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Stop GM Food from Entering my beloved India

I have read news item published that BJP Govt. will allow GM Foods in INDIA. Please understand that There are some Evil Companies like Monsanto which produces GM FOODS, SEEDS.

Their Hidden Objective is to Control Food Supply and Produce Food Which Causes Diseases in Long Term (Thereby More Patients). GM Foods have been rejected in EUROPE. So What Next, They land up in INDIA to earn Money.

EAST INDIA Company - which made us Slaves Were Also Multinational - MNCs - Armed and Had Bad Intentions. We Should Never Forget History. There are No free Lunches....No Corporate Company will give me 100 rs. For Free, because they know they will earn Rs. 400

WHY We are being FED ...GM FOOD? WHY GM Food is not LABELLED?

Agent Orange was manufactured for the U.S. Department of Defence primarily by Monsanto Corporation and Dow Chemical. Agent Orange Killed, Maimed 3 Million (30 LAKH) PEOPLE in VIETNAM during Vietnam-US War in 1970s. Dow is same Company, which killed Thousands of People in BHOPAL GAS TRAGEDY - 1984. How can Monsanto be Good to India, When it Killed or Crippled or Maimed 3 Million Vietnam people on Orders of US Govt.

GM FOODS are being introduced as a Part of Plan to DEPOPULATE Planet and Spread Disease.

These Companies Want To Control Seeds - Control FOOD SUPPLY. Govt. is under pressure, because US Says So. Because Our GOVT Takes LOANS from World Bank, Which never Gives anything Free. So, They Ask Govt To help them with entry or atleast so-called-Testing of GM Food.

REQUEST To YOU

Please Wake Up. Listen to your inner Voice. Don't give up, just because Modi Ji Tells Us. NATURAL /ORGANIC - Gods Way of Farming is always GOOD.

WHAT REST OF WORLD is DOING : Europe has banned GM FOOD.....
<http://ecowatch.com/2015/10/05/european-union-ban-gmos/>, https://www.organicconsumers.org/old_articles/gefood/countrieswithbans.php.

DONT FALL IN PRESSURE of GOVT. Do what Your Conscience Says.
JAI HIND.

— Karan Kaw, *through email.*

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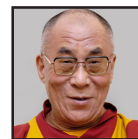
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Look at Dr. Ambedkar's life. He faced several obstacles, even insults. But he had the strength & faced these obstacles.

Narendra Modi

Prime Minister of India



The purpose of religion is to control yourself, not to criticise others.

Dalai Lama

Spiritual Leader



In a country of our size and complexity, a few supermen or superwomen can't change the nation. We should engage and energise the average citizens.

Azim Prem ji

Chairman, Wipro



When Arvind Kejriwal started making publicity of his simple ways, people started talking about my own simplicity. But I feel that simplicity should not be for publicity.

Manohar Parrikar

Defence Minister

Consequences of WTO's Nairobi fiasco

"However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results."

— (Winston Churchill)

Amongst claims and counter claims about the outcome of WTO meeting at Nairobi, Kenya one thing is very clear that developing countries have had their way once again. WTO has now outlived its utility for them. They have extracted what they wanted from the multilateral trade body without yielding anything in return to poor and developing nations. Till they got what they wanted, these deceitful developed nations pretended to offer moon to rest of the world. But alas that has proved to be a mirage. Not that people did not understand the dubious tactic of the western world. In fact Swadeshi Jagaran Manch and likes were constantly warning poor and developing world to be cautious and not to make any unilateral concessions in haste. But the governments and negotiating teams of these countries were entrapped into an imaginative make believe world willingly/unwillingly. Corruption, lobbying, allurements and blackmail may have played some role, but that does not take away the responsibility of the decisions taken. Hence it is these developing countries that are to be blamed for walking into the trap almost enthusiastically. WTO, we must remember is mandated to "practice of decision-making by consensus followed under GATT 1947(1). Except as otherwise provided, where a decision cannot be arrived at by consensus, the matter shall be decided by voting". Add to it the fact that at meetings of the Ministerial Conference, the highest decision making forum of WTO, and the General Council, each Member has one vote. This effectively means that handful of resourceful developed countries cannot force their opinion on unwilling majority. Seen in this background performance of developing countries including that of India at Nairobi Ministerial meeting will be remembered as a disaster. For India it is much more than a blow because of the admirable precedence set by Late Murasoli Maran in past. Tragedy of Nairobi is not limited to the open red flagging of DOHA Developmental Round (DDA) by rich countries, as DDA can still be salvaged. Unfortunate is the fact that Indian team failed to build on the firm stand they took last time when this government soon after assuming office demonstrated its determination to ensure a permanent solution to India's food security issues. It was in August 2014 that Narendra Modi government allowed to lapse the July 31, 2014 deadline for the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and effectively conveyed to US-EU combine that without agreeing to safeguard food interests, India cannot agree to a treaty aimed at maximising rich countries' exports. That advantage was not only surrendered in Nairobi, but new grounds were also conceded unilaterally without asking for quid pro quo even after accepting that the decision reached at the 2013 Bali Ministerial Declaration was wrong. Neither could the government ensure concurrence on Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM) to protect the interests of poor farmers. SSM, if agreed upon by the WTO member countries, would have allowed the developing countries to temporarily hike duties to counter import surges and price falls of farm items. Inability to persuade members for any concrete commitments on SSM other than just a 'work programme' practically means that the decision on SSM is indefinitely postponed. Adding to embarrassment is the opening in the Nairobi Ministerial Declaration for 'new' issues of developed country interest. In future U.S. and European Union will now push for newer elements to be included into the WTO agenda and the poor and emerging economies will be forced to grant greater market access and likewise. It is absolutely clear that collapsing of talks would have been a better option as compared to what experts' term as "collapsing of the economies of underdeveloped countries". One of the more concrete agreements at Nairobi, the reduction of export subsidies, also does not help India. "Completely eliminating export subsidies by 2023 will further aggravate the crisis" caution exists. Commerce Minister has already started process of discussing ways to do away with support to farmer's in the name of phasing out export subsidies. The lessons are clear. While negotiators from the developed countries came fully prepared to defend their strategic aims, India has faltered again. It is high time to accept the reality and prepare a new strategy to minimise the damage and reverse the negative impact. Involving all stakeholders and developing countries will also be required. There is no place for overconfidence or complacency.

Organic farming; the way forward to eradicate hunger and sickness



'Green Revolution' with high input use has reached a plateau and is now sustained with diminishing return of falling dividends.

Also the agrochemicals produced from fossil fuels which are diminishing in availability will cost heavily on our foreign exchange in future, explains Ajey Bharti.

Sikkim is now the first fully organic state of India. Though the state attained the status in December 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made the official announcement during his maiden visit to the state recently. With this news organic farming and its future is back in the focus. There was a time, not until recently, when organic farming was ridiculed and it was said that the only people who think it can feed the world are delusional hippies, hysterical moms, and self-righteous organic farmers. But that is not the case anymore. With Climatic change and global warming wrecking havoc around the world and incidence of life style disease increasing multi-fold, people in general and experts in particular are looking for alternatives.

An increasing number of scientists and experts are looking at organic farming to ensure chemical free food. It is because of this renewed interest that the myth about organic farming that it cannot feed the world, and that we must rely on industrialized conventional farming if we are to feed our growing population, stands exploded.

Now, a fairly large and ever increasing number of agribusiness executives, agricultural and ecological scientists, and international agriculture experts believe that a large-scale shift to organic farming would not only increase the world's food supply, but might be the only way to eradicate hunger.

It is not just a theoretical belief or idealist preaching but well researched evidence that is available to debunk this long-standing and consciously created parable. Researchers have now confirmed what organic farmers around the world have known for centuries. Organic farming methods have nearly the same yield as pesticide-intensive conventional methods, plus, organic produce garners up to twice the revenue.

Hence the news about Sikkim becoming the first state in India to have transformed fully into an organic state is comforting. Sikkim, The landlocked state in Eastern India has done what many other states could not. With a population of around six lakhs and no train or commercial flight connectivity till date, managed to succeed in its mission overcoming all the obstacles. Around 12 years ago, in 2003, the then Pawan Chamling led government took this decision through a declaration in the legislative assembly. And the journey began.

Over the years around 75000 hectares of land has been converted into certified organic farms following the guidelines as prescribed by National Programme for Organic Production.

Organic farmers do not use pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, and other tools that have become synonymous with high-yield agriculture. They instead, depend on raising animals for manure, growing beans, clover, or other nitrogen-fixing legumes, or making compost and other sources of fertilizer that cannot be manufactured in a chemical plant but are instead grown on land. They use methods like rotating crops to help control pest/insect problems. That results in less pollution, fewer abused farm animals, and fewer carcinogenic residues on our vegetables and fruits.

In recent years, organic farming has attracted new scrutiny, not just from critics who fear that a large-scale shift in its direction would cause billions to starve, but also from farmers and development agencies who actually suspect that such a shift could better satisfy hungry populations.



Organic farmers do not use pesticides & synthetic fertilizers.

Unfortunately, no one had ever systematically analyzed whether in fact a widespread shift to organic farming would run up against a shortage of nutrients and a lack of yields-until recently.

According to the Worldwatch Institute that works to accelerate the transition to a sustainable world that meets human needs, "There are actually myriad studies from around the world showing that organic farms can produce about as much, and in some settings much more, than conventional farms. Where there is a yield gap, it tends to be widest in wealthy nations, where farmers use copious amounts of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides in a perennial attempt to maximize yields. It is true that farmers converting to organic production often encounter lower yields in the first few years, as the soil and surrounding biodiversity recover from years of assault with chemicals. And it may take several seasons for farmers to refine the new approach....."

More up-to-date research refutes these arguments. For example, a recent study by scientists at the Research Institute for Organic Agriculture in Switzerland showed that organic farms were only 20 percent less productive than conventional plots over a 21-year period. Looking at more than 200

studies in North America and Europe, Per Pinstrup Andersen (a Cornell professor and winner of the World Food Prize) and colleagues recently concluded that organic yields were about 80 percent of conventional yields. And many studies show an even narrower gap. Reviewing 154 growing seasons' worth of data on various crops grown on rain-fed and irrigated land in the United States, University of California-Davis agricultural scientist Bill Liebhardt found that organic corn yields were 94 percent of conventional yields, organic wheat yields were 97 percent, and organic soybean yields were 94 percent. Organic tomatoes showed no yield difference."

Dr. Erica Wohldmann, an Associate Professor at California State University, writes in an article titled 'Organic Farming Can Feed the World, Researchers Confirm'

"Sustainable food advocates are very enthusiastic about the latest findings, and appropriately so. After all, a 2006 U.S. Geological Survey found that more than 90% of all rivers and streams tested positive for agricultural chemicals, with most of those containing 10 or more different compounds. More than 850,000 people living on or near conventional farms bathe in and drink well and aquifer water that is contaminated with unsafe levels

PM Narendra Modi bats for organic farming

Names two orchid varieties, also pitches for creating farming-oriented mobile phone apps, online mandis, etc.



Citing the successful example of Sikkim, Prime Minister Narendra Modi batted for expansion of organic farming across the country as part of efforts to transform the agriculture sector entailing better remuneration for the farmers. Addressing a conference of Agriculture Ministers of states in Gangtok, he also pitched for creating farming-oriented mobile phone apps, online mandis and value addition to farming while talking about the benefits of the recently-announced Crop Insurance Scheme and the Soil Health Card.

As a means of financial security to farmers who suffer due to vagaries of weather, Modi suggested that they should divide their farming activities into three equal parts — regular farming involving crop production, growing of trees for economically-valuable timber and animal husbandry.

He said timber and animal husbandry products could act as fallback options in case the crop fails and the farmer would not face the situation of “helplessness”. To address the problem of fruit wastage, he said he had asked the companies producing aerated drinks to mix 5 per cent of fruit juice in these products so that the farmers don’t suffer financial losses.

“If we see farmers, agriculture and villages in pieces, then the country will not benefit. We have to see agriculture in a holistic manner,” the Prime Minister said, adding he had come here with Agriculture Ministers of all the states to discuss how to transform India’s agriculture. Referring to the host state, he said Sikkim is scaling new heights of development while keeping environment protected. PM named two Orchid varieties developed in Sikkim *Cymbidium Sardar* & *Lycaste Deendayal*. Sikkim CM named the 3rd one *Cymbidium Namo*. In this context, he referred to the organic farming which is a success story in Sikkim and appealed to other states: “Select a district or a block or Taluka, comprising about 100-150 villages, strategically (for organic farming) and try it.

“If the experiment succeeds, farmers in other places will follow it on their own. Farmers may not be influenced by any amount of lectures by scientists...For them, seeing is believing.” Asking the states to decide in which direction to proceed, Modi suggested that they should not be discouraged by opposition.

“When the idea of organic farming would have been shared over a decade ago (in Sikkim) I am sure people would have opposed this. But farmers in Sikkim did not give up...For over a decade, they stuck to this. It is not a small thing. Sikkim has shown the way and what we are seeing today is the result of tremendous hardwork and belief in an idea,” he said. □

of nitrates. Agricultural chemicals are even found in human breast milk. The public knows that pesticides and herbicides are not healthy for our bodies or our planet.

So who isn’t excited about these findings? The chemical manufacturers, of course, and others who support and promote conventional farming, such as Monsanto, Cargill, and Syngenta. The UK National Farmers Union, the American Farm Bureau, and the American Soybean Association. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, USAID, and even NASA has gotten involved in the debate about how to feed the world. They all want you to believe that agribusiness, industrial manufacturers and producers of food and farming chemicals and patented seeds, are the only ones who can stave off the impending famine that is sure to come if we listen to environmentalists”.

She goes further to state, “So, listen up. If you like to drink clean water, eat healthy and pesticide-free, non-GMO food – If you like the idea of supporting families and farmers more than corporate executives – If you see value in biodiversity, trees and other animals – If want to bequeath a healthy planet to our future generations – Then you need to make exposing the lies of agribusiness your top priority.”

Organic farming is gaining popularity in India also. Even an association called The Organic Farming Association of India (OFAI) was set up to promote organic farming, lobby with government agencies and departments to pay more attention to sustainable agriculture, and assist farmers using chemicals and pesticides to convert successfully to organic

farming methods.

While the association has formulated programmes to assist organic farmers with organic certification and also participates fully in the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) of organic certification designed mostly for small and marginal farmers, it has steadfastly resisted becoming an agency for the procurement and distribution of organic produce. It prefers instead to promote and support individuals, communities, NGOs and networks who are in the business of organic marketing.

What is organic farming?

Organic farming system in India is not new. It is being followed from time immemorial in this country. Organic farming or natural farming is an integral part of our civilisation. It is a method of farming system which primarily aims at cultivating the land and raising crops in such a way, as to keep the soil alive and in good health by use of organic wastes (crop, animal and farm wastes, aquatic wastes) and other biological materials along with beneficial microbes (biofertilizers) to release nutrients to crops for increased sustainable production in an eco friendly pollution free environment.

FAO suggested that "Organic agriculture is a unique production management system which promotes and enhances agro-ecosystem health, including biodiversity, biological cycles and soil biological activity, and this is accomplished by using on-farm agro-nomic, biological and mechanical methods in exclusion of all synthetic off-farm inputs".

Need of organic farming

With the increase in popula-

Organic farming practiced mainly in 12 states: Ministry of Agriculture

Organic farming is practiced mainly in 12 states in the country, according to Agriculture Ministry information provided to the members of a Parliamentary committee. The meeting of Parliamentary Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture, chaired by Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh, discussed the topic, according to an official statement.

"The Potential of Organic farming in India is very huge because of its immense bio-diversity and natural resources in the country. There is a great need to promote the Organic farming and its practices in the country," Singh said during the meeting.

A presentation to the committee was given on the subject by ministry officials. It was informed that the total organic production in the country is 1.24 million tonnes while total area under organic farming constitutes 0.723 million hectare under certification.

"Presently it (organic farming) is being practiced mainly in 12 states and two states of North East namely Sikkim and Mizoram are likely to become fully organic in a few years," the ministry informed the members during the meeting. Meanwhile, Singh directed the ministry officials to circulate full details of six regional centres of organic farming to all Members of Parliament so that they may utilise the services of these centres for training farmers, particularly in villages under Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana.

Singh also assured the members of the committee that all necessary efforts will be made by Ministry towards their suggestions, which, inter-alia, included simplification of certification process of organic farming, encouraging research on organic farming in Krishi Vigyan Kendras, Agriculture Universities, ICAR and proper utilisation of crop residue. □

tion our compulsion would be not only to stabilize agricultural production but to increase it further in sustainable manner. The scientists have realized that the 'Green Revolution' with high input use has reached a plateau and is now sustained with diminishing return of falling dividends. Thus, a natural balance needs to be maintained at all cost for existence of life and property. The obvious choice for that would be more relevant in the present era, when these agrochemicals which are produced from fossil fuel and are not renewable and are diminishing in availability.

It may also cost heavily on our foreign exchange in future.

The key characteristics of organic farming include

- Protecting the long term fertility of soils by maintaining organic matter levels, encouraging soil biological activity, and careful mechanical intervention
- Providing crop nutrients indirectly using relatively insoluble nutrient sources which are made available to the plant by the action of soil micro-organisms
- Nitrogen self-sufficiency through the use of legumes and biological nitrogen fixation, as

well as effective recycling of organic materials including crop residues and livestock manures

- Weed, disease and pest control relying primarily on crop rotations, natural predators, diversity, organic manuring, resistant varieties and limited (preferably minimal) thermal, biological and chemical intervention
- The extensive management of livestock, paying full regard to their evolutionary adaptations, behavioural needs and animal welfare issues with respect to nutrition, housing, health, breeding and rearing
- Careful attention to the impact of the farming system on the wider environment and the conservation of wildlife and natural habitats

Terming sustainable, *organic farming practices as the best way to feed the future*; GREG SEAMAN, Greg Seaman, founder of Eartheasy highlights seven reason why organic farming will outperform conventional chemical farming as follows.

1. Organic farms are more profitable than conventional farms: The bottom line for farmers, regardless of the practices used, is income. The 30-year side-by-side Rodale study showed that

organic systems were almost three times as profitable as conventional systems. The average net return for the organic systems was \$558/acre/ year versus just \$190/acre/ year for the conventional systems. This figure is skewed because of the higher price organic farmers receive for their produce and meat, but the higher food costs alone cannot account for the difference in profitability. Lower input costs for organic farm systems are credited with significant cost savings for the farmer.

The relatively poor showing of GM crops in the Rodale study echoed a study from the University of Minnesota that found farmers who cultivated GM varieties earned less money over a 14-year period than those who continued to grow non-GM crops.

2. Organic yields equal or surpass conventional and GM yields: The Rodale 30-year study found that after a three-year tran-

sition period, organic yields equalled conventional yields. Contrary to fears that there are insufficient quantities of organically acceptable fertilizers, the data suggest that leguminous cover crops could fix enough nitrogen to replace the amount of synthetic fertilizer currently in use.

In a review of 286 projects in 57 countries, farmers were found to have increased agricultural productivity by an average of 79%, by adopting “resource-conserving” or ecological agriculture (Pretty et al., 2006).

3. Organic crops are more resilient than conventionally grown and GM crops: Organic corn yields were 31 per cent higher than conventional yields in years of drought. These drought yields are remarkable when compared to genetically modified (GM) “drought tolerant” varieties, which showed increases of only 6.7 per cent to 13.3 per cent over conventional (non-drought resistant) varieties.

The effects of climate change bring more uncertainty to farming, with increased drought predicted for some parts of the country. It has become obvious that weather patterns are changing, and looking to the future, food crops will need the resilience to adapt.

4. Organic farming is more efficient than conventional farming: Conventional agriculture requires large amounts of oil to produce, transport and apply fertilizers and pesticides. Nitrogen fertilizer is the single biggest energy cost for conventional farming, representing 41% of overall energy costs. Organic systems used 45% less energy overall than conventional systems. Production efficiency was 28% higher in the organic sys-

The effects of climate change bring more uncertainty to farming.



tems, with the conventional no-till system being the least efficient in terms of energy usage.

The extra energy required for fertilizer production and farm fuel use in conventional systems also contributes to greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). Conventional systems emit almost 40% more GHG per pound of crop production in comparison to the organic systems.

5. Organic farming builds healthier soil: While short-term benefits are realized with the use of chemical fertilizers and mechanized production methods, every gardener knows that soil health cannot be compromised in the long term. Eventually, soil-depleting practices take their toll as soil structure weakens, microbial life declines and erosion removes valuable topsoil from farmland.

The Rodale study found that overall soil health is maintained with conventional systems, but soil health is improved when using organic farming practices. Organic farming practices improve moisture retention which creates water 'stores' which plants can draw on during times of stress due to drought and high winds.

According to the Environmental Working Group and soil scientists at Iowa State University, America's "Corn Belt" is losing precious topsoil up to 12 times faster than government estimates.

6. Organic farming keeps toxic chemicals out of the environment: Conventional systems rely heavily on pesticides (herbicides, insecticides, fungicides) many of which are toxic to humans and animals. With more than 17,000 pesticide products (agricultural and non-agricultural) on the market today, the EPA is unable to keep



Our current food production system is in need of repair.

up with adequate safety testing. In fact, the EPA has required testing of less than 1% of chemicals in commerce today.

Many studies link low level exposure of pesticides to human health problems, and chemical residue from pesticides used in farming can be commonly found in air and water samples as well as in the food we eat.

Inactive ingredients in pesticide and herbicide formulations have been found to be as toxic as active ingredients, but are not tested for human health impacts.

7. Organic farming creates more jobs: Industrial agriculture has replaced human hands with machines and chemical inputs. According to the EPA, in the last century agricultural labor efficiency increased from 27.5 acres/worker to 740 acres/worker. Joel Salatin, organic farmer and author of best-selling books on sustainable farming, views these statistics as

another reason for us to return to our farming roots. "People say our system can't feed the world, but they're absolutely wrong," he says, "Yes, it will take more hands, but we've got plenty of them around."

One important aspect to consumer support of conventional farming practices is the cost of food. Organic produce and meat is higher priced than non-organic counterparts. But, according to Joel Salatin, we get what we pay for. "We spend around 10% of our income on food and some 16% on health care, and it used to be the reverse."

Our current food production system is in need of repair. We need to promote organic systems which respect the integrity of soil health and sustainable systems. Until recently it was thought that our national and global food needs were too big to be met with natural, organic food production systems. Recent studies confirm, however, that organic farming is the way of the future. We need, both collectively and as individuals, to support the organic food movement to enable the process to move forward with the research, seed development and farming practices needed to feed a hungry world. □□

COP-21: The Target Missed



COP-21 of Paris is a big step ahead, wherein the wealthy countries are exonerated of their past environmental misdeeds and China is still uncommitted to curb its emissions, which is the largest emitter of climate warming green house gases, explains

Bhagwati Prakash Sharma

The world appears to have derived a sigh of relief at the so called monumental success of the 195 nations in reaching at a deal at Paris to save the earth from a catastrophic climate change threatening to cause mass extinction of species, imminent submerging of vast terrestrial areas-even including whole of certain island nations, likely disappearance of innumerable glaciers feeding several perennial rivers and so on. But, this, so called path-breaking deal, has still missed the target of capping the temperature- rise of the

planet earth to the targeted 1.5°C above the post industrialization era. All the pledges of 'Intended Nationally Determined Contributions' (INDCs) to cut the green house gas (GHG) emissions, submitted in the run up to the COP21, even if fully honored by the respective countries, then as well, the global temperature is likely to rise between 2.7 to 3°C above the pre-industrialisation level. The brighter side of the deal is that in lack of even these commitments obtained after hard bargaining at Paris, the temperatures could shoot up to 4.5 degree or even beyond 4.5°C by 2100. Another and most praise-worthy achievement to rejoice is that all the countries have unanimously agreed for a target of capping the temperature-rise to 1.5°C . It is indeed a big leap to agree for a target of below the 2°C that was agreed upon by nearly 200 countries, 6 years ago in Copenhagen. However, it should also be borne in mind that the world has already hit 1°C rise in temperature in the post-industrialization era, and the recent data show no signs of any major fall in the global green house gas (GHG) emissions to restrain warming. Therefore, many of the green groups have rightly commented that the 1.5°C aspiration is meaningless, unless very bold measures are adopted to hit the target.

Still, it is no mean achievement, at least after these two decades of tough bargaining, the countries of the world could come up with a political consensus to find solution to the severe threats with a commonly accepted target. The last major attempt made to bring a consensus in the Copenhagen conference of 2009 was de-railed by conflicting stands of the developed and developing countries and an open stubborn and obstructive China, the polluter of first order. It was only there after this new round was launched in 2011, and the Paris outcome is now in hands. This time was possible only with the change in political leaderships in China, Australia and Canada-viz from Jiabao to Xi Zinping in China, from Steven Harper to Justin Trudeau of Canada and from Tony Abbott to Malcolm Turnbull in Australia.

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi too has announced of a bold initiative global alliance of 120 countries, committed to the large-scale expansion of solar power. Even Uhuru Kenyatta, the president of Kenya, Promised a major investment in renewable, notwithstanding the fact that his country contributes less than 0.1% of global emissions. Indeed every nation had its voice heard at Paris and has contributed according to its capacity.

As per the Paris deal, the developed countries have to "continue taking the lead" by undertaking economy-wide absolute emission reduction targets, while the developing countries too are expected to continue enhancing their mitigation efforts. They were also encouraged at Paris to move over time, towards economy-wide emission reduction or limitation targets depending upon their national circumstances. In the follow up of this deal, the countries have to set national targets for further reducing greenhouse gas emissions every five years. More than 180 countries have already submitted targets for the first cycle beginning in 2020. COP i.e. "conference of the parties" has been taking place since the 1992 Rio framework convention, and the Rio Declaration has at least now been ratified by 195 countries. There have been 20 COPs since 1995 — and this is the 21st, or in UN-speak, COP21, and can be said to be most successful of earlier 20. In the COP-21 as well one of the most difficult pieces to agree on, was that the largest emitter China was asking for differential requirements for it and is in transparent about its real emissions. Yet, the agreement asserts that all countries must report on their

US never ratified Kyoto protocol

emissions as well as their efforts to reduce them. However, it allows for some "flexibility" for developing countries that "need it." Another most contentious issue is how will countries finance their shift towards greener technologies? The agreement says wealthy countries should continue to offer financial support to help poor countries reduce their emissions and adapt to climate change. But, Actual dollar amounts are kept out of the agreement itself, and the wealthy nations had previously pledged to provide \$100 billion in climate finance by 2020 but, no tangible progress in this regard is visible. This seems to be a too small sum to take care of the problem. Oxfam estimates that the new deal, even short 01.5°C target will see developing countries facing adaptation costs of almost \$800 billion a year by 2050. Likewise, coming to the problems small island nations threatened by rising seas, the agreement has though recognized "loss and damage" associated with climate-related disasters.

The US had long objected to addressing this issue in the agreement, on the apprehension that it would lead to claims of compensation for damage caused by extreme weather events against the wealthy nation on the count of their pollutions. So, the issue was included with a footnote specifically stating that loss and damage does not invoke any liability or compensation. To sum up on this count of funds and costs, the developing countries have got words and vague promise of money and

the developed countries have finally got rid of their historical responsibility of having caused so huge climate change that has led to 1°C hitherto out of the 1.5°C target. They have no legally binding targets on finance or emissions cuts," who have most polluted the environment till date. The 1997 Kyoto protocol treaty too was supposed to setting out legally binding targets for countries to meet specific emissions targets. However, it only applied to wealthy countries that now account for a dwindling share of global emissions, and the US never ratified it, largely because it (i.e. Kyoto protocol) did not require China to cut its pollution. To overcome Kyoto's deficiencies, countries tried to come up with a deal in Copenhagen in 2009, at COP15. But that effort got thwarted so, a new round of negotiations was launched in 2011, aimed at coming up with a new accord in Paris that to require action from all countries, rich and poor. So, after the Rio De Janeiro and Kyoto the "UN Framework Convention on Climate Change" (UNFCCC), has made a breakthrough at Paris.

Therefore, the COP-21 of Paris is a big step ahead, wherein the wealthy countries are exonerated of their past environmental mis-deeds and China is still uncommitted to curb its emissions, which is the largest emitter of climate warming green house gases. The commitments obtained till date will lead to 2.7°-3°C of warming against a target of 1.5°C. So, the frequency calamities and disasters is bound to accelerate, instead of receding. To conclude the negotiators have won a deal but the humanity and the living world has lost. □□

Indian Constitution & Politics of Amendments



About 100 amendments signify that Indian constitution is not against changes. There are areas and issues that still need clarity and many new will emerge that may need fresh legislations or even amendments in the Constitution, feels
Anil Javalekar

India celebrated its constitution day on 26 November 2015 as it was on this day in 1949; the Constitution of India was adopted by the Constituent Assembly. Last 60 or more years' Indian national congress and its allies ruled this country and amended Indian constitution 86 times. BJP government has amended it about 14 times. On the constitution day however, entire opposition led by congress expressed apprehensions about BJP government that it may amend the constitution and change its fundamentals, forgetting that the first amendment to Indian constitution was itself in sec 19 of fundamental rights. More tragic, many of the opposition parties stood by the congress party which thrown fundamental rights to dustbin during political emergency in 1975 and now calling BJP's respect to Indian constitution as joke. Indian politics has been groomed by congress right from independence and has used constitutional changes for political purposes. It rarely took interest in protecting fundamentals of Indian constitution. More important, it has not worked towards implementing the directive principles. BJP need to change many of old policies and may have to legislate for the purpose even by amending Indian constitution.

The system of Constitutional governance

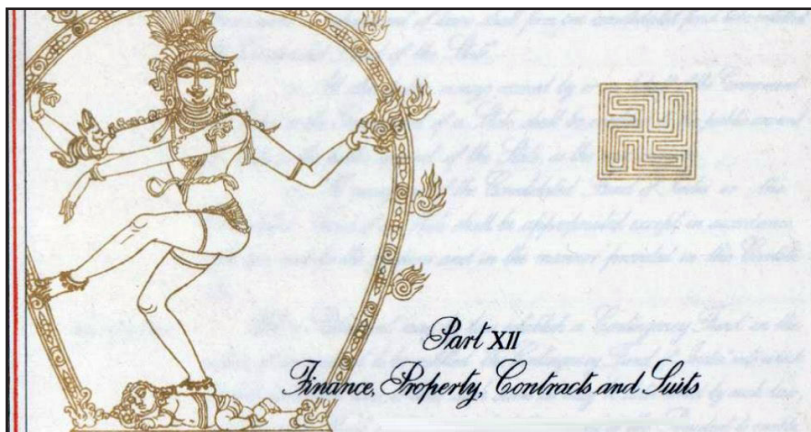
Human societies right from the beginning were complex in their socio-economic structures and their web of relations was always prone to clash with conflicting interests. Therefore, right from the beginning, the controlled expressions of interests were considered necessary for smooth functioning of these societies. Ancient Religious thinking probably was the first to bring these controls. Many behaviourally thoughts and actions of members of many societies are still defined and directed towards societal goals by religion. Later on, Kings and queens and



their kith and kin as also their ruling partners took over the controls and started making rules and laws, many times in their fancied ways. Modern liberalised thinking and ideas of freedom and democracy brought changes in the ruling by state that led to adoption of modern constitutional system of governance. Most societies now took form of a nation and adopted constitutional mode of governance. India is no exception.

Indian Constitution is borrowed one

India adopted its present constitution in 1950 and it said to be a largest one in the world detailing almost every basic of supreme law of the land. India is now constitutionally a Union of States and a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic with a parliamentary system of governance. True, many of its concepts and definitions of governance are borrowed from other countries; major part is from British legacy. Overall, there is a legislative system to make laws, governance systems to implement the laws and policies of union and state governments and a judicial system to protect the fundamentals of the constitution. Though the constitution has inbuilt system of checks and balance, there has been a controversy in regard to the supremacy. Parliamentarians think they are the supreme and judiciary consider itself the protector of the basic structure of the constitution. The constitution indeed has certain basic features like sovereignty of republic, democratic character of polity, rule of law, fundamental rights and duties of citizen, equality before law and independence of judiciary. But still, even after so many amendments



Even after so many amendments and judgments, the idea of basic structure is not clear.

and judgments, the idea of basic structure is not clear.

Indian polity made a mess of governance

Last 60 years and more have shown that Indian polity and bureaucracy made a mess of Indian governance system. In whatever way Indian constitution define its basic structure and fundamentals of Indian system of governance, Indian politicians and Indian administrative bureaucracy interpreted it in its own way and allowed corrupt system to grow in every area of socio-economic life. **First**, Indian constitution made India a democratic country; Indian polity made it a country of vote banks and allowed religion, casts and subsects to maintain its separate identity and consolidate its status and position so to influence Indian socio-economic policies. **Second**, Indian constitution talked about the rule of law and equality before

law; Indian polity and Indian bureaucracy have seen that rules are applied at discretion and allowed system to treat some citizens above the law. **Third**, Indian constitution considered fundamental rights as important; Indian polity and bureaucracy limited this right many times and even suppressed at times in the name of governance and development. **Fourth**, Indian constitution thought of protecting its fundamentals through Judiciary; Indian polity challenged judiciary even by amending constitutional provisions whenever the decisions were politically inconvenient. **Fifth**, Indian constitution expected certain directive principles to be the guiding force; Indian polity mostly ignored it.

Futile debates confuse Indians

There are many policy and governance issues that need debate. However, most of the debates are futile as these are in political media or in political academia dominated by pseudo intellectuals and politicians. The issues are also debated more for electoral gains or to marginalise majority community. **First such debate is on secularism.** Indian majority population by nature and by its cultural background and age-old philosophy are secular and live in har-



Many pseudo intellectuals undesirably argue for continuation of British system of education.

mony. Pseudo intellectuals and politicians debate to prove that majority is not secular. As a matter of fact, due to this cultural background, Indians will remain secular even after Indian constitution is amended to declare India as un-secular country.

Second debate is on Uniform civil code. The constitutional right to equality before law is denied to many in the name of religious freedom and Indian pseudo intellectuals and politicians unnecessarily plead for its continuity.

Third debate is on educational reforms. Many pseudo intellectuals undesirably argue for continuation of British system of education and teaching of colonial interpretation of Indian history and oppose any educational reforms that will help Indians feel proud of Indian past.

Fourth debate is on growing fundamentalism and fanaticism in India. Majority of Indian pseudo debate to prove that it is the Indian Majority Community-Hindu- that is responsible for every of Indian problem and Indian minorities are clean and innocent when the fact is otherwise clear seeing the happenings world over.

Fifth debate is to prove that failed western model of development is better for India than

any Indian swadeshi model. These debates are futile and take India nowhere because of its denial to Indian ethos and cultural background that built Indian society.

Indian polity must change for better

Five things clearly happened in India after independence. Politics of democracy, corrupt governance, emergence of pseudo intellectuals and their capture of every Indian institution including media, adoption of western model in every aspect of Socio-economic life and culture of futile debates in and out of media. And these happenings have negative impact on every of Indian systems and are not helping India to sustain as nation. The politics of democracy has resulted in policy paralysis allowing no government to legislate or function. The corruption has made survival of commons difficult as they have to oblige bureaucracy and politicians in meeting every of their socio-economic needs. The growth of pseudo intellectuals and their capture of institutions and media has made every non-issue as major issue and futile debates in and out of media has confused Indian population more than educating or informing them on any issue. Therefore, major national political parties like BJP and Congress need

to think over it and come together and help Indian constitution to rule this country in its true spirit and not allow pseudo intellectuals and media to distort issues and confuse Indians.

Indian Constitution need to respond future Changes

Indian constitution is not against changes; 100 or more amendments are evidence to it. There are areas and issues that still need clarity in legislations and its governance and many new will emerge that may need new legislations or even amendments in the Indian constitution. **First**, India desire to become ‘**Samarth and Samrudh**’ in all respect. The failure to give clear long term policy signals to International community, national and international capital & technology as also Indian national entrepreneurial sector will endanger Indian economic development. All necessary policy legislations and supportive governance system, therefore, need to be given priority even by amending constitution if required. **Second**, India need **good governance**. Carrying of all socio-political reforms including that of electoral, administrative, police and judicial is important to help all democratic and other supporting institutions to function in the dutiful and transparent manner. Socio-economic Justice and equality before law apart from transparency and accountability of political and administrative systems including that of police and other investigative agencies are important components of good governance. Many of these are possible through government’s will and some may need modification in the present laws or framing of new laws. **Third**, India’s

economic self-reliance is important. Last two decades saw selling of Indian self-reliance by way of liberalization and privatization for integration of Indian economy with that of world economies. This has made India subservient to MNCs and Indian corporate and also vulnerable to speculative and volatile markets. World is still divided into nations and every nation require first to protect its national interest. Only self-reliant country can survive in future and Indian priority should be to get in to the path of self-reliance. Indian government need appropriate legislations and good governance for the purpose. **Fourth, Indian youth power is important** and all hurdles need to be removed so to allow them to participate in Indian development process. The BJP government has already endeavoured in to developing entrepre-

neurial skill so as to encash the benefit of demographic dividend. Indian education and economic policies have created a huge stock of educated unemployed and led to unbalanced industrialization along with overburdened urbanization that need changes. **Fifth** is to address **socio-cultural problems** in the light of Indian ethos and its proven age old cultural background. Present policies of materialism and consumerism have westernized Indian mindset that serves only self-interest and interests of class population. This has also led to a society that made its members more dependent on government welfare programs for socio-economic security, including food security. The exploitative methods of industrialization also damaged environment and caused extinction of other life forms. Thus the priority is to frame and adopt

national policies based on Indian approach of integral humanism so as to shape future socio-economic relations and life styles.

'Janchetna' movement is the answer

Indian Democracy expects Indian political class to represent Indians and help India become sufficiently powerful to defend itself as also prosper economically. It is necessary that people are made aware of their rights and responsibilities and organize them to support national priorities instead of supporting selfish and corrupt politicians. This is possible through a 'Janchetna' movement. Participative Public spirit and resistance to socio-economic injustice apart from national outlook, a measure of self-discipline, and law-abidingness may hopefully influence Indian political class to change for better. □□

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Global Warming to hit India severely

India despite the threat of a severe economic crisis due to climate change, has taken the most inclusive stand at the conference of parties (CoP-21) at Paris. Prime minister Narendra Modi's stern warning to the affluent countries having "luxury of choices" should sharply reduce emissions is most sensible. Those who have polluted the nation for over 200 years cannot block the progress of the poor nations. India vowed to pursue a 33 to 35 per cent reduction to the emissions intensity of its economy by 2030 from 2005 levels though a large coalition of developing countries in the talks says it is unfair to expect them to stop using cheap, abundant coal and other fossil fuels unless rich nations give them a lot of money and technology to help them build cleaner energy systems.

Rich countries agreed in 2010 to deliver \$100 billion a year by 2020 in so-called climate finance, from public and private sources, and the OECD recently reported that at least \$62 billion was provided in 2014. But India and other countries have questioned that figure and say the Paris accord must require wealthy countries to deliver more than \$100 billion a year after 2020. ADB states that South Asia needs \$ 73 billion every year till 2100 to adapt to the negative impacts of climate change.

Developed countries are balking at including a specific figure in the agreement, arguing that today's governments cannot be responsible for setting budgets so far ahead. Climate change is a major global challenge. "But we in India face consequences. We see the risk to our farmers. Rising oceans threaten 7500 km of coastline and 1300 islands. We worry about the glaciers that feed our rivers and nurture our civilization", says Modi. He had to give a rebuff to the US secretary of state John Kerry's comments that India has been more cautious, a little more restrained, in its embrace of this new paradigm, and it's a challenge.



India would lose sizable farm production as the globe warms up due to excess or fall in rainfall as well as reduced energy production from hydro-power, affecting its goal to increase renewable energy generation, believes
Shivaji Sarkar



If at all India is not cautious but concerned. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) study assessing the Costs of the Climate Change and Adaptation in South Asia shows that there is a lot more danger to India and its South Asian neighbours than one can perceive.

Newly released ADB data suggests that South Asia could be particularly badly hit if the world continues on its current fossil-fuel intensive path. Climate change impacts stand to slash up to 9 percent off the South Asian economy every year by the end of this century, and the human and financial toll could be even higher if the damage from floods, droughts and other extreme weather events is included.

The report predicts that by 2050, the collective economy of six countries—Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka - will lose an average 1.8 percent of its annual gross domestic product, rising to 8.8 percent by 2100. India alone would lose sizable farm production as the globe warms up due to excess or fall in rainfall and various other natural disasters as well as reduced energy production from hydropower. This would affect India's goal to increase renewable energy generation.

A rise in average warming will increase energy requirements for cooling but reduce energy needed for warming. It will increase energy demand for irrigation. Increases in intensity and frequency of extreme events like storms and sea level rise may cause more electrical system failures. The 'mission innovation' launched at Paris to accelerate public and private global clean energy innovation may also suffer. So Modi assured to cooperate with



Rich has yet to give promised climate finance.

the US so that "innovation is backed by means to make it accessible to all". But is this the solution? Since the Industrial Revolution, carbon emissions (CO₂) from burning of fossil fuels have been building up in the atmosphere. The concentration of CO₂ is now approaching 400 parts per million (ppm), up from 280 ppm prior to 1800. If we were to stop all emissions immediately, the CO₂ concentration would also start to decline to the level of 1980 by 2300 AD. In the next 300 years, nature may recoup the last 30 years of our emissions, says the Science magazine.

So what India wants and what is to happen are not easy. The central bone of contention has long thwarted climate talks: the divide between wealthy countries that grew rich from burning fossil fuels after the industrial revolution and poor countries trying to emulate their prosperity. A large coalition of developing countries in the talks says it is unfair to expect them to stop using cheap, abundant coal and other fossil fuels unless rich nations give them a lot of money and technology to help them build cleaner energy systems.

So if the rich are holding out why should John Kerry ask poorer countries to sign a global deal requiring five-year review periods and other measures wanted by richer countries?

There is also widespread recognition that emissions reduction pledges fall short of the action needed to prevent dangerous levels of global warming above 2 degrees. The group Climate Action Tracker says even if everything is on track the world would warm by 2.7 degrees by 2100. The US-based group Climate Interactive put the figure at 3.5 degrees.

Developing countries are set to absorb much of the losses caused by climate change, various studies have pointed out. Ratings agencies are beginning to factor these effects into their assessments.

Inflation is likely to rise over time, driven by rising food prices and an increase in the cost of energy. Although the climate of some countries is predicted to become more accommodative to agricultural yields in the medium term, the long-run implications of rising temperatures are likely to reduce global crop yields. It is also likely to have impact on industrial activities as large number of people would be afflicted by poverty and less purchasing power. The concern and firm stand of India is right. It affects 1.43 billion people of South Asia. The economic cost is too high. The battle for a fairer deal would continue to the next climate summit. But any leeway to the rich would severely hit the poor not only here but the world over. □□

Budget 2016-17 should increase government's capital expenditure

Last year, when Finance Minister Arun Jaitley presented his Budget for 2015/16, he promised to cap fiscal deficit at 3.9 per cent of GDP. He also said that it would be brought down gradually and in 2016/17 it would be kept at 3.5 per cent of GDP. It is notable that in order to keep inflation in check, lowering of fiscal deficit assumes significance. As per Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, fiscal deficit was to be brought down to 3 per cent of GDP by 2008/09. However, the same was postponed in view of global recession.

In Budget 2015/16, provision was made for the Seventh Pay Commission, and this year's Budget will have to provide more than Rs 1 lakh crore for the implementation of the Commission's recommendations. It is a known fact that salaries and pensions eat away a huge part of government expenditure.

Now that the Seventh Pay Commission and one rank one pension (OROP) of pensioners of armed forces are to be implemented next fiscal, government expenditure is bound to increase proportionately.

For raising expenditure, it is essential that revenue also increases. Tax revenue forms a major part of the Central government's total revenue receipts (80.6 per cent in 2015/16). However, this year the government's worry is that wholesale inflation has remained in the negative zone in the past 14 months. Despite better performance in terms of real GDP, nominal increase in GDP in 2015/16 and 2016/17 would be much lower than in previous years.

There is confusion prevailing in official circles about deflation in the economy. Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Subramanian recently made a statement that India has been facing a situation of deflation, as the GDP deflator is no longer indicating inflation. Minister of State (Finance), Jayant Sinha, has cautioned



Given the deflationary situation in the economy upward revision of fiscal deficit targets for increasing capital expenditure may not be much problem, opines
Ashwani Mahajan



that due to this deflation, government's revenue may get adversely affected.

Possibilities of Increase in Revenue

It is true that due to deflation in the commodity market, government's revenue from excise and custom duties may get affected adversely. However, due to increase in rate of excise duty on petroleum products, and in the wake of declining prices of petroleum products, government's revenue from this source is likely to increase by nearly 90 per cent. It is worth noting that in 2015/16, there has been a huge decline in international petroleum prices and price of crude oil; prices came down to less than one third of the prices of a couple of years ago.

The benefit of this fall in crude price was transferred only partially to the consumers, and taking advantage of the lower prices, government increased the excise duty manifold. As a result, petroleum excise revenue, which was Rs 78,545 crore in 2014/15, is expected to be nearly Rs 1.5 lakh crore in 2015/16. It was 0.8 per cent of GDP in 2014/15; and is expected to go up to 1.4 per cent of GDP in 2015/16.

Losers are the states whose VAT is based on value (ad valorem). Central government's advantage was three-fold, namely, increase in excise revenue, reduction in subsidy bill (with much lower prices), and increase in profits of public sector oil companies. Therefore, as price of crude is expected to remain low for some more time, taking advantage of this threefold gain from fall in crude price, legitimately the Central government should boost up infrastructure, especially rural in-



The government's Start-Up initiative is a good start.

frastructure and other development projects.

Imperative to Increase Capital Expenditure

At the same time, the Finance Minister is under moral obligation to increase capital expenditure to boost growth. In the past few years, domestic investment has come down drastically, the main reason for which is decline in government's capital expenditure. Therefore, it is imperative to increase public investment.

There is scope for raising public investment in roads, railways, airports, sea ports etc. The government has been making efforts to raise private investment in infrastructure, including foreign investment. However, it is a fact, which even the government concedes, that to increase private investment; we need to raise public investment also. Budget 2015/16 was made to shrink due to increased share of states in the Central taxes, thanks to the recommendations of 14th Finance Commission.

Now with the implementation of Seventh Pay Commission and OROP, the Budget will again be stressed as revenue expenditure would increase significantly. However, the need of the hour is to raise capital expenditure also to give boost to infrastructure and rural development. For this, the govern-

ment will have to raise its Budget by no less than 10 to 15 per cent; and increase the size of the budget to nearly Rs 20 lakh crore in 2016/17.

The nation has been in the clutches of recession in the past few years. Investment in all sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing and infrastructure, has been badly hit, pulling growth rate down. The government has been chanting the 'Make in India' mantra to boost manufacturing. However without bringing new investment in manufacturing, agriculture and infrastructure, this can't be realised.

The government's Start-Up initiative is a good start; however in case of infrastructure, the government itself has to be a partner. It is a known fact that the Golden Quadrilateral, airports, sea ports, Metro or any other infrastructure project could not have seen the light of the day without government's active participation.

All eyes are now on the Finance Minister, especially on what steps he undertakes to increase capital expenditure in this Budget and take the economy forward on 10 per cent plus growth trajectory. For increasing capital expenditure, even if fiscal deficit targets are revised upward, there may not be much problem, given the deflationary situation in the economy. □□

Probity Vs Public life in Lutyens Delhi

AB Bardhan, a respected leader of the Communist Party of India passed away last week. A rare leader, Bardhan is different from the icons the mainline polity is familiar with today. He was simple and therefore honest. Leaders like him are only remembered for their simplicity in personal life and probity in public life. Many political leaders had lived and died, some of them most powerful and popular. Yet, only a few are remembered for probity. Whether it is Sardar Patel or Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri or Kamaraj, Ram Manohar Lohia or Deendayal Upadhyaya, Jayaprakash Narayan or Achyut Patwardhan, AK Gopalan or Acharya Kripalani, Morarji Desai or Nanaji Deshmukh, Kushabhau Thakre or Inderjit Gupta, Namboodiripad or Madhu Dandavate — to mention only a few names cutting across all political parties — they are all recalled for their probity first. Many of them stood equally for truth. I recall with gratitude that when the Indian Express was raided and I was arrested in March 1987 on false charges, it was the CPI leader Inderjit Gupta who defended me in Parliament against the powerful Ambanis and government!

But whenever such honest leaders pass away, they seem to leave an enlarging vacuum behind with steadily declining number of people like them — committed and honest. The malady, which began in politics, gradually extended to media barons and journalists, academics and professionals and even bureaucrats and judges — particularly in Delhi where from the nation is governed. And there are no courageous media owners like Ramnath Goenka or Cushroo Irani now. No Mulgaonkar or George Verghese in journalism today. Many successful journalists own properties and farms which will be businessmen's envy. The despicable practices of some media owners, which includes laundering bribes into their coffers, will dwarf the adventures of the most seasoned buccaneers in business. Yet, these perfidious



At the elite parties in Delhi, the English-speaking Lutyens meet, gossip, build and destroy others' name and goodwill and decide the ecosystem of governance of India, reveals S. Gurumurthy



media men claim the sacred constitutional rights for which men like Goenka fought at the cost of the viability of their own papers.

How did a nation which won freedom by the sacrifices of hundreds of thousands of nationalists, who cast aside their life and even destroyed their families in nation's cause, so quickly descend to such low, post-independence? Where did the rot begin? It all began after the advent of Indira Gandhi in the late 1960s. She changed the paradigm of politics based on ethics and probity to the paradigm of power and success. She asserted her raw power first by defeating her own party candidate whose nomination she had signed just weeks earlier, demonstrating the importance of success and irrelevance of ethics. She is remembered for the power she wielded for 16 long years.

In contrast, her predecessor Lal Bahadur Shastri, who ruled the country for a mere tenth of her tenure, is recalled for his simplicity and probity. Though both won wars with Pakistan, they symbolised two divergent paradigms. Indira was powerful. Shastri was simple. She did not respect honesty greatly. Shastri was a symbol of probity. Known as the 'homeless home minister' of India, Shastri lived in a rented house in Lucknow in his home state UP, and in a government accommodation in Delhi.

Shastri did not even need all of his Delhi accommodation. He occupied just two small rooms. His sons got married in simple ceremonies under the mango tree in the backyard of the two rooms. When Shastri resigned as union railway minister owning 'moral responsibility' for an accident, he forthwith surrendered his official

car and stood in queue in bus stand to catch a bus to home.

Later, after he had resigned under the Kamaraj Plan, Ramnath Goenka saw him waiting in bus stand and picked him to home. As he repeatedly bemoaned the moral decline after Shastri, Goenka used to recall him tearfully. Shastri was born in a poor family, led a simple personal life, austere family life, ethical public life & finally died a poor man. When he died, all that Shastri had had was an old car which he had purchased on monthly instalment. Instead of celebrating such a great man, after he died, the Congress party turned so ungrateful that it humiliated him and refused state honours for his

Advent of Indira shifted the core of Indian polity.

funeral and wanted his body to be taken to Allahabad for cremation. It was only after his wife, Lalita Devi, fought with the party, the great leaders relented to cremate him with national honours at the spot which is now the Vijay Ghat.

Advent of Indira shifted the core of Indian polity from celebrating honesty and ethics to worshipping success and power. For the first time in the history of free India, corruption charges were made against the Prime Minister which, of course, she couldn't care less, turning a hitherto shy polity turned into a shameless one.

This shift in polity manifested in the character of the Lutyens of Delhi. With power naturally concentrated in the national capital Delhi, the different government

offices, tribunals, and courts generate opportunities—genuine and dishonest—for the Lutyens to amass income and wealth which no other geography in India could provide. Austerity ceased to be a virtue, even became a burden in public life. Ostentation became acceptable, even venerated among the Delhi elites. With globalisation and liberalisation bringing in an avalanche of easy money into Delhi, whatever little respect virtues and the virtuous commanded declined rapidly. Wealth and power became the exclusive indices of success. Delhi changed forever, for the worse. The Lutyens of Delhi began revelling in ostentation. It is at the elite parties in Delhi, the English-speaking Lutyens meet, gossip, build and destroy others' name and goodwill and decide the ecosystem of governance of India. The powerful elite club includes politicians, media barons and editors, bureaucrats and touts some of who masquerade as journalists.

This elite, secular, modern and powerful club, which has no connect with the Indian people, influence all governments, parties, bureaucrats and the policies they formulate. No party or government has been free from their pernicious sway. They constitute the biggest distortion of government, public life and polity. They virtually control the national media discourse which is echoed all over the country. They cannot and will not allow honest media or public discourse. Posing as heavyweight liberals, seculars and intellectuals, they justify dishonest politics. Political survival of non-Lutyens in Delhi is difficult unless this elite Lutyens club endorses them.

[Continued on page no. 32]

2015 was a bad year for Indian agriculture



It was a bad year for agriculture. Not that it was anything better earlier, but 2015 was particularly a bad year. Bruised by the continuous battering received since the beginning of the year, and dumped by an apathetic government, the continuing agrarian crisis has only worsened. With a back-to-back drought for the second year in a row, the summer rainfall deficit touched a high of 14 per cent, the highest in six years. Nearly 40 per cent of the country's cultivable area recorded deficit monsoons with Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, eastern Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Telangana being the worst affected. Punjab and Haryana too received less rainfall but escaped being negatively impacted because of a wide network of irrigation.

Before the summer rainfall seasons began in June, an unexpectedly long spell of unseasonal rains, accompanied by strong winds and hailstorm, had lashed western Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, parts of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. The standing wheat crop that was almost ready for harvest was extensively damaged with a spate of farmer suicides hitting the hailstorm affected belt. Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan saw a rise in farmer deaths, with many farmers dying from shock after seeing a flattened crop.

Far away in Karnataka, in what appears to be an unprecedented reflection of the severity of a continuing agrarian crisis, more than 600 farmers (and still counting) have taken their own lives since June. In fact, self-immolation by some farmers, a few of them even jumping in the burning sugarcane fields, is seen as an expression of extreme indignation against the apathetic and farmer-unfriendly agricultural policies of the state. Such has been the pace and spate of suicides that Karnataka has suddenly joined the category of farm suicide hotspots of the country.

The situation is the worst in Maharashtra. More than 2,950 farmers had committed suicides till October from the beginning of year. A year earlier, according to official estimates, 1,611 farmers had ended their own lives. Besides the suicide-prone Vidharbha region, the worsening plight of farmers in Marathwada has turned the region into a new suicide hot spot of the country. Not knowing what else to try, the Maharashtra chief minister had earlier roped in film actress Deepika Padukone to apply a psychological approach in minimizing the death toll. Later, he announced a relief package of Rs 10,512-crore. Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh too witnessed a spurt in suicides. In Madhya Pradesh, it was primarily the attack of yellow mosaic virus on soybean that compounded the prevail crisis. But what came in as a bigger shock was the spate of farmer suicides



Not only the weather, prevailing apathy and neglect is playing havoc with the farming systems across the country that has systematically added on to the agrarian crisis in India, explains

Dr. Devinder Sharma.

in Odisha. Almost close to 100 farmers have taken their lives prompting the State BJP to launch a campaign seeking the ruling BJD to address the issue.

In Punjab and Haryana, the food bowl of the country, two to four suicides on an average are happening every day. After unseasonal rains in March-April, a crash in potato prices followed forcing farmers to distribute potato free of cost at various places. The prices of *basmati* rice were the next to slump, with farmers not being able to get more than Rs 1,200 per quintal for the early maturing variety. Two years earlier, *basmati* had fetched a handsome return of Rs 4,000 per quintal or more. The price for basmati at that time was even less than the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for rice. To add to their woes, approximately Rs 5,500-crore of paddy MSP has not been paid to farmers even a month after the procurement was over.

As if this is not enough, whitefly, a tiny insect, which was till recently considered a minor pest, took a devastating form to devour nearly 75 per cent of the standing cotton crop. Much of the damage was on Bt cotton, the genetically-modified strain. Agriculture Radha Mohan Singh informed Parliament that cotton crop in 3.32 lakh hectares had been destroyed from whitefly attack. Some estimates point to Rs 4,600-crore loss for farmers. Irrate farmers had resorted to rail rook at a number of places demanding a compensation of Rs 40,000 per acre for the damage done by whitefly. They also are seeking a relief of Rs 20,000 for farm workers who were laid off due to the insect attack. The rail rook protests were later discontin-



**Government
has ignored the
cries of the
farming
community.**

ued but farmers still continue to resist the entry of ruling party politicians into the villages.

It is not only the weather that played havoc with the farming systems across the country, but what has systematically added on to the agrarian crisis is the prevailing apathy and neglect. At a time when the farmers were the worst hit, I had expected the Central government to come up with a higher MSP for wheat and paddy, and in addition announce at least a Rs 2-lakh-crore economic bailout package for farmers. Instead the government has ignored the cries of the farming community and has decided to provide a three-times increase in the monthly emoluments of the government employees through the 7th Pay Commission. While the MSP for farmers has been raised by a paltry Rs 50 per quintal, which corresponds to an increase of 3.5 per cent or so, the lowest government employee – *chaprasi* – has been given a jump of 260 per cent in basic salary.

I am of the firm opinion that the underlying intention is to drive farmers out of agriculture. Make it so uneconomical that farmers are left with no choice but to abandon farming. This is the better way rather than forcing them out. Niti Ayog deputy chairman Arvind Panagariya and the Reserve Bank of India

(RBI) Governor Raghuram Rajan has often said that the biggest reform will be when population from agriculture is moved to the urban areas. The Confederation of India Industry (CII) on the other hand has been seeking cheaper labour for infrastructure which can come only if farmers are forced out. An indication of this process comes from a news report which says around 500 farmers in Sonapat district (adjoining Delhi) are offering their land being acquired for setting up an educational institute. Another report tells us that 3,000 villages have been deserted in Uttarakhand in past 15 years!

This is a telling insight into the deliberate effort over the years to keep the farmers impoverished. But if you think, farmers have suffered unknowingly, you are simply mistaken. For a country to grow economically, the economic prescription is to reduce drastically the dependency on agriculture. Therefore the entire effort is to create such pitiable conditions that forces people on their own to abandon farming and migrate to the cities. Government needs cheap work force – *dehari mazdoors*. But what is being forgotten is that agriculture is the biggest employer. All efforts should be to make it economically viable and environmentally sustainable. □□

Small 'COINS' – Big Problems



Disappearance of the small denomination coins has augmented the prices of goods and services in a multiple way and thereby increased the cost of living,

says
Dr. S. Lingamurthy

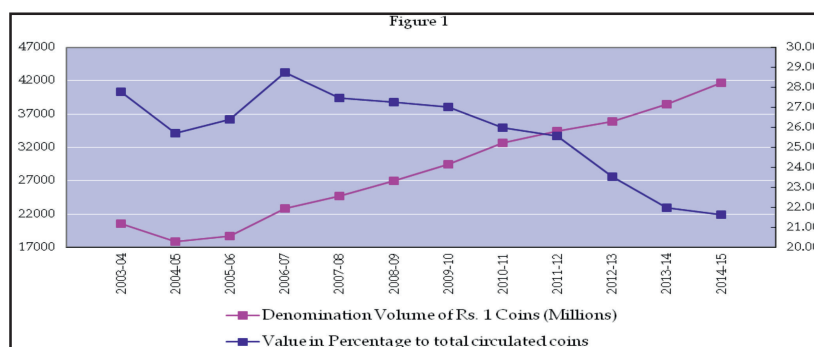
Small 'coins' have become a subject of serious discussion on its disappearance from market circulation over the years and its influential factors have been almost ignored by the policy makers. There is an array of explanations on diminishing of 25 paise and 50 paise which have become history now. Most of our small coins are metallic, are melted to produce 'metal' as the higher face value than its intrinsic value with the passage of time and boosting superfluous expenditure. Besides, there are serious apprehensions on metallic coins being melted to produce different items like razors and blades. There are different avenues and religious rites where the coins either kept in the worship places or affixed to different items of reverence. There is also a habit of tribute the mighty rivers or rivulets by throwing coins while crossing them by boats or even through bridges. The frugal nature of people urges them increase their savings. As a result, the coins and small denominations get trapped in piggy banks. Gresham's law explains the disappearance of the soiled notes and worn out coins. Naturally, currency notes have a relatively lower span of life as compared to the coins.

The fundamental problems which have cropped up due to the disappearance of coins in India are prudently discussed at this juncture. In the last decade it has been observed that there has been serious paucity of notes and coins of small denominations i.e., Rs 1, 2, 5 and 10 respectively. Evidently, the disappearance of the small denominations has augmented the prices of goods and services in a multiple way and thereby increased the cost of living. For instance, Mr. Barua, a resident of Dibrugarh (Assam) is a retired person explains, the disappearance of small coins resulting paucity small coins and notes which leads the redundant hike in the cost of vegetables and fares of rickshaw. Earlier a bunch of *dhokia* (Fiddlehead fern) used to be of Rs 2 / Rs 3 per bunch. Now due to the absence of 2 rupees coin, he has to buy a bunch for Rs 5 or three bunches for Rs 10. Similarly bottle gourd which is available in plenty is now available for Rs 10 and onwards. Rickshaw pullers fix their fares as a multiple of Rs 10 with no consideration of distance but with the sole consideration of dealing with the problem of lack of currency of small denomina-

Table provides the picture of the coins in circulation in Indian Economy (2003-04 to 2014-2015)

Year (End of March)	Coins in Circulation in India						Value (Rs. in Billion)					
	Small Coins	Rs.1	Rs. 2	Rs. 5	Rs. 10	Total	Small Coins	Rs.1	Rs. 2	Rs. 5	Rs. 10	Total
2003-04	54,102	20,565	6,275	5,071	0	86,013	14	20	13	25	0	72
2004-05	54,051	17,896	6,449	5,238	0	83,634	14	18	13	26	0	70
2005-06	54,115	18,730	6,684	5,289	0	84,818	14	19	13	27	0	72
2006-07	54,277	22,878	7,441	5,761	0	90,357	14	23	15	29	0	80
2007-08	54,735	24,721	9,535	6,500	0	95,491	15	25	19	33	0	91
2008-09	54,736	26,957	11,179	7,141	0	100,013	15	27	22	36	0	99
2009-10	54,738	29,461	13,198	7,760	149	105,306	15	30	26	39	1	111
2010-11	54,797	32,675	15,342	9,070	300	112,184	15	33	31	45	3	127
2011-12	14,785	34,414	18,201	9,981	648	78,029	7	34	36	50	6	133
2012-13	14,788	35,884	22,113	10,675	1,267	84,727	7	36	44	53	13	153
2013-14	14,788	38,424	24,823	11,577	2,017	91,629	7	38	50	58	20	173
2014-15	14,788	41,627	27,038	12,761	2,750	98,964	7	42	54	64	27	194

Source: Compiled from respective years RBI Annual Reports

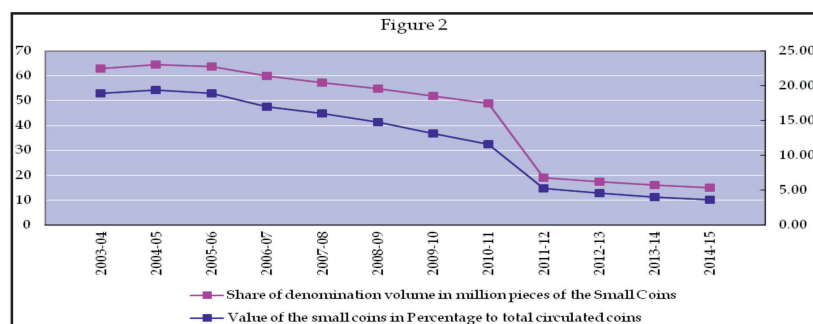


tions. The example of *dhokia* is really important. Famous classical economists used to simplify and explain their models using the assumption of zero cost in production. The *dhokia* is available in plenty in nature and one only need is to gather and sell. The costs of other vegetables which are cultivated have become much higher.

Very often, one has to deliberately or is rather forced to purchase unnecessary additional items so as to overcome the problem of change. This also erodes the wallet of a common man. Even though the problem stated may be of less significant for the higher and middle income strata, but definitely, it hurts the low income strata like daily wage earners, labourers and daily commuters.

Similar case in Delhi (the Capital of India), the cost of the vegetables is rounded to the nearest multiple of Rs 10 without taking into the consideration of availability and durability. Before a customer starts talking, the vendors enquire whether the customer has required change. Very often, the customers have to compromise and sometimes even the vendors have no choice. As a result, the cost of living has gone up and it hampers the common peoples' wallet.

Ranjit who is in a private job in Hyderabad has to change three buses to reach his office by purchasing bus tickets of Rs. 22 (7+9+6)



every day and the same for the return journey to home. His normal bus fare for to and fro is not more than Rs. 44 provided he possesses enough 'change' in his hand. When he does not have the change for ticket he usually gives Rs. 10, Rs 20 or Rs 50 currency notes for Rs. 7, Rs. 9 or Rs. 6 respectively. In this case, most of the times he loses out 40 percent in a day. He said that it is the plight of almost all his co-passengers. Sometimes he is also given a two rupee coin to share with a co-passenger who is a stranger to him. In a month, he sometimes has to part with Rs 150-200 extra which erodes his wallet.

When we dig at RBI website in search of small denomination problem, found that due to the relative cost of printing low-value notes (as a percentage of the value of the notes) is quite high. Therefore, RBI preferred to mint more value notes rather than small currency notes in order to keep up with the total demand for currency also by considering the efficiency of its

cost. The production of Rs. 10, 1000 and more value coins took place 2009-10 onwards. Despite of this, it has been decided that notes in the denomination of Rs.5 be re-introduced so as to meet the gap between the demands and supply of coins in this denomination and left aside the small and Rs. 1 and Rs. 2 in terms of its coin value share

showed in the following graphs.

Figure-1: Rs. 1 Coins in circulation and its value share in the total circulated coins value in India and it depicts, tough the number of coins circulation relentlessly increasing in the market its share of the value in the market among the total circulated coins continuously declining since 2006-07. This could be the reason behind the scarcity of its circulation in the real market of the economy. And figure-2 shows the share of other small coins denomination volume in million pieces and its share in the total value of circulated coins in India.

Therefore it is evident that lower availability of small coins sparks the price level of the daily necessities, vegetables, fruits and unavoidable regular services of the poor. Therefore, RBI and policy authorities need to rethink on the overall small coins problem and must to be addressed by getting availability them to mitigate the poverty and wallet of a common man. □□

(The author is Editorial Member in Coordination of Economic Issues, Bharat Niti, New Delhi)

Down the Dark Hole of Economic Reforms

It has been 18 long months since the BJP Government came to power. Undisputedly there has been a reduction in corruption—at least at higher levels. It will take some time for this culture of honesty and efficiency to percolate down. Consequently, most people including myself had expected the economic growth to pick up. That, however, is not happening. The government is claiming increase in growth rate to seven percent. But the ground reality is opposite. Every businessman is saying that turnover is down by 20-30 percent in comparison to the last year. Reason for this low growth despite better governance is that wrong policies promoted by the World Bank are taking our country down into the dark hole. The level of bleeding of government revenues has drastically come down. That would have led to higher growth rate. But the Government has simultaneously reduced public investment in infrastructure. In the result the improvement in growth due to good governance has been cancelled by the reduction in growth due to throttling of public expenditures.

The Government has already brought fiscal deficit under control. But that has not led to higher growth. This experience is not limited to India. Other countries have had a similar experience. Many governments have fallen after applying this policy promoted by the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and the United States Government. In Latin America alone Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Uruguay and Venezuela had applied this policy in the eighties and nineties but economic growth did not follow. There was deep social unrest and the people threw out these governments. Today Leftist leaders are in power in these countries.

It is necessary to note the origin of this policy of controlling fiscal deficit and inviting foreign investment in order to understand its repeated failure. This policy was born in a meeting of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the



FDI proposals that bring no technology should be discouraged and conditions of reinvestments of profits in the country must be imposed in all FDI proposals to reduce profit repatriations making negative impacts manageable, suggests

Dr. Bharat Jhunjunwala



U.S. Government in early eighties. This mantra is known as the 'Washington Consensus' since the meeting was held in Washington. Problem at that time was that the Latin American governments had been given huge loans by the World Bank, the IMF and U.S. commercial banks. But the leaders had siphoned off that money into Swiss Banks leading to bankruptcy of the borrowing governments. Those loans were turning bad. The U.S. government wanted to help the U.S. commercial banks to recover their loans. It was necessary to resuscitate the borrowers for this purpose. But giving more loans by the World Bank or the IMF was not found to be viable because that would only be changing the hats. The countries would borrow from the IMF and repay the commercial banks. Then they would not be able to repay the loans to the IMF.

It was decided, therefore, that the developing countries would no longer be given further loans with ease. Instead they would be asked to control government expenditures by controlling fiscal deficit and open up their economies for foreign direct investment (FDI). Loans will be given by the World Bank and the IMF only if they allowed FDI to come in. Benefit for the U.S. banks was that the borrowers could use the money received from FDI to repay the loans. Let us say Brazil is under huge debt. Opening to FDI will lead to the MNCs bringing in dollars. Brazil could replay the loans taken from U.S. Banks with this money. Additional benefit for the western countries would be that their MNCs would be able to enter the host countries. The strategy worked for the U.S. The Latin American gov-

ernments repaid the loans taken from the U.S. commercial banks but sank deeper into the stranglehold of the MNCs. Their economic growth rates collapsed and there was huge social unrest. However, the Western countries were doubly benefited. They were able to put the noose of FDI around the necks of the borrowers and also get repayment of their non-performing loans. No wonder the nineties are called the 'lost decade' of Latin America; and "golden" period for the Western countries.

The mantra failed because control of fiscal deficit did led to only a marginal increase in FDI. A substantial increase in FDI would have perhaps jumpstarted growth. But that did not happen. Reason was that foreign investors found East Asia and China more attractive than Latin America despite the implementation of the Washington Consensus by those countries. Thus, the Latin American countries were doubly hit. They made cuts into the public investment that was taking place in order to control the fiscal deficit. But FDI did not come in torrents as projected because the foreign investors went to East Asia and China. Moreover, the limited investment that happened was capital-intensive and did not create many jobs. The people were angered. They threw out the governments that towed the World Bank and installed Leftist ones.

The fundamental problem with the Washington Consensus is that increase in private investment remains uncertain. Modi may cut public investments to control fiscal deficit but private investment may not come in such large quantities to compensate for reduction in public investment. This danger is acute in

The correct policy is to improve the quality of government investment.

the present situation of a global slowdown. Europe is in crisis as indicated by the troubles in Greece. The U.S. is living off borrowed money. It is not likely that foreign investors will come in a big way when their home economies are in trouble. That will lead to less public- and private investment and push the economy down the dark hole. The correct policy is to improve the quality of government investment. We need more reforms of public investments; not reforms to attract FDI at any cost.

The way forward is to put the FDI proposals through a tight scrutiny to determine whether it brings any frontline technologies. The negative financial impacts of FDI by way of profit repatriations are compensated by the positive impacts of technology transfers. FDI proposals that bring no technology should be discouraged. The Government must impose conditions of reinvestments of profits in the country in all FDI proposals. Then profit repatriations will be less and negative impacts will become manageable. The FDI proposals should also be scrutinized for possible round tripping. The Government is committed to controlling black money. People in the know of things say that large amounts of FDI coming is actually Indian money sent out via hawala. This only adds to figures without adding any content. The Government should adopt such a nuanced policy towards FDI. □□

India's Raksha Mantri brings about paradigm change in defence sector

Indian defence sector has witnessed new developments ever since Manohar Parrikar assumed office in November 2014 as Defence Minister. He has been given a gigantic task of transforming Indian military power in the larger construct of comprehensive national military power, which will determine India's location in world affairs. If my assumption is reasonable, Parrikar must have been given a free hand to construct a direction to Indian military prowess. Consider the following: Within a few months of taking over the portfolio, he ordered sacking of the (then) chief of DRDO, which shook the rank and file at defence scientific establishments as well as the whole country; Parrikar took his own time (quite a few months actually) in appointing the next chief and bifurcated DRDO chief's contentious triple role (Chief of DRDO is scientific advisor to the Defence Minister; Secretary, Department of Defence R&D; and Head of DRDO) into two with a new head of DRDO and Secretary Defence R&D (Dr S Christopher) and a new Scientific Advisor to the Minister (Dr G Satheesh Reddy); he attempted at resolving the much complicated OROP (One Rank, One Pension) issue, which is still continuing; he raised the issue of CDS (Chief of Defence Staff) by announcing that such a position is necessary for real synergy among armed forces (it is learnt that he himself has studied all case studies, including Gold Water Nichols Act, 1986 of the US and French model) and took multiple initiatives in reforming both higher defence organisations as well as production and procurement domains.

Parrikar's initiatives, especially in the production and procurement domains include constitution of an Experts Committee under Dhirendra Singh, a former bureaucrat, to review the existing Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) and



RM is determined enough to ensure speedy procurements for urgent requirements, both from domestic sources and abroad, feels
Deba R. Mohanty



putting a definitive framework on defence procurement and facilitate 'Make in India' into the DPP (Singh Committee has already submitted its voluminous report to the government, which is under consideration). Next, as a first step of Singh Committee's recommendations to create a 'Strategic Partnership' (SP) model for the Indian private industry, the Raksha Mantri has constituted a Task Force under V K Atre, former head of DRDO and a distinguished scientist, to recommend criteria for selection of Strategic Partners from the Indian industries; and most importantly, he has avowed that a clear direction for Indian defence sector is in place with drastic reform initiatives in order while there are too many complicated problems in the defence sector to address as well.

In between, he, through the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS, the nodal agency for approval of vital defence projects), has approved capital defence procurement of various kinds, worth more than Rs 1,70,000 crore (including the ones signed by his predecessor Arun Jaitley) with a resolute decision to approve another Rs 1,00,000 crore in the next few months. This is unprecedented in the history of Indian defence equipment acquisitions (his UPA predecessor A K Antony used to sanction less than Rs 40,000 crore worth new acquisitions per annum, according to one senior defence ministry official).

Parrikar's contract-signing spree transcends yearly financial plans, one must wonder! He signs those, which are in urgent need or have been pending for years. He admits problems related to resources allocations but at the same



36 Rafale fighters would be acquired with mutually agreed formula between the seller and the buyer.

time he is determined enough to ensure speedy procurements for urgent requirements, both from domestic sources and abroad.

Defence related project approvals and consequent announcements have two sides: one is mere publicity with knowledge of procurement related complications for specific projects (for example, the 126 MMRCA tender) and second, real time necessity based acquisitions. In both cases, thanks to multi-dimensional problems, it is the end-user who suffers the most. The problem thus needs focused attention. How does one evaluate Parrikar's performance as leader of a Ministry, which is otherwise plagued with dozens of problems, starting from higher directions till bottom of the pyramid? He initially appeared a novice, but his decisions, for example like sacking of head of the DRDO or fast tracking of project approvals, do speak volumes of his resolute persona. It is interesting as well as intriguing at the same time that he and his UPA predecessor are both known for their appreciable grade honesty and integrity, but deliverables appear to differ. For example, big international consulting firms minted millions through paid advice on a project (126 MMRCA) that was destined to be scrapped! Against the wide tide of optimistic asser-

tions by most of the security analysts and consultants, I had argued as far back as in December 2006 that MMRCA would not likely to be concluded before the end of tenure of UPA II regime in 2014, thus getting to be decided by the next government.

Contrary to popular belief, one actually does not need rocket science formula to predict fates of larger defence procurements. I stuck to my arguments for the past several years knowing fully-well that such a complicated contract, involving too many countries, companies, consultants and formal negotiators with many procedural riders will reach a dead end, thanks to arms dynamic, politics and institutional/procedural mechanisms.

My assumption was validated when the new NDA government scrapped the deal, while equally pleasantly I was surprised to hear that the government arranged a new one in which 36 Rafale fighters would be acquired with mutually agreed formula between the seller and the buyer. A deal, which languished amid all complications for close to a decade, was scrapped, re-framed and agreed upon within a shorter time span by the new government. Whether such complicated acquisition cases see the eventual light of the day or not actually does not

matter. What matters is a decision – right or wrong – in large defence projects, which invariably has politico-strategic dimensions. Arms dynamic – I hold on to my old argument – is more about politics and strategic considerations than economics or technology, although the latter two matter at different stages. If Dassault/France has agreed to the new arrangement, it connotes new Indian strategy of arms dynamic as well as bilateral strategic interests.

Political leaders need time to settle into their responsibility domains, which is usual. What is surprising in Parrikar's case need to be contextualised. Consider these: Soon after Arun Jaitley assumed charge of Defence portfolio, he said in no uncertain terms that he was in charge of defence ministry for a temporary period and within that uncertain period signed defence procurements worth INR 1,20,000 crore in two phases, knowing fully well that his successor would endorse the same; and

A definitive vision needs a team for realization of goals.

Parrikar succeeded him, cleared all those files and rest is history.

In sum, here is a Minister, who does his homework himself (as a technocrat, he finds tech related gaps and hence asks uncomfortable questions to any one). I do not have substantive evidence to prove, but I am told that he is still in search of a complementing team to help him. If it is true, it reflects two important pointers: a definitive vision needs a team for realization of goals; and a simplified version of his vision, whenever prepared, should ideally be explained to the larger audience.

His keynote address at a recently held conference at FICCI gave glimpses of his persona, working style, beliefs and most im-

portantly, devotion to duty and responsibility. In the same seminar, he was blunt enough to ridicule his own ministry (unprecedented in the history where a Minister admonishes his own armed forces as 'erratic' buyers), but most importantly, appears genuine enough to admit that there are too many problems. Spotless personal integrity appears to be his only asset apart from unfathomable dedication. The manner in which decisions are being taken, are a clear indicator of signs of change, change for better. This is what has been missing for decades – lack of a clear direction and a resolute leadership – the first essential element for a national military power.

If a firm leadership is in place with a clear direction (which Parrikar should spell out), bulk of problems associated with Indian defence sector – self-created, interest driven or otherwise – can find their solutions. History will judge Parrikar's performance. □□

Author is New Delhi based defence analyst. Views are his own.

[Continued from page no. 23]

Probity Vs Public life in Lutyens

The situation appeared hopeless a couple of years back. But an unprecedented change was thrown up in the 2014 elections when the people elected Narendra Modi – a rank outsider and unknown to the Lutyens of Delhi. The Lutyens and Modi are a poles apart. The Lutyen Delhi is comfortable only in English and Modi is not. It loves elite parties which Modi keeps away from. Lutyens love to gossip and Modi wouldn't listen even to them. For the Lutyens, he is a stranger. Modi faces their challenge

which is also an opportunity. He can keep away from the Lutyens, which he does, and thus keep his government away from perfidy and corruption. But he does pay the huge cost – their intense hostility – for keeping away from them.

Not only Modi, but many of his colleagues and bureaucrats too avoid the Delhi Lutyens. In the process, the Lutyens have lost their power over the powers. The Lutyens cannot allow Modi government to succeed which will mean their defeat and irrelevance – some-

thing which they cannot accept. Modi is still the last and the best chance to break the Delhi Lutyens circuit's strangle hold over national polity.

If he succeeds, there is scope for honest leaders like AB Bardhan, who emerge only outside Delhi Lutyens circuit, to regain respect and relevance. Otherwise they will, of course, exist, but as marginalised and endangered species in national polity and at the mercy of Lutyen mafia of Delhi. The rest of Modi's term is crucial not only for him and his government but also for probity in public life. □□

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Bharat Niti Discussion on 'Pulses: Securing India's self-reliance'

Government has decided to incentivise pulse production, create buffer stock and to secure assured availability of pulses in the country; Radha Mohan Singh. Report by Anoop Koopahali (National co-ordinator Bharat Niti)

Stating that the Centre would create a buffer stock of 1.5 lakh tonnes of pulses through direct purchase from the farmers at the market price, Radha Mohan Singh, the Minister for Agriculture, assured that the Narendra Modi government would not allow the pulse crisis to happen again. At present, the Central government is not only working towards encouraging farmers in pulse production by assuring a fair price for their produce but also facilitating the availability of high yield seeds and other inputs, Singh said at an event hosted by Bharat Niti on the topic 'Securing self-reliance in pulse production' at the Constitution Club here on Friday, December 18, 2015.

P. Muralidhar Rao, BJP general secretary, and Vijaypal Tomar, president BJP Kisan Morcha, also spoke during the event Bharat Niti, a public platform to debate and discuss the policies of the country.

The Agriculture Minister brought to the notice the fact that the pulse production was on a downward spiral for years but earlier governments remained indifferent towards this development. "Also, there was no procurement mechanism of the government; except NAFED, no other agency was procuring pulses. But this time, the Modi government has decided that to incentivise pulse production and to secure assured availability of pulses in the country, the Union government would create a buffer stock of pulses."

He explained that by procuring 50,000 tonnes (of pulses) and 100,000 tonnes of pulses in Kharif and Rabi seasons respectively, a buffer stock of 1.5 lakh tonnes would be readied. Singh further went on to inform that the pulse procurement would also be done at market price other than the announced MSP.

This (procurement) has been assigned to the FCI, NAFED and state trading corporations. The agriculture minister hoped that with the co-operation of every state government, the present state and future of



agriculture in the country would be transformed. "The farmers were duped in the name of debt waiver by the earlier government," he alleged.

Muralidhar Rao said that securing self-reliance in pulse production would require not only fair price to the farmers for their produce but also manifold increase in the acreage of pulse cultivation. Rao said it becomes the responsibility of the Modi government that pulses being the major source of protein, it's easy availability is ensured by securing self-reliance in production. He drew an analogy between pulse and cows. "Pulses are not only excellent source of protein but are also very important for restoring the fertility of the soil. Present requirement of pulses in our country is around 25 million tonnes but we barely manage to produce 18-19 million tonnes, rest is sourced from imports and that too from countries which are not the consumers of it and for them pulses are just like commodities."

Rao said that if India continued its dependence on pulses' import from other countries, it would not only be wasting the valued foreign currency reserves but also be condemning the country into a state of helplessness in times of crisis since "pulses are unlike industrial commodities, which could be imported at time of our choosing." He said that it is almost essential to increase the acreage of legume cultivation. Presently, only five or six states are into pulse cultivation, it needs to spread country wide.

Vijaypal Tomar, president BJP Kisan Morcha, said the decreasing pulse production has resulted in increased price which, in turn, has pushed it out of reach of the common man's plate. At present, availability of pulses is a mere 42 gram per capita against the WHO suggested standard of 80 gram/capita to fulfill our protein requirement. "The farmers across India are struggling not only on production front but also on issues of crop protection and storage," he added. □□

■ No clear pollution trend during odd-even trial: CPCB ■

Lack of any clear trend and wide fluctuations in concentration of pollutants during the odd-even experiment suggests that no single action can substantially reduce air pollution levels in the capital, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has said in a report.

"With no clear trend and wide fluctuations observed in the concentrations, it is evident that the meteorology and emissions from other polluting sources have been major factors impacting air quality of Delhi during the period. "Overall, it can be stated that while some reduction in air pollution is likely to happen due to odd-even scheme, a single factor or action cannot substantially reduce air pollution levels in Delhi," says the report that analyses air quality in Delhi before, during and after the odd-even experiment. The board has also called for a "comprehensive" set of actions and an "integrated" approach to make substantial improvement in air quality. The air quality in Delhi is monitored through a set of Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring System (CAAQMS) and manual stations by National Air Quality Monitoring Programme (NAMP). The CPCB analysis is based on the data collected by 8 operational CAAQMSs including 4 of its own (Shadipur, Dwarka, Dilshad Garden and Parivesh Bhawan) and other 4 belonging to Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) (Mandir Masg, RK Puram, Punjabi Bagh and Anand Vihar). Apart from this, data has also been collected from 7 manual stations of CPCB (Pitampura, Sirifort, Janakpuri, Nizamuddin, Shahzada Bagh, Shahdara and Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg) which operate on alternate days. □

Attacks not prevention make headlines

Terror attacks grab headlines but their prevention does not get as much attention, feels Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu who wants curbing of the ideology and motivation that lead a person to become a terrorist. "The ideology and motivation that manifests individuals have to be curbed. And the source need not be within the country. It could be outside the country. That is why we have to ensure prevention of terrorism," Prabhu told a gathering here yesterday.

He was delivering a talk 'Role of good governance in national security', organised by Forum for Integrated National Security (FINS), a local NGO. Prabhu said a terror attack gets media headlines, but prevention of such attacks due to timely action does not get so much into the public domain.

"The Paris attack caught the headlines of the media all over, but after that on the eve of New Year (in Paris) there were threats of terror attack which were prevented," he pointed out. The Minister also said that a stronger economy is required for a secure nation. He also said that the concept of security has changed over the time.

SC restores possession of mine

The Supreme Court has held that the Rajasthan government will take back possession of a mine from Gotan Limestone Khanji Udyog Pvt Ltd (GLKUPL), which was transferred to cement major Ultra Tech, saying that competent authority was "misled" by concealing the real transaction. The apex court set aside the order of the Rajasthan High Court which

had dismissed the state government's plea to restore to it the possession of a mine, located in 10 sq km area near Gotan town in Nagaur district, the lease of which was transferred in contravention of rules to Ultra Tech Cement Ltd (UTCL), also known as Ultra Tech.

It also directed the Rajasthan government to frame and notify its policy with regard to transfer of mining lease within one month and said, "Till such a decision is taken, status quo may be maintained." Holding that the Rajasthan government rightly exercised its power to cancel the lease transferred in violation of rules, a bench of Justices A R Dave and A K Goel said, "In the present case, it was not a case of mere transfer of shareholding or change of Directors or even a routine merger, but use of device to unauthorisedly acquire mining lease by misleading the competent authority by concealing the real transaction.

The state's Mines Department on December 16, 2014 had cancelled the mining lease granted in favour of GLKUPL, which was set aside by the single judge bench of the high court on March 25, 2015.

India to probe dumping of chemicals

India has started a probe into alleged dumping of a chemical, used as an antiseptic and antibacterial agent, from Pakistan, Bangladesh and other countries. Acting on a joint complaint by National Peroxide Ltd and state-owned Hindustan Organic Chemicals, the Directorate General of Anti-Dumping and Allied Duties (DGAD) has started a probe into imports of 'Hydrogen Peroxide' originating in or exported from Bangladesh, Taiwan, Korea, Indonesia, Pakistan and

Writers agree to take back awards

Several writers, including Nayantara Sahgal, have agreed to take back the awards they had returned a few months ago citing 'growing intolerance' in the country. "Sahitya Akademi has started sending back the awards to the writers...It has already been sent to Nayantara Sahgal. Another writer Nand Bhardwaj has also agreed to take back the award. It would be sent to other writers as well," Sahitya Akademi president Vishwanath Prasad Tiwari said.

He said the Akademi is also sending a copy of their resolution, which was passed in the October meeting, to all writers mentioning that there was no provision in its constitution to return the honours. A source in the Culture Ministry said, "There is a list of 10 writers who have agreed to take back the awards they had returned. Sahgal and Bhardwaj are two confirmed names."

About 40 writers had returned their awards to the Sahitya Akademi in the backdrop of Akademi's silence on the murder of fellow writer M M Kalburgi as well against the "communal" atmosphere in the country following the Dadri lynching incident. On October 23, Sahitya Akademi passed a unanimous resolution appealing to State and Central Governments to take steps to prevent such incidents and asked authors to take back the awards they had returned to protest against "rising intolerance". □

Thailand. The move is aimed at protecting domestic players in the automobile sector against cheap imports.

In a notification, the DGAD said there was sufficient prima facie evidence of the 'injury' being suffered by the domestic industry caused by dumped imports from the countries to "justify" initiation of an anti-dumping investigation. The period of investigation (POI) for is from April 2014 to June 2015 (15 months). After the probe, DGAD, if needed, would recommend to the Finance Ministry for imposition of the duty.

Hydrogen peroxide has strong oxidising properties and is therefore a powerful bleaching agent that has found use as a disinfectant, as an oxidiser, and in rocketry and in bipropellant systems. It also finds application in odour control, corrosion control, disinfection/ bio-control, paper and pulp bleaching, therapeutic uses as an antiseptic and antibacterial agent, among others.

The anti-dumping duty is aimed at ensuring fair trading practices and creating a level-playing field for domestic producers vis-a-vis foreign producers and exporters resorting to dumping of goods at below-cost rates. Commercially, the product is produced and sold in 35 per cent, 50 per cent, 60 per cent and 70 per cent concentration.

Defying green nod to cost builders

Days after the Supreme Court warned that all housing projects constructed without prior environment clearance will be declared illegal, the Centre informed the court that a stringent regime will be put in place to ensure builders who do not obtain the green nod before commencing construction are made

to pay dearly or even face criminal prosecution.

The measures proposed form part of a draft notification being prepared by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Neeraj Kishan Kaul representing Centre informed the Court that the fresh thought occurred to the Ministry of Environment and Forests following the order of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in July last year which slapped several builders in Chennai with huge fine ranging between Rs7 crore and Rs36 crore for constructing multi-storey flats without getting clearance under the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification of 2006,

The NGT went ahead and struck down an order issued by MoEF on December 12, 2012 subsequently amended on June 27, 2013 which allowed builders to get post-facto EIA clearance by depositing penalty at a stage after construction had commenced. As it turned out, some builders in Chennai had even granted possession to flat owners without obtaining the mandatory environmental clearance.

This trend had anguished the apex court earlier which was worried that such violation by builders would land innocent flat purchasers at grave risk of being in illegal occupation. ASG Kaul said that the notification under process will take care of all concerns expressed by NGT. It will make EIA clearance mandatory for commencement of any construction project. So far as existing violators are concerned, the Centre has proposed an Expert Committee to study the extent of violation and assess the damage caused to environment in monetary terms. In fitting cases, the Committee could even recommend criminal prosecution. □□

■ Madhesis reject constitutional change as 'incomplete' ■

Nepal's agitating Madhesis have rejected a constitutional amendment passed by the Parliament to resolve the ongoing political crisis and blockade of key trade border points with India, calling it "incomplete" as it did not address their concerns over redrawing federal boundaries. The amendment, endorsed with a two-thirds majority yesterday, addresses two key demands of the Madhesis - proportionate representation to the minority community largely of Indian-origin and seat allocation in the Parliament on the basis of population.

The lawmakers of the agitating parties had boycotted the voting, saying the amendment was "incomplete", as it fell short of addressing their concerns, including redrawing of federal boundaries. Rajendra Shrestha, co-chair of the Sanghiya Samajbadi Forum Nepal - one of the constituents of the Samyukta Loktantrik Madhesi Morcha (SLMM), said that the proposal by Nepali Congress leaders Minendra Rijal and Farmullah Mansoor was progressive than the original bill that was filed in Parliament on December 15.

As many as 24 proposals were filed by more than 100 lawmakers of different parties, seeking to amend the bill, which was endorsed in the House after incorporating the proposal registered by Rijal and Mansoor. The agitating Madhes-based parties said the revision proposal, in line with which the Constitution Amendment Bill was endorsed, was "incomplete" despite being progressive, The Kathmandu Post reported. Morcha leaders said that they would make further comments after thoroughly "studying the text". □

Taliban commander vows more attacks

A senior Pakistani Taliban commander released video footage of four fighters he said carried out deadly assault on a university in Pakistan's northwest that killed 20 people and vowed more attacks on schools in future. The footage raised fresh questions of a possible split in the fractured Taliban leadership, whose official spokesman has denied the group was behind the assault. Militants scaled the walls of Bacha Khan University in Charsadda on Wednesday morning and killed 20 people before being gunned down by army commandos and police.

Taliban spokesman Mohammad Khorasani issued a written statement that evening disassociating the group from the attack and calling it un-Islamic. But the same day, a Taliban faction commander Umar Mansoor told Reuters his fighters had targeted the campus because it prepared students to join the Government and Army. Mansoor is considered close to Mullah Fazlullah, the embattled leader of the fractious Pakistan Taliban group. The reason for the conflicting claims by the official spokesman and Mansoor was not immediately clear but has led to speculation of a possible split in the Taliban leadership.

Israel evicts settlers from WB home

Israeli security forces evicted dozens of Jewish settlers from two homes in the heart of the West Bank city of Hebron a day after they had moved in. Dozens of settlers left the house carrying their possessions and accompanied by Israeli border police, an AFP photographer on the scene said. Police later welded the doors of the homes shut, the photographer said.

Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld confirmed 80 people had been removed from the homes, with the evacuation occurring without incident. The buildings stand near a religious site known to Jews as the Cave of the Patriarchs and to Muslims as the Ibrahimi Mosque in the heart of the flashpoint southern West Bank city. The families had only moved in on Thursday after buying the homes from Palestinian families, the settlers said.

UK mother denies terrorism

A British Muslim mother on trial for taking her 14-month-old baby to ISIS claims she was unaware of the terrorist groups true nature and had travelled to the war-torn country only to live under Sharia law. Tareena Shakil, 26, has told the Birmingham Crown Court jury that she only wanted to live under Sharia law and feared she would go to hell if she lived in England.

Cooperation on tax issues at good level

Confident of stronger bilateral and trade ties with India, Switzerland has said its cooperation on tax matters in terms of sharing information on suspected black money cases would continue at "a good level". It has also invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi on a state visit to bolster relationship between the two countries, Swiss Finance Minister Ueli Maurer told the news agency in an interview here.

Maurer, who met Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, said Switzerland is also keen to expand the relationship between industries of the two coun-

Dismantle all terror networks: Obama

In a strong message, US president Barack Obama told Pakistan that it “can and must” take more effective action against terrorist groups operating from its soil by “delegitimising, disrupting and dismantling” terror networks there. Describing the terror attack on the IAF base in Pathankot as “another example of the inexcusable terrorism that India has endured for too long”, Obama gave credit to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for reaching out to his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif after the attack.

“Both leaders are advancing a dialogue on how to confront violent extremism and terrorism across the region,” Obama told PTI in an interview here during which he answered a wide range of questions covering Indo-US ties, terrorism and outcome of the Paris climate change summit.

Voicing his belief that the Indo-US relationship can be one of the defining partnerships of the century, Obama said that Modi shared his enthusiasm for a strong partnership and “we have developed a friendship and close working relationship, including our conversations on the new secure lines between our offices”. Asked if the relationship has achieved its full potential, the US president replied, “Absolutely not.” On the Pathankot attack, Obama said, “We join India in condemning the attack, saluting the Indians who fought to prevent more loss of life and extending our condolences to the victims and their families. “Tragedies like this also underscore why the US and India continue to be such close partners in fighting terrorism.”

Obama was of the view that Sharif recognised that insecurity in Pakistan is a threat to its own stability and that of the region. After the December, 2014 school massacre in Peshawar he had vowed to target all militants, regardless of their agenda or affiliation. The US president said that he still believed that “Pakistan can and must” take more effective action against terrorist groups that operate from its territory. □

tries. Asked whether there could be greater cooperation on information exchange in tax matters, he said: “We have already agreed on more cooperation and this is working well and should continue.

Over the past few months, both countries have been working closely on mutual administrative assistance. In recent months, Switzerland has disclosed names of more than a dozen Indians about whom information has been sought by the Indian Government amid suspicion that their accounts in Swiss banks were being used for stashing illicit money.

Swiss banks, known for their banking secrecy practices, have come under global pressure as countries, including India, are ramping up efforts to crack down on the black money menace. About the issues discussed with Jaitley, Maurer said, “We have good relations with India and we discussed our trade ties.

China jails Xinjiang democracy activist

China has jailed an activist in its volatile north-western Xinjiang region for 19 years over online posts criticising the ruling Communist Party and interviews with overseas media, his lawyer said. A court in the regional capital Urumqi found Zhang Haitao guilty of “incitement to subvert state power” and “illegally providing intelligence overseas”, his lawyer Li Dun-yong said. China regularly jails dissidents who have spoken out against the Communist Party, but observers said the sentence handed down on Sunday was unusually harsh. Xinjiang, home to the mainly Muslim

Uighur minority, has in recent years seen a security crackdown prompted by clashes in the region that have killed hundreds.

Call for new strategy on terror

India and the Arab League have vowed to combat terrorism and called for developing a strategy to “eliminate” its sources and extremism including its funding as External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj made a strong pitch for delinking religion from terrorism. While addressing the 1st Ministerial Meeting of Arab- India Cooperation Forum here in the Bahraini capital, she also warned that those who “silently sponsor” terror groups could end up being used by them, in an apparent jibe at Pakistan.

She said that today’s meeting marks a “turning point” for India-Arab relations while pointing out that “we are also at a major turning point in history when the forces of terrorism and violent extremism are seeking to destabilise societies and inflict incalculable damage to our cities, our people and our very social fabric”. The two sides condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and rejected associating terrorism with any religion, culture or ethnic group. They emphasised the need for concerted regional and international efforts to combat terrorism and to address its causes and to develop a strategy to eliminate the sources of terrorism and extremism including its funding, as well as combating organised cross-border crime. □□

Cabinet clears India's stand at WTO

The stand taken by India on issues such as public stockholding for food security purposes and commitment to abolish export subsidies for farm exports was on cleared ex-post facto by the Union Cabinet. "The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has given its ex-post facto approval for the approach adopted by India at the 10th Ministerial Conference of the WTO held in Nairobi during 15-19 December," an official statement said.

The outcomes of the meeting, referred to as the 'Nairobi Package' include ministerial decisions on agriculture, cotton and issues related to least developed countries (LDCs). India wants a permanent solution to the issue of public stockholding for food security purposes. It had proposed either amending the formula to calculate the food subsidy cap of 10 per cent, which is based on the reference price of 1986-88, or allowing such schemes outside the purview of subsidy caps. The food security issue is related to several developing nations which provide subsidised foodgrains to the poor.

In view of the reluctance of developed countries to agree to continue the Doha Development Agenda post-Nairobi, India negotiated and secured a re-affirmative ministerial decision on public stockholding, it added. "The decision commits members to engage constructively in finding a permanent solution to this issue," it said. The statement said that another area under negotiation in Nairobi dealt with the rules on fisheries subsidies. There was no outcome in this area of the negotiations," it said.

China wins appeal against EU

China has won an appeal against EU in a dispute at the World Trade Organization over EU tariffs imposed on Chinese imports of screws, nuts and bolts made of iron or steel.

It can now ask for sanctions. China has never before asked the WTO to impose trade sanctions since it joined the organisation in 2001, but the end of the seven-year battle leaves the way open to a claim for compensation. "The measures have negative effect on exports from China around \$1 billion and more than 100,000 jobs from thousands of fastener producers in China," China's Ministry of Commerce said in a statement. "It has resulted in huge economic losses to the Chinese industry, which has expressed strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition to the measures."

The EU must now comply with the ruling and remove its illegal tariffs or China would take "further steps", the statement said. The value of China's exports of the products to the EU peaked at over \$1 billion in 2008, but averaged about \$200 million after the EU imposed punitive tariffs on the Chinese exports in 2009, according to a Reuters analysis of data from the International Trade Centre, a UN-WTO joint venture. Under WTO rules, countries are allowed to punish "dumping" - or exports priced at an unfairly cheap level - to stop one country deliberately undermining its foreign rivals by artificially undercutting their prices. But the use of anti-dumping tariffs is subject to strict rules and, in this case, China complained that the EU had not applied the rules correctly. WTO arbitrators agreed. The EU appealed and lost, and said it had reduced the tariffs. But China complained that the EU had not done enough to comply with the ruling, and again it won.

Colombia appeals panel report on imports

Colombia filed a notice of appeal on 22 January 2016 regarding the panel report in "Colombia - Measures Relating to the Importation of Textiles, Apparel and Footwear" (WT/DS461/R). Parties to a dispute can appeal a panel's ruling. Appeals have to be based on points of law, such as legal interpretation — they cannot re-open factual findings made by the panel. Each appeal is heard by three members of a permanent seven-member Appellate Body comprising persons of recognized authority and unaffiliated with any government.

The Appellate Body membership broadly represents the geographic range of WTO membership, with each member appointed for a fixed term. Generally, the Appellate Body has up to 3 months to conclude its report.

Jamaica ratifies TFA

Jamaican Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller has confirmed her country's ratification of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) during a meeting with WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo in Kingston on 19 January. The Director-General is currently on an official visit to the Caribbean. DG Azevêdo was in Jamaica on 18-19 January, where he met with senior government representatives and gave a speech at the University of the West Indies. DG Azevêdo continues the visit on 20 January in Barbados. □□