for sale. The banks will need to rent storage space or enter into an arrangement with Mother Dairy and other organised retailers like Reliance Fresh, Big Basket and Big Bazaar.

Certainly, this is not going to be a prohibitive cost that the banks cannot undertake. If the banks have the resources to write off corporate bad loans to the tune of Rs 13 lakh crore in 10 years, and are able to provide huge 'haircuts' to the defaulting units under the insolvency proceedings, it is time to put the profits where they belong. This surely is the prescription for a debt-free agriculture. □□

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/a-prescription-for-debt-free-agriculture-519695>

Goods and Services Tax: Matching Level-Playing Field of Small with Big



GST has expanded the base of the organized sector, has motivated small businesses to join the organized system, increased transparency, and arrested the exploitation of any stakeholders in the business process.
Alok Singh

Goods and Services Tax (GST) is a designed taxation tool having many characteristics like simplicity, integration of multiple taxes, whole country as a single market, checking tax avoidance or tax theft, and most importantly it is a tool which has offered an opportunity of level playing field to small players who compete with big players.

A big player can forward integrate as well as backward integrate their supply chain practices. When a company is forward integrating it is moving its planned product nearer to the end user customer on its own system and hence control over the whole forward supply chain. When a company is backward integrating itself then it is attempting to control the supply of raw materials, and other ancillary parts needed to produce the planned product. For example, if we consider a company which is manufacturing potato chips then the meaning of extreme case of backward integration is that the company owns the potato, to own the potato company owns the logistics network including trucks, the company also owns the cold storage facilities which are nearer to the potato farmers, the company also engages itself with a legally bound farming contract with the farmers, or can even lease the farmland for a lengthier time from the land owners. The forward integration in this case means that the company owns the logistics facility to transport the packaged potato chips to the market, it also has a warehouse near the market, it also has exclusive wholesale and exclusive retail outlets for its potato chips and it is as nearer to the customer as possible by any other potato chips manufacturer. In this scenario, the company has everything available in-house, and hence the tax paid by the company is also in its knowledge. Moreover, the company can trace



its backward as well as forward supply chain and keep on improving its operational efficiency and hence consistently increasing aggregate profit margin.

A small player who makes potato chips is dependent on another small player who supplies potatoes and another small player who transports the chips to the market, and another small shop seller who sells the potato chips. There can be a huge chain of small players in the small potato chips business starting from farmland to the end user customer. In the absence of a GST system, the small player's cost of production will be higher and hence market share will be smaller. Such players won't see the light of sustainability easily and struggle throughout their life for survival. The older system was such that these small players won't pay tax and also won't get access to the facilities for matching the production cost with those of big integrated players. It means that the tax avoidance by the small players is at the price of higher production cost, lesser market share, and hence reduced profit margins. One failure can kick the small player out of the business. The GST has provided an opportunity of leveling the playing field for small players with those of the big players.

The cascading effect of the older system of state and central taxes impacted adversely small businesses. The input tax credit mechanism in GST provides an opportunity for small businesses to match the cost of production with those of big integrated businesses. Earlier the big integrated businesses could get the raw materials, logistics support, market

access, and other operations in-house while the small businesses relied on external agencies for the same raw materials, logistics support, market access, and other operations. This resulted in higher production, operations, and logistics costs for small businesses in comparison to big integrated businesses. This forced the small businesses to bypass the organized mechanism for making profits and such businesses dealt mostly with hard currency for their survival. That small business that attained a sustainable level of success might also rely on the hard currency transaction mechanism to make a profit. Still, such intentional exclusion from the organized business had a huge tradeoff of efficiency, productivity, agility, and many more. Once a small business survives, it aspires to sustainability and then aims to maximize profit by expanding its market reach. Such businesses were the culprit of tax theft and the GST regime has forced such businesses to fall in line.

Along with GST, the union government has come up with incentives for small organized businesses to migrate to organized business. The production linked incentive (PLI), the tax holiday period, the handholding in terms of many other assurances and actions like regulating e-commerce, providing open network digital commerce (ONDC), and obviously GST mechanism is a huge relief to the small businesses in matching the cost of production with that of the big integrated companies. Moreover, the cost of debt for small businesses in the organized sector is cheaper than those in the unorganized sector. There is no motivation left for small business-

es to continue in the unorganized sector or informal category as the transparency, accountability, and facilities provided to small businesses are huge in an organized category. The GST is a triggering point to convert the unorganized category of business to an organized category.

Small businesses can come up together, create clusters for their products and services and form a cooperative for their businesses. These are possible only if all the small businesses of a particular product or service join the organized sector.

Petroleum products are outside the purview of GST and petroleum products impact the logistics and transportation cost in a huge way. The inclusion of petroleum products in GST will be further helpful to small businesses. The real estate business is mainly unorganized and there are many small contractors of big cities and big contractors of small cities who are comfortable doing business in the unorganized sector. Real estate is in a grey area of GST as there are many ifs and buts about GST in the real estate sector. The government should develop a simple GST mechanism for the real estate sector which is understandable and interpretable by the real estate buyers, developers, and the real estate project supply chain members.

GST has expanded the base of the organized sector, has motivated small businesses to join the organized system, increased transparency, and arrested the exploitation of any stakeholders in the business process. □□

(Alok Singh is a Fellow of the Indian Institute of Management Indore, a freelancer academician, and associated with AGET Business School, Jhajar.)

A Forgotten Freedom Struggle Hyderabad Mukti Sangharsha and its Significance



This year the earlier Nizam ruled Hyderabad prant consisting of regions of Kalyana Karnataka, Telangana and Marthawada are celebrating Amrit Mahotsava i.e. 75th years of Hyderabad Mukti Sangharsha. Hyderabad Mukti Sangharsha is at par with the India's Independence Struggle. Hyderabad Mukti Sangharsha was struggle against the oppression, brutality and atrocities of Nizam. Not only the leaders, warriors, martyrs and but common people who raised slogan Vande mataram, Bharat Mata ki Jai and hoisted independent India's flag has to face ire of Nizam and Razakars (Demons in the form Humans). Common people of these reasons had to fight their war in Independent India more than 13 month against Nizam, Razakars his followers & his military's brutal oppression & atrocities.

Ruler was a Muslim, subjects were 80% Hindus. In spite of this Nizam wants build his own kingdom or want to join hands with Pakistan. To liberate Hyderabad

from clutches of Nizam a movement took birth.



The history of Mukti Sangharsha should have been fully documented & taught it unveils the heritage of our Nation. In India wherever armed struggle took place, it has been ignored.

**Mahadevayya
Karadalli**

Hyderabad Mukti Sangharsha. Popularly known as Rajakar hawali (attack) was the history containing incidents of brutal murder, oppression and atrocities. Razakars, Demons in the form Humans are so cruel that they did not spared anybody including children, women and senior citizens of the areas. Some historians highlighted & written the Razakar's attacks on Hindus. First time hindus tolerated the onslaught but they reacted immediately and taught them lesson. It is the united sangharsh of the people towards success. Hindus with strong will and wish joined patriotic organizations. Arya Samaj, Hindu Mahasabha, Raita Dal, Congress (not present congress) Sangh etc within months Hyderabad liberated successfully from the clutches of Nizam. But historians and history books failed to give record. Sangharsha history either find place or suitable place. Freedom fighters sacrifice not even mentioned. Thus number of sacrifices, stories of unsung heroes, warriors which can inspire the young were kept in cold storage. With a fear losing muslim votes the Sangharsha – became A Forgotten Freedom Struggle i.e. Hyderabad Mukti Sangharsha. It is important to note that Struggle was not against the Muslims, but it was against Nizam who wants to join hands with Pakistan.

After 1949 Police action (Hyderabad Mukti Sangharsha) during Feb. 1949, the pioneer, leader of the struggle had visited Hyderabad. During the course of meeting with Nizam, Sardar Patel urged him that this was golden opportunity for him to forget the past and join hands to work for the good and welfare of the all.

In instant reply Nizam started saying that he always worked for the welfare of his subjects without discriminating as Hindu and Muslims. They were dear to him as his two eyes. Sardar Patel initially did not contradict his statement. But when Nizam started repeating the same words with no choice he called Menon, his secretary, and asked him that to exhibit truly reflected the philosophy of the Nizam. Immediately The Secretary readout Nizam's own lines: All ancient ancestral empires have been lost to the sight of time, Osman! The mark of Musalmans remains today only because of your sultanate. The cries of Allahu Akbar have silenced the blowing of the conch. It is as if pralaya has descended upon those who wear the thread and tuft. Upon hearing his own lines being read out to him in this unexceptionable fashion, Nizam was struck speechless. The evidence of prior preparedness to give a befit reply in any context stupefied him. This was the true picture of the mind and heart of the Nizam. At one point of time Nizam deceived the world by claiming that he was prisoner of the Razkars and was a friendless and helpless. And simultaneously asked aid from Indian Government. But Nizam himself was ambitious and turned his deaf ears to the legitimate demands of Hindu majority subjects.

Veera Savarkar "The first page of all history are always unknown this is the curse on history". It applies to Mukti Sangharsha also. Study of Sangharsha is nothing but the courageous struggles of common people against brutal oppression, tyrannical feudal regime of Nizam. It was against the

crushing of the opposition of common man. Struggle is also to avenge atrocities, renunciation, sacrifice and exhibition of bravery. Study to echo the feelings of freedom fighters i.e. Mukti Sangharsha & their unshakeable commitment, behavior and character. Youth can get inspiration, feel the pride about sacrifice & the dignity of their ancestors. Now a days generation can quote the pride and honour of those hard days. Those Youths came out with zeal, on their own to fight oppression, brutalities and heedless, at the cost of their own lives. Such a priceless historical moments, powerful source of inspiration was kept in dark.

Hyderabad Mukti Sangharsha Popularly known as Rajakar havali where the incidents of Razakars brutal oppression on Hindus were only highlighted. Whereas the successful role of organisations involved such as Arya Samaj, Hindu Mahasabha, Raita Dal, Congress (not present congress) Sangh etc., and stories of sacrifices of unsung heroes, warriors which can inspire the young were kept in dark with a label of communalism.

We have limited and authentic knowledge about the Hyderabad Mukti Sangharsha Struggle which was fought at regions of Kalyana Karnataka, Telangan and Marthwada regions. If the history of Mukti Sangharsha was fully documented, and made available to each citizen that it would be an inspiring story for our youths and will prepare them to work for building a model & welfare state (Kalyana Karnataka).

Activists of social media shall posts details of reference books, authors, and publishers for the benefit of new generation. So, that interested people can collect those

books and read & access them easily. Following are primary source for readers.

But Successive governments distanced themselves due to fear of stigma of communalism. Further it is million dollar question among three regions why the part of Karnataka region called Hyderabad Karantaka region with backwardness tag. Further, the Muslims of other two regions distance themselves with Nizam region. So the both regions were not either Hyderabad Marathwada or Hyderabad Telangana. A successful movement has multidimensional effects viz Political, Social, cultural, economical and developmental effects. Its study itself will be an interesting subject and open many avenues. But here Sangharsha was not taken care of either by Government or by public. So, year after year people forgotten the story of Hyderabad Mukti Sangharsha. In this year of Amrit Mahotsava interested we can try to enlighten the people, especially youths of the respective region.

The history of Mukti Sangharsha should have been fully documented & taught it unveils the heritage of our Nation. In India wherever armed struggle took place, it has been ignored. So the fate of Hyderabad Mukti Sangharsha struggle also unable to secure its due place in the history. Hence Sangharsha gata was forgotten. Amrit mahotsava (upto Sept 2023) is the right time to expose and enlighten about Hyderabad Mukti Sangharsha, its warriors and its Martyrs. Let us take this story of forgotten Sangharsha gata to young minds. □□

Mahadevayya Karadalli: Thinker & writer on Nationalistic Perspective.

Ref: *Liberation struggle of Hyderabad – some unknown pages by Asharya Khanderao Kulakarni Translated by Dr Rahul A Shastri*

“India’s Pursuit of Self-Reliance and Economic Growth: Strategies to Strengthen Domestic Industries and Address Unemployment” : Dr. Mahajan

Dr Ashwani Mahajan, Economist and National Co Convenor, Swadeshi Jagran Manch, talks to Mahima Sharma, India Stat, a renowned Statistical organisation, on host of issues including nation’s journey towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat, implication on international trade agreements, innovations, entrepreneurship and employment. Dr. Mahajan has candidly expressed his views on monetary challenges, effects of rupee depreciation on India’s economy and job creation through self-reliance. Here is the edited excerpt of the interview for the readers of **Swadeshi Patrika**...

MS: How can India strengthen its domestic industries and promote self-reliance in the face of globalization?

Dr. Mahajan: In the post-new economic policy period, our industrial base started eroding, due to the rising imports from different parts of the world, especially China. Chinese imports have been the biggest contributor to the decline of our industries, across the board. Industries which have been worst hit include textile, chemicals, electronics, machinery and equipment, electric and telecom equipment, paper and paper products, basic metals, refined products and many others. This has led to even closure of factories in many cases. This process of destruction of industries, which is also sometimes called as deindustrialization of the Indian economy, was accentuated after China became a member of WTO in 2001. The share of manufacturing in our overall GDP, which was 21.26 per cent in 1995-96 declined to 16.35 per cent in 2018-19.

In a country like India with a large army of the youth labour force, the manufacturing sector can provide vast opportunities for employment and livelihood. But unfortunately, not only three crucial decades were lost, during which we could have given a boost to our manufacturing, our policymakers remained insensitive to this loss. Instead, they argued in favour of the import of manufactured products, saying that cheaper imports will make it possible for our

people to afford many of the goods, and therefore improve their lifestyle.

It is notable that prior to 2004, the government used to impose heavy tariffs on imported manufactured and agricultural goods. The average weighted tariff on imports was 56.36 per cent in 1990 (before WTO came into force). This was reduced to 27.01 per cent by 1992 when WTO negotiations were going on. This was further reduced to 23.72 per cent by 1996. It is important to note that WTO agreements came into force in the year 1995. The average weighted tariff was 22.96 per cent in 2004. Since 2004 there is no look back and tariffs continued to decline. In 2005 average weighted tariff was 13.9 per cent, in 2007 it was 11.99 per cent and by 2008 it declined to 5.99 per cent. The lowest average weightage tariff was in 2018 when it declined to 4.88 per cent. Since 2018 the government attempted to increase tariffs on some selected items of imports, which included electronic and telecom, mobile phone, textiles, apparel and non-essential commodities. Despite all this, the average weighted tariff remained low at 6.19 per cent in 2020.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, it was realized that the country cannot remain dependent on imported manufactured goods and the country needs to achieve some degree of selfreliance, what is popularly known as ‘Aatmanirbhar Bharat’. The government prepared a list of sub-sectors/commodities which have been

badly hit by unequal imports from China, whether due to dumping by China or due to other kinds of violations of trade rules by Chinese authorities or due to any other means. The government decided to offer a production linked incentive scheme for the revival of these industries. Apart from this, the government has been giving direct and indirect support for the revival of these industries.

Very encouraging results of these efforts are being seen in these sub-sectors in manufacturing. Many new API manufacturing capacities are being created and the country may once again become self-reliant in the production of APIs. Similar is the situation with other sub-sector of manufacturing. Unfortunately, though new capacities are being created for different products, imports from China are continuing unabated.

MS: What is your assessment of the current state of the Indian Rupee and its implications for the economy? What will be the impact of RBI's decision to allow the settlement of international trade in the Rupee?

Dr. Mahajan: The Indian Rupee has been depreciating against the USD for some time now, and the Rupee has declined from Rs 74.5 per USD in February 2022 to almost Rs 82 per USD now.

In the past, the Rupee had been weakening not only against the USD but also against many important currencies including the Euro, Pound, Yen, and Yuan. For example, since 1991, the Rupee has depreciated 137 per cent against the Pound Sterling, 489 per cent against the Euro and 241 per cent against the Yen, while the depreciation against the USD has been 252 per cent. This means that in the long run, the Rupee has weakened against all the important currencies.

But there has been a change in the depreciation trend of the Rupee recently. From February 2022 till June 2023, the Rupee weakened by 10.23 per cent against the USD, but depreciated only by 2.47 per cent against British Pound and 5.1 per cent against Euro and appreciated against the Japanese Yen by nearly 9 per cent. Earlier it had gained 6.31 per cent against the Pound Sterling, 10.77 per cent against the Yen and 4.72 per cent against the Euro in five months prior to July 2022. Since the USD has strengthened against almost all major currencies around the world, it would be more beneficial for us to understand the reasons for the strength of the USD against various currencies rather than the weakness of the Rupee.

In July 2022, the Reserve Bank of India, through a circular allowed settlement for import and export of goods and services in Indian Rupee. This was a strategic decision in the background of the Ukraine and Russia war and US sanctions on the use of the USD for payments to Russia and Iran. Another reason was to support the weakening of the Indian Rupee by promoting Indian exports resulting in growth in foreign trade.

As a result of this decision, many countries of the world which were interested in importing from India and were not able to do so, due to paucity of the USD, can now pay in Indian Rupee for their imports. To facilitate the settlement of trade in the Indian Rupee, Indian banks have opened 'Special Vostro Accounts' with 19 countries including the UK, New Zealand, Germany, Malaysia, Israel, Russia and the United Arab Emirates.

In July 2022, the Reserve Bank of India, through a circular allowed settlement for import and export of goods and services in Indian Rupee. This was a strategic decision in the background of the Ukraine and Russia war and US sanctions on the use of the USD for payments to Russia and Iran.

Like Russia, some other countries out of these 19 countries, export hugely to India and they shall be paid in Indian Rupees for their exports. It is reasonably believed that such countries are likely to use their Indian Rupee reserves for importing more and more products from India. It may give a substantial boost to exports from India subject to the quality and quantity of goods or services available in India required by them. The entire exercise will help in saving precious foreign exchange reserves amid rising global economic risks.

Corresponding changes have been made in Foreign Trade Policy to allow for International Trade Settlement in INR i.e., invoicing, payment, and settlement of exports/imports in Indian Rupees in sync with RBI's Circular dated 11.07.2022. Further changes have been introduced in the Foreign Trade Policy for the grant of export benefits and fulfilment of Export Obligations for export realizations in INR as per RBI guidelines. These changes will ensure that export-

ers remain entitled to export incentives even when payments for their exports are realized in Indian Rupee.

This decision will reduce the requirement of the USD in international trade and may help strengthen Indian Rupee, therefore, it will have several benefits, including combating inflation and making Rupee an international currency.

MS: How will demonetization of the Rs 2000 notes impact the Indian economy - please list both pros and cons.

Dr. Mahajan: Issuance of Rs 2000 note in the name of demonetisation of big notes was against the very spirit of demonetisation itself. That's why the withdrawal of 2000 notes was started in March 2018. It is worth mentioning that the Rs 2000 notes amounting to Rs 6.73 lakh crore, which came into circulation initially, were reduced to only Rs 3.62 lakh crore by March 2023. It can be said that although the govern-

The 2000 notes in circulation are mostly with those people who have kept their money in cash, so the Reserve Bank says that with this decision, there may be a huge increase in the deposits of banks. This will increase the revenue of the govt. and also transparency in the economy.

ment had issued 2000 notes, its intention was to gradually reduce the circulation of these notes, and ultimately withdraw them altogether. The Reserve Bank says that 89 per cent of the total Rs 2000 notes, which were issued before March 2017, have already completed their life and were supposed to be withdrawn as per RBI's clean notes policy. The conclusion is that the withdrawal of Rs 2000 notes cannot be said to be a sudden decision.

The Reserve Bank says that the general public has very few Rs 2000 notes. This also means that the 2000 notes in circulation are mostly with those people who have kept their money (or say black money) in cash, so the Reserve Bank says that with this decision, there may be a huge increase in the deposits of banks. This will increase the revenue of the government and also transparency in the economy.

Demonetisation of 2018 had been beneficial for India, in terms of combating inflation, bringing greater transparency, digitalisation, controlling crime, terror-

ism, stone pelting and even naxalism, increasing government revenue etc.

Some holders of Rs 2000 notes may convert them into other currencies. But the majority of them will either deposit them in bank accounts and pay taxes or may increase conspicuous consumption and this will benefit the economy. Some economists feel that with this bank deposits may increase by minimum Rupees one lakh crores.

MS: How can India address the challenges of unemployment and job creation in the current economic scenario, when the population has become a major concern?

Dr. Mahajan: At the outset, we need to understand that at present, the concern in India is not the size of the population, but the deployment of our youth, especially in the age group of 15 to 30 years, which constitutes nearly 30 per cent of the population, which is considered to be a boon; and is also called demographic dividend.

Due to the obsession of policymakers towards globalization, in the last almost 3 decades, there has been a significant decline in manufacturing in India. Alongside, a psyche has also developed that India can never compete with the world in the field of manufacturing, so we only need to concentrate on the service sector. We can import items from abroad for our requirements. There was also an attempt to develop the mindset that imports are necessary to increase domestic production and also to increase exports.

Despite the widening of the trade deficit and the resulting increase in demand for foreign exchange and the depreciation of the Rupee, there has been no change in the thinking of our policymakers. But during the Corona period, when the international supply chain was disrupted and we had to depend on China for the supply of essential commodities, which was the main culprit, a new thinking of self-reliant India (Atmanirbhar Bharat) and 'vocal for local' started taking shape. In those difficult times, India not only manufactured essential medicines, vaccines, PPE kits, ventilators and other medical equipment but also started intensive efforts to make India self-reliant in various fields.

Sectors which have been affected due to the influx of imports in the last few years, such as API, Electronics, Textile & Apparel, Telecom, Chemicals etc. and other industries which India needs like Semi-

conductors, Solar Panel, Electric Vehicles, efforts started to revive them using production linked incentives (PLIs), imposition of Anti Dumping Duties, raising of tariffs etc. The government plans to spend around Rs 3 lakh crore on all these PLIs in the next few years. The implementation of the Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme by the Prime Minister and the slogan of 'Vocal for Local' is indeed infusing new energy into these sectors.

To make these historic efforts successful, no stone should be left unturned. Taking the government to the entrepreneurs and youth, society's efforts would be needed. There are nearly 700 industrial clusters in the country, many of which are facing the threat of extinction due to an onslaught of imports and a non-conducive business atmosphere. One district and one product scheme in some states can also help revive many of our industries facing the danger of extinction.

The challenge before India today is not only to make up for its unsatisfactory performance in the first, second and third industrial revolutions but also to participate actively in the fourth industrial revolution.

MS: How can India effectively manage inflationary pressures while ensuring sustainable economic growth?

Dr. Mahajan: Though inflation has been impacting the common man and businesses, the rate of inflation has been significantly lower than in other major economies of the world. Be it manufacturing or the service sector, all are pointing towards rapid growth. The figures of receipts of GST corroborate this. The Rupee has weakened slightly against the Dollar, but it is not the same as in the past because whenever the Indian currency was weakening, it was weakening against all the major currencies of the world.

But in the last 5 months, the Rupee has strengthened against Pound, Euro and Yen. The strength of the Dollar against the Rupee and all major currencies is due to the rise in interest rates in the US and global turmoil, therefore, this strength is believed to be short-lived. But the main concern of India's policy-makers is inflation. Inflation in India remained at a very low

level in the range of 3 to 4 per cent for a very long time. But for some time it peaked at 7 per cent, before declining recently.

Due to high inflation, the Reserve Bank had to increase policy interest rates, which also had an impact on growth. In the event of a high rate of inflation, the government will have to make concerted efforts to curb inflation. There have been many commendable efforts to combat inflation, including the purchase of crude oil from Russia and Iran at cheap prices, increasing agricultural production in the country, and reduction in tax on petrol and diesel by the government. Due to all these efforts, the rate of inflation in India is much lower than that of the US and UK.

Globally, countries are facing food inflation, rising fuel prices and rising prices of essential raw materials. India is also being affected by the same, maybe to a lesser extent. But efforts are on to contain inflation by increasing tax revenues and consequently controlling the fiscal deficit. There is no doubt that if India is able to control inflation, then we will be able to increase both our GDP and employment by promoting manufacturing in various sectors of the country, supported by the efforts of self-reliant India.

MS: What role should the government play in promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in India via AI? And how must it ensure minimal job loss?

Dr. Mahajan: The challenge before India today is not only to make up for its unsatisfactory performance in the first, second and third industrial revolutions but also to participate actively in the fourth industrial revolution. It is true that there can be some reduction in employment generation due to robotics, artificial intelligence, drones etc., but the same can be made up by creating jobs through the same by being pioneers in these technologies in the world. However, we must not forget that due to new technology, cost also comes down.

For example, companies that use artificial intelligence, robots, drones, etc., reduce their cost. Those industries become more competitive in the market as costs come down, but the indiscriminate loss of employment in the name of new technology also cannot be justified. In such a situation, policymakers have to show utmost sensitivity and serious consideration to the selection of technology. □□

<https://www.indiastat.com/Socio-Economic-Voices/India-Pursuit-Self-Reliance-Economic-Growth-Strategies-Strengthen-Domestic-Industries-Address-Unemployment#>

G20: Emerging India on the World Stage



India is a country in South Asia which has a proud history of thousands of years with the rich culture and heritage. Today India is the fifth largest economy in the world along with this it is an emerging superpower in the global market there is no doubt that India is emerging as a world leader among global powers.

Currently India is chairing the 18th G20 summit. This is a sign that India's global importance is increasing and it is a great opportunity for every Indian to introduce the world to India's think tank. India's culture and social power increase the knowledge of the world with the

wisdom of thousands of years old culture and the modernity contained in it.

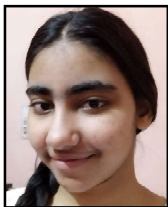
The G20 was formed in the backdrop of the financial crisis of the late 1990's it is a strategic multilateral forum linking the world's major developed emerging economies its objective is to secure global financial stability with the coporation and participation of middle income countries.

G20 is a group of developed countries, which has about 85% participation in world GDP it is about 60% of the world's population and accounts for 75% of global trade this group includes 20 countries (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States).

There is no permanent secretariat of G20 it holds the conference through troika. This time India is part of troika along with its predecessor Indonesia and successor Brazil. This would be the first time when the Troika would consist of three developing countries and emerging economies it is hoped that as a result there would be a shift in the balance of power within the G20 favouring emerging economies to have a greatest share in the decision making.

India hopes to extend this principle towards finding sustainable solutions to some of the key global challenges emerging out of the interconnectedness of the world such as climate change and emerging technology food and energy security digital economy and climate change inclusive equitable sustainable development and more focus on women empowerment energy security public infrastructure. This issue can have a positive impact on the economy and social life of poor countries.

The theme of G20 one earth one family one future reflects the commitment towards Vasudeva kutumbkam. Its logo inspired by the saffron white green and blue colours of the national flag of India and a vibrant symbol of India's pro earth approach.



India wants to demonstrate the dignity of individual to all countries on the world stage and focus on global welfare through the culture of democracy and the goal of sustainable development.
Vaidehee

For India the G20 presidency also mark the beginning of Amritkal which mark the century of India's independence where a human vision lies at the core of a prosperous inclusive developed society.

Today the world is looking at us with hope today every decision of India can have a deep impact on global issues it was not easy for India to reach this position we have also seen the darkest days in the world whether it is 200 years of slavery or the past of poverty and being economically backward but we have not stop over journey of development.

Today as a result of those efforts, new India is rapidly taking shape our country has also passed through the epidemic from which no country could escape but the way, the recovery has been done in India is commendable. The whole world is acknowledging

how India helped more than 150 countries with vaccine medical equipments and medicine India meet 65% of the world's vaccine requirements.

As we know India is making new efforts every day. On path of becoming developed there are some challenges in this path the solution can be found in G20 conference such as China's increasing policy of expansionism strict action against terrorism. Today India's territorial sovereignty is threatened by the activities of China and Pakistan. Therefore India as a chairman can try to help the grouping countries find solution on this serious issues. Reducing economic dependance and preventing trade imbalance is also major problem so that economy could work smoothly.

Today a big challenge in front of India is the Russia Ukraine war due to which the global economy

is in a bad condition the supply chain has been completely disrupted. Along with this there has been shortage of food and other essential commodities. Today the world is divided against Russia in such as situation the challenge before India is how to bring all the countries on one platform and solve this problem through dialogue and negotiations. Today India has good relation with Russia as well as developed countries such as (US UK Japan etc) through its diplomacy. India's efforts are to strike a balance between the two. But India does not support Russia's war on Ukraine at any cost.

India wants to demonstrate the dignity of individual to all countries on the world stage and focus on global welfare through the culture of democracy and the goal of sustainable development. □□

Vaidehee: Student of Delhi University

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Nine Years of Narendra Modi

Taking seriously the challenges facing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the run-up to the general elections in 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a four-hour long meeting with the chief ministers and deputy chief ministers of BJP-ruled states on May 28, 2023, at the party headquarters. Ostensibly to take stock of the implementation of various welfare schemes and consider ways to accelerate its development agenda, the recent defeat in Karnataka would have underlined the need to avoid complacency, especially among states going to the polls in December 2023.

The Congress-led opposition boycott of the inauguration of the new Parliament building in the capital on May 28, 2023 highlighted the deep fissures in the polity. The Congress was especially incensed at the arrival of the Sengol, symbol of righteousness and royal (read political) power of the old Tamil kingdoms (Chola, Pallava, Pandya), and did much to discredit and disown its association with the transfer of power in 1947, despite a plethora of media accounts and archival photographs.

Unable to explain Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's decision to banish the Sengol to Anand Bhavan and then to the Allahabad Museum, the party's antics were ignored as people were mesmerised by the Adheenam priests conducting the ceremony with aplomb and the artwork of the new premises that highlighted the nation's civilisational moorings. The participation of all faith communities in the multi-religious prayer ceremony further underlined the multiple strands that contribute to the diversity of India.

The Janata Dal (United) struck a sour note by reprimanding Rajya Sabha deputy chairman Harivansh for attending the ceremony. The JD(U) would be aware that though Harivansh is a party MP, the Rajya Sabha deputy chairman is a



The past nine years have seen formidable progress on several fronts.
Sandhya Jain



constitutional post above party affiliations, at par with Speaker of the Lok Sabha.

However, the north-east, the site of the most unprecedented developmental investment in the past nine years, is suddenly rife with old fault lines. The Kuki-Meitei rivalry, allegedly aggravated by illegal immigrants from neighbouring countries, erupted on May 3, 2023, and has already taken 80 lives and displaced over 40,000 people. While Kukis were expelled from Imphal, Meiteis have vanished from Churachandpur or other Kuki-dominated hill districts.

The issue is complex. While the ostensible trigger was the Meitei demand for ST status, the Meitei comprise around 60 per cent of the population but occupy only 10 per cent of the total land area, mainly Imphal, while the hill districts are occupied by Kuki, Naga, and other tribes. Tensions are still high despite two visits by the Union Home Minister and a visit by the Army Chief; reports suggest theft of weapons from the armouries of Manipur Rifles and IRB (India Reserve Battalion).

Simultaneously, in Mizoram, the radical Young Mizo Association (YMA) has asked non-Mizo traders in Aizawl to leave the state, causing an exodus of ethnic Bengalis from the Barak Valley. This is widely perceived as an attempt at ethnic cleansing and augurs ill for social harmony in the region.

Nevertheless, the past nine years have seen formidable progress on several fronts, from defence production to the frontiers of space. The JAM (Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile) Trinity has enabled people in the remotest areas to have bank accounts to receive



The Ujwala cooking gas and Saubhagya Yojana to electrify villages across the county, piped water and toilets in every household to protect the dignity and safety of women, are successful foundational schemes for the overall rise of living standards in India.

and deposit money safely and receive government subsidies and benefits directly, without leakages or commissions. Duplicate and fake accounts have been weeded out and other groups, such as farmers, also receive government subsidies directly in their accounts. Various platforms to make digital payments (BHIM, PhonePe, UPI, Paytm, etc) have revolutionised the economy and made life simpler for the common man across the nation.

The Ujwala cooking gas and Saubhagya Yojana to electrify villages across the county, piped water and toilets in every household to protect the dignity and safety of women, are successful foundational schemes for the overall rise of living standards in India. The Ay-

ushman Bharat health scheme and housing for the poor (3.5 crore houses have been built so far under PM Avas Yojana) are equally credible achievements.

Developments in infrastructure beggar all description, from highways and bridges across the nation, expansion and upgradation of the railway network, airports, metros, internet, smart cities, new IITs, IIITs and IIMs and new medical colleges outside of state capitals to distribute development more evenly. These investments made it possible for India to host the myriad functions associated with its G20 presidency in cities across the country, rather than be confined to major metropolitan cities.

The development of the Kashi Vishwanath and Ujjain Mahakal corridors and ongoing Vindhyavasini corridor, not to forget the construction of the Ram Mandir at Ayodhya, bear testimony to the multifaceted tasks executed at mind boggling speed.

The Covid pandemic, where India for a while suffered shortage of oxygen for the suffering victims, was heroically overcome by developing a vaccine with Oxford University (UK) and the British-Swedish company AstraZeneca, and the purely indigenous Co-

vaxin. A nasal vaccine was also developed, and now, as another wave of Covid afflicts the nation, the panic of the last three years is no more.

India redeemed herself by sharing vaccines with over hundred countries; this was also a major item on the QUAD agenda. Despite the damage to the economy and the human suffering engendered by the Covid lockdown and its aftermath, India kept tight control on its monetary policy and emerged in relatively good health as compared to other nations.

Covid was closely followed by the Ukraine war of 2022, but India managed to float on the high seas, marketing Russian oil and gas!

The near absence of terrorist attacks in Indian cities, the response to the Uri and Balakot strikes, and the defanging of Article 370 that encouraged separatism in Jammu and Kashmir, are noteworthy achievements.

However, it would be churlish not to take note of challenges and critiques of the government. Opposition parties have alleged that raids by the Enforcement Directorate and Central Bureau of Investigation to detect black money are political vendetta and not anti-corruption measures. The Centre can direct officials to avoid such actions during elections (as in the recent Karnataka poll) and at family occasions. In 2015, the then Himachal Pradesh chief minister Virbhadr Singh was raided on the day of his daughter's marriage, for a sum of Rs 6 crore of unaccounted wealth.

Some observers believe that the challenges to the party will grow in the run-up to 2024, owing to voter fatigue and concen-

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trated action by the opposition that is striving to unite despite deep fissures in its ranks. This is inevitable.

But this writer does not buy the proposition that an aggressive pro-Hindu agenda is the way ahead. Certainly, temples should be freed from state control – by returning them to the groups from which control was seized to begin with. Tweaking the terms individual trustees can serve consecutively can be considered by the communities themselves.

Muslim women have been liberated from the fear of instant divorce and homelessness, but instances are still reported of the curse of halala. The community needs to be encouraged that education and economic empowerment are the way ahead. Resistance to enforced orthodoxy such as hijab in schools where girls happily wore the uniform till recently, will inevitably come from the community itself, as in the case of triple talaq.

On the other side, a small section of the Hindu intelligentsia is pushing for “Hindu Rashtra”, an

idea that has been espoused by a spiritual guru in Madhya Pradesh, whose popularity graph has since surged enormously. This writer distrusts this notion for several reasons. To begin with, proponents of the idea of Hindu Rashtra do not know the difference between rashtra and rajya.

The latter is a theocratic state at par with Islamic Republics in our neighbourhood, which is anathema to the Hindu ethos. A recasting of our civilisational-cultural matrix in an Abrahamic mould would do untold damage to the soul of India. Hindu Rashtra is the triumph of the long-suppressed soul of India and is best expressed in the peaceful restoration of the sanctity of the Ram Janmabhumi in Ayodhya.

The fact that this does not satisfy the proponents of a more aggressive Hindutva is because Hindus have failed to unshackle their minds from slavitude to the Western intellectual and economic paradigm, something that Russia and China have managed successfully, and Africa and South America are actively striving to do.

The tide is inexorably moving towards a new multipolar world order; India has been moving with it, joining the new institutions that shape this new world. But the intellectual elite remains conflicted with deep attachment to the West (possibly economic strings) and will have to choose its side. This is not a task for Narendra Modi or his government. □□

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Mewar as Locus of Guhila State (Part-XII)

Mewar Kings and Kinship**(The Thirteenth Century)**

An examination of the thirteenth-Century records of the Guhila royal house points to the consolidation and expansion of Guhila monarchical power, which was accompanied increasingly by the concentration of power with royal kinsmen. The earliest thirteenth-century record refers to Sri Jaitrasimha as maharajadhiraja. A Jain record from Chittaur of AD 1267 refers to Sri Tejasimha as rajabhaga vannanarayanamaharaja implying divine attributes. Significantly one of the most important of the thirteenth-century private records from Mewar, the Chirava inscription, uses grandiose titles for the Guhila kings such as mahisvar and bhupala for padmasimha, ilapati for Tejasimha nrpati for Mathanasimha nrpa and rajana for Jaitrasimha, ksitipati for Samarasimha, and so on to distinguish the Guhila kings from the rest of the Guhila royal family. Both the Chittaurgarh (AD 1274) and the Achalesvara (AD 1285) Inscriptions tracing the ancestry of the thirteenth-century Guhila kings to Bappa, Puranapurusa (primeval man) magnify his role in the foundation of the Guhila royal power in Mewar. The son born to him was to him was Guhila and succeeding kings are presented as follows:

Guhila – Bhoja – Sila – Kalabhaja – Bhartrpatta – Simha – Mahayaka – Khummana – Allata – Naravahana – Saktikumara – Sucivarma – Naravarma – Kirttivarma – Vairisimha – Arisimha – Coda – Vikramasimha – Ksemasimha – Kumarasimha – Mathanasimha – Padmasimha – Jaitrasimha – Tejasimha – Samarasimha.

Unlike the Kadmal plates of the late eleventh century and the Paldi inscription of the early twelfth century royal records of the thirteenth century neither acknowledge Mahipala, founder of an important junior branch in the tenth century, nor confine the royal genealogy to a few select preceding kings on the Guhila throne (see for instance, Paldi Inscription of dated AD 1116). Not only do royal records attempt to project a unified genealogy, even records of important func-



Repeated royal references to the Guhila lineage and the absence of references to non-Guhila chiefs point to the growing importance of royal kinsman.

**Prof. Nandini
Kapur Sinha**



tionaries such as those of the Tamtarada family form Chirava introduce each king as a son (tanuja) or younger brother of the previous ruler. This recording of royal genealogies by administrative functionaries of the state reveals percolation of the royal perception of its own power to the ranks of the elite at least. However, contemporary records also points to the political importance of the royal kinsmen.

Both royal as well as private records indicate that a political hierarchy based on rank existed. The queen mother Jayatalladevi's reference to Guhila King Samarasimha as maharajakula (maharaval) seems to point to a hierarchy of ravals (royal kinsmen: immediate kinsmen of the king) which was headed by King Samarasimha as mahanijakula. Hence both the royal and private records establish the fact that at least by the second half of the thirteenth century, Guhila kings presided over a number of ravals or royal kinsmen who were recognized by their formal political status. Before moving on to a discussion of the role of kinship in the Guhila state of Mewar, one must note that besides ravals, no other political title can be gleaned from contemporary records.

The presence and importance of the royal kinsmen in the political structure of the Guhila state is also evident from the royal recognition of the lineage of the Guhilas and its branches, in their official charters. Royal records which propagate legitimizing motifs for the Guhila monarch also significantly eulogize the Guhila lineage and its branches as kuthara-dharasta brumahe guhila vamsam parosakhkam (the axe-edged tree of the Guhila lineage with branches) as

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well as sakhopasakhakulitah suparvagunsochitah.... guhilasya vamsah (branches and sub-branches of the AGuhila royal family are full of fine qualities). The same records repeatedly refer to the Guhila royal lineage as guhila vamsa prasiddham gauhilyamavamsa guhilakula and sanrpatih guhilabhidhano. These references to the royal lineage and its branches undoubtedly indicate proliferation of several branches of the royal family by the second half of the thirteenth century. Royal concern for their immediate kinsmen is also evident from royal prasastis of the branches and sub-branches of Guhila royal kinsmen in the organization of territorial control.

The thirteenth-century annexation of Chittaurgarh and expansion beyond Mewar further increased royal dependence on close kinsmen due to the failure of the Guhilas to enlist the support of non-Guhila chiefs (of the upper Banas plain and Particularly of Chittaurgarh). Unlike tenth-century references to chiefs of non-

Guhila Rajput families. At least non-Guhila Rajput families of Chittaurgarh and upper Banas plain should have been mentioned in the contemporary royal records for their continuing role in the territorial integration of the Guhila state. It is important to remember as has already been mentioned that samantas played a significant role in the abdication of Samantasimha and in the succession of Kumarasimha. But repeated royal references to the Guhila lineage and the conspicuous absence of references to non-Guhila chiefs point to the growing importance of royal kinsmen.

However, the two royal prasastis of the thirteenth century maintain a conspicuous silence on the ranking system. Similarly, although the Chittaurgar (AD 1274) and Achalesvara (AD 1285) Inscriptions refer to the branches and sub-branches of the Guhila lineage, they do not refer to King Samarasimha as maharaval. Also though queen mother Jayatalladevi's record refers to reigning king, Samarasimha s maharajakula, it designates the preceding King Tejasimha (Queen Jayatalladevi's husband) as medapatadhitpati. This suggest that royal inscriptions were reluctant to highlight the ranking system. Thus royal proclamation of Guhila kings as the sovereigns of Mewar despite the presence of rajakulas cannot be taken a face value. The fact that the evidence suggest that King Samarasimha who had attained extensive territorial acquisitions was also possibly the first Guhila king to have been designated as maharaval strengthens my view that by the second half of the thirteenth century, Guhila kings were increasingly depending on their close kin for the consolidation of Guhila power.

Globalization of India's UPI is Blow to Western Payment Systems: Expert

PM Narendra Modi announced during an address to the Indian community in Paris that India and France have agreed to the usage of Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in Paris. The upcoming launch of India's domestic digital payments' platform Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in France as part of its ongoing "globalization" process will deliver a further blow to western payment mechanisms such as Mastercard and Visa, an Indian advocacy group has told Sputnik.

"The announcement by PM Narendra Modi on the upcoming launch of UPI in France represents a step forward for making it a global payments system. It will definitely reduce the importance of western giants such as Mastercard and Visa," stated Ashwani Mahajan, the co-convenor of Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM).

Mahajan remarked that the UPI's upcoming launch in Paris was "just the beginning" in the journey of "making the Indian Rupee (INR) a global currency".

The UPI is an instant digital payment system allowing transfer between different banks. It is based on the Indian rupee. The UPI was launched in 2016 by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), a government-backed agency.

Mahajan noted that many countries have already evinced "interest" in joining the UPI ecosystem. The Indian government told the country's Parliament in March this year that Singapore, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Mauritius, Nepal and Bhutan had already accepted the UPI mechanism. India's Communications, Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos this year that India witnessed more digital transactions in 2022 than sum total of US, UK, Germany and France. According to NPCI data cited in Indian media, nearly 74 billion transactions valued at \$1.5 trillion were carried out using UPI in India in 2022.

Mahajan said that, as compared to European nations, New Delhi was already "ahead of the curve" in adopting the digital payments platforms. Mahajan underlined that the push to globalize the UPI had gained momentum owing to the "disruptions" caused by sweeping economic sanctions against Russia by the G-7 club of rich countries since last year.

"Such geopolitical disruptions always lead to changes," he remarked. Last March, the European

Union (EU) banned major Russian banks from using the SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) system.

The move caused significant disruptions in countries such as India, where banks have traditionally relied on the SWIFT to carry out trade with Russia. As a means to bypass the western restrictions, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) last July allowed foreign banks to open 'Vostro' accounts in Indian banks to settle payments in INR. New Delhi has said that it has agreed on trading in national currencies with close to 18 countries. India's new Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) released this year said that New Delhi would "encourage" the use of rupee in international trade settlements to "disaster-proof" the domestic economy from global economic contingencies.

<https://ashwanimahajan.wordpress.com/2023/07/15/globalization-of-indias-upi-is-blow-to-western-payment-systems-expert/>

415 million Indians came out of multidimensional poverty in 15 years: UNDP

A total of 415 million people moved out of poverty in India within just 15 years from 2005-06 to 2019-21, the United Nations (UN) said on July 11, highlighting the remarkable achievement by the world's most populous nation. The latest update of the global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) was released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) at the University of Oxford.

It said that 25 countries, including India, successfully halved their global MPI values within 15 years, showing that rapid progress is attainable. These countries include Cambodia, China, Congo, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Serbia, and Vietnam.

In April, India surpassed China to become the world's most populous nation with 142.86 crore people, according to UN data. "Notably, India saw a remarkable reduction in poverty, with 415 million people exiting poverty within a span of just 15 years (2005/6-19/21)," the report said.

In India, 415 million poor people moved out of poverty from 2005-06 to 2019-21, with incidence falling from 55.1% in 2005-06 to 16.4% in 2019-21.

In 2005-06, about 645 million people were in multidimensional poverty in India, with this number declining to about 370 million in 2015-16 and 230 million in 2019-21.

The report noted that deprivation in all indicators declined in India and “the poorest States and groups, including children and people in disadvantaged caste groups, had the fastest absolute progress.” According to the report, people who are multidimensionally poor and deprived under the nutrition indicator in India declined from 44.3% in 2005-06 to 11.8% in 2019-21, and child mortality fell from 4.5% to 1.5%.

“Those who are poor and deprived of cooking fuel fell from 52.9% to 13.9% and those deprived of sanitation fell from 50.4% in 2005-06 to 11.3% in 2019-21,” according to the report. In the drinking water indicator, the percentage of people who are multidimensionally poor and deprived fell from 16.4 to 2.7 during the period, electricity (from 29% to 2.1%) and housing from 44.9% to 13.6%.

The report said that countries with different incidences of poverty also halved their global MPI value. While 17 countries that did so had an incidence under 25% in the first period, India and Congo had a starting incidence above 50%. India was among the 19 countries that halved their global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) value during one period - for India it was 2005/2006–2015/2016.

According to the 2023 release, 1.1 billion out of 6.1 billion people (just more than 18%) live in acute multidimensional poverty across 110 countries. Sub-Saharan Africa (534 million) and South Asia (389 million) are home to approximately five out of every six poor people. Nearly two-thirds of all poor people (730 million people) live in middle-income countries, making action in these countries vital for reducing global poverty. Although low-income countries constitute only 10% of the population included in the MPI, these are where 35% of all poor people reside.

Children under the age of 18 account for half of MPI-poor people (566 million). The poverty rate among children is 27.7%, while among adults, it is 13.4%. Poverty predominantly affects rural areas, with 84% of all poor people living in rural areas. Rural areas are poorer than urban areas across all regions of the world. Countries halved their MPI in periods as short as four to 12 years, demonstrating the feasibility of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of halving poverty according to national definitions within 15 years.

“Thus, it is crucial to consider context-specific multidimensional poverty indices that reflect national definitions of poverty since the global MPI assesses

multidimensional poverty with the same methodology,” the report said. The agencies, however, added that despite these encouraging trends, the lack of post-pandemic data for most of the 110 countries covered by the global MPI restricts the understanding of the pandemic's effects on poverty.

“As we reach the mid-point of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we can clearly see that there was steady progress in multidimensional poverty reduction before the pandemic,” the Director of the Human Development Report Office, Pedro Conceição, said. “However, the negative impacts of the pandemic in dimensions such as education are significant and can have long-lasting consequences. It is imperative that we intensify efforts to comprehend the dimensions most negatively affected, necessitating strengthened data collection and policy efforts to get poverty reduction back on track,” Mr. Conceição added.

A press release issued by the UNDP said that judging from the few countries where data were solely collected in 2021 or 2022 – Mexico, Madagascar, Cambodia, Peru, and Nigeria – momentum on poverty reduction may have persisted during the pandemic. Cambodia, Peru, and Nigeria showed significant reductions in their most recent periods, offering hope that progress is still possible. In Cambodia, the most encouraging case among these, the incidence of poverty fell from 36.7% to 16.6%, and the number of poor people halved, from 5.6 million to 2.8 million, all within 7.5 years, including the pandemic years (2014–2021/22). “In over half the countries covered, there was either no statistically significant reduction in child poverty or the MPI value fell more slowly among children than among adults during at least one period. This suggests that child poverty will continue to be a pressing issue, particularly in relation to school attendance and undernutrition,” it said.

“The world is reeling under a data deluge and gearing up for the next era of digital growth. Yet we do not have a post-pandemic line of sight for 1 billion of the 1.1 billion poor people,” Ms. Alkire said.

“This problem is eminently solvable – data on multidimensional poverty are faster to gather than most realise – requiring just 5% of questions in the surveys we use. The MPI as a poverty index can be pictured as a stacked tower of the interlinked deprivations experienced by poor individuals, with the aim of eliminating these deprivations. □□

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Swadeshi Activities – Swavlambi Bharat Abhiyan

Arth Sanchay Abhiyan

Pictorial Glimpses



Jaipur, Rajasthan



Paschim Vibhag, Delhi



Chandigarh



Meerut, UP



Ranchi, Jharkhand



Fridabad, Haryana



Jamshedpur, Jharkhand

Swadeshi Activities – Swavlambi Bharat Abhiyan **Arth Sanchay Abhiyan**

Pictorial Glimpses



Rohini, Delhi



Hathras, UP



Bhilwara, Rajasthan



Jalandhar, Punjab

