

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 70 No. 10
April 5, 2015

Multi to single

S. Viswam

Improving police command
Kuldip Nayar

Land Acquisition Ordinance
Prem Singh

Making judicial appointments
Rajindar Sachar

**Lokayat joins
Socialist Party (India)**

Can State Budgets make up?
Bharat Dogra

**Relevance of
Ramamanohar Lohia today**
K. S. Chalam

**Dynamics of
Southeast Asian Security**
Jayabrata Sarkar

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

The promise and prospect of the consolidation of six different parties into a single political entity, to begin with at least in Parliament, has been looming large for almost six months. There has been much talk but little action on the ground. At last, we are assured that the official act of uniting six parties, all off-springs of the original Janata Party of 1977, is about to be enacted. The time has apparently come for a new political grouping to be a new addition to national politics, with a left-of-centre ideology, and with a respectful if not substantial numbers in Parliament—15 in the Lok Sabha and 30 in the Rajya Sabha. A new party means a new voice, a new representation, and a new intellectual input into the national political discourse. Considering the background of the six parties that are merging into one, the development is indeed worthy of a full-throated hail of “three cheers” and also high expectations.

The parties involved in the merger are: the Janata Dal (United), the Rashtriya Janata Dal, the Samajwadi Party, the Indian National Lok Dal, the Janata Dal (Secular), and the Samajwadi Janata Party. We do not yet know what the merged party intends to call itself by, and we do not yet

know the contours of its ideological predilections. We do know, however, that each of the merging parties has a political history, that its leaders are all political stalwarts in their own rights, that each of them has sometime or the other in the recent past held chief ministerial offices and that each of them can still be expected to play major political roles in their respective spheres of influence.

However, it has been reported that the formal announcement of the merger is to be made this week-end. That means that a new party expects to function as a single political entity in the second half of the budget session of parliament commencing on April 20 and that the formal announcement of the merger will introduce into the national electoral politics a new player, especially in UP and Bihar, and that national politics is bound to be enriched and enlivened by the emergence of a new player.

The six parties are not new to the merger game. Each of them at one time or the other has been involved in mergers and splits. The merger-split disease is common to all parties in our country. The six parties now planning merger were all socialist parties once, and in turn they have

Between the lines

Improving police command

Kuldip Nayar

also aligned themselves in turn with the Congress and the BJP, the original face of the left and the right-ultra right in the political spectrum. Yet another common link binding them these days is that each of them has had the mortification of having been humbled by the BJP in the Lok Sabha poll. In both UP and Bihar where all the six barring the JD (Secular) have a sizable base, the six parties paid a heavy price.

The nitty-gritty of merger was speedily worked out, possibly because the merging parties are all in a hurry. Elections are due soon in JD (U)-ruled Bihar this year and in 2017 in UP where the SP is in control. It is a question of face and prestige for the two parties to do well in the assembly polls since they were decimated in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. Indeed, the socialists represented by Mulayam Singh, Lalu Prasad and Sharad Yadav (JDU chief) regard the coming assembly polls as a trial of strength against the BJP and the saffron parivar. Indeed, the merger is getting off to a flying start because the six parties are driven by the wish to avenge their defeats. The flag symbol, manifesto and all other issues stand sorted out, and the designated chairman Mulayam Singh has only to announce the launch of the event.

The task is cut out for the new group. Its first test will be in Bihar. If it makes a good showing in Bihar, the morale of the constituents will rise and further gains can be within reach. Now that the Congress has virtually vacated the opposition space, it is for the merged Janata Party to fill it. The new party is bound to be a welcome addition to the forces fighting the saffron wave in the country. The merged party will be an asset in this regard.

It is a travesty of justice. The court has let off all the 16 policemen, belonging to the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) of Uttar Pradesh on the ground of lack of evidence. It was dark and it was difficult to determine who from among the policemen fired at whom, says the court. Apparently, no real hard work was done to conduct the inquiry and fix responsibility. Yet how were the 16 accused separated from the rest, in the first instance? Some criteria would have been adopted to reach the verdict.

In fact, the happening reminded one of the Jalianwala Bagh tragedies. At that time, the British officers blocked the only route of exit and killed nearly 1,000 demonstrators demanding independence. At Hashimpura too, the five lanes where Muslims lived had no rear exit, so there was no escape route.

The army was also searching every house. Muslim men, old, young and children were coming onto the road with their hands raised. Women were on the rooftops, crying, begging the PAC to let go of their men. One top Army official has rightly demanded an inquiry.

True, the court had to let off all the accused. The killings cannot, however, be wished away. Naturally, the people are generally appalled over the acquittal of the accused PAC personnel. The families of those killed feel let down because, if only the perpetrators had been punished, they would have got some sort of justice.

By letting off the accused, without ordering a fresh probe or taking the police to task, the court may have done anything but serving the ends of justice. The case is yet another example to testify that the police do not go whole hog in pursuing an inquiry when it comes to its own force's involvement. If even after 28 years of investigation, the police have failed to produce before the court admissible evidence it is time to reassess the effectiveness of police. The cover up is obvious. I wish the court had commented on that.

Granted the law and order is a state's responsibility under the Constitution, but the central government is equally responsible for peace in the country. It was incumbent upon New Delhi to have appointed an inquiry committee from its side so that the witnesses, who are telling the media their plight, can be asked to testify before it. The larger question that the Hashimpura episode has posed is the lack of recourse when the police drag their feet and when the accusing finger is directed at the force itself.

The overall control of the Union Home Ministry has not worked effectively. State chief ministers do not care about its behests even if the same party is ruling in the state as well as at the centre. Reforms proposed by the Dharamveer Commission some 39 years ago are accumulating dust in the states which were asked to implement them. The Commission's

(Continued on Page 11)

Land Acquisition Ordinance: Government-Corporate nexus against people and democracy

Prem Singh

The Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013 (LARR Act 2013) was enacted in the parliament after incorporating suggestions from the BJP and with its due support. Sumitra Mahajan, presently the speaker of the Lok Sabha, then had headed the Parliamentary Committee, which okayed the law. The LARR Act 2013 which came into effect from January 2014 empowers land-owners, for the first time, with the right to fair compensation for acquired land along with consent right. As per the Act the provisions to pay fair compensation to the farmers and seek their prior consent were to be implemented over and above the existing 13 laws in the matter within a year's time. The LARR Act 2013 was meant to replace the Land Acquisition Act of colonial times enacted in 1894. The staggering destitution of peasants and tribals, social unrest and environmental devastation resulting from the post-1991 new economic policies had forced the UPA government to enact this law. This law mandates prior permissions of 70 percent land-owners in cases where land is acquired by the government, and prior permission of 80 percent land-owners, in cases of acquisitions by private companies. Along with this, Social Impact Assessment has also been made mandatory.

The ordinance promulgated by the present government on the last day of December 2015 adds Section 10 A to the Act which undoes the rights which the land-owners got in LARR Act 2013. As per this Section five areas - national security, defence

and defence production projects; industrial corridors projects; rural infrastructure projects; infrastructure/social infrastructure projects, mostly fall under the Public Private Partnership; and housing projects for the poor -will not require either prior consent or Social Impact Assessment. It is a matter of speculation if any areas are left out of these five! For these five areas, even fertile multi-crop cultivable land can be acquired straightaway.

The government decided to bring in this amendment to the LARR Act 2013 after the winter session was over. When the President inquired into the reasons as to the hurry regarding the matter, three ministers on the part of the government clarified their reasons and the President's authorisation was promptly obtained. Thus, whatever role the peasants and tribals had come to have in the process of the acquisition of their lands as per this law was snatched by this amendment and placed back instead into the hands of bureaucracy and corporate houses. Whatever justifications the BJP leaders are giving for this amendment, ought to have been given at the time of its enactment. Explicitly, the government has compensated for the support of the corporate houses in the Lok Sabha elections by bringing the amendment in such hasty manner.

It seems as if the corporate houses have placed their bet on Narendra Modi instead of Manmohan Singh and Sonia Gandhi because their disappointment was aggravated by

MNREGA, Land Acquisition Act, Food Security Act and the like. Manmohan Singh was an economist prime minister who followed the classicist approach towards neo-liberal reforms whereas Narendra Modi is taking blind leaps. BJP's propaganda against Manmohan Singh as a weak prime minister is misleading; but it proved to be an effective campaign in the general election. As the progenitor and facilitator of neo-liberalism in India, Manmohan Singh will be remembered as the strongest prime minister ever. He removed India's economic policy and its goal from the axis of the Constitution and installed it instead on the axis of various power stations of neo-liberalism like World Bank, IMF, WTO, World Economic Forum, various multi-national companies and so on. He believed in all wisdom that the capitalist way to growth is the only right way. From the Harshad Mehta scandal to the numerous scandals in his tenure nothing ever even brought the slightest shadow on his brow. This is because he honestly believed that the path of capitalist development has to traverse through corruption. Narendra Modi is an extension of Manmohan Singh because the same policies and practices are being carried forward by his government too.

It is inherent in the spirit of the Constitution as well as reiterated by the Supreme Court in 1987 that amendments ought to be brought only during an emergency or an extraordinary situation. It will be well to remember that the sequence of ordinances had begun in

Manmohan Singh's tenure as finance minister. The Vajpayee government swiftly carried it forward. The UPA 2 government too was a government of ordinances promulgating - at least five ordinances in a year. But the current government in its seven month tenure by bringing nine ordinances during and after the parliament session has delivered the severest blow to the parliamentary democracy till date. To say that amendments harm parliamentary democracy is - as some other critics have observed - merely a technical objection. The pertinent question is why did the previous governments or the present one resort to Ordinances? The only possible answer is that governments do so in the interest of the global bodies of corporate capitalism, multi-national companies and corporate houses in the country. Thus, it is a one-sided power play that ruins the already marginalized farmers and forest-dwellers.

In the neo-liberal times, elections have become extremely expensive. According to news reports, in the last parliamentary elections, the BJP spent twenty to twenty five thousand crores and the Congress spent about ten to fifteen thousand crores. This money comes from corporate houses. Prime ministerial candidates openly participate in the conclaves and conferences of capitalists and solicit their support saying 'make us win and we will do your bidding'. Indian democracy has, thus, been hijacked by corporate houses. The BJP government under the prime ministership of Narendra Modi, just after its formation, had made it clear that it intended to amend the 4 months old LARR Act 2013. It considers the thirty percent mandate to be a gift of corporate houses, not of the voters. In such a scenario, the interests of big business houses become of utmost importance to the government. The point is, if the

money of corporate houses is not kept out of elections, it will not be possible to keep out the ordinances promulgated in their interest.

With this ordinance the already complicated issue of water, forest and land (Jal, Jungle, Jameen) will become even more confounded. Expensive compensations against acquired lands do not ensure salvation for farmers and tribals. Most farmers have small land holdings and that is their private property. With land acquisition, they belong neither here nor there. The compensation is usually blown up in frivolous expenditures and addictions. Very few people are able to invest the compensation money judiciously for the future. Non-land-owners like dalits and craftsmen castes who depend on farming land for their livelihood did not receive any compensation amount, residential plots or jobs right from the times of the Land Acquisition Act of 1894. In such a situation, land acquisition without prior consent or any social impact assessment will invariably lead to social discontent, and might even increase naxalite violence.

The important lesson in the Land Acquisition Ordinance is that the supposedly apolitical efforts of a few good people (who wish to bring respite to farmers-tribals-labourers by working within the fold of neo-liberalism as advisors to the governments) cannot be a permanent solution. They will have to understand that the awareness and participation of the people that they talk about in their NGO endeavour means nothing without active political participation.

Most parties, including the Congress, have opposed this ordinance. Many peoples' organizations, farmers' unions and important citizens have also opposed it. The farmer cell of the BJP too has

opposed the ordinance as its affiliate trade union Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh participated in the token strike of the Coal Mines Workers Union along with other trade unions against promulgation of the Coal Ordinance. This protest is meaningful only if all these parties and organizations identify, recognize and oppose the root cause. That is, the neo-liberal economic policies and the capitalist model of development.

Along with opposition to the ordinance, some important measures must also be taken. Political parties must fight for the strengthening of the LARR Act 2013, and they must also insist on the formation of a Land Use Commission, as has been demanded by the Socialist Party (India). This commission must have comprehensive representation of farmers, tribals and non-land-owners of villages. The farmers have played an important role in the freedom movement. It has had several important leaders and thinkers including Gandhi himself. In the post-independence era, from Chaudhary Charan Singh to Mahantha Devaru Nanjundaswamy, Kishan Patnaik and Sachidanand Sinha, there have been people who have deeply deliberated upon the nature and problems of agriculture and agriculturists vis-a-vi industrialization in previously colonized countries including India. This unique legacy must become a part of the present discourse of development/progress.

There are peasant movements and leaders world over, even in the Europe, who oppose the conditions imposed by the WTO in the interest of certain multi-national companies operating in agriculture sector. Lessons can be learnt from these movements.

Making judicial appointments

Rajindar Sachar

The All India Chief Justices' Conference, being held on April 3, 2015 began in a relaxed atmosphere as a result of the Law Minister's statement that as the National Judicial Appointments Commission law is under challenge, courts can till then make appointments under the collegium system. This is a big relief because sometime earlier Press reports had suggested that the government was taking the view that the appointments would have to be under the new legislation. That would have been unfortunate considering that of the total 895 posts in the High Courts, 265 are lying vacant. Thirty-one of the 85 posts in the Punjab and Haryana High Court remain unfilled.

The situation is horrendous and seems to be frozen because even in 2010 there were 200 vacancies. Will the Chief Justices' Conference kindly issue information for the benefit of the real masters of the country ('we the people of India') as to where the real obstacle lies — in the High Courts, the Supreme Court not recommending the names, or is the government delaying the appointments? This is necessary as the Supreme Court itself says "public scrutiny is the best disinfectant." The court can put all this information on its website and update it regularly so as to enable people to find out where the fault lies.

Of course, one innovation the collegium must follow now is to publicise the names of persons being recommended for appointment. One of the grave objections raised by the Bar is the utter secrecy that is adopted

in considering the names; though in actual practice the Bar comes to know about the inside deliberations even before the minutes of judges' meetings are circulated! But that is no substitute for making the procedure formal and transparent. All that it requires is that the Chief Justices should, before appointments, circulate the candidates' names to the High Court and Supreme Court Bar Associations to invite their comments before finally sending these to the authorities concerned. In the matter of Supreme Court appointments, the information needs to be sent to all Bar Associations but in case of a High Court it may be confined to the High Court Bar Association concerned. Once that is done, suggestions of private confabulations within the collegium (a charge which I believe is an overreaction) would not be made.

Another gravely mistaken policy is the appointment of outside Chief Justices. I have never understood the logic or the rationality of this practice which is a sure recipe for weakening the inherent strength of the judiciary as represented by the Chief Justice of a High Court.

At the Chief Justices' Conference held in 2002 it was resolved that the policy of having outside Chief Justices of High Courts be discontinued. Later on, however, the Supreme Court collegium yielded to the government suggestion of outside Chief Justices which practice, I believe, is not very conducive to the efficient working of High Courts and this is a view shared by the Bar Associations.

I have never understood the logic of transferring the senior-most judge whose turn has come to head the court in which he has worked for almost 10 to 15 years and with the functioning of which and also the lower judiciary he is most familiar. To transfer him out of the state to a new court for a period of one or two years to which he is a total stranger, most likely not even knowing the names of his colleagues, is a strange concept of advancing the administration of justice.

The most adverse effect is on the lower judiciary which is appraised every year by the full court. There are hundreds of judges in each state. The full High Court is expected to jointly supervise their work and give them their assessments for the purpose of promotion. An outside Chief Justice will be totally unfamiliar with their work. How does he evaluate them? The usual course adopted is to take the advice of colleagues. He cannot get any feedback from the local lawyers because he would not be so informal with them. Is that fair to the lower judiciary? Why are we bent on creating this morass - as if the judiciary was not already under serious attack already?

No one has suggested that an I.A.S. officer, when his turn comes to be the Chief Secretary in his parent State, should be appointed from outside. Why this gratuitous insult to the local Chief Justice? At present one watches the embarrassing spectacle of a Chief Justice on transfer being sent sometime to a State whose language is not even understood by him.

Personally, I am opposed to the Chief Justices' Conference recommending any suggestions/benefits to the judiciary because I consider such an exercise self-deprecating. But I now feel that the conference must boldly take up the question of retiring age of High Court and Supreme Court judges. There has long been a demand by the public that the age of retirement should be raised to 70. There is no physical or mental weakness or less agility attributed to this age. As it is, there are a number of Tribunals to which Supreme Court judges are appointed. Their age of retirement is 68 or 70. I cannot conceive of any logical reason not to increase the retirement age of High Court or Supreme Court judges. As this will take time because it requires a Constitution amendment, let the retiring judges be continued as ad hoc judges till the vacancies are filled.

An increase in the retirement age of judges will also widen the field for selections. At present a successful lawyer in the age group of 50-55 is reluctant to accept judgeship because of early retirement. This obstacle would be removed, permitting more experienced lawyers to accept judgeship. Members of the Bar will have no objections because it would apply uniformly to all.

Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque on
Mumbai Bank

in favour of

JANATA TRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir
Bharucha Marg, Mumbai 400 007

Union Budget's Cuts in Social Spending Can State Budgets make up?

Bharat Dogra

The Union Budget for fiscal year 2015-16 introduced very high and unprecedented cuts in high social priority programmes like the ICDS, mid-day meals, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (school education), Indira Awas Yojna (rural housing) and women's welfare.

The ICDS budget has been cut from Rs. 16000 crore to Rs. 8000 crore, the mid-day meal budget from Rs. 13000 cr. to Rs. 9000 cr. while the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan budget has been reduced from 28000 crore to Rs. 22000 crore. There are reduction also in drinking water, health and family welfare.

The outlay for Women and Child Development Ministry has been reduced from Rs. 21193 crore in the previous year to Rs. 10351 crore this year. The overall allocation under gender budgeting has also gone down significantly.

The budget for the scheduled caste sub-plan was reduced from Rs. 50548 cr. (Budget estimate 2014-15) to Rs. 33638 (Revised estimate 2014-15) to Rs. 30850 cr. (Budget estimate for 2015-16). The budget for tribal sub-plan has been reduced from Rs. 32386 cr.) Budget Estimate 2014-15) to Rs. 20535 cr. (Revised Estimate) to Rs. 19979 cr. (Budget Estimate 2015-16)

These and other cuts were introduced on the assumption that increasing responsibility for these will be taken up by the state governments as they now have a significantly higher share of the

Central taxes (raised from 32% to 42%), as per the recommendation of the 14th Finance Commission.

However some crucial questions remain. Will the extra resources accruing to the state governments prove adequate to enable the state governments to make up for the entire cuts in some crucial programmes? Even assuming that they have enough extra resources. Will all the state governments have the necessary social commitment to ensure that these resources are used only for social priority programmes?

While more definite answers to these crucial questions will be available only after some time, it appears the cuts imposed by the Central government may not be made up entirely in many state budgets. Hence the net effect is likely to be that the overall budget available for several high social priority programmes will be less than the previous years.

This situation has to be seen in the context of the cuts imposed also in the last months of previous financial year 2014-15. If these are also kept in view, then the overall reduction for high priority social programmes becomes even more.

Any cuts in high social priority programmes like nutrition and housing aimed at meeting the basic needs of vulnerable sections will prove very costly in human terms. Even at a late stage, these cuts should be re-considered so that any tragic

(Continued on Page 11)

Lokayat joins Socialist Party (India)

At a press conference held in Pune on December 18, 2014, Lokayat, an activist group based in Pune, announced its decision to affiliate with the Socialist Party (India). Lokayat has sent Janata the following article explaining the reasons for its joining Socialist Party (India).

–Editor

The policies of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation implemented in the country over the last more than two decades by successive governments that have come to power at the Centre have pushed the Indian economy into a deep external and internal crisis. These policies have led to rising inflation, worsening unemployment, a huge increase in poverty and destitution, and a worsening agricultural crisis which has pushed a quarter-of-a-million farmers into committing suicide over the past decade. Taken in by the massive propaganda launched by the BJP, the people, hoping for 'better days' (*acche din*), voted the BJP to power in elections to the 16th Lok Sabha held in April-May last year. However, after coming to power, the Modi government is implementing the very same policies of capitalist globalisation, only at a much faster pace.

External crisis

The country is entrapped in a whirlpool of an ever worsening foreign debt crisis. Our external debt crossed \$450 billion in September 2014, making the country one of the most indebted countries of the world. The Indian economy has become totally dependent on foreign capital inflows, including both foreign direct investment inflows and speculative capital inflows, to stay afloat. However, with our foreign exchange reserves much less than our 'vulnerable external liabilities' (foreign capital that has come into the country that can leave the country very quickly—in end-March 2014, when our forex reserves were \$304 billion, our short-term liabilities were \$415 billion), our economy has become vulnerable to the whims of foreign investors. The claims of our country's leaders and establishment intellectuals that India is on its way to becoming an 'economic superpower' is absolute nonsense. The reality is, if foreign speculators start withdrawing their investments in India—which they can do at the tap of a computer key—this superpower will meltdown.

And so, the new 'Swadeshi' BJP government, like its predecessor UPA government, too is going all out to woo foreign investors and entice them to invest in India.

Within months of coming to power, it has opened up the defence sector and railways to foreign direct investment. It has quietly dropped its opposition to FDI in retail. It is bending over backwards to meet US objections to India's nuclear liability law, so that giant US corporations can set up nuclear power plants in India without having to worry about paying indemnities in case of design defects causing a nuclear accident—this basically means they are being encouraged to supply risky equipment, which is nothing but an invitation to disaster! The BJP has also got the Insurance Laws Amendment Bill passed by Parliament to increase FDI inflows into the insurance sector, yet another step towards eventually handing over control of India's insurance sector to foreign insurance corporations—corporations that the US government itself has called "crooks, scoundrels and fast operators". It has further loosened controls on inflows of foreign speculative capital. The more the foreign capital inflows, the more the profit outflows; which means that all these measures are only going to further worsen our external accounts situation, and push us closer to foreign exchange bankruptcy.

Internal Crisis

Internally too, the BJP government has continued with the policies of the UPA government of running the economy solely for the profit maximisation of giant foreign and Indian corporations. Throwing all democratic norms to the winds, the Modi Government amended the Land Acquisition Act through an ordinance promulgated on December 31, 2014, to facilitate acquisition of land of urban and rural poor communities for giant private sector projects. As it is, the government collects so few taxes from the rich that the country's tax-to-GDP ratio is amongst the lowest in the world; in 2014-15, Jaitley gave another Rs 5.49 lakh crore of tax concessions to the rich; and in his 2015-16 budget, he has announced a reduction in corporate taxes, a further deferral of the GAAR by two years, and several other subsidies to corporate houses such as transfer of thousands of crores of rupees of public funds to private investors in the infrastructural sector under the guise of Public-Private-Partnership. After

giving such mindboggling transfers and concessions to the rich, the Finance Minister unabashedly declared that the government's finances are constrained, and so in his budget for 2015-16, Jaitley has further cut the government's already low expenditures on education, health, welfare of scheduled castes and tribes, schemes for the welfare of women and children, even drinking water and sanitation—which Modi claims is his pet project—by as much as 20-40 percent! This, in a country where the social sector expenditures of the Government of India are already very low—just 7 percent of the GDP, as compared to 18 percent for the Latin American countries, and 30 percent for developed countries.

There is no doubt—in its economic policies, the BJP government is racing down the very same path traversed by the previous Congress-led UPA government.

Growing fascist threat

What is new at the present juncture is that while implementing this regressive economic agenda, the BJP is simultaneously implementing a very regressive fascist social agenda.

The RSS, that has now come out from behind the curtain and openly controls the BJP, and the dozens of organisations spawned by it, are pushing ahead their communal agenda with great speed. In complete transgression of the very foundation of India as a secular country, Mohan Bhagwat, the RSS Sarsanghchalak, recently stated that “Hindutva is the identity of India and it has the capacity to swallow other identities.” In Cuttack, he asserted that India is a Hindu state and “citizens of Hindustan should be known as Hindus.” Leaders of the ruling party are openly demanding that the Gita be decreed as a ‘National Book’. As if in synchrony, the government too cleverly initiated a debate on removing the words ‘Secular’ and ‘Socialist’ from the Preamble of the Indian Constitution.

Cadres of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the Bajrang Dal and scores of other sister-groups have intensified their intimidating campaigns like ‘Ghar Wapsi’ and ‘Love-Jihad’. They are brazenly attacking places of worship of religious minorities. Dalit and tribal Christians are being physically attacked and socially ostracised. Hundreds of incidents of communal violence have taken place since the new government assumed power.

Another disturbing agenda of the Sangh Parivar being blatantly promoted by the Modi government is saffronisation of education. Text books written by

Dinanath Batra, an RSS ideologue, which according to historian Romila Thapar contain “not history, but fantasy” have been introduced into the state curriculum in Gujarat; more recently, the newly elected BJP government in Haryana has appointed Batra as its advisor on education. The process of filling important research, educational and cultural institutions and committees with people associated with the Hindutva agenda has begun. The government pressurised the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) director Prof. Parvin Sinclair to resign and replaced her by Y. Sudarshan Rao, who has openly eulogised the caste system. Baldev Sharma, former editor of the RSS mouthpiece, Panchjanya, has been appointed the Chairman of the National Book Trust.

Even more serious, divisive, and promoting communal hatred are the pronouncements by BJP leaders and leaders of other wings of the RSS valorising people like Dhananjay Desai who is in jail for instigating people to murder a Muslim youth in Pune, and Nathuram Godse, the killer of Mahatma Gandhi. While the BJP is denying its involvement in the murders of Dr. Narendra Dabholkar and Comrade Govind Pansare, there is no doubt that fascist goons born out of the atmosphere of hate and intolerance created by fascist forces are responsible for their cowardly killings.

It is important to clear the air regarding another related issue here. Despite the mild admonition of the divisive agenda of the BJP by the US President Obama, the truth is, the USA and other imperialist countries actually have no problems in supporting and doing business with fundamentalist and fascist regimes. Even a cursory look at history makes this clear. Both the US and UK did not have a principled anti-fascist position in the period between the two world wars; Churchill was actually sympathetic towards Mussolini; US Presidents only belatedly discovered the danger presented by Hitler's Germany and imperial Japan; and both showed no hesitation in rehabilitating Franco and Salazar in 1945. More recently, the USA has been the main backer of the fascist dictatorships in Latin America, and not only actively supports Islamic fundamentalist regimes like Saudi Arabia, it has even promoted Islamic fundamentalism to undermine progressive regimes in the Arab countries. The US is willing to ‘accept’ the excesses of these regimes, so long as these reactionary regimes accept exercising their power within globalised neoliberalism. And so President Obama had no problems becoming the chief guest of the BJP government for India's Republic Day function earlier this year.

Unite, to fight fascism and capitalist globalisation

Neo-liberalism and fascism are twin brothers; the former creates the ground for the latter, and the latter by its rejection of the principles of democracy, makes it possible for corporate houses to continue with their accelerated profit accumulation despite the worsening economic crisis.

More than two decades of capitalist globalisation and now the rapid growth of fascist forces are threatening the very conception of India as a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic as visualised by our country's founders and enshrined in the Constitution of India. The majority of the Indian people believe in democracy and the values of the Indian Constitution; the fascists are in minority; but because the progressive forces are disunited that the fascists appear to be so strong. Lokayat strongly feels that in this time of such serious crisis, all progressive forces who share the values of the Indian Constitution must join hands to fight the twin enemies of fascism and capitalist globalisation.

Lokayat, since its very inception, has worked together with other progressive forces in several united fronts, the most recent being Satyashodhak Sanskritik Manch, Jaganyacha Hakkache Andolan and All India Forum for Right to Education. But now we feel that simply working in coalitions is not enough to face the onslaught from the fascist Right, we need to unite with other progressive groups. Furthermore, in such times of crisis, it is time to directly take political stands. In this, we find ourselves closest to the Socialist Party (India) led by the venerable Bhai Vaidya. The Socialist Party (India) has consistently opposed globalisation and communalisation, and has not made any unprincipled compromises to somehow form coalitions and win political power. Like the Socialist Party (India), Lokayat too believes in democracy and that society cannot be changed forcibly by violent means.

Therefore, Lokayat announces its decision to affiliate itself to the Socialist Party (India).

We also call upon other socialist and left organisations to seriously think over the crisis facing the country, and work towards building a strong unified progressive socialist movement to counter the growth of fascist forces in the country, and provide the people a genuinely alternative model of development.

••• ••• •••

About Lokayat

The Directive Principles of the Constitution direct the Indian State to orient its policy towards: building an egalitarian society and a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life [Article 38 (1)]; minimising inequalities in income and ensuring that there is no concentration of wealth [Articles 38 (2) and 39 (c)]; ensuring that all citizens have the right to an adequate means of livelihood [Article 39 (a)] ensuring that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity [Article 39 (f)]; regard raising the standard of living of the people, improvement of public health, making effective provision of education for all children as among the primary duties of the state [Articles 41 and 47].

Unfortunately, the major political parties that dominate the Indian Parliament have decided to abandon this vision of the founding fathers of the nation, and secede from the people of the country. Ever since they decided in 1991 to globalise the Indian economy and open it up to foreign multinationals, they have been running the economy solely for the profit maximisation of giant foreign and Indian corporations.

Giant corporations have launched a ferocious assault to dispossess the poor of their lands, forests, water and resources—in order to set up SEZs, huge infrastructural projects, golf courses, residential complexes for the rich, etc.

Public sector corporations, including banks and insurance companies, are being privatised at throwaway prices.

Indian agriculture is being deliberately strangled—so that it can be taken over by giant agribusiness corporations. The consequence: more than 2.5 lakh farmers have committed suicide since the 'reforms' began.

Tens of thousands of small businesses have downed their shutters.

Welfare services are being privatised and transformed into instruments of naked profiteering:

government hospitals and municipal schools are being privatised; medicine prices have zoomed; college fees have gone through the roof; electricity prices are

rising; bus fares are rising; the ration system designed to make available foodgrains and other essential items to the poor at affordable rates is being eliminated.

There are simply no decent jobs for the youth; probably nearly half the population is unemployed or underemployed.

The country is heading towards an ecological catastrophe; corporations are being allowed to cut down entire forests, destroy coastal lands in the name of aquaculture, over-exploit groundwater, pollute our seas—rivers—soil—groundwater—air, damage the health of not just the living but also of those yet to be born ...

These policies have produced the most obscene inequalities that are becoming worse by the day:

While on the one hand, the rich are becoming extremely rich—the wealth of India's 56 Indian billionaires now equals 10% of the country's GDP, and the wealth of India's richest 7800 people equals 50% of the country's GDP;

On the other hand, the poor are becoming even more poor. According to Government's own statistics:

75.5% of the rural and 73% of the urban population are not able to eat two full meals a day;

50% children below the age of 5 are malnourished;

42% children drop out of school without completing basic schooling;

Lakhs of children die every year due to entirely preventable diseases;

As the economic system becomes more and more sick, the social and political system is also becoming more and more degenerate. All-pervasive corruption; an educational system that makes us think we are incompetent fools; continuation of the age-old caste-based social system because of which atrocities on dalits take place almost daily, and which is exploited by politicians to make the upper caste youth believe that the reservation system is responsible for lack of jobs; a communal political system that divides people in the name of religion and fills them with hatred against each other; a value system that promotes crass selfishness and unconcern and apathy for others; a society where cynicism and moral bankruptcy permeate every nook and cranny—this is the reality of today.

The common people have not been silent spectators to this betrayal of the Indian Constitution. Like flowers spring up in every nook and corner with the onset of spring, people are coming together all over the country, getting organised, forming groups and raising their voices in protest. Though these struggles are presently small, scattered, without resources, the future lies in these magnificent struggles. As more and more people join them, they will strengthen, join hands, and become a powerful force which will transform society.

We must stop being sceptics, dream of a better future, believe that it is possible to change the world. Yes, Another World is Possible! But to make it a reality, we must start our own small struggles. These will ultimately unite, like the small rivulets hurtling down the Himalayas which ultimately form the mighty Ganges, to transform society and build a new society in

accordance with the dreams of our freedom struggle that are embedded in the Directive Principles of the Indian Constitution. And so, we have started this forum, Lokayat.

We organise a wide range of activities/programs in Pune colleges, schools, city and slums, including:

We organise seminars, talks, film screenings, songs concerts, street campaigns, street plays, poster exhibitions, rallies—dharnas and even solidarity hunger fasts, on various issues of deep concern to common people, such as: rising inflation; privatisation of essential services; destruction of the environment and livelihoods of common people in the name of development; the dangers of GM Foods; the horrifying consequences of nuclear power plants on human health and environment; the impact of Coca-Cola and Pepsi on our health and environment; the deepening crisis of global warming; Pune's transportation problems; etc.

We have also staged numerous protests on the growing atrocities on dalits, on the genocide of Muslims in Gujarat and Christians in Orissa, and against the targeting of minorities in the name of fighting terrorism.

Lokayat's women's wing, named Abhivyakti, actively campaigns and organises programs on the various aspects of gender inequality and social roots of violence against women.

Lokayat has a very active cultural wing which makes use of a wide variety of cultural forms—including songs, rock concerts, street plays, dramas, dance and traditional folk art—to reach out to people, raise their cultural consciousness,

stimulate them to question the present decadent social-cultural order and its decadent values, and motivate them to come together to act for social change.

Recently, after the coming to power of the BJP-NDA government at the Centre, and with the fascist forces launching an offensive that is threatening the very conception of India as a sovereign, socialist,

secular, democratic republic, Lokayat has decided to align with the Socialist Party (India). We strongly feel that all progressive forces who share the values of the Indian Constitution need to join hands, and so this decision.

Dear friends, if you would like to know more about us, or participate in our activities, you may contact us at any of the addresses given below:

Contact phones:

Neeraj Jain 94222 20311

Abhijit A. M. 94223 08125

Website and E-mail:

www.lokayat.org.in

lokayat.india@gmail.com

Contact address:

Lokayat, opp. Syndicate Bank, Law College Road,
Near Nal Stop, Pune – 4.

(Continued from Page 2)

main recommendation was that the states should have a supervisory body, including the leader of the opposition, to keep an eye on the appointments and transfers of officers from SHOs and above. However, the commission's sole motive was how to separate the state from politics.

State chief minister did not agree to the proposal. Today, they interfere even in the appointment of a thana (police station) in charge. They want their own loyal officers in such positions so that they could make a telephone call to them directly, as they do, to influence the investigation of cases against the men of their party or even acquaintances.

It is too farcical an argument that the system is to blame. The system cannot override the wishes of people. In a democracy, it ultimately depends on the representatives they return to the state legislatures and parliament. However, no consensus emerges even there because the institutions have become politicized.

In such a scenario, the judiciary is the only institution that still enjoys respect. If the police were put under its supervision, the force may act more independently than it is doing now. The police may find that the political interference is not there. It does amount to running

away from the problem than finding a solution. But in the prevailing political climate, there is little scope for anything working independently.

It is disconcerting that things have come to such a pass. Unfortunately, even by persisting with the status quo the system is not functioning properly. A new experiment is required. The police force under the judiciary may turn out to be a better experiment with commitment than the options we have at present.

The Shah Commission, which went into the excesses of the Emergency, came to the sad conclusion that the police had become an instrument of tyranny in the hands of rulers. The force carried out illegal orders and went out of the way to execute what the political masters wanted.

The same type of obedience is visible now that the details of the Babri masjid destruction are coming out. The police were willingly cooperating with the Kalyan Singh government which was, despite the Supreme Court's order to maintain status quo, determined to destroy the masjid. It is encouraging to see that the apex court has issued notices to the top leaders of the BJP like L.K. Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharti, to explain their involvement in the entire happening.

The BJP leaders would have to explain how far months they

recruited kar sevaks, collected funds and carried out the destruction act at Ayodhya. It is sad that even after 23 years, there is no plausible explanation how the police were effete to enforce the law and order. True, the history of the PAC is too well known as it had come to be influenced by religion and even built temples at the thanas. There was not even a word of reprimand and it was obvious that the top brass itself was contaminated. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor?

(Continued from Page 6)

consequences for weaker sections can be checked in time.

On the whole it is clear that despite the new situation created by the Finance Commission's recommendations, the Union Budget should not have made such big cuts in social priority programmes. Many exemptions given to the corporate and trading sectors could've been removed to get more resources for the poor. If the massive exemptions given on the custom duties on trade of gold and diamond had been withdrawn, then this alone would have provided the means for avoiding many cuts. By making significant efforts to raise the tax-GDP ratio and the other ways, the government could've raised extra resources to avoid any sudden and drastic cut in social priority programmes.

Relevance of Ramamanohar Lohia today

K. S. Chalam

History is always dispassionate about personalities and detached from emotional connect. It is proved time and again that individuals and personalities are mercilessly thrown into oblivion when their work and ideas are menace to the contemporary society and brought to limelight those whose sacrifices for the wellbeing of mankind are eternal though they might have been desolated during their lifetime. The relevance of the ideas and opinions of some intellectuals may be far reaching and visionary though during their lifetime those might have been found incredible by their contemporaries but that does not mean they remain lay waste forever. There is another group of evangelists whose profession is to make irrelevant ideas significant and earn a living whether they are useful or useless to common people. Religion and faith based on hypocrisy and hegemony might make a few ideas always appear in public domain but with little relevance to aid the victims of unkindness of time. We have in India some great men like Mahatma Phuley, M. N. Roy, B. R. Ambedkar, Rammanohar Lohia and others in the modern times whose ideas are found relevant whenever the society is dragged into chaos and bigotry. Lohia whose 105th birth anniversary was observed on 23rd March is an occasion to review some of his ideas along with those of one of our greatest patriots Bhagat Singh who was hanged by the imperialists on 23rd March.

There are interesting happenings in the recent past that are significant. The collapse of Soviet Union experiment, the crisis in Europe, the emergence of neoliberal

policies along with the resurrection of fundamentalism, control of caste and corporate media and the inconsequence of the poverty of Indians in public debates call for a reflection on the ideas of Lohia once again. Though some scholars have published fascinating papers and books on Lohia during the centenary year in 2010, it is an occasion not burdened with any obligations to remember him as a custom, but to really understand his relevance today.

Unlike several other Indian leaders, Lohia did not go to England for his higher studies as he abhorred the Anglo-Saxons (though Germans do come under Saxons, they never claim so). He was trained by one of the foremost economic historians of his times Sombart and his contemporaries included the famous Schumaker whose 'Small is Beautiful' derived ideas from Gandhi and Buddha. His approach to the study of Indian problems is indigenous and critically drawn from Indian philosophical thought. It is very illuminating to read his 'Marx, Gandhi and Socialism' - one of his very important contributions to Indian thought. Lohia used several examples from Indian thinkers like Shankara to illustrate his point. He was very critical about Marx being at the same time being a Marxist and used his theory of surplus value for his analysis. Lohia's major criticism against Marx was that he had used his European background for the study of Asian or Indian problems that are different. He was of the opinion that Marx's lack of knowledge about the Asian society made him to draw extreme generalizations that did not allow

him to draw meaningful conclusions and in a way made him irrelevant in the Indian context. One of the examples that he used to attribute to Marx is about the economic crisis and the appropriation of appropriators. This did not happen in the capitalist advanced countries of Europe, but only occurred in Asia and Russia. In fact this criticism is taken by some of his followers to an unconstrained extent to denounce Marxism. Lohia's criticism about Soviet Union of Stalin era did not last long. It is here I think we need to revise some of our reflections on Lohia to make him relevant.

The critics and admirers of Lohia should not hesitate to recognize that the limitations of Marx and Soviet model and even China do not exist anymore to extend the logic. If we do not realize this fact we would be fighting only with a shadow. Similarly the Marxists who were critical about Lohia's approach to Communism may consider the changed circumstances in the world and the relevance of Socialist programme advocated by Lohia and the need for a reassessment of his ideas to bring all the progressive forces on one platform to fight capitalism and its Siamese twin fundamentalism. The frequently cited metaphor of Marxism by most of our Indian activists and intellectuals is about the base and super structure. It is gone to such an extent that some of the materialist interpretations of history have rejected the blatant reality of caste and hoodwinked intellectuals like Ambedkar and Lohia as those who squandered time and resources on a super structure issue that will blow off once economic emancipation

of the poor is achieved. We know now what has really happened to that interpretation today. That is why some critiques attribute this wrong or injudicious interpretation as mischief played by those who really belong to the other camp but tactically worked with the left to give vigor to the fundamentalists. It may not be precisely the matter of fact of the criticism, but some of the interpretations and marginalization of Lohia and his ideas by the mainstream left have caused great damage to the foundation of democracy, secularism and socialism in India. We have seen four decades of left active participation in the parliamentary form of democracy and their demands, activities, implementation of policies, etc that are in no way different from what Lohia advocated. Then where is the point of departure? It may be in the analysis and interpretation of Marxism. Now the objective and subjective conditions and the assumptions about India have changed. It seems both the left and the socialist groups have lost precious time and energy in coming to terms to mitigate the miserable conditions of the poor and the socially deprived. Is it because of the lack of realization of this phenomenon, the space kept open ended is now occupied by the opportunistic and hegemonic compradors?

Lohia has spelt out his socialist agenda in terms of 6 programmes as 1 maximum attainable equality, 2 social ownership, 3 small and indigenous technology, 4 four pillars of state, 5 decetralisation of industry, and 6 world parliament and government. These goals perhaps Lohia thought could be achieved through his seven point revolution or 'sapta kranti'. They are; equality between men and women, shun colour discrimination, annihilation

of caste and status based on birth, revolution against colonialism, revolution against private capital, revolution against armaments and creation of world parliament. Unfortunately very few left thinkers seem to have taken these ideas very seriously and never interrogated them. However, his ardent followers are also to an extent responsible for this apathy who failed to raise these issues for public debate at all India level. The followers of Lohia were confined to Hindi belt and a few pockets of social groups, though they were supported by the bahujan majority (may be due to the Lohia legacy).

Some of the intellectual contributions of Lohia are found to be still valid after the emergence of North Atlantic hegemony which Lohia detested during his lifetime. Let us look at three of his important ideas like capitalism and Imperialism, limited personality of Rama and capitalist production relations. Lohia unlike the Indian Marxists was one with the Latin American scholars who have developed ideas as to how imperialist centre of USA was responsible for underdevelopment of the periphery. Lohia has questioned Marx's formulation that imperialism comes in at the final stage of capitalist expansion. He did not agree with it and said that British imperialism was responsible for the development of British capitalism and both are interrelated. He was perhaps anticipating the Latin American scholars like Wallerstein, Gunder Frank, Cardoso, Arrighi, etc when he said that the exploitation was like the village being exploited by the town. Though Lenin has elaborated on Imperialism as a continuation of Marxist analysis, interestingly both M N Roy and Lohia gave a different analysis to this as far as India is concerned. This needs to

be further studied to make Lohia relevant today.

The greatest price the Marxists and the so-called materialists of India have paid for disregarding the potential of Hinduism to derail the agenda of socialists can be seen in terms of tolerating it. It was Lohia who has taken the Hindu ethos to task by questioning the limited personality of Rama and making him as their ideal. Lohia being a critique might have in the process prickled Gandhi's Ramarajya? The Indian intellectual class due to their control over media and public discourse has never allowed any indigenous thinker to come to limelight who questioned their social hegemony. They have been doing it from time immemorial and we could see it in the case of Phuley, Ambedkar, Periyar, Lohia and several others during the last century. We are witnessing the same in the contemporary period as well with the support of technology and at the same time diabolically even questioning its credence?

One of the important contributions of Lohia in the area of mode of production debate is his criticism of Marxist overemphasis on the destruction of production relations rather than the productive forces. It is seen that the collapse of Soviet Union could be related to the continuation of productive forces that became necropolis of socialist regime and the development of bourgeois class who diverted social surplus to USA and Western Europe and ultimately pulled down the system. It is to be examined to what extent Lohia was right in this prophecy.

The recent debate in the Parliament about color and gender discrimination and targeting Sharad Yadav a Lohiate seem to have been

India, ASEAN and the Dynamics of Southeast Asian Security

Jayabrata Sarkar

distorted in the media. But the fact of the matter is that Lohia spoke about the beauty of black people and explained the splendor of the personality of Draupadi. He was right in saying had the African blacks rather than the British whites were our colonial masters, black color could have taken the place of white in our public discourse. You can see this now in our electronic media and the ad industry with which our self styled protectors of Indian culture are comfortable eulogizing white and European color and blondness. This reminds that their primordial relations with Anglo-Saxon and Aryan link being displayed in their subjugation to white power but glossed over by their caste media. In order to hoodwink some of these ideas they bring a pet black cat from the opposition camp.

Lohia was one of the ardent supporters of democratic decentralization and power to the victims of caste system. Perhaps it was in this context he has encouraged the lower castes in the positions of party and power politics to provide adequate representation to the real proletariat. Unlike the Marxists who proclaim the nonexistence of caste and the presence of class in India, Lohia being an indigenous thinker correctly strategized his political move to bring equity and equanimity (*samta* and *samtvam*) in a caste ridden Hindu society. In this process Lohia is far ahead of his caste man and mentor Gandhi and also Marxists. Sadly both the groups are now considered as irrelevant and there is wide spectrum of scope thrown open for building a united struggle to make India a democratic socialist and secular country with all the left and democratic forces coming together. The life and mission of Lohia would definitely enrich all of us in this direction.

India, an overpopulated and poor nation, after independence, viewed itself as the hegemon in the South Asian region and as a leader with the Non-Aligned Movement. It hardly mattered on the wider world stage that was gripped by an intense Cold War rivalry between the East and the West.

Indian foreign policy in the first four decades evolved as a dual pattern encompassing a global as well as a regional role. The two roles were run on a very different basis as relations with India's neighbours were conducted on a much more realistic policy course as opposed to the moralistic international policy. Nehru's global vision, more popularly known as 'Third World-ism' was based on moral supremacy and leadership of the developing world as well as economic self-sufficiency at home. These moral principles bordering on idealism focussed on superpower domination and anti-imperialism and remained the *raison detre* of successive government's political position till the late 1980s.

In the aftermath of the Cold War India's foreign policy formulation began to alter and then experience significant conceptual shifts in the mid-1990s. The backdrop to the changes was the economic reforms which started in 1991. India opened its large insulated captive market to the world for investment for economic growth side-lining the decades old concept of self-sufficiency based on a predominant

public sector driven development model. The opening of the Indian economy meant that foreign relations began to represent an economic dimension and trade became a major foreign policy tool.

By the late 1990s India's economic interests began to focus on Southeast Asia and the 'Look East Policy' was initiated as part of India's re-assessment of its role in the wider region. For the first time India was looking at Southeast Asia as a neighbour and as a market for investment and trade. Closer cooperation with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), founded in 1967, whose offer of membership India had refused due to its anti-American worldview, was now seen as a new priority area of India's East Asian policy. It assumed momentum in the backdrop of frosty relationships with neighbouring countries and realization that South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was not going to be a huge success in terms of multilateral trade.

India became ASEAN's 'sectoral partner' in 1992 and a full-fledged member in July 1996. At the second ASEAN-India summit in Bali in October 2000 the two signed an agreement to establish a Free Trade Area. Further, the presence of India at the East Asian Summit in December 2005 and its inclusion in the East Asia Community testify to the growing synergy and a future beckoning a greater integration in the region. ASEAN has certainly

taken note of the fact that it is in their best interest to include India in a regional framework and thereby capitalize on its emerging strength as a large economic power with an equal measure of economic potential and ample opportunities for 'economies in the region' for years to come.

Post-9/11 India and ASEAN have begun to evolve a structure of regional peace and security in the region. While terrorism remains a global threat, Southeast Asia, in addition, faces the reality of the rise in China power that is seeking to alter the balance of power in Asia in the backdrop of the declining presence of USA from strategic locations in the region. One of the considerations ASEAN has taken into account while according bigger status to India is definitely the issue of China's rising profile and especially its naval incursions into South China Sea, a waterway through which world's one-third shipping transit passes through and considered to hold huge oil and gas reserves beneath its seabed. China historically claims it as its own casting aside protracted maritime disputes it has with Phillipines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan over the sea. Certain news reports suggest that China is building a 'South China Sea island' big enough for military installations. The Southeast Asian countries deem it appropriate to guard against pervasive Chinese influence and have been making efforts to set up vital sea-lanes of communications through the Taiwan, Malacca, Sunda and Lambhok straits. ASEAN countries justifiably perceive India, with the largest naval forces in the Indian Ocean and sufficient nuclear capabilities, a strategic partner to balance China's growing power

in the region. From an ASEAN perspective Indian presence in Southeast Asia would provide them with additional 'hedging options' as many 'members' want to see 'all major powers playing a role in their region so that it is not dominated by one or two players, particularly China', says Ian Storey, Senior Fellow of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.

India observes the emerging security scenario within the context of the Indian Ocean Region, a theatre of intense rivalry of contending powers, home to two billion people, which serves as a global energy highway with nearly 50% of world's container traffic and 70% of world's petroleum products travelling through its waters. With the imperative of geo-economics over geopolitics and the shift in balance of power from Atlantic to the Indo-Pacific, with a strong Chinese presence in the region, India has publicly avoided being drawn into endorsing a 'safeguarding military option' for the Southeast region.

India has vital economic interests to defend in the region. The ASEAN-India Plan of Action to implement the ASEAN India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity (2010-2015) has targeted USD 100 billion by 2015 for ASEAN-India trade. On matters of security and its positive impact on increasing trade relations with ASEAN India has on its part has shown its willingness to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia and its endorsement of the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone to indicate its peaceful intent casting aside any apprehension that ASEAN member states might have to possible Indian 'military

designs'. At a broader level India has sought to engage ASEAN members in the process of multiple levels of dialogue spanning defence and counter-terrorism seeking to evolve new multiple security structures and institutions in the region. Taking forward the Indo-Pacific regional concept forward ASEAN and India should be more active in pursuing a greater 'strategic certainty' by galvanizing multilateral organizations such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, East Asian Summit, ASEAN Regional Forum and various "ASEAN Plus" grouping alongwith moves to rejuvenate the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation. It could then address specific regional issues including energy security and face multifaceted security risks, including those from non-traditional sources ranging from maritime piracy to arms smuggling, illicit drug trafficking, human trafficking, cyber-crime and threats from both state and non-state sponsored terrorism.

**Acharya Javadekar
A Satyagrahi Socialist**



G. P Pradhan

Price: Rs. 20/-

Janata Trust

*D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir
Bharucha Marg, Grant Road (W),
Mumbai 400 007.*



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 14001–2004 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

janata

Vol. 70 No. 11
April 12, 2015

A heart-warming story

S. Viswam

Children of democracy
Kuldip Nayar

Modi's jibe at judiciary
Rajindar Sachar

**AAP, civil society,
dissent and politics**
Neerja Chowdhury

Defending Gandhian ideology
Qurban Ali

**Withdraw
higher education
from WTO**

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Operation Rahat is appropriately named. India's rescue operations in strife-torn Yemen have fully vindicated the title which roughly translated means succor or asylum. The world has been impressed by what was to be later described by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "seamless operation" of helping people in distress "which is India's ethos". Thousands of Indians have been rescued and brought to safety and eventually to their homes. This is not as noteworthy as the fact that as many as 28 nations have asked India for assistance in rescuing their nationals caught in the "war" zone.

In response India has evacuated 232 (this number has risen in the few days past) nationals of 25 countries including the US and some of the major European powers. Consistent with the policy of forgetting differences at a time of crisis, Pakistan sent 11 Indians back to India by a special plane. These Indians were taken out of Al Mukallah by Pakistan Navy along with 171 Pakistanis. India has also helped in evacuating Pakistani nationals from the Yemeni port of Al Hodeidah last week. At last count, the total number of Indians evacuated from war-ravaged Yemen

touched the 4000 mark. Seven hundred of these were among others lifted off in air sorties of C-17 Globemasters clocking more than 150 flying hours. The Indian Navy made its own significant contribution to the rescue efforts when its three ships Mumbai, Sumitra and Tarkash saved hundreds of lives. Thus, the two major arms of the Indian armed forces successfully carried out an operation that rose to the challenge of the hour, the unexpected crisis in Yemen. They demonstrated how they coped with the crisis and emerged with laurels.

Give the credit where it belongs. Operation Rahat was headed by the Minister for External Affairs Sushma Swaraj, her number two Gen. V. K. Singh and those involved were the Indian Navy, the Indian Air Force, Air India, Indian Shipping, Railways, and state governments. All worked in close co-operation, and this is what the Prime Minister referred to as seamless operation and cooperation in his praise. Operation Rahat brought out the best in the personnel manning their respective charges. No wonder, other nations were impressed enough to ask for our assistance.

Between the lines

Children of democracy

Kuldip Nayar

This is only one aspect of the Indian endeavour to save our citizens caught off guard in a crisis. In past crises in the Middle East, Indian nationals have managed to find safety since Indians have not always been under attack as India is seen as a neutral country in this region. Even so, the fact remains that there are nearly six million Indians employed in West Asia. Most of them are unskilled. Secondly, it is not always possible for the majority of these Indians to leave at a moment's notice. In most cases, the local employer takes away their passports and visas, and in some cases, their wages also. Thirdly, most Indians do not want to return to India leaving their jobs unprotected. Whether in West Asia, or other countries of the region and the SAARC area, Indians often are forced to work in what can best be described as inhospitable working and living conditions. This is partly due to the fact that it is mostly the unskilled labourers that are forced to take up such jobs as come their way. Economics is the major factor influencing their conduct. Indian workers choose to stay on and face danger to their lives rather than return to India and face unemployment and worse. These workers are often at the mercy of touts back home and also in their places of work who ensure some kind of an invulnerability in protecting their jobs. Cases have been reported in the media in which the workers have to part with a great deal of cash - a substantial part of their wages - to buy the touts' cooperation.

We began by lauding Operation Rahat. However, occasions which necessitate the institution of such schemes comes once in a while. But

(Continued on Page 12)

Religious sensitivity has deepened since the advent of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's regime. Even though he has underlined the principle of sarva dharma samabhava, parochialism has shown its ugly face in one field or the other. The judiciary is the only institution that has been above the taint. Nonetheless, the outburst of Supreme Court judge Kurian Joseph shows the pent up feelings of a justice belonging to the minority community.

There can be no exception to what he has said: "Our religious and cultural festivals and hues, irrespective of caste and creed, have contributed to the vibrancy of our rich pluralistic culture and ethos. The whole world jealously looks at the beauty of the secular image, communal harmony and cultural integrity of our great nation. India must in these trying times, safeguard her credentials and be a model that other nations must follow."

However, I think that he overreacted to the scheduling of annual chief justices' conference on Good Friday. Chief Justice of India H.L. Dattu honestly believed that the working of the court would be disturbed because of stretched holidays. He, therefore, decided to utilize the large weekend, which included Good Friday, to hold the conference of justices of state high court chief justices. Where he went wrong was that he did not fathom the sensitivity of Christian judges or the community.

This is not the first time that such a conference has been held on Good Friday. But those days the feeling of discrimination was not harboured by members of the minorities. Now the blatant expression of Hindutva ideology, which the BJP represents and implements, has changed the climate of pluralism that the nation has inhaled since independence.

True, the country has given the BJP an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha. This does reflect a change in the thinking of the people, who have been voting for a secular plank until a few years ago. However, it must be remembered that the basic structure of the Constitution, defined by the Supreme Court, cannot be changed. One part of that structure is secularism that animates the Constitution.

What must be disconcerting for the judiciary is the relentless effort by the extremists to change the very basics of our nationhood. The new terminology like ghar wapsi (reconversion to Hinduism) has been coined to the detriment of pluralism. The Gita has been introduced in the curriculum of Haryana schools.

Churches have been attacked in Delhi, Navi Mumbai and Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh. There is a ban on beef in Haryana and Maharashtra. After a lot of cajoling, Prime Minister Modi deprecated the attack on the Churches. Yet the general perception is that he is not against the soft Hindutva that is spreading in the country.

Modi's jibe at judiciary

Rajindar Sachar

The BJP-run states are worse because they are not on the national radar and evoke a limited attention. In any case, they are already islands of Hindu chauvinism. The fear among the minorities is, therefore, understandable. I have heard several Muslims saying that they are afraid of their jaan aur maal (life and wealth).

The RSS leaders are sitting pretty. Even the liberals in the BJP are mum. They may want the domination of Hindutva ideology. But it is difficult to imagine that they could be in favour of a second class status for Muslims, a flagrant violation of the Constitution which enunciates equality before the law and underlines the principle of one man, one vote.

It is incumbent on the Modi government, which represents the majority that the institutions remain without the taint of communalism. Particularly, the judiciary cannot afford to have a finger pointed towards it. The allegation by the Prime Minister that the 'five-star activists' are driving the courts has only aggravated the situation.

The Chief Justice of India has rightly contradicted the statement, adding that the judiciary and parliament are like 'siblings' and must work together "towards a truly and effective administration of justice." Both the judiciary and parliament are children of democracy. They have to work hand in hand for a just and egalitarian society. One has to correct the other whenever one of them goes wrong.

Still the impression that the activists influence the court's judgment has to be removed. The National Judicial Appointments Commission is expected to replace the collegiums system of appointing judges, giving a greater say to the

Prime Minister Modi's gratuitous comment about the judiciary being influenced by five-star activists was a cheap joke which brought down the prestige of the biggest political office of the country. And he made these observations at the Chief Justices' conference, which was also attended by chief ministers. The diatribe against the judiciary was uncalled for, and dangerous if allowed to be followed by chief ministers.

The remark shows ignorance of the kernel philosophy of a democratic country like ours where three wings - the executive, the legislature and the judiciary - have an equal role within our Constitution, but still inevitably cannot help breathing down on each other's neck. Statesmanship and sobriety require a mature response from all. Unfortunately, Modi, a former Chief Minister, has not been able to find his feet of working in the broad contours of India's Constitution and that alone could be the excuse put forth by his apologists. Thankfully, the Chief Justice of India issued a dignified response that "Indian judges remain as fearless as they ever were".

In spite of the executive's unhappiness, the judiciary right from the beginning has not shirked from its path as explained by Chief Justice Patanjali Sastri (1951) thus: "We think it right to point out, what is sometimes overlooked, that our Constitution contains an express provision for a judicial review of legislation as to its conformity with the Constitution. If then, the courts in this country face up to such important and none too easy task, it is not out of any desire to tilt at legislative authority in a

crusader's spirit, but in discharge of a duty plainly laid upon them by the Constitution".

The criticism of judicial activism as such is, therefore, untenable. Courts have for long been judicially active in giving relief in social action litigation to labour, to victims of custodial violence, to victims of excesses committed by the executive. But as previously judicial targets were comparatively junior officials and certainly never involving politicians, the issue of judicial activism was not raised by politicians. This charge of alleged interference by courts has only now been made because the fire of judicial activism is coming nearer home to the high officials and politicians who had hypnotised themselves into believing that they were above the law.

The Prime Minister has, in spite of strong T.V. and public criticism, chosen to keep silent about five-star social activists from whom he alleges the judiciary is said to be threatened. Let me then share a few facts. The Supreme Court has passed various orders to uphold the human rights of people, especially of the deprived sections, at the instance of the People's Union of Civil Liberties, a human rights organisation set up in the dark period of the Emergency (1976) by Jayaprakash Narayan, the Socialist leader. The PUCL's constitution forbids foreign donations. Its funds are raised locally. It challenged and got some relief from draconian laws enacted in the name of fighting terrorism like TADA, POTA and the Unlawful Activities Act both by the Congress and BJP governments.

(Continued on Page 4)

It was at the instance of the PUCL that the Supreme Court directed the candidates to disclose information about their financial status and criminal cases pending against them at the time of filing nominations for an election. Such was the effrontery of all political parties, including the Congress, the BJP and even the Left, that they unanimously passed a law specifying that, notwithstanding the Supreme Court verdict, the Election Commission would not follow that judgment. The PUCL had to move the Supreme Court second time to have this resolution of Parliament nullified and it is only then that the present system came to be followed.

Again, it was at the instance of the PUCL that the government was prohibited from telephone tapping at the executive's pleasure and Parliament was forced to pass legislation.

The right to reject a candidate at the time of an election, though recommended by the Election Commission, was withheld by both the Congress and NDA governments for over a decade till a directive was issued to the Central government on a writ petition filed by the PUCL. Directions to the government to supply food to the starving people of Orissa and poor people have been issued at the instance of the PUCL.

The bar on MPs and MLAs to continue as members of their respective legislature after their conviction was the result of a petition by a citizens' group. So was the exposure of illegal allotments of Spectrum and coal blocks that were later set aside by the Supreme Court.

It is not necessary for me to go into details to recapitulate where, but for a judicial intervention, many of the urgent public matters would have remained in limbo. Thus the Supreme Court's declarations in gender harassment cases led to the framing of legislation. Similarly

but for the Supreme Court the independent status of the Central Vigilance Commission would not have been established. Nor would police reforms have been put on the anvil so as to hold the police accountable for custodial illegalities, notwithstanding that police commissions recommending police reforms in their reports submitted over decades back. This was all at the instance of civic-conscious citizen groups.

I am willing to concede that courts are now showing more activism than before. But this is a consequence of misfeasance of politicians. It will be a pity if ever a climate was created against the exercise of judicial activism because such an eventuality may lead to the loss of faith in the law as an instrument of social change and justice - an alternative course cannot be viewed in equanimity even by Modi loyalists because people, if denied justice through courts, would inevitably be driven to march through the streets.

Yes, I concede there have been decisions made at the instance of five-star personnel - but they are not at the instance of courts - they are the result of a direct link-up between the Modi government and the big corporate sector. The decision not to appeal in the Vodafone case resulted in the loss of Rs 8,000 crore to the government. The Modi government pressured the State Bank of India to guarantee loans to the extent Rs 6,000 crore to an industrial house close to the present political power for utilising funds to extract coal from Australian mines - ironical when our coal mines are remaining idle because the government says it is short of funds.

No, Mr Prime Minister, this cheap joke directed at the judiciary was totally uncalled for - more especially when you ignored such a wide, ever-expanding mole in the Central Government's own eye.

(Continued from Page 3)

executive in the process. Yet there was a time when the executive had its say. But it was found that the government's interference in appointments and transfers of judges was politically motivated. And hence the matter was left to the judges themselves.

Still, both the collegiums and the executive have failed to ensure impartiality in appointments. Therefore, the Law Commission should seriously consider how to insulate the judiciary against any influence and constitute some mechanism to take into consideration what the executive says. This way the sensitivity of both the judiciary and the executive which represents the people are taken care of.

For example, the Right to Information (RTI) has proved to be useful to know the reason behind a particular decision. This has helped to bring in transparency in the official decisions. It has deepened democracy. The government may feel embarrassed over the disclosure of the truth. But there can be no compromise with the demands of an open society.

To that extent, the Prime Minister's statement comes in the way of scrutiny. This cannot be the purpose of his warning against the activists. He should realize that they are doing their job. Many scams would not have seen the light of the day if they had not questioned the official decisions.

The Modi government has to ensure that the executive does not in any way interfere in the working of the judiciary. At the same time, the judiciary has to be sensitive enough to the executive's right to frame policies from time to time. Ultimately, both have to adhere to the limits of boundary delineated by the constitution.

Note book

For Modi, the slide has started

The meeting of BJP's National Executive does not seem to have excited the press. What was noticed predominantly was the silencing of Shri Advani, whether he was silenced by the PM-Shah duo or he himself chose to do it has become a matter of speculation, but both ways it did not enhance the image of the BJP. And the decision to go round the country to make farmers accept that the amendments to the 2013 Land law is in their interest, was to help them, was dismissed by the Press as something that the BJP very well had to do. The Press and their owners want the land delivered and not a promise of an all India campaign. They have been waiting long enough and their patience is getting exhausted. Did not a spokesperson of the India Incorporated tell us – the people and the government - that nothing has changed? : *We made you, gave you your position, now very well deliver; that's its message.*

One truth that the BJP should underline is that once the slide starts in Indian politics the curve is unidirectional for a long time. The corporate sector now knows that the Modi-Shah duo has lost that charisma which gave it famous victory in the Lok Sabha elections and its capacity to get things done for their benefit has taken a beating. The slide started, not in Delhi, but in Maharashtra. The well calculated experiment to humble its long time partner did not succeed as expected by the BJP. The party did emerge as a single largest party, and though it formed the government with the help of the unsought generosity of a rival party, it had to negotiate peace with its former ally. While it succeeded, the damage had been done. The ally felt humbled and it's not willing to accept this development. It is not in

the mood still to relent. And the way the big brother behaved has hurt the Marathi pride. People in the state realize that what is happening in the new government is a replay of the earlier Congress-led coalition government where both parties were looking for opportunities to humiliate the other rather than run the state. And the BJP's gamble with J&K too did not succeed either, it had to form a government with its polar opposition and was forced to do what Vajpayee-Advani led NDA had done with some grace. But the hardliners have not been amused and the supporters have realized that the duo cannot perform miracles.

To add to the woes of the duo is the realization by the RSS and its several wings that, as with the earlier BJP-led government, the time had come to tame the government. The not so hidden Hindutva agenda was unleashed. There was a daily dose of pro-Hindutva statements by one celebrity or the other, and these did not go well with the press and the corporates, and in the process the opposition got a reason to come together. If what the RSS allowed its hardliners to do was testing of water, it boomeranged and, if it was to warn the public as to what to expect, it went home. But the Indian soul formed by the freedom movement and as crystallized in the Constitution, woke up and rebelled. Something unexpected is happening. Those who had decried the Constitution-making because it was being framed by a truncated mandate, started defending it and the Marxists, who never tired of denouncing Mahatma, have started praising the latter's glorious role.

The BJP has to realise – specially the duo - which stormed in the Lok Sabha elections by annexing a large state through the use of Gujarat

formula, that India is not Gujarat, that the formula will not work much outside Gujarat and to retain power it will have to deal with not just the Dalits, but also the minorities and appropriating Gandhiji or other icons of the freedom movement the way it was doing was not enough. People who venerate 'tyag' and envy 'bhog' are difficult to please. India has not graduated as yet to accept the formula 'to be rich is glorious'. It still believes that 'to renounce is the way to be happy'. No wonder then that Ambani's magnificent home does not impress people, it attracts ridicule and raises questions in most minds as to how many schools could have been built, how many people could have been fed in the amount which had gone into building that home. And the thousand dollar or million rupee sartorial experiment of the PM appeared vulgar, obscene.

No, Shriman Modi, the slide has started; the delivering of land will please your preferred sector, but the voters will turn their backs. And for all you know the moves to please the corporate sector, will make the RSS think of taming you, and pleasing the latter, displeases the former. In the process, the Congress is getting a chance to emerge pro-farmer, and the Janata Parivar, a reason to unite. No wonder the PM was so rattled in the aftermath of the national executive meeting that he allowed himself to rub the judges in the wrong and using the five-star activists to do so gave a chance to the activists to retort powerfully.

The road to east - Bihar, UP, - for the present seems blocked. It will get unblocked only if the Parivar falters, if the Congress wastes the opportunity it has got, or the anti-land agitation loses steam.

AAP, civil society, dissent and politics

Neerja Chowdhury

The recent split in the Aam Admi Party (AAP) stunned many around the country, coming as it did immediately after its unprecedented and historic win in Delhi. The disappointment was all the more because the fledgling party had defeated both the mainstream parties, the 130-year old Congress and the 35-year old BJP, and halted the Modi juggernaut on a victory run in the Lok Sabha and assembly polls in its tracks.

The rise of AAP represented a watershed in the country's polity. After a long period, here was a party which had emerged out of the womb of a civil society movement against corruption and for a cleaner and a more accountable politics.

Here was a party, which was "national" in its outlook, though its area of operation was Delhi. What is more, in a caste and community ridden politics, its appeal cut across caste, class, community, and AAP succeeded in reaching out to the bastis as well as to the high rise buildings in the city state, winning as many as 67 out of 70 seats in February 2015.

This was no mean achievement for a party which had started out on an anti-corruption plank, normally considered a middle class issue. VP Singh, who, had in 1989 taken on Rajiv Gandhi on corruption went on to defeat him despite the whopping majority the Congress had at the time in the Lok Sabha - 415 seats. VP had remarked once that victory had become possible only when Rajiv

announced "shilanyas" in Ayodhya, antagonising the minorities. For, politicians know well that middle class following by itself does not add up to an electoral win in a country like India - though one must add that Delhi is an urban melting pot.

AAP's rise also marked a break from the past in other ways. There was a time not so long ago when activists, respected by people they had worked with and for, would not be accepted as politicians.

The Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini, a group initiated by Jayaprakash Narayan in the 1970s, had mobilized landless Musahars, at the bottom rung of the dalit community, to fight for their right to land in Gaya district of Bihar and they succeeded in getting pattas, and that too in the names of their womenfolk. But when a Vahini worker stood for elections from Gaya, an area which was its "karmabhoomi", he lost. Among other reasons, it was just that people did not see activists in a "political" role. Many did not believe that voluntary workers, dedicated as they were, could become successful politicians.

The same has been true of professionals who stood for elections from time to time, hoping to cleanse public life. They too mostly came a cropper.

AAP changed all that. Civil society activists, professionals, lawyers, journalists, civil servants, academics and those from the

corporate world came together to form the new party in 2012. It caught the imagination of the people of Delhi. In its first election in December, 2013, AAP fell short of a majority, but when elections were held after a year of Governor's rule, people gave it a runaway mandate to make sure that it would be able to form a government on its own, and not be at the mercy of other parties.

It is not as if there have not been other instances of political parties emerging out of a movement, but they were different from AAP. The Janata Party in 1977, formed in the wake of the "JP movement", was more a merger of the then existing parties in the opposition - which had battled the authoritarianism of the 1975-77 Emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi. The youth, at the heart of the movement led by Jayaprakash Narayan for a "total revolution", found little place in this new party which came to power in 1977, decimating the Congress all over North India and defeating Indira Gandhi herself in her fiefdom. "JP", who hoped that the Janata experiment would break new grounds was a broken man at the end of his life. He himself had to "swallow the bitter pill", as he put it, when his request for 40 tickets to be given to movement activists in the Bihar state elections was turned down.

The Asom Gana Parishad emerged out of the student movement against foreign nationals who infiltrated into Assam from Bangladesh. After six years of demanding their

deportation, these student leaders, decided to form a political party in 1985. The AGP first came to power in Assam that year and then again in 1996. But unlike AAP, it was an Assam party, with sub-nationalism as its focus, playing on the regional aspirations of the Assamese.

There is nothing unusual about parties splitting, but what makes the AAP different is the speed with which it is breaking up.

The Indian National Congress, which was a byproduct of the freedom movement and also shaped it, split many times—in 1907 (between the “naram and the “garam” dals), in 1939, 1948, 1951, 1959, 1967, when Subhash Chandra Bose, the socialists, Acharya Kripalani, Minoo Masani and those who fashioned the Swatantra Party, and Chaudhary Charan Singh quit (in that order). With the advent of Indira Gandhi and her struggle for control of the Congress, the party split in 1969, and then again in 1978. A group of Congress leaders quit the party in 1977, as also in 1989, led by Jagjivan Ram and VP Singh respectively, and joined hands with the opposition forces to replace the Congress at the Centre. And in the late nineties, Sharad Pawar quit the Congress to launch his Nationalist Congress Party and Mamata Bannerji to create the Trinamool Congress which has replaced the Congress in West Bengal.

The Socialist Party split four times, but over a period, and it is because of the Socialist leaders’ inability to work together, despite their brilliance and dedication, that they could not have the kind of impact they were expected to in post-Independent India.

The Janata government fell apart in two and half years, essentially because of the ego clashes of three of its seniormost leaders—the then PM Morarji Desai, Charan Singh and Jagjivan Ram. The AGP also broke up six years after its formation, with its two seniormost leaders, Prafulla Mahanta and Bhriгу Phukan, going their separate ways. Subsequently its different factions regrouped and opted for a merger, but it was never the same again.

The Janata Dal fragmented into many groups in 1990 and thereafter - into what came to be known as the Samajwadi Party, RJD, JD(U), SJP, JD(S), RLD - but today they are trying to refashion one formation again, to take on an ascendant BJP. The list is only illustrative.

If truth be told, splits in Indian parties, though over issues, has invariably had the subtext of personality clashes, whether it was Indira Gandhi versus the “Syndicate” or JP versus Lohia, or VP Singh versus Rajiv Gandhi or Sharad Pawar versus Sonia Gandhi, and so on. It is by now well known that splits are invariably precipitated by leaders, due to their failure to share power and take everyone along, or their ambitions, or their inflexibilities, or their inability to subsume their egos, all at the cost of the party.

The story is no different in AAP, and it connotes an all round failure of leadership in the party.

There is hardly any other instance of a party breaking two weeks after it notched up such a spectacular victory, made even more impressive by the fact that many were writing its obituary only eight months earlier, with AAP convenor Arvind Kejriwal

pulling up the party, virtually by its bootstraps, and rising Phoenix- like from the ashes.

Normally power is a glue which binds even a disparate group together. But that did not happen in AAP. Clearly AAP leaders could not navigate the differences, (though this was not the first time that the purist versus pragmatist conflict had surfaced in a party).

Though a mediating group comprising representatives from both sides tried to effect a reconciliation, and they almost succeeded - with even a draft of a statement reportedly readied, including an apology to the nation from all of them together for the open squabbling they had indulged in - things came apart when the sting operation, with Kejriwal calling the rebels names, went viral. Bhushan and Yadav called off the peace process.

The question many are asking is this: Was it really necessary for AAP to show Prashant Bhushan and Yogendra Yadav the door from AAP’s apex decision making bodies, and do it so soon after the victory?

From all accounts, many in the Kejriwal group felt that unless thrown out, the rebels would continue to “snipe”, obstructing Kejriwal at every turn. The Kejriwal loyalists mounted a crude operation against the duo at the meeting of the party’s national council, when there was little reason not to stick to democratic niceties - like giving the rebels a show cause notice and to let them have their say - particularly as Kejriwal had numbers on his side.

That the normally politically savvy Kejriwal did not do this, inviting criticism from his middle

class constituency, which had decided to give him another chance in the February 2015 election, showed that the personal hurt and distrust overshadowed political considerations. Ideological and programmatic differences can be resolved; it is more difficult to overcome distrust.

It is obvious that Arvind Kejriwal felt betrayed by his colleagues, that they should want the defeat of AAP at the height of a difficult Delhi campaign, when the 3-year old party was fighting for its very survival, on the grounds that it was the only way to teach Kejriwal a lesson and bring him to his senses. The fat was in the fire when Prashant Bhushan's father, Shanti Bhushan, a founder member of AAP, praised Kiran Bedi as a better candidate than his own party's chief ministerial candidate Kejriwal, at the height of the poll campaign, and made a case for replacing him as AAP's national convenor with Yogendra Yadav.

It was curious that the rebels made it a fight to the finish, so soon after the Delhi victory. The "five principles" they espoused could have been debated a little later, when the Delhi government had consolidated its position.

It was as if Arvind Kejriwal's emergence as a mass leader could not be digested by some in the party and they felt they had to settle issues that had been festering over months, then and there, before the victory made "AK" even more powerful. Before the celebratory notes had died out, the sound of pot shots had taken over, culminating in a bitter parting of ways, ending on a "tu tu main main" note - a process further embittered by sting operations.

Just as the use of the new media and the latest technology helped AAP gain followers, the sting operations against each other - scary because these kind of things happen in police states and not in open societies like ours - became the AAP's undoing.

In turn, Prashant Bhushan and Yogendra Yadav charged Kejriwal of "cutting corners", being autocratic in decision making, promoting a high command culture, and moving the party away from the path of alternative politics they had come into AAP to fashion.

AAP's recent functioning has raised questions on the issue of dissent, so desirable in any political organization so as to ensure its health and vibrancy. But it has also raised questions on when dissent becomes indiscipline in a political outfit.

The top AAP leaders were so blinded by their sense of being let down and betrayed by each other, that they forgot they had powerful opponents, who would only be too happy to exacerbate the divisive processes which had been triggered off by them in the party.

A senior Congress leader had once remarked, "When differences crop up, the NGO type groups tend to wilt quickly. Politicians are that much better at recognizing the writing on the wall, at running a marathon, at hanging out there, when the going is rough, not letting go of the larger picture". That "larger picture" may be a desire for personal gain, or power, or furtherance of an issue which brought them into the fold in the first place.

Since those participating in movements for change sometimes get involved at a personal cost,

they are much more emotional in their responses, and have a shorter fuse. They find it more difficult to display a spirit of accommodation of each other's frailties, or a readiness to defuse tensions, and negotiate differences for the larger good. This makes the transition from a movement to a political party that much more difficult.

In AAP, both sides nurse wounds of being wronged, but when the dust has settled, people will remember not who fired the first salvo, nor the "principles" they differed on. They will only remember that AAP leaders failed to hang together, when the people of Delhi - 54 per cent of them, in other words, more than one out of every second voter - had reposed their trust in them.

And now AAP seems to be on a slippery slope. The most worrying aspect of its recent functioning is not just the removal of Bhushan and Yadav but the way all those who disagree with the dominant line are being removed one by one. That does not bode well for the party, because any popular leader also needs those who do not agree with him by his side, to keep the party on the straight path. It also goes without saying that he/she also needs a core group of loyalists to function smoothly.

The recent shakeup in the party may lead to an all round shrinkage in AAP - in terms of ideas, which colleagues will be fearful to voice lest it annoy the high command, and it could discourage the entry of new people, and thereby is plans for expansion.

Though the AAP's relevance is limited to little Delhi, at least for the time being, the ripple effects of the

latest turbulence will be felt beyond the national capital.

For all the setbacks he has suffered, Kejriwal should not be dismissed so easily, and he is bound to knuckle down to delivering on the promises he has made. In power for the next five years, he will try and regain lost ground, but for the moment his credibility and moral authority have taken a knocking.

No matter what the future trajectory of AAP, or of the new platform that Prashant Bhushan and Yogendra Yadav may forge in the weeks to come, the breakup, and more the manner in which it has taken place, has robbed the AAP experiment of its sheen which will be difficult to restore.

Most important, it has dealt a blow to the concept of “alternative politics”, and people will think many times before they lend their support to such an effort. The Delhi victory, generating enthusiasm all over the country, had raised hopes in the educated, professional, middle class Indians that they could play a role to cleanse the country’s political life - something they had shunned as “dirty” and “untouchable”.

Saddest of all, is the opportunity that has been lost. Only but rarely do moments come in the life of a nation, when a confluence of events throws up forces for change, with some given the chance to provide leadership. Kejriwal and his colleagues were given that opportunity. Will they retrieve lost ground? Only time will tell. For the moment, both sides have lost out, and so has the country.

Making clinics accountable

The Delhi government aims to make private clinics and hospitals in the city accountable by implementing the Clinical Establishments Act, a Central law under which the maximum cost of medical procedures would be laid out and services standardized.

The law, passed by Parliament in 2010 and notified two years later, provides for registration of all health facilities, clinics and pathology labs, even if it is run by a single doctor. It also stipulates the minimum requirements for facilities and manpower.

“The existing law, Delhi Nursing Home Registration Act, 1953, is outdated. It lacks the teeth to curb large scale corruption that plagues the medical sector today,” said Delhi health minister Satyender Jain, confirming the move.

As health is a state subject, it was up to individual state governments to enact the Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act. Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Sikkim have so far opted to implement the law. It’s also in force in all Union territories.

The Sheila Dikshit government had considered enacting the law but a senior health department official said it was stalled by doctors’ associations.

According to an official in the Delhi health department, there was opposition to the clinical establishments Act from the Indian Medical Association and the Delhi Medical Association.

“The Act permits health authorities to conduct inspections and penalize or cancel licences of hospitals that are found to be fleecing patients, either by prescribing needless tests and procedures, or overcharging. The owners of clinics and hospitals are obviously perturbed,” said a senior official in the directorate of health services.

He added that once enacted, the law would help in standardizing services and charges. “Today, if someone complains to us about a particular hospital charging Rs 2 lakh for a particular surgery which is being done at half the cost in other hospitals, we cannot do anything. But under the new law, government can put a cap on maximum charges for various services,” the official explained.

Dr Kameshwar Prasad, professor and head of neurology at AIIMS, said that stricter regulatory mechanism is needed to check corruption in the medical sector. “Lab tests and imaging, procedures such as angioplasty, knee replacement and caesarean section must be audited. The government should appoint monitoring committees for random checks of patient data to identify instances where needless tests or procedures have been prescribed. That would put fear in the minds of errant doctors and hospitals,” Dr Prasad said.

A recent survey carried out by TOI had revealed that most diagnostic labs in the city did not have quality equipment or adequate number of trained staff, and were operating out of congested localities.

(Continued on Page 12)

Withdraw higher education from WTO

The Government of India (GOI) has expressed its readiness to allow educational traders from all over the world i.e. 160 member-nations of World Trade Organisation (WTO) to establish colleges, universities and other technical or professional institutions in India as commercial ventures. This is done in form of submitting 'offers' to WTO. Once India's education sector comes under this regime, the people's right to education, for which the GOI must be democratically accountable, will be completely dismantled. The unbridled privatization and commercialization demanded by the WTO-GATS regime would not only deny access to the poor but also to those who may afford to purchase it in the market since even they would not get it worth the name. This is because thorough commercialisation will result in degradation of the very purpose of education, course content and pedagogical practices. Again, the academic autonomy, independent research and democratic spaces in our educational institutions will be eroded. The WTO regime considers education as a tradable service and a commodity and student a customer in clear legal terms. Once, the global commitment for market access in education comes into force, essentially speaking, the GOI would be bound to protect the interests of foreign and domestic corporate houses who pursue trade in education against the interests of the students and teachers of the country. If the people of India, particularly students and teachers, fail to bring pressure on the GOI to withdraw the 'offers' given to WTO in higher education sector immediately, our education system

will be entangled with the WTO regime forever and be doomed.

Technically speaking, the GOI has submitted its 'offers' for 'Market Access' in 'Higher Education Sub-Sector' to WTO way back in August 2005 as a part of Doha Round Trade Negotiations which started in 2001 in Doha, Qatar. However, they have not yet become 'commitments' as the trade negotiations could not be concluded for the last 10 years. But, now there is a fresh momentum in the negotiations. Plans are on to expedite the process of the ongoing trade negotiations in WTO from the forthcoming July onwards and successfully conclude them in the ensuing Tenth Ministerial Conference to be held at Nairobi, Kenya from 15th to 18th December this very year. This Conference aims at significantly widening the jurisdiction and scope of WTO. If GOI do not withdraw its 'offers' given to WTO in Higher Education Sector well in advance of the Conference, these would automatically become irrevocable 'commitments' on the part of the nation with far-reaching implications.

Momentum in trade negotiations

A special meeting of the General Council of WTO was held in November 2014 in Geneva which culminated the process of systematic suppression of the 10 year long resistance of the least developed and developing countries to the encroaching agenda of Doha Round Negotiations. It was decided to finalise a 'work programme' of the negotiations by July 2015 and further to hold the Tenth Ministerial Conference, the topmost body of WTO, as noted above, in December

2015. This would prove to be most ruinous for the least developed and developing nations and working masses of the whole world. The decisions of the Tenth Ministerial shall cover trade in goods, including agriculture and services such as education, health, drinking water, public distribution system and all other entitlements of the people. The present ongoing package of negotiations (Doha Round Trade Negotiations), as stated earlier, started in 2001. These were started in the Fourth Ministerial of WTO held in Doha, Qatar and are hence named after the host city. Being clearly predatory on the sovereignty of the nations and rights of the people, the Doha Round has conceived an elaborate scheme of extending and sharpening the claws of WTO. Anticipating the assault, fighting forces throughout the world are resolutely preparing themselves to resist the Tenth Ministerial Meet. Education-loving people cannot keep silent at this critical juncture.

Onward march of imperialism

The countries of the world are classified by WTO as 1) Developed; 2) Developing; and 3) Least Developed. Economic inequalities among countries referred to as 'developed' and 'developing' are a product of the imperialist exploitation of the latter by the former. WTO was constituted to protect the interests of the developed countries; it is detrimental to the interest of the developing world. Developing countries like India joined WTO intending to use this membership for the benefit of its corporate houses, and promising subsequent 'trickle down' benefits

for the people. The class and social inequalities (caste, ethnic, gender, disability-related, linguistic) in all countries and inequalities among nations stand aggravated due to different agreements operating under the WTO regime for the last two decades. With the proposed expansion of WTO operations at the Tenth Ministerial this process will be further intensified. Ironically, this 'Doha Round Trade Negotiations' is also called Doha Development Agenda as it has got some palliatives for the poor nations in order to woo them.

GATS-Education

Three Integrated Multilateral Agreements viz., 1) General Agreement on Trade and Tariff (GATT-1994) which includes Agreement on Agriculture; 2) Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS); and 3) General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) together constitute the main body of WTO. Education, reduced to one of tradable services, is brought under GATS which is one of the three integrated multilateral agreements under WTO regime as stated above. Ironically, the trade in education is governed by GATS Council (Council for Trade in Services) along with and at par with services such as recreation clubs and night pubs under the same set of rules, though with some variations due to domestic regulations of member-nations! The 'offers' and ultimately the 'commitments' in 'Market Access' are to be given by a member country in Mode-wise and Sector-wise format for operationalisation of GATS in the country.

Four modes of trade

GATS recognized five sub-sectors in 'Education Service' viz., 1) Primary Education; 2) Secondary

Education; 3) Higher Education; 4) Adult Education; and 5) Other Education. GOI submitted 'offers' in Higher Education Sub-Sector. Further, GATS also recognizes four modes of trade in all services. In higher education, they would work as follows **a) Cross border supply:** The students receive correspondence education from a foreign supplier and pay the service charges; **b) Consumption abroad:** The students go to a foreign land to receive education and pay service charges; **c) Commercial presence:** The foreign providers can establish universities and colleges here, provide service and collect service charges; and **d) Presence of natural person:** The foreign teachers as individuals can come to India render service in institutions in India and collect service charges. In all the four cases, as India is opening its market, the Indian students would be customers, foreign individuals get remuneration and foreign corporate houses earn profits. Even if we leave the question of money aside, the major adverse impact will be to reduce education to a tradable service; the trade being controlled by the global corporate forces; and, the worst aspect being that the agreement is, essentially, irrevocable!

Foreign providers

We need not oppose foreign universities if they are coming to India on the basis of educational and cultural relations between our country and a foreign country in order to exchange and spread knowledge. This has been a prominent feature throughout India's history and was promoted by leaders of the freedom struggle including Gandhi and Tagore. But, that is not the case at all under WTO regime. Now, the foreign universities are coming under global trade agreement to

make profits. Again, under this agreement, it is not a must that only well-established good quality foreign universities come here and provide comparable education and research facilities. Any provider can establish a new sub-standard university in the country of origin and then establish a branch here. A report of a survey by World Bank in 2000 on foreign educational providers is on record stating that 'well-known universities of Developed Countries established low standard branches in backward countries'.

Domestic regulation

Accredited bodies formed under the Trade Policy Review Mechanism (TPRM), one of the legal instruments under WTO, would annually review the trade policies of different countries and 'suggest' to the countries to change their respective policies. This regulation of domestic policies by WTO bodies will prove to be an outright infringement on freedom and sovereignty of the nations in formulation of their respective public policies. In all possibility, the public policy perspective of member countries would be controlled by WTO regime. The developing and the 'least developed' countries would fall victim in an incremental manner to this provision. The TPRM personnel with full authority meet the ministers and secretaries of the HRD Ministry on yearly basis and enquire year after year about the implementation of the so-called reforms agenda in education. The HRD Minister would be more accountable to TPRM personnel than to the people of India! The HRD Ministry in UPA regime introduced six Higher Education Bills in the Parliament to change the Domestic Regulations in conformity with WTO demands. Though all the

bills now got lapsed, there is every possibility that the present BJP lead NDA regime introduce their equivalent ones and try to pass them. Thus, the 'domestic regulation' by WTO and its organs can lead to infringement on sovereignty of the member countries, more particularly of the developing and the 'least developed' ones.

Independent Regulatory Authorities

In the recent times, we find Independent Regulatory Authorities (IRAs) are established in many a service sectors. We have IRA for Power, IRA for water, IRA for Insurance, IRA for Telecommunication and IRAs for many other services. Sam Pitroda and, unfortunately, Prof. Yash Pal too suggested an IRA for Higher Education. Sam Pitroda, Chairperson of Knowledge Commission, suggested in his report (November 2006) on Higher Education that an 'Independent Regulatory Authority of Higher Education' (IRA for HE) be established to regulate higher education. In the same vein, Prof. Yash Pal, in his report on 'Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education (2008)' suggested that the government should establish an overarching body to be named 'National Commission for Higher Education and Research' by either abolishing or subsuming the various all-India educational bodies working in different domains of higher education like UGC, AICTE, NCTE, MCI, BCI and so on. So, both the Knowledge Commission and the 'Prof. Yash Pal Committee' have recommended an independent regulatory body as a high-profile centre of power, often using untenable logic. Establishment of these IRAs can only be understood as a compliance of 'Additional

Commitments' provision under GATS. These IRAs are established clearly to divest the representative governments of their power and accountability of decision making. The already established IRAs in different services as well as that to be established in the field of education will be 'independent' of public pressure and thus be free to 'regulate' the respective sectors in favor of domestic and foreign capital. As on date, a Bill which was introduced by the previous UPA government to establish an IRA in education under the nomenclature of NCHER stands lapsed along with the other higher education Bills. However, the present BJP-led government has already declared in its Election Manifesto (2014) its commitment to establish a 'Higher Education Commission' for the same purpose.

Call of the hour

WTO-GATS regime reduces education into a commodity and student into a consumer in clear legal terms. Turning education into a tradable commodity will lead not only to the denial of education to the poor and disadvantaged but also to deceiving of students and exploiting of teachers in so created global market. Further, globalization of education under trade rules would lead to the degradation of the very purpose, course content and research in higher education to suit to the needs of corporate world while repudiating the role of education as one of enlightening, empowering and transforming process which is required to build citizenry with self dignity on the values of democracy, plurality, social justice, secularism and socialism as enshrined in the constitution of India and to protect its sovereignty. Education loving people and organisations in India

have been organising campaign against inclusion of Higher Education Sector of India in WTO from 1998 as a back ground paper was circulated by WTO in Sept 1998 in favor of bringing education under its regime. However, the campaign was not strong enough to stop the 'offers' being given to WTO by the Government of India in Higher Education Sector in 2005. It is time now time to build a strong movement demanding the withdrawal of the offers for market access lest they become irrevocable commitments on the part of the nation.

—All India Forum For Right To Education

(Continued from Page 2)

the question of ensuring affordable living and working places is a constant. It is in ensuring that the Indian national is made less vulnerable to crisis like the one in Yemen at present, that the Indian government has to play a part like that of a guardian angel. It is the unskilled labourers that are most vulnerable in crisis situations.

(Continued from Page 9)

It also revealed that most imaging centres did not follow the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board's guidelines on design and location parameters for setting up X-ray or ultrasound machines. The cost of tests such as MRI also varies from one centre to the other.

-Times of India

Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque on

Mumbai Bank

in favour of

JANATA TRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir
Bharucha Marg, Mumbai 400 007

Prof. Irfan Habib defends Gandhian and Nehruvian Ideologies

Qurban Ali

The noted historian and Marxist ideologue, Prof. Emeritus Irfan Habib of Aligarh Muslim University has recently, on several occasions, spoken out in defense of both Mahatma Gandhi and late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Some eyebrows may be raised when a Marxist professor eulogizes the achievements of the two above mentioned 20th century's giants widely accepted as blue blooded icons of Indian nationalism and Indian National Congress ideology. Habib, however, sees no contradiction between his mild Marxist ideology and his laudatory references to the above two national figures.

Habib was a teenager when India acquired freedom in 1947. He carries vivid memories not only of events connected with the dawn of freedom in the country but also carries painful memories of the traumatic events which followed the partition of India. Habib's father, Prof. Mohd. Habib, was a prominent nationalist and a senior teacher at the Aligarh Muslim University at the time of India's independence. He was ideologically close to both Gandhi and Nehru and there is no reason why some of his admiration for the two should not have rubbed off on the impressionable mind of his young son. As a historian, even at that young age, Irfan Habib could not have failed to appreciate and acknowledge the overwhelming role played by the two national stalwarts in saving and preserving the newly

formed nation from the forces of destruction and sectarianism.

Recently, delivering a lecture on "Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian Nation", in Aligarh Prof. Habib said that a large amount of criticism which has been heaped on the Mahatma, especially in the last few months, "is simply not history".

Habib also rubbished critics of Mahatma Gandhi, including some western authors, who have in recent years, frequently, tried to denigrate the Mahatma's achievements and his contribution as one of the greatest humanist of the 20th century. He asserted that in the years to come, "the future of India will be largely influenced by the manner in which India itself treats Gandhi and the doctrine of Gandhi-ism".

Habib, who has personal memories of the traumatic events connected to the partition of the country and early days of freedom of India, said, "If we want to truly understand Gandhi's contribution to the building of modern India, then we should critically examine the events connected to the last four weeks before his tragic assassination".

While accepting the fact that Mahatma Gandhi had his own share of weaknesses and failures in public life, Habib pointed out, "The months immediately after partition were tumultuous period with continued massacres taking place both in India and Pakistan. It

was during this difficult period that the newly formed cabinet of India decided not to fulfill its obligation of paying Rs. 55 Crores to Pakistan as part of the partition agreement".

With millions of refugees pouring into India, there was an atmosphere of anger and hatred towards Pakistan and hence there was widespread resistance to pay Pakistan the above mentioned amount. Gandhi, however, took a principled and humanist view of the situation and despite threats by a section of rightwing Hindu leaders, prevailed upon Nehru to reverse the cabinet's decision.

Habib said, "I lived through those traumatic days when this episode took place. Communal riots were raging all over Punjab and present day Haryana and it appeared to be just a matter of hours when, we feared, the violence would spill over into districts like Aligarh, Bulandshahr and Muzaffar Nagar".

Had not the Mahatma gone on hunger strike in protest against the killings of Muslims in Delhi and Punjab, and had not Pakistan been mollified by the compensation which it received at the instance of the Mahatma, there would have been no stopping of violence both in India and Pakistan, and the two new born nations would have found it very difficult to survive in their present form.

Referring to the Mahatma's assassination, Habib said, "Nobody

should allow himself to believe that the Mahatma's assassination was a conspiracy of a handful of people like Godse and Apte. Let us accept the fact that there was a tremendous money and power of an organization which planned this crime".

Striking a personal note on the aftermath of Mahatma's assassination, Habib said that the whole of India including all political parties like the communists and socialists who had some differences with the Mahatma over some policy matters, were shocked by the Mahatma's killing. "The only exception were some Hindu organizations connected with the Hindu Mahasabha and others. It pains me to point out that on the day of Mahatma's assassination, persons belonging to some groups whom we all can identify today, distributed sweets in several parts of the country including Aligarh when such errant individuals were put on the dock and questioned about this atrocious behavior, they tried to wriggle out by saying they had distributed sweets because of some function in their families including marriages and engagements".

Habib said, "The Mahatma had signed his own death warrant the day he persuaded Nehru to part with the compensation to Pakistan. Certain groups could never digest this reconciliatory move".

Prof. Habib went on to say that there is strong evidence to support the thesis that the Mahatma was bitterly disappointed and unhappy by the role played by India's Home Minister Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel in the months preceding his demise. Habib said that the Mahatma's words regarding Sardar Patel cannot be underplayed by fair historians –

"Sardar Patel ab badal gaye (Sardar Patel has changed)". Habib said these prophetic words uttered by the Mahatma tell their own story and let no one deny this.

Habib said that he was pained by the fact that even a noted author and humanist activist like Arundhati Roy had in recent years questioned the Mahatma's commitment to the cause of racial and social justice in South Africa. Habib said that equally unacceptable to him was the charge by some Indians that the Mahatma was patronizing and unfair in his approach towards dalits and was a votary of the upper class "Brahman-Bania" vested interests.

Need for genuine alternative

Recent experiences reveal that the search for an honest political party committed truly to resolving basic issues should continue. One of the most important issues in India has always been to meet the basic needs of all people and ensure sustainable livelihoods of people. This in turn needs significant reduction of inequalities and broad-based efforts to protect environment protection.

While these basic issues were always there, in more recent times even more urgent survival issues have emerged in the form of climate change, other irreversible type of environmental problems and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These survival issues are a worldwide phenomenon but also have a more specific context of South Asia.

All these urgent issues should get the highest priority. Alongside social relations (including of course gender relations) have to improve at all levels to ensure that the above

It would be a travesty of justice if the Mahatma's commitment for the cause of upliftment of dalits is questioned or doubted by some people today. He may have missed out on some issues pertaining to justice to Dalits as viewed today, but it has to be borne in mind that those were very early days. It was a time when dalits were not even allowed to drink water at railway stations and the only water which they were permitted to drink was the water which was used in steam engines.

Habib said that if India is to survive then people will have to take it up as a mission to promote the ideology of Gandhi-ism.

challenges can be met in a situation of peace, harmony and goodwill.

Any alternative political party should therefore strive for the integration of justice, environment protection and peace issues/movements.

Such urgent concerns appear to be missing in the cacophony of various warring factions of the AAP. The task of creating a genuine alternative political party to resolve the real issues of the country is a much bigger challenge which needs to be taken up with all seriousness, creativity and enthusiasm. Any such effort should've an in-built system of complete transparency, honesty, collective work and responsibility, avoiding all problems of personality cult.

Such political mobilisation cannot be done in isolation but should be part of a wider social mobilisation with adequate room for various constructive activities.

– Bharat Dogra



Rural India Focus

PRESENTING THE NATION WITH A REPLICABLE MODEL OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT



ADIVASI GIRLS HOSTEL AT TARA, PANVEL



WEEKLY EYE CAMPS AT THE YMC HOSPITAL, TARA, PANVEL



RUNS THREE HIGH SCHOOLS

YUSUF MEHERALLY CENTRE AND YOU

There are ways in which you can join the YMC movement in bringing education, healthcare, women empowerment, employment generation, relief and growth to our rural villages. Visit our Centre, volunteer your help, buy our products, become a Life Member. You could also support the cause by donating to our various initiatives.

SPONSOR AN ADIVASI GIRL'S HOSTEL STAY

It takes Rs.15,000 per year to meet the expenses for supporting a girl child's stay at the hostel in Tara, Panvel Taluka.

FINANCE A CATARACT SURGERY

10 to 15 eye operations are performed at the weekly eye camp held at the Maharashtra State Government funded hospital building. Sponsor a cataract operation for Rs. 15,000/-.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE SCHOOL CORPUS

YMC runs 3 high schools - 2 Marathi, 1 Urdu medium. With only 2 of these on goverment aid, the Centre needs Rs.1 crore as corpus to run the 3rd and maintain, conduct extra-curricular activities in all 3 and finance its building expansion plans. Give generously.



Yusuf Meherally Centre
D-15, Ganesh Prasad, 1st Floor,
Naushir Barucha Marg,
Grant Road (West),
Mumbai 400 007

Visit www.yusufmeherally.org,
Call: (022)-2387 0097,
Fax: (022)-2388 9738 or
E-mail : yusufmeherally@gmail.com



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 14001–2004 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

janata

Vol. 70 No. 12
April 19, 2015

Parties and leaders

S. Viswam

Encounter or sheer murder
Kuldip Nayyar

Changing Tunisia
Irfan Engineer

**The coming crisis
in social sector**
Bharat Dogra

**Why Grassroots People's
Movements Oppose Nuclear
Power**
Praful Bidwai

Union Budget 2015-16
Arun Kumar

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

India is going through a phase of relative political activity these days but the quiet will give place to interest and action when the election mode and mood sets in. Between now and 2016-17 end, many state assemblies will go to the polls to elect new Houses and it is during that period that parties will bestir themselves into action. Bihar leads the rest of the states, elections will be held quite soon there, as an indication of which there is considerable political activity in the state and the cross-talk among the parties has begun.

There has been a fresh round of statements from some party leaders, the BJP has been celebrating the development of its growing to become India's largest and one of the world's largest political parties, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has had its convention, all the parties celebrated Ambedkar's birthday on April 14 each claiming his legacy as its own. One of the major political developments has been the announced merger of six Janata Parivar parties into one entity and stake a claim to function as a single group in Parliament. The BJP has been the first to lampoon the merger and dismiss it as of no consequence, as, according to it, zero plus zero will still remain

a zero. Whether the zero(es) will add tails or remain zero(es) is a matter of conjecture. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, as we will soon see.

The BJP is the party that is most heard these days. Not surprising given that it is not only the ruling party at the Centre but its prime minister is still riding the crest of the popularity wave. However, the approach of the elections in Bihar has brought out the signs of growing dissensions within the State unit of the party. BJP President Amit Shah has launched an offensive heralding his party's entry into the election fray but there is definitely some discontent, particularly over reports projecting Sushil Kumar Modi as the party's chief ministerial candidate. He was Nitish Kumar's number two when the JD(U) and the BJP ran a coalition government. Much waters have flown down the Kosi and other Bihar rivers since then. Things are due for a change when and if the Janata Parivar merger is followed by assertion of the new group of its political clout.

After the BJP, the party that has claimed some media attention is the Congress but the focus of the attention was not on the state of the party but on the whereabouts of its missing

Between the lines

Encounter or sheer murder

Kuldip Nayar

leader, vice-president Rahul Gandhi. Speculation persisted during the entire period of his absence from New Delhi on whether or not he will take over as the president at the AICC session two months away ie from VP to P! That speculation has been effectively assaulted and pushed to the background. It has been replaced by a new one that says that there are reservations in the party over Rahul becoming the president and that the party is divided over the proposed elevation. Veteran Congress leader and former Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dixit has placed the pigeon among the cats by stating that there is skepticism over Rahul Gandhi's leadership as the party has not seen him perform and also, importantly, the party ranks enjoyed a feeling of comfort over Sonia Gandhi's leadership. There are a handful of other senior leaders in the Congress, like former Punjab CM Amarinder Singh who do not want any change in the present hierarchy. Former Madhya Pradesh CM Digvijay Singh said that Rahul needed to be seen more and that politics cannot be a part-time job. The question now remains as to whether or not Sonia will pass on the leadership to Rahul right now or wait for another occasion when the reception of the news of his elevation will be more kindly received.

The differences plaguing the Aam Aadmi Party have left the people sad and disturbed. There were high expectations from this group of young politicians. Now, the party seems to have split between pro-Kejriwal and anti-Kejriwal groups. Kejriwal is in control, but the situation is fluid and changes every day. The latest is that the dissidents have given up the idea of forming a new party right now, but are keeping

(Continued on Page 7)

Yet another encounter has taken place in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. I have lost the count. What is distressing is that even the human rights activists are practically quiet. Hardly anyone of them goes to the state to find out what happened on the ground, as was the practice till recently.

This indicates not only the lessening of interest but also a tacit approval of the excesses committed by the security forces. The Mufti Mohammad Sayeed government which announced to provide an accountable governance does not come out well.

In this murky atmosphere, the return of Kashmiri Pandits, who were forced to leave their homes in the valley, has become more uncertain. Those who are shedding tears over the composite culture which the valley enjoyed when the Pandits were there are doing little to bring them back.

The fundamentalist Syed Gillani was at least honest when he said in reply to my query a few years back that the Pandits' return depended on the solution of the Kashmir problems. That means waiting till eternity. The hardcore people like Yasin Malik do miss the composite culture but he too has reconciled to the situation.

Former chief minister Omar Farooq Abdullah is frank enough to admit that none in the valley made

any serious attempt to stop the Pandits' exodus in 1993. Not a single voice was heard on the loudspeakers at the mosques asking the Pandits not to leave, he said.

Some extremists have defended their opposition to the Pandits' return on the ground that it would disturb the demographic balance, knowing well that the valley with 98 percent Muslims would probably bring down the Muslim population to 96 percent.

It is a pity that the fundamentalists have the last word. But this is the solution which people are increasingly accepting. That it should happen in Kashmir, which remained undisturbed even during partition, is unfortunate. Yet this is the reality.

The battle over the return of the Pandits was lost in the valley itself. If the population does not assert itself to retrieve the situation, no other force can help. The resolve of composite culture lovers is weakening. Religion is having an upper hand. Both the Kashmiri Pandits and Punjabi Hindus have no future. The valley is claimed by the Muslims and Punjab by the Sikhs. The extremists are corroding the common ground.

Indeed, the hot wind of saffronisation blowing in the country is having an adverse effect in Kashmir as well. But we seem to

(Continued on Page 5)

Changing Tunisia

Irfan Engineer

The support of *South Asian Dialogues on Ecological Democracy* (SADED) and *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (VK – whole world is my family) enabled me to participate in the World Social Forum (WSF) held in Tunisia in 2015. I had participated in the WSF in Mumbai and Nairobi. The previous experiences of participation in WSF were mixed. WSF brought together so many civil society organizations from all over the world working on issues that include environment, rights of the marginalized sections – including indigenous peoples, dalits, workers, gender justice, organizations that worked to make large and Monopoly Corporations accountable, writing off the debts of the third world countries, sustainable use of limited natural resources, de-escalating arms race in the world, abolishing nuclear weapons, opposing wars, decolonization of the world and liberation of occupied peoples, promoting pluralism and acceptance of diversity, accountable governance, empowered citizenship, deepening of democracy and many other issues. Activists and committed academicians and delegates from various countries and civil society organizations and movements participate in WSF. Getting to listen to and learn from so many experienced and learned people having experiences is itself a very exciting prospect. Even mere being in midst of so many people from various movements working for change and with optimism that “a better world is possible” is itself inspiring and energizing, and it helps fight doubts that sometime creep in

some individuals whether another world is possible.

One of my objectives in attending the WSF was to meet and interact with people from all over the world as well as from Tunisia. Though language was a barrier to communicate with Tunisian people, they were very friendly as we travelled in trains, buses and cabs. Partly relying on universal sign language together with some common words between English and French, and partly relying on observations on streets, I could to some extent overcome that barrier.

Tunisians were very friendly with Indians and had lot of regards and love for Indians. One of the reasons was that Bollywood films are very popular and younger generations could speak quite a few sentences in Hindi. In one shop, as soon we entered, the shop floor sales girl started singing, “I love India” for our benefit. Most Tunisians wanted to visit India, particularly the city of Bollywood. In Monastir (about 170Km from Tunis), when we entered a shop vending cereals and pulses and household utility items (what we call in India *kirana* shop), the shopkeeper went out of his way to explain what a particular flour was made up of, in spite of language barriers – he showed us sample of every grain that was included into the flour – what we later learnt was “*bsisa*” flour to which olive oil and sweetener could be added to prepare staple diet of Tunisians. He then added olive oil to the flour, mixed it himself to *bsisa* and gave it us

to take it away and refused to take money for it!

Liberal society

We found Tunisian society quiet liberal and challenged our commonsensical and lazy understanding that Arabs are very conservative and fundamentalist in their religious opinions. We found Tunisian people very liberal and saw many women on streets wearing dresses of their choice – right from traditional to French/western. 99 per cent of Tunisian people are Muslims – Arab-Berbers speaking Tunisian Arabic. The other 1 per cent is Christians and Jews. We saw women with head scarf but they were fewer. We observed that even the head scarf didn’t come in way of men and women mixing freely in public space. Many WSF volunteers were students of El Manar University drawn from both sexes. They were interacting without any apparent inhibition or sexual restrictions – singing and dancing together and greeting each other with cheek to cheek contact. While the nearest Mosque was about half a KM from our hotel, during my entire stay, one thing was conspicuous by its absence – *azaan* – call for prayers, even though I used to get up at 5.00 am daily and leave the hotel at about 6.00 am for my morning walks in different directions. It is this liberal section that fought for democracy which movement is now popularly referred to as Arab Spring in 2011.

Though pork and alcohol are *haram* (not permissible to consume) in Islam, both were freely available

and it was left to the individuals to follow their religion and not the state to prohibit, prescribe or regulate consumption of food and drinks. In the mall we saw meat looking like pork though we could not confirm it because the labels were in Arabic or French.

Just as Nehru led Indian National Congress adopted secularism and democracy as the founding principle of Indian state, so did Habib Bourguiba, who led the Independence Movement and the post-colonial Tunisian State. Education was one of the main priorities after Independence in 1956 for Habib Bourguiba. Even in 2005-6, the Tunisian Government allocated more than 20 per cent of the budget for education. Education has largely been in French, particularly higher education and the process of Arabization is very slow. As a result, Tunisia is ranked 98 out of 182 countries according to the HDI 2007.

Under the leadership of Habib Bourguiba (1956–1987), Tunisia's post-independence government pursued a program of secularization. Bourguiba, was avowedly secularist who secularized education and unified the legal system so that all Tunisians, regardless of religion, were subject to the state courts. He restricted the influence of the religious University of Ez-Zitouna and replaced it with a faculty of theology integrated into the University of Tunis, banned the headscarf for women, made members of the religious hierarchy state employees and ordered that the expenses for the upkeep of mosques and the salaries of preachers to be regulated. Nehru had to withdraw Hindu Code Bill but Bourguiba introduced 'Code du Statut Personel' (CSP) the laws that govern issues

Even if another and a better world is possible, is a better outcome of WSF process possible? Some people see WSF as a cacophony of voices albeit of marginalized communities screaming to seek attention without resulting into tangible outcomes. In other words, they compare WSF to a supermarket of ideologies and perspectives where prospective "customers" visit a few shops but "buy" nothing. Other critical viewpoints suggest that WSF is not all that democratic and free space it is touted to be. The space is controlled by a few North based civil society organizations who are able to mobilize finances for the event. They set the priorities, decide the agenda and are indirectly in the position to determine who can speak at the event. It is the case of "*march separately and strike against the status-quo separately*" which leads to dispersion of energies for change in various directions and the status-quo emerges harmless in the process. If millions of Lilliputs (CSOs) resisting the oppression of Gulliverian Status-quo with its oppressive-destructive structures do not work in cohesion and organized manner to tie down and immobilize Gulliver, their energies will only get dissipated without achieving anything substantial with Gulliver emerging more powerful than before. The Gulliver representing arms industry, huge corporations, the neo-conservative-racist-nationalist-supremacist-patriarchal ideologists are more organized controlling media, educational and religious institutions to obfuscate realities and experiences of oppression of the people, propounding justifications for inequalities and social hegemonies forcing the world to open up for free movements of goods for unfair trade, free movement of capital to exploit global natural resources and cheap labour and protecting

profits from taxation. The Gulliver also exploits cultural traditions to push its agenda to create more and more unequal world, poverty, hunger, destroying everything that is egalitarian in people's culture, traditions and customs, moral values of religions and reinvent culture and traditions to promote selfishness, greed, individualism that pitches self in competition with the rest and against the whole society as a virtue; to promote ruthlessness, aggressiveness; to promote consumerism; to promote aping the ways of socially and politically dominant class; to make most brutal violence and manmade disasters acceptable; to make sexual violence and misogyny acceptable and call it all 'modernity'. The Gulliver is destroying cultures of solidarity and values of empathy. The WSF is bringing the hundreds of Lilliputs together, is it helping them get organized? Even if WSF is a confluence of CSOs, if a CSO is better prepared and organized, it can avail of the space provided in WSF to network with other similar movements and organizations.

The WSF in Tunisia, as on earlier occasions acts more as a platform and space to take our organization's concerns, perspectives and experiences to event and share with other and also seek out others working on similar issues or related issues and exchange perspectives and learn from others' experiences and also network for solidarities. As a SADED and VK delegate in WSF provided ample opportunities to me to meet and interact with various organizations and movements that had come to attend WSF in Tunisia. That Tunisia was the venue of WSF was added attraction as that was the place where Arab Spring – people's movement for democracy – had been launched.

related to the family: marriage, guardianship of children, inheritance and most importantly the abolishing of polygamy and making divorce subject to judicial review.

Bourguiba clearly wanted to undercut the religious establishment's ability to prevent his secularization program, and although he was careful to locate these changes within the framework of a modernist reading of Islam and presented them as the product of *ijtihad* (independent interpretation) and not a break with Islam, he became well known for his secularism. For Bourguiba, Islam represented the past; the west was Tunisia's only hope for a modern future. The Islamists are fighting back for their space and exert considerable influence in the people. Muslim Brotherhood found its influence on people of Tunisia and so did Hizb ut-Tahrir. Ennahda Movement or Renaissance Party, a moderate Islamist Party, won 37 per cent of popular votes and 41 per cent (89 out of 217 seats) in the Tunisian Constituent Assembly elections in 2011. Today Tunisia provides highest number of recruits to *Daesh* or Islamic State fighters and attack on foreigners outside the Bardo Museum is indicative of the challenges faced the Tunisian State.

Unemployment

Economically Tunisia is facing lot of challenges of late. The backbone of their economy is production of olives and olive oil which also earns export revenues. Tourism is also important source of foreign revenues. Many Tunisians have emigrated and are working in various countries. Their remittance is another source of foreign currency. Southern Tunisia has phosphate mining which is another source of revenue for the state. Fishing in the

Mediterranean Sea also contributes to the economy. Of late, we were told that unemployment has increased. Tunisia has experienced its highest unemployment rates since the revolution of 2011. Youth between 15 and 29 years old constitute 72.2 per cent of the total number of unemployed people in 2012. An article published in November 2013 by the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) explained the reasons behind this economic decline leading to an increase in unemployment:

“Since Tunisia's 2011 revolution, the economy has had a hard time

(Continued from Page 2)

be oblivious to the religious factor. Liberals believe as if they have no hope that they can win.

It is a pity that the Aam Aadmi Party is floundering because of minor differences. When one set of people go to the extent of having a separate convention to voice their grievances, it is obvious that the atmosphere within the party is suffocating.

A split among the members is unfortunate. It indicates that social movements tend to split when they enter the political field. Activist Medha Patkar says that social movements will change the complexion of politics. One wishes this comes true. But power corrupts even those who have spent the entire life in propagating the democratic values.

Encounter became a familiar word during the militancy in Punjab when the then police chief, K.P.S. Gill, was accused of staging encounters to kill the militants to circumvent the long, tedious legal procedures of having the verdicts against the guilty from

regaining its pre-Arab spring growth rates. Al Qaeda's presence in North Africa has grown in the last few years. Instability in neighboring Libya has only added to anxiety over the security situation in Tunisia, a country traditionally boasting healthy tourism revenues. Finally, demand for Tunisian exports has dried up in the European Union, Tunisia's most important trade partner.”

The high rate of unemployment among youth is a cause of worry for the Tunisian rulers and a fertile ground for their recruitment by the political Islamists.

courts. He always denied the charge and said in defence that the legal system was so defective that a case could go on for decades or so. The person charged with murder, rape or worse got the bail and committed same heinous crime during the period he was out of prison.

Strange, the killing of 20 labourers by an Andhra Police task force earlier in the month has not created the furors in the country which the incident should have. Is it because the victims were mere labourers, considered at the bottom of the elitist society which lays down the law? Or, is it because they were poor, already living on the margin?

Eight labourers set out from their homes at Vettagiripalayam in Tamil Nadu on a Monday afternoon. They first head to Tiruttani, not far from the Andhra border. From Tiruttani, they take a bus to Renigunta in Andhra Pradesh but are picked up by police on the way. Encounters take place in Seshachalam forest near Tirupati.

According to one of the survivors, he was with the seven in the bus

when it was stopped by Andhra police. While the others were led out, he was spared because he was sitting next to a woman and police thought he was her husband.

Incident after incident shows that the police have followed the same methods which were used during the British period. There is the same cruelty and the same reluctance to go into the matter deep and determine the cause. Rulers do not care as to the method used so long as the force delivers what they want. In the last 68 years since independence the scenario should have changed. But obviously it has not been because the target is to secure what suits rulers, not the method to reach the goal.

The Kashmiri Pandits are an affluent and influential community. If their fate can move the government to solve what is the real cause, their affliction would not go waste. If the nation were to introspect, it would realize that the excesses committed in the name of governance are sheer indifference and political aggrandizement.

Pre-meditated killings which have the name of encounter should not be tolerated in a democratic society. The National Human Rights Commission summoned the survivors of the Andhra encounter and has recorded their version. In due course, the verdict would be out to either chastise the police or let them go with a warning.

With the passage of time, the incident will recede from the memory of the people. But this should not happen. Otherwise, similar incidents will take place at some other place, at some other time and the police will call its action as encounters.

The coming crisis in social sector

Bharat Dogra

The Union Budget made big and unprecedented cuts in rural and social sectors. This was sought to be explained by saying that as higher allocations are to be made to states as per the 14th Finance Commission's recommendations, these cuts will be made up through higher provisions in the state budgets.

However there are no signs of this promise being fulfilled in most state budgets. For example this can be seen in the less than adequate allocations made for these priority areas in the budget of the Rajasthan government.

Comparing the budget estimates for 2014-15 and 2015-16, there is only a very modest increase in health and family welfare, education, social welfare and nutrition in the Rajasthan budget. This is the kind of modest increase that happens almost every year (including the inflation component). At the same time some allocations of social sector have even been cut in the state budget along with the central budget. For example in the Rajasthan budget the budget estimate for welfare of SC/ST/OBC has been reduced from Rs. 1542 to 1471 cr. For agriculture and allied services there is a reduction from Rs. 5469 cr. to 5232 cr. For rural development there is a cut from Rs. 13904 cr. to Rs. 12968 cr.

Department-wise allocations reveal that comparing the budget estimates of 2014-15 and 2015-16, there is a reduction from Rs. 105 cr. to Rs. 92 cr. in the case of, minorities, a reduction from Rs. 1957 cr. to Rs. 1678 cr. in 'Women

and Child Development'.

This is a matter of grave concern, particularly keeping in view the fact that very serious damage to crops has been caused by adverse weather condition in several states (including Rajasthan).

Questions have also been raised by expert analysts about whether the transfer of additional resources to the states has been adequate for them to shoulder the additional responsibilities. This obviously has longer-term implications well beyond this year's budget.

The Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability, Delhi, has stated in its analysis of this year's budget, that starting from 2015-16, the centre will not cover the Revenue Expenditure (especially the recurring expenditure on salaries and staff) incurred at the State level in 24 different Plan schemes (e.g.. National Health Mission, ICDS, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna, National Rural Drinking Water Programme, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Indira Awas Yojna among others).

Further this review states, "Quite contrary to what has been the common perception about the implications of the 14th Finance Commission recommendations, the net increase in the spending capacity of the state Governments (resulting from the changes being introduced in Centre-State sharing of resources) in 2015-16 would be very modest."

Hence this review concludes, "It appears that the transfer of social

sector responsibilities to the state governments is not going to be matched by an adequate increase in their spending capacity.”

A senior budget analyst says, “In several state budgets it appears to be business as usual. There are no signs of any major effort to make up for the deep cuts in social sector made in the union budget.”

Clearly this can lead to serious resource constraints for important social and rural programmes, causing distress to vulnerable people.

The Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitly told the Rajya Sabha on March 19 that the resource transfer to the states has been more than adequate to make up for the cuts made in social sector in the Union budget. However, earlier a senior opposition (Congress) leader Jairam Ramesh insisted that there are very legitimate concerns about an overall shortage of funds for critical social sector schemes at least during a transition period from the old regime to the new arrangements. He suggested strongly that the Finance Ministry and the newly set up Niti Ayog should evolve a mechanism to monitor this carefully and ensure that any shortages for significant social sector schemes can be avoided.

(Continued from Page 2)

the option open. This means that internal stability and unity will be absent for some time, and something quite unexpected may happen out of the churning within the party. Right now, the focus seems to be on keeping the movement that brought the AAP leaders together alive and work for internal cohesion again. It remains to be seen whether Kejriwal or the dissenters will emerge stronger from the crisis.

Socialist Party (India) is going to organise its National Convention in Lucknow and Sitapur, U.P., during 1-3 May, 2015. Socialist Party is committed to ending inequality based on any of the artificial divisions created in human society and discrimination based on these inequalities in the world through peaceful and democratic means. It values the human rights of all very highly and endeavours to bring justice to the wronged. It wishes to promote harmony among human beings and a perfect balance with nature so that our development process is sustainable. It is against over-exploitation of nature and would like to establish itself as the green party on India. For more details or for joining the party please visit our website at spi.org.in

This is an appeal to make financial contributions to Socialist Party (India) so that we're able to organise our convention well. In order to make a contribution to Socialist Party (India) please use the following details. Do inform us (Alok Singh, 8756222696 or singhalok099@gmail.com) when you make a donation.

Name of Account: Socialist Party (India)

Name of Bank: Allahabad Bank

Branch: Hazratganj, Lucknow, U.P.

Account Number: 50084256339

IFSC: ALLA0210062 (there is a zero following second A and two zeros consecutively)

Socialist Party (India) National Convention

1-3 May, 2015, Lucknow and Sitapur

1st May, 2015: 10 am to 1 pm, Meeting of National Executive;

2 pm to 6 pm, Inaugural Session, Gandhi Bhawan Auditorium, opposite Shaheed Smarak, next to Residency, Lucknow, Contact: 9415402311 (Girish K. Pandey), 9839422521 (Chunnilal), 9795020932 (Hafeez Kidwai)

2nd & 3rd May, 2015

Village Kanh mau, Sidhauili-Biswan Road (5 km from Sidhauili), District Sitapur

Contact: 9810319758 (Dr. Shuchita Kumar), 9450379003 (Anurag Agney), Deepak Sharma (8175031062)

How to reach Kanh mau:

Kanh mau is 5 km from Sidhauili on the Sidhauili-Biswan Road. Sidhauili is 55 km from Lucknow on Lucknow-Sitapur Road which also happens to be the Lucknow-Delhi route. There are regular buses from Quaiserbagh bus stand, next to Gandhi Bhawan, in Lucknow for Biswan which will drop one in Kanh mau village itself. For more information please call the abovementioned numbers.

We look forward to seeing you in Lucknow on 1st May and Kanh mau, Dist. Sitapur on 2nd and 3rd May, 2015. If you inform us about your arrival and departure in advance we will be able to serve you better.

Faisal Khan, National Organisational Secretary (9968828230), Girish Kumar Pandey, Patron, U.P. (9415402311), Dr. Shuchita Kumar, U.P. State President (9810319758), Chunnilal, Organisational Secretary, U.P. (9839422521), Sandeep Pandey, National Vice-President, Ph: 0522 2347365, ashaashram@yahoo.com, on behalf of Socialist Party (India).

Why Grassroots People's Movements Oppose Nuclear Power

Praful Bidwai

Even before history's worst nuclear reactor accident happened, at Fukushima in Japan on March 11, 2011, the world witnessed vigorous protest movements against nuclear power generation. Many of them took the form of NIMBY (not in my backyard) campaigns, which highlighted the perception that most people and communities do not regard nuclear reactors as good or safe neighbours. India was no exception to this trend and saw sustained anti-nuclear protests from the 1970s onwards, beginning with the proposed plants at Kakrapar in Gujarat and Narora in Uttar Pradesh.

At Fukushima, where core meltdowns occurred in three reactors—compared to only one at Chernobyl in Ukraine—the crisis continues four years on, with huge radioactivity releases. Cleaning up the site alone will take four decades and cost at least \$200 billion. After Fukushima, the anti-nuclear movement has acquired a more global, universal character and gathered great energy.

Along with the crisis of the global nuclear industry, which is turning graver by the month, popular opposition could spell the end of what has been promoted as the world's nuclear dream—the never-fulfilled promise of atomic power as an abundant, manageable, clean and safe source of cheap electricity, “too cheap”, it was said, “even to meter”.

People everywhere know that if a grave accident could take place in a highly industrialised, technologically advanced society like Japan, it can happen anywhere

else, especially in a technologically backward society like India, with its poor safety culture and a record of serious nuclear accidents.

Anti-nuclear Arguments

That's why Koodankulam in Tamil Nadu, Jaitapur in Maharashtra, Mithi Viridi in Gujarat, Kovvada in Andhra Pradesh, Gorakhpur in Haryana and Chutki in Madhya Pradesh, where new reactors are planned, have all witnessed huge protests, defying ferocious state repression. In Koodankulam, where the police filed First Information Reports against more than 55,000 people, and charged 6,800 with “sedition” and “waging war against the state”, the movement refuses to die down. It is gathering great momentum at other sites too. (For more information, see www.cndpindia.org and www.dianuke.org)

What inspires the anti-nuclear movement? The movement, to simplify matters a little, advances six arguments: Too Little, Too Late, Too Centralised, Too Secretive, Too Expensive, Too Dangerous. They add up to a formidable case against nuclear power. Consider each one of them.

Too Little: Contrary to propaganda, nuclear power accounts for just two percent of the world's final primary energy consumption, compared to the 18 per cent share of renewable sources, including wind power, solar photovoltaics, solar-thermal, biomass, hydroelectricity, etc. Nuclear's long-term contribution to energy is severely limited by uranium reserves, whereas the potential of renewables is almost

unlimited. India's indigenous reserves cannot even sustain 10,000 MW (megawatts) of atomic power generation, of today's existing total electricity capacity of about 240,000 MW.

Currently, India's nuclear power capacity is under 4,800 MW, compared to 15,000 MW in wind and 2,000 MW in solar. Nuclear reactors contribute less than three per cent to India's total electricity generation and less than one per cent to total energy consumption. Even if all the grandiose plans announced by the government for nuclear expansion materialise, such as a tripling of capacity in eight years, nuclear's contribution to electricity production will still not exceed five per cent.

But no target set by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) has ever materialised. In the 1960s, the DAE said India by 2000 would have 43,500 MW in nuclear capacity; it had 2,700 MW! Tripling assumes that 19 reactors would be started and completed in six years, when average global construction time is 10 years, and in India, 12 years.

Nuclear power is rapidly shrinking worldwide. Its share in global power generation has declined from a peak of 17.6 per cent in 1996 to 10.8 per cent. Its contribution to the world's commercial primary energy production has also fallen to a new low (4.4 per cent).

The number of nuclear reactors operating worldwide peaked in 2002 at 438. It now stands at 390. Nuclear has seen no major technological

innovation for decades: 170 reactors (44 percent of total) are 30 years old/older. But only 65 new reactors are under construction, four fewer than a year ago.

Too Late: Given the grim reality of the climate crisis, all energy generation must be judged on the criterion of how quickly and richly it can contribute to peaking and reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The world must make GHG emissions peak by 2020 if it is to avert catastrophic global warming, with irreversible changes in the climate system, leading to a rapid melting of icecaps and glaciers, a rise in sea levels, more ferocious cyclones and storms, floods alternating with droughts, and other extreme weather events.

Nuclear power scores poorly here. Although nuclear reactors do not directly emit greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide, the entire nuclear fuel cycle—including uranium mining, ore processing, fuel fabrication, reactor construction with steel and cement, transportation of materials, storage and reprocessing of nuclear waste, etc—generates GHGs. Their life-cycle GHGs emissions per million units of power generated are much, much higher than those of renewable energy sources, which are maturing as competitive alternatives to both nuclear and fossil-fuel based power.

For instance, emissions per kWh from wind are less than one-tenth of those from nuclear power, and from solar-PV about one-quarter to one-half.

Besides, nuclear reactors take at least 10 years to build, and will take even longer as safety regulations are tightened in the wake of Fukushima, and as nuclear corporations worldwide face deep financial problems, prolonging

construction periods. By contrast, gas-based power plants can be built in three or four years' time. Solar or wind farms are now being routinely built in only a few months' time. This makes a vital difference given the urgency of combating climate change.

Too Centralised: Nuclear power generation is excessively centralised in two ways. First, all decision-making on nuclear energy planning, investment, execution, etc is made in highly centralised institutions such as governmental apex committees and giant corporations, which are not amenable to democratic control or rational regulation in the public interest.

This is a serious issue. In matters nuclear, the public is compelled to submit itself to bureaucracies and centralised apparatuses which are essentially unaccountable to Parliament and other democratic institutions, and which are insensitive to the environmental and social costs that are imposed on communities on account of nuclear power generation. These local communities are dispersed and cannot make their voice heard sufficiently in apex-level power structures.

Second, nuclear reactors can at best contribute to a centralised grid. They can only deliver “base-load” power and cannot alter their output according to changing demand, or what is called “peak” power. The difference between base and peak loads is huge in India: of the order of 60 to 100 percent.

This limitation of nuclear reactors is fast becoming a great disability as the world moves towards decentralised energy generation and consumption, localised grids, “smart” grids (which can switch between different sources of power

and groups of consumers), and so on. In a country with 600,000 villages, and where 40 percent of the population has no electricity, decentralised sources and distributed consumption must play a major role. Nuclear power has no place here.

Too Secretive: Nuclear power comes wrapped in secrecy and opacity, and often deception. That is partly because it is a Siamese Twin of nuclear weapons. The two programmes share a common infrastructure, personnel, training, funding and command structures. The chairman of the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd reports to the chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, also secretary to the DAE, and therefore in charge of both the nuclear weapons and power programmes.

The weapons programme uses materials produced or processed in the so-called peaceful civilian nuclear power programme, including plutonium, which has dual use. Many countries have transferred or diverted materials and personnel from the civilian to the military programme, including France, the US, USSR, India and Iran.

For instance, India used the spent fuel from CIRUS (Canada-India Research Reactor-US) to extract the plutonium that was used in the 1974 Pokharan blast. CIRUS was designed and built by the Canadians, and the US supplied heavy water to it. India promised to use the products of CIRUS for entirely “peaceful” purposes, but flagrantly breached this legal commitment. That’s one reason why it called the 1974 Pokharan test a “peaceful nuclear explosion”, a blatant lie.

Nuclear power operators are secretive for another reason too. They have a lot to hide—breach of internal regulations, mishaps, accidents,

excessive toxic exposure of plant workers, and releases of poisonous materials and radioactivity that affect the wider public. It's only rarely that the operator reveals that an accident or mishap has occurred: usually, the media does, or the affected people do.

This is especially true of India, where the DAE and NPCIL have typically failed to reveal the occurrence of accidents, including fires, collapse of safety systems, exposure of workers to tritium, breakage of containers during transportation, leaks from storage facilities, etc.

Secrecy has become a habit with the DAE and NPCIL because they have never had an independent regulator. The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board is a toothless organisation which has no independence from the agencies it is meant to regulate. Its head reports to the Atomic Energy Commission chief who is in charge of nuclear power generation. The AERB has no staff, budget or equipment of its own. None of the so-called safety audits it carried out in Indian nuclear installations after Fukushima carries any credibility.

Both the DAE and NPCIL brazenly claim exemptions from the Right to Information Act, even when the activities in question do not have any bearing on "national security".

Too Expensive: The nuclear industry has always been promoted through huge public subsidies. No bank would finance it, and no insurance company would cover it without subsidies. It has been called "the greatest failure of any enterprise in the industrial history of the world", which has lost more than \$1 trillion in subsidies, cash losses, abandoned projects and damage to the public.

Nuclear power long ago failed the market test and turned to be much more expensive than virtually every other energy source. In many energy-related technology areas, unit costs fall as electricity generation capacity doubles—a benefit of "learning by doing". The reverse is true of nuclear power, itself a "mature" technology where no major innovative breakthroughs have recently occurred, leading to greater efficiency and lower costs.

Nuclear power comes with a lot of hidden or future costs, which are dumped on society, including the costs of "decommissioning" old reactors, of handling and storing high-level wastes, and so on. After a reactor exhausts its economic life of 30 to 40 years, it continues to seethe with radioactivity and must be "entombed" in concrete at a cost that's one-third to one-half the construction cost.

All reactors leave behind high-level wastes which remain hazardous for thousands of years. For instance, the half-life of plutonium-239 is 24,400 years and uranium-235's is 710 million years. Science hasn't found a way of safely storing, leave alone neutralising, radioactive waste.

Even if these costs are excluded from calculation, nuclear power is far more costly than electricity from coal, gas and renewables. The per-kilowatt capital costs of nuclear reactors have risen internationally from \$1,000 to \$6,000-9,000 (as in the case of figures quoted for the French company Areva's reactors, meant for Jaitapur). Operating costs too have risen 16 percent in three years in many countries, just as renewable wind-power and solar-photovoltaics get cheaper every month.

At this rate, nuclear electricity from these imported reactors will cost Rs 15 plus a unit and bankrupt all consumers, including industry, agriculture and domestic users.

The world over, governments have tried to mollycoddle nuclear power by subsidising it through special liability laws, limiting insurance payments, etc. The Indian government also tried this on the nuclear liability issue, but has failed so far. There was no "breakthrough" on this during Barack Obama's recent visit to India—only sleights-of-hand to substitute administrative memoranda for proper laws enacted after prolonged legislative debate.

This trick, meant to please US nuclear suppliers at the expense of India's public, falls foul of Parliament's intent. But it still won't work. Westinghouse and GE, now owned by Japanese capital, are unlikely to sell reactors to India so long as any element of liability exists.

Too Dangerous: Nuclear power is inherently hazardous because it concentrates huge amounts of energy in limited spaces. Nuclear power generation is the only form of energy production which has a potential for catastrophic accidents like Chernobyl and Fukushima, which release large amounts of toxic radioactivity and poison people and huge tracts of land.

Fukushima happened not because of an earthquake and tsunami, but because these triggered mishaps in reactors which were vulnerable to catastrophic accidents in the first place. Nuclear accidents happen because of the nature of nuclear technology. Natural calamities only make them more likely. All reactor designs are vulnerable to core-meltdown accidents.

International experts say there will be disastrous failures at nuclear power stations, and that this cannot be avoided. As Edward Teller, the nuclear physicist, said, "If you [try to] construct something foolproof, there will always be a fool greater than the proof."

Nuclear hazards include radiation exposure at each step of the so-called nuclear fuel cycle—from uranium mining, to fuel fabrication, reactor operation and maintenance, eventual decommissioning of reactors, to waste handling and storage. There is no threshold below which radiation is safe. Yet, for entirely expedient reasons, the nuclear industry sets "maximum permissible" limits of exposure—simply because some exposure is inevitable if nuclear activities are to take place. It also frequently breaches these limits.

Ionising radiation damages chromosomes in the body which control the code for the reproduction of cells, leading to cancers, leukaemias and genetic damage. It also increases the burden of degenerative diseases and can lead to cell death or breakdown of DNA and RNA, which affects the ability to cope with environmental changes, and recover from diseases or illness. Radiation cannot be neutralised or fully contained. Occupational workers in all nuclear facilities, from uranium mines to reactors, to reprocessing and waste storage plants, are constantly exposed to radiation.

Nuclear safety issues also pertain to routine emissions and effluents from nuclear reactors which expose the public to hazards. Other risks from nuclear activities are equally significant, including those from transportation, handling and storage of nuclear materials.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

Nuclear power programmes pose an even graver danger:

the spread of mass-destruction weapons which kill massively, indiscriminately and brutally, and against which there is no military, civil or medical defence. Countries such as France, India, Pakistan and North Korea successfully acquired a nuclear weapons capability at least partly through a civilian nuclear programme. The dividing line between civilian and military facilities or operations is always thin. Nuclear installations are also uniquely vulnerable to sabotage and armed attacks, with terrifying consequences.

These problems make nuclear power generation uniquely hazardous, and irredeemably so.

Fishing Ban

The Union ministry of agriculture has instructed the state governments of the east coast -Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Seemandara, Orissas and West Bengal - that all fishing by the Mechanised Boats in territorial waters and the EEZ shall be banned for 61 days between April 15 and June 14. Basing on it the government of Puducherry has announced such ban for 61 days.

It is also been announced that the ban on the western coast states – Gujarat, Maharashtra, Diu and Daman, Goa, Karnataka and Kerala – will be for 61 day from June 15 till August 14th. On the western coast, the fishermen welcome it as the timing synchronises with the monsoon. All states barring Kerala have welcomed the 61 days ban. Only Kerala wishes that it is restricted to 45 days.

On the eastern coast, there are different opinions about the ban period among the fisher communities. They do not object to 61 days, but they would very much like it to synchronise with the monsoon, as

The anti-nuclear movement has a solid, rational argument to back it up. It also has growing grassroots support. It has succeeded in showing that continuing with nuclear power generation is a narrow, parochial agenda of a small cabal within the nuclear establishment and capitalist interests, which has nothing to do with public purpose.

1 This formulation, made popular by Achin Vanaik, is used by the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace, set up in 2000 by more than 250 civil society groups, of whom Achin and I are founder-members. CNDP's charter is available at www.cndpindia.org.

in western coast. The monsoon in eastern coast is in the months of October and November. This opinion is based on the traditional knowledge and proper understanding of the fisher communities of the eastern coast regarding the fish breeding season, which happens around monsoon.

This opinion is passed on to the union and state governments periodically by the fisher communities and also in the Bay Bengal level project consultation meetings conducted in collaboration with the respective governments.

But the fisher communities are very disappointed with the decision of the Union government of holding the ban period between April and June, without considering such valid and knowledge based opinion.

Hence the fisher communities demand that they should be consulted by the concerned state governments and also by the union government in this regard and the ban period should be reconsidered.

Encounter killings

The erstwhile combined state of Andhra Pradesh was notorious for fake encounters in the country. After ten months of the bifurcation of the state into Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, once again the police resorted to killing of 25 people on a bloody Tuesday, April 7, 2015.

In Telangana, in the incident in Warangal district, the police escorting five under-trial prisoners, who were suspected terrorists, shot the prisoners dead on the pretext that one of them tried to snatch a firearm from one of the escorts in a bid to flee police custody.

In Andhra Pradesh, 20 men alleged to be smugglers of red sandalwood were shot dead in the Seshachalam forest of Chittoor district, near Tirupati in a joint operation conducted by the Andhra Pradesh Police and Forest Officials.

The fake encounter in Telangana incident took place in a prison van, where 17 security force members were taking 5 prisoners namely Vikhar Ahmed Vikaaruddin, 30 years; Syed Amjal Ali, 29 years; Dr. Haneef, 32 years; Mohammed Zakeer, 30 years; and Idar Khan, 28 years - all under-trials from Warangal Jail - on its way to a Hyderabad court. This encounter happened inside a jail van with all of the under-trials killed, while handcuffed to their seats. The police claims that Vikar Ahmed, one of the under-trials, asked to be released in order for him to answer nature's call. Upon his return he tried to snatch a weapon. The police opened fire when other under-trials allegedly tried to snatch weapons too and this led to all of them being killed.

The police version of the Andhra Pradesh encounter is that Red-sanders Anti-Smuggling Task Force spotted footprints of the "smugglers" and

came across around 100 of them felling trees in the Seshachalam Forest at the foot of the Tirumala Hills. Members of the Task Force challenged them to surrender, but the woodcutters responded by pelting stones. The Task Force in turn responded to the raining stones by firing randomly at the woodcutters, which led to death of 20 of them; the rest ran away.

It is surprising to note that a "random firing" in response to stone pelting has resulted in the death of 20 woodcutters. One wonders what could have been the toll had the Force targeted the woodcutters in self-defense. Let us not forget how disproportionate it is to use bullets for stones, even if the stones were "raining" down. The alleged encounter took place in a jungle after all and trees could have given ample protection till the Task Force was able to capture all the alleged smugglers.

Now coming to Warangal incident it has to be imagined how could Vikar Ahmed attempt to snatch a weapon from the security personnel, as under-trials are never let-off alone, not even to use the toilet? As standard operating procedure, security personnel always escort under trials. Furthermore, even if he did attempt to snatch weaponry, how come a 17-member security force failed to overpower him without firing? Were not remaining four, as per claims of the police, still handcuffed? It is impossible to believe this obviously fictitious story weaved by the police.

The PUCL wishes to bring to the notice of one and all, particularly the police organization that there is no concept much less any legal provision for "Encounter Death" as manifested by the police. In neither the provisions of the IPC nor the provisions of the Cr.PC and nor the provisions

of any other law dealing with any crimes and criminal investigation does the expression "Encounter Death" appear. It is a mere invention created by the police without any basis of law. While the matter has been adjudicated several times by the courts not only the discountenancing but also condemning the action of causing deaths of the persons in the custody naming them as "Encounter Deaths" in the latest full bench judgment of the High Court of Andhra Pradesh comprising of five Judges it has been authoritatively laid down that in case of every unnatural death caused by the police force even under the pretext of self defense must be reported and made the subject of ordinary enquiry under the provisions of Cr.P.C and also naming all the police personnel causing deaths. Such police personnel must be left to defend themselves in one or the other provisions contained in the Chapter relating to "General Exceptions" in I.P.C. Putting in other words, every claim made by the police personnel claiming the "self defense" either under the guise of encounter or otherwise, must necessarily be subjected to an adjudication by a competent court. Otherwise, all the deaths caused by the police under the 'fictitious' name of encounter will be a cases of culpable homicide amounting to murder.

We demand: 1. A judicial enquiry headed by a former judge of Supreme Court on Fake Encounters. 2. To register an FIR to book all the police personnel involved on charges of murder (Section 302, IPC). 3. Immediate suspension of the implicated personnel pending the investigation, and arrests with no delay. 4. Preservation of crime scenes, ballistic and forensic evidence, seizure of all weapons. 5. Full protection to all witnesses.

-K. Pratap Reddy Jaya Vindhya
President General Secretary People's Union for Civil Liberties Telangana

Union Budget 2015-16: Continuity with the Past Framework

Arun Kumar

Union Budget 2015-16 is in the same mould as the budgets in the preceding years. The Finance Minister's speech announces or mentions a whole host of schemes for different sections of the population. With a projected expenditure of Rs.17.77 lakh crore and a GDP of Rs.141.1 lakh crore, the expenditure is slated to be 12.6% of GDP. This is no small amount and out of this, a few hundred or a few thousand crore can be given to many popular schemes. Say, for women, children, old, marginalized sections, rural infrastructure, irrigation, agriculture and so on.

When massive schemes are announced like, setting up of 5 Ultra Mega Power Projects of 4000 MWs each, money does not have to be allocated immediately. At Rs. 5 crore per MW, it would cost a total of Rs. 1 lakh crore to set them up. In the starting year, it may not even require Rs.5,000 crore but the impression created is as if a massive outlay is to be incurred. This would also be true of housing for all by 2022 and other infrastructure schemes to be set up over a period of time. But given the history of stalled and delayed projects, often allocations are made but not spent so that delays are the order of the day in most projects.

There is another category of announcements that will lean heavily on the financial sector to provide resources like, the pension schemes. The budgetary provisions will be small but the public sector insurance companies will have to

carry the burden for implementation. Similarly, many scheme of financial inclusion like, the Jan Dhan yojana, are dependent on the Public Sector Banks. The contribution of the budget to these schemes which look grand on paper will be minimal. But this is nothing new since every budget has resorted to such announcements. It makes the budget speech of the FM look very promising.

The real problem in India is that announcements are easy but implementation difficult. For instance, while 10 crore accounts are reported to have been opened in a short time under Jan Dhan Yojana, most have no deposit or are inactive since the genuinely poor have little savings to put into their new accounts. How many overdraft have been given to the micro businesses and how much is the cost incurred on such accounts has not yet been revealed? The problem is one of governance. Firstly, most schemes are ill conceived and, therefore, unimplementable. Secondly, even when designed well, they are not executed properly and, therefore, they do not yield the expected results.

There are, of course, many policy announcements in budgets which are of a general nature and have nothing to do with budgetary allotments and the present budget is no exception. There is a scheme for the monetization of country's considerable holdings of gold. There are provisions for tackling the black money held abroad and in India.

There are provisions for making the economic environment business friendly by introducing a 'stable tax policy', likely introduction of GST next year, deferring the implementation of GAAR, changes to reduce tax disputes, merger of Forward Markets Commission with SEBI, proposal to amend the RBI Act, changes in the Permanent Establishment norm to encourage return of fund managers back home and so on.

Playing with Numbers

One of the problems faced by the public sector is that there have been large budgetary cuts in plan allocations. In 2014-15, Plan size was designated as Rs.5,75,000 crore but in the revised estimates, it has become Rs. 4,67,934 crore. This is a shortfall of Rs.1,07,066 crore and this was realised by cutting expenditures on education, health, infrastructure, etc. Those schemes that are new have to face the biggest cuts but other schemes are also slowed down.

The cuts are not done all at once but over the years. If we look at the data on Plan expenditures for 2013-14, the budget estimate was Rs.5,55,322 crore but in the revised estimate it was brought down by about Rs.80,000 crore to Rs. 4,75,532 crore and now the current budget reveals that the actual expenditure was Rs.4,53,327 crore. That is a further decline in Rs.22,000 crore and the total short fall compared to the budgeted amount is Rs.1,02,000 crore. This

has become a common pattern in the last decade when the revised estimates are much less than the budget estimates and then the final actual figures are even lower. The implication is that government's announcement of schemes have to be taken with a pinch of salt or often as window dressing of the budget.

These shortfalls in expenditures apart from reflecting poor governance are also a result of the macroeconomic problems of budget making based on dressing up numbers. At the time of the budget presentation, the FM is under pressure to announce many things (as in the present budget speech) and for this purpose, the FM shows higher revenue figures so that she/he can claim a lower fiscal deficit. The pressure for this comes from the IMF and the credit rating agencies. Thus, both the revenue and expenditure numbers are dressed up by the budget makers. Since the figures are dressed up, revenue collection falls short and then to meet the fiscal deficit target, the expenditures have to be cut. Since the non-Plan expenditures are hard to curtail as they are committed on the basis of past commitments, it is the Plan size that bears the brunt of the cuts.

In 2013-14, Tax receipts were budgeted at Rs.8,84,078 crore but in the revised estimates they are Rs.8,36,026 crore and now the actual figures show them to be even lower at Rs.8,15,854 crore, i.e., a shortfall of about Rs.69,000 crore. Capital receipts are short by about Rs.64,000 crore. The, total receipts are, therefore, short of the budgeted amount by about Rs.1,05,000 crore. Thus, to maintain the target of Revenue and Fiscal Deficits at about 3.3% and 4.6% of GDP, respectively, expenditures had to be curtailed by the extent

of the shortfall in revenues. Since non-plan and revenue expenditures are mostly committed ones from the past, it is difficult to curtail them and the burden of cuts fell on the Plan account (as mentioned above) and capital account (about Rs. 41,000 crore). Both these have implications for the completion of public sector projects and schemes. The result is losses to the public sector, increased costs of setting up of projects and decline in government's prestige and increased pressure for privatization.

But the real issue is the credibility of the budget numbers if they repeatedly turn out to be incorrect. Further, what is the meaning of achieving the fiscal and revenue deficits targets if they have to be achieved by cutting back essential expenditures? This is like chopping one's nose to cure a cold. But in this the present FM is not the only one to blame, the earlier FMs have also resorted to the same devices.

Larger transfers to the States

The larger transfers by the Fourteenth Finance Commission from the Centre to the States from 32% to 42% of the tax pool has led to much confusion for analysts and the public. The amount of Tax revenue going to the States has risen from Rs.3,82,216 crore (BE) in 2014-15 to Rs.5,23,958 crore in 2015-16, an increase of Rs.1,42,000 crore or by 37%. That is why the budget estimate of Centre's Net Tax Revenue has hardly risen over the revised estimate for 2014-15 of Rs.9,08,463 crore and is Rs.57,000 crore less than the budget estimates for last year.

This is the reason that the total estimated expenditure (BE) for 2015-16 is slated to fall compared to 2014-15 (BE) by Rs.17,500 crore. That is why the Plan expenditure

(BE) compared to last year is slated to fall by 1,10,000 crore. The Central assistance for States and UT Plans has been cut by Rs.1,30,000 crore. This is roughly of the same order of magnitude as the additional revenue accruing to the States under the devolution of tax revenue to them.

A part of the loss of resources is sought to be made up by forcing the Public Enterprises (PE) to contribute more to the Plan financing under the Internal and Extra Budgetary Resources (IEBR). The figure is to rise by 28% or Rs.70,000 crore. This is unprecedented and unlikely to be achieved given that increased social obligations are sought to be placed on them which will lower their capacity to generate additional surpluses/profits. For instance, the Jan Dhan Yojana cannot but impact the profitability of the Public Sector Banks and the new insurance schemes will dent the profitability of the Insurance companies.

Comparisons with the Actuals of 2013-14 are telling. The most savage cuts in Central Plan allocations for 2015-16 have been in Rural Development, Energy and Social Services (consisting of education and health). Rural Development has been cut from Rs.52,000 crore to Rs.3,000 crore and Energy from Rs.1,82,000 crore to Rs.1,67,000 crore. Social Services have been cut from Rs.1,51,000 crore to Rs.81,000 crore. The cut for the Department for School Education and Literacy has been from Rs.43,700 crore to Rs.3,000 crore and for Department of Health and Family Welfare has been from Rs.22,500 crore to Rs.6,300 crore. The cut in the Ministry of Women and Child Development has been from Rs.18,000 crore to a token Rs.1,000 crore and in Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation the cut is from Rs.12,000 crore to

Rs.230 crore. The only big increase is in the allocation to Transport from Rs.1,04,000 crore to Rs.1,93,000 crore. In this, Ministry of Railways gets a boost from Rs.52,000 crore to Rs.98,000 crore and the Ministry of Road Transport and Highway from Rs.29,000 crore to Rs.83,000 crore.

The boost to the Railways and road construction is a reflection of the government's intention to step up investment in infrastructure. How much of this will ultimately be realized is a moot point since every year the Plan is being pruned and now the big items that can be pruned will be the ones that have big allocations. Other major sectors have any way been drastically cut and the scope of further cuts will be minimal.

The cuts in the social sectors and rural development are a result of the larger transfers to the States and the expectation that they will spend more on these sectors. The States have anyway been the major spenders on these items. The various Central schemes under these categories that were providing funds to the States are being pruned or the States expected to pick up a larger share of the spending out of the additional funds they are to get. Thus, the figures of expenditures by the Centre are not directly comparable with earlier years.

The macro-dynamics of policies

The budget is first an instrument of macroeconomic policies and after that only a means for achieving micro-economic goals. If the macroeconomic goals of say, stepping up growth, controlling inflation and providing higher employment are not achieved then the goal of poverty alleviation, benefits to the marginalized sections, etc., will also not be fulfilled.

The macroeconomic problem faced by India in the last 25 years has been that in spite of higher growth, poverty, malnourishment, unemployment, etc., have persisted. This is because governments of all hues since 1991 have ignored distribution of incomes. After the late 1990s they have followed the strategy of 'growth at any cost' with all costs falling on the workers and the environment. As the Economic Survey, 2015 notes, the employment elasticity of production has been low across all sectors and further there has been a 'jobless growth' in the organized sector of the economy which corners a majority of the investment in the economy.

To take care of the problem of the marginalized sections whose economic situation has hardly changed since 1991, safety nets were erected by UPA in the form of rights to food, employment and education. If the income generation of the marginalized sections had been buoyant and the government had spent enough on education (6% of GDP), health (3% of GDP), etc., they would not have needed these special rights. Those who are market fundamentalists deride these rights and their implementation as a waste of resources and constantly argue for an end to such schemes. They often cite the high degree of corruption and poor governance as a reason for discontinuing these schemes. Alternatively, they have been talking of giving direct benefits to the poor via cash transfer to their accounts via Aadhar, etc., which is now sought to be implemented via the JAM scheme. What is unstated is that if governance is poor, the Jan Dhan Yojana and Aadhar cards can also be fouled up. There are reports of multiple Aadhar cards or errors in the cards being issued, etc. History is replete with examples of how introduction of new technology has

often been fouled up by the human element.

The macro-dynamics of the budget affects prices and output of the economy and in turn it determines the budgetary calculus. Budgets in the last 5 years have projected a higher real growth rate and a lower inflation rate. This has resulted in lower revenue realization. That was the problem in 2013-14 and 2014-15. This is also likely to be the problem in 2015-16. Real growth is being projected at about 8% and inflation at about 3%.

The basis of the 8% rate of growth is the new series of data for national income that has been put out by the Central Statistical Organization. However, the Economic Survey and the RBI have expressed doubts about these numbers. Doubts have arisen because other economic data does not support a spurt in growth to 7.4% in 2014-15 and above 8% in 2015-16. Data on exports, imports, index of industrial production, tax collection, rate of investment and savings, etc., do not support the idea of a growth rate of 7.4% in 2014-15. The FM put it imaginatively as 'India is ready to fly' but others feel that India is flying but may not be soaring.

The inflation numbers are not accurate since the true inflation is not represented by the wholesale price index which is usually used for calculations (See, Kumar, 2013). This index has no representation for the services sector which now produces more than 50% of the output of the economy. For instance, the increase in the tax on services in this budget would raise prices but this will not get reflected in the inflation index. There are other reasons why our inflation index turns out to be an underestimate

(to be concluded)



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 14001–2004 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

janata

Vol. 70 No. 13
April 26, 2015

**Importance of being
Rahul Gandhi**
Kuldip Nayar

**Is GDP a good measure
of development?**
Devansh Mittal
Sandeep Pandey

Lokpal Amendment Bill 2014
Rajendra Prasad Singh

**Political roadblocks to
return of Kashmiri Pundits**
Shujaat Bukhari

Evolutionary Socialism
Bhagwat Prasad Rath

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Games leaders play

S. Viswam

Developments in national politics during the last few weeks can best be described as interesting. Looking at the way political parties are behaving these days, one cannot take the risk of welcoming the developments nor can one ignore them. While the coming together of six parties of the erstwhile Janata parivar for forming a single entity is undoubtedly a positive development, the steady decline in the Aam Aadmi Party is certainly a negative development. We have had the good and the bad happen in politics often before and hence there is little to be despondent or euphoric about.

When the AAP was formed, it raised high expectations because there was good reason to believe that the new formation would be a true representative of the people - the common man's party. After starting off well - the AAP was able to form a government in Delhi - the party has gone the way some of its predecessors have done, namely becoming a party with all the characteristics of negative features forcing out the positive and resulting in the steady erosion of internal democracy in functioning.

What is the position today? The AAP leaders are playing familiar

games. The party has split into pro-Arvind Kejriwal members and anti-Kejriwal members. The latter group alleges that Kejriwal has turned a dictator and is bent upon expelling all those questioning his style of leadership. Some senior leaders have also been expelled. Those expelled are creating problems for Kejriwal by refusing to accept the expulsion.

The Kejriwal group, on the other hand, says that after the expulsion of four senior leaders, two of whom are founder-members, Yogendra Yadav and Prashant Bhushan, the party leadership can focus on the governance of Delhi, make it a model state and plan on taking the party outside Delhi. The implication of their statement seems to be that it was the expelled leaders who stood in Kejriwal's way of developing the party. On the face of it, this is a ridiculous charge. The reality would seem to be that Kejriwal has begun asserting himself and has become intolerant of criticism and questioning.

This is why Yogendra Yadav and Prashant Bhushan are saying that AAP has now become a Khap panchayat with one leader who is dictatorial and insists on everyone else following his

Between the lines

Importance of being Rahul Gandhi

Kuldip Nayar

orders. These two leaders fell from Kejriwal's grace and have now been shown the door. The parliamentary party leader Dharamvira Gandhi has been removed from the post for questioning the ouster of Yadav and Bhushan. Whatever is happening is exactly what happens in a party which suddenly loses inner party democracy and succumbs to arbitrary dictats of the top leader who gets delusions of grandeur.

Listen to Yadav and Bhushan describe the state of affairs in the AAP. "The kangaroo trials, expulsions, witch-hunts, character assassination, rumour campaigns and emotional theatre to justify such macabre acts - all this is so true of the Stalinist regime." In short, Kejriwal is behaving like a dictator and is brooking no dissent. Those who disagree with him are shown the door and allowed no voice. What triggered the expulsion of Yadav and Bhushan was that they launched a Swaraj Abhiyan (self-rule) campaign some days ago and were recruiting volunteers for the cause of promoting the campaign. What is Kejriwal's objection to this? The Abhiyan is aimed at re-creating the movement that led to the birth of the AAP and became a favourite of the common man.

Is it time to write off the AAP? We think not. After all the AAP is in power in Delhi and has the credit of winning 67 of the 70 assembly seats. Kejriwal as chief minister has a good control over the administration and his own party. The majority vote has helped him consolidate his power and position. He will not repeat the mistake of resigning in haste and repenting at leisure. While the AAP government may endure, the party may slowly break up with

(Continued on Page 4)

Rahul Gandhi is in the news for one reason or the other. Yesterday, the debate was on his 57-day leave of absence from the country. In fact, Rahul himself should have told about his passion for chanting if that is what he was doing in Myanmar. That the party leaders, except her mother Sonia Gandhi and Congress President, have preferred to make his absence as his private affair does not help.

Public leaders have no private life once they are in the people's domain. People like their leaders to take them into confidence. It gives them a vicarious satisfaction of intimacy. Jawaharlal Nehru, Rahul Gandhi's great grandfather, always told about his trips abroad to people in public meetings and also conveyed to State chief ministers in letters that he wrote every fortnight.

Today's debate is about Rahul's vitriolic attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the Land Acquisition bill. Not that Modi is above criticism. But Rahul's remark that the Prime Minister had brought down the reputation of India by saying in Canada that they were cleansing the litter left behind by previous regime was churlish. It would have been better if Rahul had preferred to stay quiet on Modi's observation in Canada.

I recall when Inder Kumar Gujral, then in the opposition, was in Geneva, he resisted the temptation of criticizing the Congress. He said

that he had plenty opportunities to do so in the country itself. Why should the dirty lines be washed abroad?

Many will agree with Rahul that Modi should have avoided commenting on the domestic politics while in foreign countries. Ideally, there should be a bipartisan approach in comments on this subject. In fact, this was the attitude continued to be reflected till the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power. The party behaved like the opposition party even while in office. Unfortunately, that habit has got stuck with the BJP.

Rahul's biggest asset is that he is from the dynasty that has guided his party from its inception. His mother Sonia Gandhi will see to it that he succeeds her. But the disadvantage from such a practice is that the merit in the party is ignored. Nehru did not allow Morarji Desai to have his due because he had his daughter, Indira Gandhi, in mind. Maybe, the dynasty has given the country a sense of continuity but it has put several genuine claimants in jeopardy. It is a Hobson's choice which a democratic country can ill-afford.

The absolute majority that Prime Minister Narendra Modi got in Parliament showed that the nation wanted to move from this scenario. The resurgence of the BJP was essentially an expression against the Congress, not for the former. By and large, the country has come

(Continued on Page 4)

Is GDP a good measure of development?

Devansh Mittal
Sandeep Pandey

The development of a country is usually defined in terms of only its economic progress. The more a country economically progresses, the more it grows. Economic progress is measured in terms of its Gross Domestic Product. GDP is calculated in terms of the monetary value of all legal transactions involved in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of economy. More the goods and services are produced and consumed, more the GDP rises and more the country progresses. Most countries in the world and international financial institutions use GDP as a yardstick to measure progress. So much so that some modern economic experts are obsessed with merely maintaining high rates of GDP. Fall in GDP rates brings gloom to economies.

However, from time to time questions have been raised about the GDP being a true measure of progress. Does it capture the overall growth in a holistic sense? Does it hide more than it reveals? Does it have some adverse affects? If GDP is not a true reflection of progress, what is? Let us consider some of these questions.

GDP doesn't reveal the actual wealth distribution. It is not uncommon for the GDP of a country to increase simultaneously with increase in gap between the rich and the poor. It implies that the wealth being generated is concentrated in the hands of a minority rich section of society rather than being equitably distributed. Economic inequality does not lead to a healthy society as it results in a plethora

of social problems. These include crime, violence, physical and mental illness, unsatisfied aspirations of youth, disintegration of community life, trust deficit within and among families, drug and alcohol abuse, social segregation, more members of marginalised sections of society landing in jail, lower literacy levels and health status of society, homelessness, suicides, - to name a few. Thus what we get is an encumbered growth.

Let us consider the following examples which expose the flawed nature of GDP. Forests if allowed to flourish on their own do not contribute to growth but if trees are cut down and wood sold in the market then this activity contributes to GDP. If people are healthy they do not contribute to GDP. But if they fall ill frequently, have to consult doctors, undergo tests and consume medicines they contribute to GDP. If people are hale and hearty they do not contribute to GDP. But if they have to visit psychologists, psychiatrists or counselors, they contribute to GDP. If water sources are clean, they do not contribute to growth, but if they become polluted with industrial waste, chemicals used in agricultural fields and sewerage, their cleaning constitutes an economic activity. The bottled water industry stands to gain directly from polluted water sources. If society is crime free then it doesn't contribute to GDP. However, if we hire security personnel and buy expensive equipments, arms and ammunition, it contributes to GDP. At global level if there is peace between nations, it doesn't contribute to GDP. If there are wars

and dangerous weapons are used it may boost some economies. There is money to be made even in post-war reconstruction work, contracts for which are decided even before the war begins. If people exchange gifts and services as part of barter system, it doesn't contribute to growth but if the same things are bought and sold, they begin contributing to economy. If people live in joint family system as part of which they share resources then they don't contribute to GDP. But if there are disputes within family, lawyers have to be hired to contest legal cases, money is spent to divide property and to build boundary walls, nuclear families buy more items from the market - it is good for economy. If the production and consumption is local it is not good for larger economy. But if long distance transportation of goods is involved, packaging and middle men are involved then it contributes significantly to economy. If women take care of domestic chores it doesn't contribute to economy but if men go out and cook food in a restaurant or a lady babysits for payment then there is a contribution to GDP. If one helps another human being as a volunteer out of a sense of service, which gives inner satisfaction, it doesn't contribute to economy. But if the same job is done by a professional, it contributes to GDP. If one believes in the omnipresent notion of God and worships from home it doesn't contribute to economy. But if one goes on pilgrimage to visit a special place where God resides, it contributes to GDP. If one pays attention to words of wisdom from elders in family and community

it doesn't contribute to GDP, but if one goes to listen to one of the commercial preachers, some of them in the garb of sages, it contributes to economy.

Quite clearly GDP is a very inadequate criterion of growth. It doesn't capture quality of human relationships, psychological and physical well being of human beings, sustainable relationship with nature, sense of security or even the fulfillment of basic material needs of all human beings.

The idea that 'product' can make human beings progress will have to give in to a more holistic notion of growth where 'happiness' of human beings becomes the key criterion. Some countries like Bhutan are already measuring the progress of their society on the basis of a Gross National Happiness index.

(Continued from Page 3)

more members getting disillusioned with Kejriwal. But he still has the wherewithal to stay on in power and even enhance his political clout since he is heading his own party government and is not beholden to any other party or leader for his survival. Of course, he has to ensure that dissent does not grow and that the expelled leaders like Yadav and Bhushan are unable to do serious mischief.

In the coming days and weeks we are bound to hear more of the Janata Parivar and of the AAP. When Bihar elections fall due, the Janata Parivar parties will come into their own as parties with a past and a future too. All its leaders are seniors and have to learn to work with each other and one another in a common cause. They have to put aside the temptation of ousting the rivals

and seizing control! The merged entity will bank heavily on mutual cooperation and give and take.

(Continued from Page 3)

to develop a secular temperament, realizing that only parochialism will undo the idea of India. The pro-Hindutva BJP too has come to realize that. Home Minister Raj Nath Singh has endorsed this view in a recent speech.

The 10-month non-rule of Modi shows that the rhetoric during the election campaign has not gone beyond the paper. This may have disappointed the core of Hindutva. But Rahul Gandhi has found in it a climate favourable to him. He seems to have drawn a page from his grandmother, Indira Gandhi's book to make most of the situation. She played the *garibi hatao* (oust poverty) card and rehabilitated the Congress at a time when there were fissures appearing in the party.

In the same manner, Rahul has coined the phrase of '*suit-boot ki sarkar*'. He too has realized that the criticism of the rich goes down well in a country where the have-nots abound. His party has, however, gone miles away from the ideology of socialism which it once proudly owned and propagated. In this way, the Congress has somewhat repudiated Nehru who would say that a country which had so many poor people had no option except to move left.

Rahul, whatever the jibes of the BJP, has touched the respondent chord. The untimely rains have damaged wheat crop in northern India, particularly Punjab and Haryana, India's granary. The case in Maharashtra is no different from most states in the north. It is a bitter story for the mango and sugarcane

growers. For the state's beleaguered farm sector, crippled by two drought years in 2012 and 2014 and recurrent hailstorms and unseasonal rainfall, the latest blow came as recently as earlier this month when a fresh hailstorm destroyed standing crop including, cruelly, some ready for harvest.

The state government may bail out the farmers but cannot do so to a great extent because their financial condition is not too happy. Rahul has found a convenient target. But this does not help in the long run. It may be a scoring point during elections. The political parties have to join hands to face the calamity which has befallen on the country, not on a particular political organization.

The opposition built on the basis of the Land Acquisition Bill is counter-productive. The Congress itself had moved a similar legislation when it was in power. Of course, the consent of farmers and social impact have been wrongly dropped from the BJP's bill but, as Prime Minister Modi has said, he is open to suggestions indicates that he may agree to some points which Rahul had made.

Rahul's attack on the government may give a wrong impression that he was for a progressive set-up. Jyotiraditya Scindia was quick in saying that his party was not anti-corporate because he knows that all political parties draw funds for elections from industrial houses and businessmen. Whether the Congress, with its close connection with the corporate sector, can reclaim its constituency among the poor is yet to be seen. But if the perception of Rahul's speech spreads such an impression, he would have underlined his importance.

Lokpal Amendment Bill 2014, a virtual undoing of the parent Act

Rajendra Prasad Singh

It seems most of the civil society persons and groups including esteemed Anna Hazare, Justice Hegde, Shanti Bushan, Prasant Bhusan, Medha Patkar, Arvind Kejriwal, Kiran VEDI, Aruna Roy and CHRI team are still unaware of the dangerous provisions mooted in 'The Lokpal and Lokayuktas and other related law (Amendment) Bill, 2014' which was introduced in Lok Sabha on 18 December 2014 last. Soon after its introduction, the Bill was referred to the concerned Parliamentary Standing Committee, which would submit its report within three months from the date of referral. From the scanty coverage that the Bill could bag in the national media, most of the readers have innocently thought that the Bill merely aimed at removing a technical snag around the much debated issue of 'leader of opposition' on account of which the Lokpal Selection Committee headed by the PM didn't even sit for once till date. The Bill of course provides that in absence of the leader of the opposition in technical sense, the leader of the single largest opposition party in Lok Sabha would be taken as a member in the Lokpal Selection Committee. On a closure scrutiny, this very provision, which is otherwise an established convention in our system of parliamentary democracy, could have been mandated by the Central Government under Section 62 of the parent Act (Power to remove difficulties), instead of going through a time consuming and cumbersome route of amendment to the Act itself.

But the Amendment Bill doesn't stop at removing the above snag. Anybody going through the Bill would be dismayed to notice that it goes far beyond the minor issue of redefining 'the leader of opposition' and seeks to nullify the very quintessence of the parent Lokpal Act, for which anti-corruption crusaders with Anna Hazare in forefront had waged an arduous country wide battle with political class in not-so-distant past. That quintessence is the reconstitution of CBI the country's prime investigating agency into a strong but independent and autonomous body capable of investigating and prosecuting any case of corruption alleged against a public servant freely, fairly and fearlessly. In order to impart such a new *Avatar* to the CBI, the Central Lokpal Act 2013 had carried out some crucial amendments to the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act 1946 the law that primarily governs the constitution and functioning of CBI. As is well known, the present Government at Centre chose to delay the implementation of the provisions of the Act for quite some months on the plea of 'absence of leader of opposition' and when that trick became unworkable due to strident criticism from very many quarters including Supreme Court, they have taken to the new and a more cunning route of amending the concerned provisions of parent Act via the present Bill. In case the concerned provisions of the present Bill get passed by the Parliament,

the whole nation shall be left with a virtually weakened, truncated and divided CBI, even if the Director CBI continues to formally enjoy the freedom and independence thanks to the provision of his selection by a 3-member apex body comprising Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition and Chief Justice of Supreme Court.

In the parent Lokpal Act the DSPE Act was suitably amended to provide for a strong and integrated CBI with its Director exercising 'overall supervision and control' over the Director Prosecution, so that any allegation of corruption if found genuine as per the investigation carried out by the Director CBI, would be subject to prosecution by the Director Prosecution and the guilty punished in a time-bound manner as laid down under the Lokpal Act. But the Amendment Bill has removed the clause providing for overall supervision and control of Director CBI over the Director Prosecution and replaced it by a queer provision which reads, "In case of difference of opinion between the Director and the Director of Prosecution, the matter shall be referred to the Attorney-General for India for his advice and such advice shall be binding". Thus the Amendment Bill creates enough space for differences of opinion to crop up between two Directors, by virtue of which the Director Prosecution may refuse to carry out the recommendation of Director CBI for prosecuting a public servant

proved corrupt on the conclusion of investigation by the latter. Not only that. The Amendment Bill provides for such differences of opinion to be referred to the Attorney-General whose advice shall be binding on all concerned. Needless to say, the Attorney-General of India like his state counterpart the Advocate General, is a Government appointee and therefore can't go against the intentions of the Government-that-be in any matter concerning prosecution. Should the above Bill get passed by the Parliament, it is the Government of the day the real boss of the Attorney General, whose unwritten fancies and fiats would rule the roost as regards whether to prosecute or not a proven case of corruption. Endowing the Attorney-General with such final authority as the amendment Bill does, shall doubtless pave for complete re-entry of the Government albeit through a backdoor into the CBI set-up as the supreme arbiter over all matters concerning prosecution. A perturbing question now looms large- what is the use of holding a fair and impartial investigation under the aegis of an independent and autonomous body called CBI, if the Attorney-General or for that matter the ruling elite can simply say a flat no to the need for prosecuting and punishing the concerned public servant proved guilty by such investigation? The Amendment Bill, if enacted into law, shall land up the whole nation in a quixotic situation, where a thief caught shall be set free, only because the Government wishes so.

The Amendment Bill provides, "The annual performance appraisal report of the Director of Prosecution shall be recorded and maintained in the Ministry of Law and Justice, in such manner as may be prescribed."

That being so, is there even a remote chance where the Director Prosecution shall follow a course other than the one wished by the Government.

There are of course some other provisions in the Amendment Bill which would dilute the letter and spirit of the landmark anti-corruption law Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act 2013 and which therefore necessitate a critical appraisal by all concerned. However, of all the new dispensations mooted in the Bill, the ones providing for both direct and indirect subjugation of Director of Prosecution under the Central Government as mentioned above are most ominous amounting to virtual undoing of the historic Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act 2013.

The Lokpal Act 2013 amended the DSPE Act 1946 (that governs the constitution and functioning of country's premier investigating agency viz. CBI) with a view to ensuring that the Director CBI in order to act freely, fairly and fearlessly in investigating any case of corruption referred to him by Lokpal or any other competent authority (such as Supreme Court, any of the High Courts, Central Government or any State Government) would henceforth be selected by an apex committee comprising PM, Leader of Opposition and Chief Justice of India (in fulfilment of a long standing demand for several decades for transforming CBI from a servile tool of the Government to an independent and autonomous body, that served as the main driver of recently unfolded Anna inspired anti-corruption movement culminating in enactment of Lokpal Act 2013). Secondly the Act of 2013 also ensured that every complaint of corruption held genuine through enquiry and

investigation by the Director CBI would be subject to prosecution by the Director Prosecution in the designated Courts for punishing the corrupt public servants in a time-bound manner as laid down in the said Act. To achieve this integrated objective i.e. completion of investigation immediately followed by the prosecution, the Act of 2013 justifiably made the provision in 4BA (2) of DSPE Act that 'The Director of Prosecution shall function under the overall supervision and control of Director' (meaning Director CBI). In fact this Act created a new Directorate of Prosecution within the DSPE structure, with its focus being the time-bound prosecution and punishment of the public servants held guilty of corruption by the investigation conducted by the CBI. Argued from a reverse position, in the absence of a dedicated prosecution directorate to work under the control of Director CBI the very promise of the Lokpal Act for a time-bound punishment to the corrupt public servants would remain only a pipedream.

It seems the NCPRI has erred in confusing the Director Prosecution mentioned in the Amendment to DSPE Act (Section 4BA) effected by Lokpal Act 2013, with the Director Prosecution mentioned in Section 12 (Prosecution Wing) of the said Act. Let it be made absolutely clear that these two Directors of Prosecution are not the one and same entity, but two separate entities having two separate modes of appointment and two separate mandates. While the latter (Section 12 of Lokpal Act) is a wing of Lokpal constituted by Lokpal itself with the sole mandate to prosecute the cases of corruption on the orders of Lokpal, the former (Section 4BA of DSPE Act) though bearing the same nomenclature

i.e. Director Prosecution, happens to be the head of a Directorate of Prosecution, to be appointed on the recommendation of CVC but to function under the control and supervision of Director CBI, for the purpose of prosecuting not only the cases of corruption if and when referred by Lokpal (vide Section 20-8) but also for prosecuting all cases of crime including that of corruption on the orders of Director CBI. Thus the Director Prosecution acting under the Director CBI (Section 4BA of DSPE Act) has a much wider mandate than that of Director Prosecution acting under Lokpal (Section 12 of Lokpal Act). It goes to the credit of Lokpal Act 2013 that this Act true to its all-encompassing anti-corruption mission, provided for a dedicated prosecution directorate for CBI while putting in place a dedicated prosecution wing for Lokpal.

It is however disconcerting to note that the Lokpal Amendment Bill 2014 very cunningly seeks to dismantle the integrated investigation-cum-prosecution system which finds embodied in the single, reconstituted structure of CBI made possible through amendment to DSPE Act 1946 as laid down in the Schedule to the Lokpal Act 2013. Firstly, the Clause 9 of the said Bill deletes the provision of 'overall control and supervision' to be exercised by the Director CBI over the Director Prosecution, creating thereby necessary space for the Government to exercise the control and supervision over the Director Prosecution. Next, the said Clause of the Bill allows the Director Prosecution to hold differences of opinion from that of the Director CBI, which implies that even if the Director CBI has proved a public servant corrupt through

his investigation, the Director Prosecution may simply refuse to prosecute him in the Special Court citing the new clause. In the ensuing standoff between the two Directors the proven case of a corrupt public servant would enjoy the virtual protection from any manner of trial or punishment in the post-investigation period. The next provision of the Clause 9 is further reprehensible since it provides for such differences of opinion to be "referred to the Attorney-General for India for his advice, and his advice shall be final and binding". Needless to say, the Attorney-General is basically an appointee of the Central Government and therefore whatever advice he would tender in the context of the above differences of opinion can't but be in line with the wish of the Government-that-be. Further, to render the subjugation of the Director Prosecution under the Governmental control foolproof, the Clause-9 of the Bill provides, "The annual performance appraisal report of the Director of Prosecution shall be recorded and maintained in the Ministry of Law and Justice, in such manner as may be prescribed.". Thus, the Bill aims at reducing the Director Prosecution to a servile tool of the Government, who can render the Director CBI a virtually dysfunctional executive and his charge-sheet against a corrupt public servant meaningless by exercising his right to differences of opinion with Director CBI, by his obligation to adhere to the decision of Attorney General and by his unwritten loyalty to the concerned Ministry of the Central Government which maintains his APAR. The nation would thus be pushed back to the square one, i.e. Governmental control over prosecuting agencies, against which the anti-corruption crusade spanning several decades

since mid-sixties of last century had marched forward culminating in the enactment of historic Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act 2013.

As for the question who should maintain whose APAR it is worthwhile to mention that the APAR of a particular public servant should be maintained by his/her controlling authority. In the instant case, therefore the APAR of Director Prosecution working under the control of Director CBI needs to be maintained by the latter, and that of Director Prosecution constituted and working under Lokpal by the Lokpal. The proposal to entrust the maintenance of APAR of Director Prosecution to the Ministry of Law and Justice, GoI aims at making it doubly sure that the Director Prosecution never falters in dancing to the choreography of Central Government.

While the NCPRI's submission on Lokpal Amendment Bill 2014 is on the whole a valuable critique of the various problematic propositions mooted therein, it seems to lack in a clear understanding of the highly cunning provisions made in Clause 9 of the Bill on the innocuous pretext of providing functional autonomy and independence to the Directorate of Prosecution vis-a-vis Director CBI. I wish the NCPRI fraternity to re-read the Clause and restate its position thereon since this single clause of the Bill has the potential to decimate at one go not only the quintessence of historic Lokpal Act 2013 but also the entire fabric of an independent and autonomous investigating and prosecuting system that the said Lokpal Act had laboriously built up by way of amending several archaic and flawed legislations.

Political roadblocks to return of Kashmiri Pundits

Shujaat Bukhari

“The Chief Minister (Mufti Mohammad Sayeed) assured the union home minister that the state government will acquire and provide land at the earliest for composite townships in the valley,” reads a press release issued by Press Information Bureau on April 7.

This routine press release issued after Chief Minister Mufti met Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh kicked a fresh controversy which refuses to die down. This has also put the coalition partners – Peoples Democratic Party and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) – in a tight spot. For BJP, the issue of Kashmiri Pandits has been an inalienable part of their politics on Kashmir and for PDP it hardly can afford to do anything that is construed as undermining the politics that is centered around the sentiments espoused by the majority community in the state.

For both PDP and BJP, the government formation was a hard-earned thing after a two-month-long back-channel negotiations. The government came into existence on the basis of a document called “The Agenda of Alliance”, in which the return of Kashmiri Pandits also figured, besides some other contentious issues. This is what the document says about the issue: “Protecting and fostering ethnic and religious diversity by ensuring the return of Kashmiri Pandits with dignity based on their rights as state subjects and reintegrating as well as absorbing them in the Kashmiri milieu. Reintegration will be a process that will start within the state as well as the civil society, by taking

the community into confidence”. As far as the wording is concerned, it is straight and unambiguous; it does not talk about any township whether composite or separate. Surely a process has to be followed.

But the way the Home Ministry issued the press release, it led to a controversy and understandably so. Even as chief minister Mufti clarified on the floor of the House that there was no plan to have separate or isolated townships, the damage had already been done. Despite the state’s painstaking effort to clear the air, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh reiterated on April 9 that Government of India would go ahead with the plan to rehabilitate the Pandits. On the other hand, the response of separatists was also extreme. Concerns can always be genuine but to draw parallels with Palestine in such haste does not help in creating a scope for understanding the issue in the right perspective.

As pointed out by Sanjay Tickoo, the Srinagar-based president of Kashmiri Pandit Sangarsh Samiti (KPSS) that “in one breath they (separatists) are opposing their return and also talking about their return with dignity”. Tickoo is a genuine voice and cannot be ignored since he represents those families who have chosen to stay back in Valley despite the troubles Kashmir has seen.

Notwithstanding the fact that migration of Kashmiri Pandits was a dark chapter in the history of Kashmir, there is hardly disagreement on their return. If you ask a common Kashmiri he feels incomplete without his Pandit neighbour as

his being part of a mohalla had made Kashmir a distinctive place about which we continue to boast about. But the unfortunate thing is that the murky politics takes over every positive effort when you try to resolve issues in a conflict. If BJP continues to play this politics and lay stress on anything which further isolates this community from rest of the people in Valley, it will not be doing any service to them. Since their migration, most of KPs had been aligning with BJP but in the last assembly elections it became clear that except for a section the rest have distanced themselves from the party, probably not to be projected as against the majority community.

Return of KPs at this stage seems to be their returning to Kashmir and not to their “homes” if we go by the proposals projected by some of the organisations representing them in Jammu and Delhi. Both state and central governments need to come clear on the terminology used by the Home Minister and others. “Composite Township” would generally mean that all communities will be part of it but technically it seems impossible to create such a space in changing landscape of Valley. Ordinarily the KPs should have returned to their homes. But most of them have sold their properties and there are only those families who used to live in rural Kashmir who have their homes (dilapidated) standing and land intact. All efforts to lure the KPs with doles in the past have not worked.

The previous government constructed safe colonies for them

(Continued on Page 15)

Evolutionary (Science-Directed) Socialism: VIII

Bhagwat Prasad Rath

Seven reputed intellectuals of the world met to discuss the present status of the world and suggest a theory to guide thinker-activists' conscious of the ailing humanity.

The intellectuals were: Michael Albert, Editor Z Magazine, Leslie Cagan, an organizer who has been involved in hundreds of movements, events and projects particularly in Cuba, Noam Chomsky, a professor of linguistics at MIT in Cambridge and a tireless critic of U.S foreign policy, Robin Hahnel, a professor of economics at American University in Washington D.C. and a participant in diverse anti-war, community, socialist, and anti-interventionist movements. Mel King is a professor at MIT and director of the Community Fellows program. Lydia Sargent edits Z Magazine and is a director, playwright, and actor with the Newbury street Theater in Boston. She has been involved in the feminist and anti-war movements.

Together they wrote the book: *Liberating Theory*.

Michael Albert wrote, "..... establishing a humane society is the only way to attain lasting liberation. Nonetheless, in recent years "the left" has largely lost its capacity to project an uplifting conception of human possibilities and a plausible picture of how people's potentials might be fulfilled. Since I believe *Liberating Theory* can help reinvigorate our desires for capacities to achieve a better future, I worked on and advocate its conceptual framework and hope others will do likewise."

Leslie Cagan wrote, "... I believe it will be possible to bring fundamental, revolutionary change to this country. Out of the everyday struggles of people through this nation and around the world, we learn new ways to name the problems and define new solutions. At the same time, our organizing and mobilizing needs a framework that gives direction to our efforts...I hope this book will be read by people active in a wide range of political, social, and economic struggles, as well as those just beginning to think about such issues. This book does not solve the problem or give us magical formulas for organizing. What I hope it does do is provoke discussion, open up debate, motivate further theoretical work and play some role in inspiring us all."

Wrote Lydia Sargent, "...As I drift further from the events, ideas, and goals that contributed to my own radical consciousness-raising, I feel more and more impatience, despair, even boredom creeping into my political work and my life and getting a stranglehold on my lofty reasons. I am haunted by the fear that I will live out my life as a witness to the continued existence of what I hate, without ever seeing the fruits of a hoped for revolution".

Robin Hahnel: "Functioning separately, movements to overcome racism, sexism, classism, and authoritarianism fail. Functioning together and sharing aims and methods, they can succeed. I helped write *Liberating Theory* because I believe that to go forward radically we need to develop a

new understanding of society and ourselves suited to human potentials and able to promote solidarity among people with different priorities... I know that life and society can be much better, and that we can make it happen."

Liberating Theory takes into consideration the development in the field of science.

To quote the book, "Just as Marx and Engels paid strict attention to 'state of Science' in their time, we should keep up with contemporary developments. Ironically, however, though most contemporary Marxists pride themselves on being "Scientific", few bother to notice that "state of the art" science has changed dramatically in the last hundred years. While avoiding simplistic mimicry and misapplication of scientific principles, we should update our methods by seriously examining contemporary science for new ideas relevant to our theoretical efforts.

Modern quantum physics, for example, teaches that reality is not a collection of separate entities but a vast and intricate "unbroken whole". Ilya Prigogine comments, "The new paradigms of science may be expected to develop into the new science of connectedness which means the recognition of unity in diversity." When thinking about phenomena, we inevitably conceptually abstract parts from the whole in which they reside, but they then exist as separate entities only in our perceptions. There are no isolated electrons, for example, only fields of

force continually ebbing and flowing in a seamless web of activity which manifests events that we choose to call electrons because it suits our analytic purposes. For the physicist, each electron, quark, or whatever is, is a “process” and a network”. As a process it has a developmental trajectory...extending through all time. As a network, it is part of an interactive pattern... stretching throughout all space. Every part embodies and is subsumed in a larger whole.

In Liberating Theory there is in-depth discussion of four interconnected topics. They are: 1. Community (the concept of one world). 2. Feminism (man and woman equality) 3. State abolition (anarchism) 4. Economic equality. Nowhere in the world do we find progress in any one field as visualized by the authors. In every field the world has remained static or moved in the reverse direction.

It is unfortunate that the world thinkers are ignoring the only civilization which was ideal in all the fields mentioned in Liberating Theory. This was the Sindhu Civilization.

No king or priest oppressed the people in the Sindhu Civilization (archeology and the Mahabharata). There were Yogis guiding the people.

To quote R. P. Chandra, “a group of stone statuettes found at Mohenjo-Daro in a mutilated condition seems to me to supply this missing link between the pre-historic and the historic civilization of India. The only part of these statuettes that is in fair state of preservation, the bust is characterized by a stiff erect posture of the head, the neck and the chest, and half-shut eyes looking

fixedly at the tip of the nose. The posture is not met with in the figure sculptures, whether pre-historic or historic, of any people outside India; but it is very conspicuous in the images worshipped by all Indian sects, including the Jainas and the Buddhists, and is known as the posture of the Yogin or one engaged in practicing concentration.

According to the Buddhist texts Gautama Buddha taught that austerities were not absolutely necessary for gaining perfect knowledge: Dhyana-yoga (the practice of the four dhyanas) was enough for that purpose. Buddha says in conclusion, “Well, Kevaddha, it is because I perceive danger in the practice of riddhi or wonders (as well as mind and character reading), that I loathe, and abhor, and am ashamed thereof.” (Survival of the prehistoric Civilization of the Indus Valley from the book Studies in the History of Indian philosophy Volume-I. Edited by Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya). Buddha was against miracles and mysticism.

The elite of the Sindhu Civilization practiced the three philosophies: Yoga, Samkhya and Lokayat (collectively known as Aanwikhiki). Most of the women were enjoying sexual freedom (Mahabharata and Jainism up to the period of Mahavir). There was egalitarianism in the Sindhu society (R. Rajagopalan: The Secrets of Indus Valley; archeologist R. S. Vist). The Sindhu civilization was free from violence (Mahabharata and archeology). The elite of the society were fully rational (Arthasastra).

Why did the Sindhu civilization develop differently from other civilizations? The answer is that this was the only developed woman’s

civilization in the world. No male-dominated civilization of the world can give so much importance to non-violence by the elite and the absence of wars. Yoga can only be the discovery of women folk because all its values are matricentric. The presence of too many female figurines in this civilization also reinforces the idea that a female-centric civilization developed in this Sindhu valley. Women’s sexual freedom and their choosing the caring and sharing males as the fathers of their progeny was the key factor in development of the human species. The story of Sulabha in the Mahabharata supports this point of view. The Vedas tell about Indra’s killing of Vritra and Namuchi. Both were Yogis (Mahabharata) and did not have wives. (The Vedas and the Mahabharata) Sulabha was a scholar of Samkhya and preferred Janaka as her sexual partner. Uddalaka episode in the Mahabharata shows that even married women living in families had sexual freedom. Madhavi, the daughter of king Jajati spurned kings and preferred to marry Galab, an ascetic. Even great kings and warriors wanted their wives to mate with sages and have children from them. The great Vedic king Sudas is an example. He asked his wife, the famed lady Madayanti to mate with Vasista, the sage.

These women-centric societies led to a civilization free from predatory institutions like the military, the priests, the sports-supporting and the ruling classes as mentioned by Thorstein Veblen. Unlike women in the past who preferred caring and sharing males as sexual partners, today’s women are crazy to marry members of these predatory institutions. So today’s competitive societies are becoming more and more violent and cruel as

days pass. Caring and sharing people are marginalized as twentyfirst century advances.

The great-ape species are five in number. They are Orangoutang, Gorilla, Chimpanzee, Bonbon and Homospecies. In the past women of the last two species were more powerful than men. Bonbon women were indiscriminate in choosing sexual partners. Only among Homospecies women were choosy. They chose sharing and caring males to alpha males having powerful bodies. This led to the diminishment of physical dichotomy of males and females only among Homospecies.

Recent scientific discoveries give credence to the female-centricity of human evolution.

The Hindu (11th December-2014) contains an evolution-centered article named *Skulls Reveal the Dawn of Civilization* by D. Balasubramanian. To quote the article: "When and how did we humans turn "modern" and technologically and culturally adept? This was the theme of a symposium held several weeks ago at the Salk Institute in California. Dr. Ann Gibbons has given a lucid summary of the main conclusions of the symposium in the 24 October 2014 issue of the journal *Science*. The experts attending the meeting suggest that "self-domestication" turned humans into the co-operative species we are today... Dr. Gibbons mentions the work of Robert Cieri and others... They carefully measured and compared the features of the skulls of archaeological specimens of the early humans (80,000 years old) with those of more recent (some 10,000 years ago and some contemporary) ones. The sheer job of collecting thousands of skulls, measuring their shapes,

dimensions, features of individual parts such as the brows, ridges between the eyes, shapes of teeth, size of the cranial part of the skull (which house the brain) and so forth has been a gargantuan task in itself. But they persisted and found some remarkable differences of the human skulls over the millennia. The brow ridges above the eye have reduced over the years, teeth became smaller, the cranial volume came down (smaller brains), and the faces shortened over time... They have termed this set of changes in the skull and head itself, as "crania-facial feminization". This is because they claim that these changes over the years have made the male faces look more like female ones. Over the last 80,000 years and particularly after the early, middle and late stone age era), we have become less, "wild" and more "delicate"."

Studies on animals, for example dogs, have suggested that the genes that regulate robustness and aggression affect the facial shape. These in turn lead to lower levels of "aggression molecules" such as testosterone, stress hormones and changes in the action of neural crest cells leading to changes in teeth, muscles, bones and glands. See how much the skull can tell!

Such changes have not been sudden or rapid, but evolved over time. The growth in human size, beginning about 200,000 years ago, led to higher population densities, giving rise to the play of natural selection.

Humans started forming groups as early as about 68,000 years ago in Africa and began their long migration across the globe. In doing so, they formed groups or societies over millennia, settling down in various places across the world.

Languages, customs, social mores, culture, religions and technology began emerging. The main thread that bound each such society has been tolerance, cooperation and leveling down of aggression. This, in turn, Cieri and others argue, led to the evolution of technology - tools, taming and using fire, navigation, fishing and birding, water harvesting and agriculture - all over the millennia spanning the early middle and later stone ages (almost until 25,000 years ago) Domestication of horse and cattle occurred. All this could happen because we 'self-domesticated'.

Today human brain has lost much of its power of socialization. Families and societies are getting adversely affected. Violence against women is devastating societies. Surveys are increasing our worries.

The director of Children's Movement for Civic Awareness, Sadasiva says "We were not only taken aback by some of the views and answers of the students, but worried for the country, especially about violence against women and about being 'ok' with violating rules."

Among youth (15 to 19 years) 55% say the dresses of women excite them.

36% among girls and 44% among boys think dowry should be given at the time of marriage or later.

65% among students say that boys and girls belonging to different religions should not gather together in public places.

Democratic consciousness is decreasing day by day. The majority of youth is not against military rule in the country.

Union Budget 2015-16: Continuity with the Past Framework-II

Arun Kumar

As argued in Kumar (2013), the problem of the Indian economy is that what is thought to be the solution has been the problem. The rate of investment in the economy has dropped sharply since 2010 because of the uncertainty around government decisions, an uncertain international environment in which all the major economies are growing sluggishly and so on. In such a situation, private sector is not investing enough and the public sector is hamstrung by the cut in the plan expenditures to maintain the fiscal deficit targets. Thus, the investment rate has continuously fallen. Thus, maintaining fiscal prudence at the behest of the credit rating agencies has become the problem.

In today's environment, when the rate of inflation is down because of the fall in the international commodity prices, current account deficit has declined due to fall in the import bill and reserves have been rising, the government could have taken a bold posture to revive the economy by letting the fiscal deficit rise by say 1.5% of GDP and use the extra resources it would make available (about Rs.2 lakh crore) to step up infrastructure investment which is woefully lacking and holding back growth. An increase in the rate of growth given the adverse income distribution would also help the poor by generating employment. It would also mean that the credit rating agencies would not downgrade us because our rate of growth is robust.

To conclude, if the budget continues with the earlier policies, it will also not generate much additional employment. Its focus is largely on the expansion of the large scale sector which generates few jobs and displaces many when it expands at the cost of the small scale sector. This is not to say that there is nothing for the small scale sector. But, the point being made here is that the focus of Make in India and other such programmes is the corporate large scale sector.

Another point of macroeconomic caution for the present policy makers is the continuing low rate of inflation. It is due to a decline in commodity prices like, that of petroleum products. This is signaling a possible slowdown in the world economy. India needs to take precautionary steps to deal with this possibility in 2015-16. Today, there is an arc of instability in the world which stretches from Afghanistan to Iraq, Syria, Libya, Nigeria, East Africa and now Ukraine. This is supplemented by the economic uncertainty introduced by the Greek election results and the survival of the Euro zone as a viable entity. The Greek situation is having its ring in Spain, Italy and other European countries facing an economic crisis. Thus, we need to depend more on our internal markets than on the global markets but the budget has a far greater external orientation than it should.

Other high visibility schemes

The budget contains important tax proposals, like, the introduction of

GST from 2016 but the shelving of the much discussed DTC. It implies that a much greater importance is being attached to indirect taxes than to direct taxes. This is a reflection of a regressive thinking.

Introduction of GST has been a demand of the international agencies, MNCs and our big business. That is why they talk of a unified market being created via the GST. But it is hardly considered that GST may not be good for the small and medium sectors for whom the local markets are more critical. GST would require massive computerization for businesses and that is difficult for small and tiny units. These units may get out competed by the large and medium scale sector and if so, there could be greater sickness amongst them with adverse consequences for employment generation. GST also lends itself to black income generation because of its complexity.

With much aplomb, the Budget speech of the FM talked of the several schemes that would help curtail generation of black incomes in the country and force the black money stashed abroad to return to the country. This is a reflection of the pressure on the government to be seen to be proactive on this front. While it is good to tighten the rules and regulations with regard to black income generation it must be remembered that a law on paper may be good but it is its implementation that is crucial. India has failed on this front. There have been dozens of committees in the past

60 years that have analysed the situation and made thousands of suggestions. Of these, hundreds have been implemented but the black economy has continued to grow. The reason is that implementation has been faulty because there is lack of political will.

The schemes/changes announced presently can only work if the will exists to implement the rules. If we do not catch anyone how can we imprison them for 10 years or levy a fine of 300%. In the last 25 years so many Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAA) have been signed but not one name has come. The information that has come is from stolen data from bankers. Even the latest data to come was released by journalists of ICIJ and not the government. Government is not proactively seeking information from Julian Assange who claims to have a lot of data.

Abolition of wealth tax would make the fight against the black economy more difficult. It is true that very little (Rs. 1,000 crore) was being collected under this head. But that is because there are so many concessions and deductions (like, ownership of shares and house property) that this tax appears to be redundant. It needed to be made buoyant by removing concessions. It is difficult to hide property so a lot of tax could be collected as wealth tax and to pay it, incomes would have to be declared. Even if a property is held benami, if concessions are removed, tax would have to be collected and income revealed (Kumar, 2013).

The budget has tried to be popular with the middle class, an important constituent of the BJP support base. It has offered various concessions to this category. It was stated that tax

need not be paid for incomes of about Rs.4.5 lakh. The question is who are the people who constitute the middle class? For one to reduce the tax liability via savings, one should have a high enough income. If one is to save Rs.4.5 lakh, the income should be at least 3 times higher or say, Rs.13.5 lakh. This is more than 10 times the per capita income. A tiny fraction of the countrymen earn such incomes, say less than 1% of the population. Thus, of the middle class of say 150 million only 8% would be able to take full advantage of these schemes. The rest have to consume and survive before they can save so much and take advantage of the schemes. In fact, since only about 40 million individuals file tax returns, and effective tax is paid by about 10 million, most of the middle class is out of the tax net and cannot take advantage of the schemes announced.

It is also argued that the country's savings rate has fallen since 2008 so it needed a boost and these schemes can help. What is forgotten is that concessions only change the form of savings but do not lead to higher savings. For that, incomes have to go up. Finally, much is being made of skill development for Make in India programme. But can this be achieved if savage cuts are made in the education budgets. In brief, the Union budget 2015-16 is full of contradictions because the macro-dynamics is not correct.

Conclusion

Any budget is not just an instrument of economic policy but also a statement of the politics of the ruling dispensation. This budget is no different. In spite of the change of regime from the UPA to NDA, the political message is the same because both the dispensations

differ only on the social plane and not on the economic one. They both have been pro big business and the budget reflects that. They are following policies under the direction of international finance capital. So, there has been lack of independent policy space to frame policies beneficial to the common people of India.

Given the analysis of the budget numbers in the preceding sections, there is need to make budget making more realistic and transparent but that has not been done by the FM. The claim that the target of Fiscal Deficit has been maintained needs reassessment if it is done through expenditure cuts in essential areas. Consequently, the Macro dynamics which needed change to give a boost to the economy continues to be the same as earlier. This could be a huge problem given the arc of instability in the world. Due to all these reasons, the intended outcomes are unlikely to be realized by this budget. Consequently, the marginalized sections will have little respite from economic hardships they have been suffering. In this sense, the Union Budget 2015-16 continues the past trends in spite of the opportunities that exist, the many new proposals contained in it and the feeling the FM tried to generate that there is much that is different.

Kumar, A. 2013. Indian Economy since Independence: Persisting Colonial Disruption. N Delhi: Vision Books.

Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque on

Mumbai Bank

in favour of

JANATA TRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir
Bharucha Marg, Mumbai 400 007

Hunger Strike in Byculla Jail

Angela Harish Sontakke is a 45-year old political undertrial prisoner facing charges of being a Maoist party member who has been incarcerated since April 2011. Most of this period has been spent in Byculla Jail at Mumbai. Eight out of her 11 co-accused have been released on bail. Angela herself has been acquitted in 15 of the 16 additional cases foisted on her and has been granted bail in the 16th case. She has been denied bail in Sessions Case No. 655 of 2011 under various sections of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (a law akin to the draconian TADA and POTA) A highly educated lady, she has a double M.A. and has taught in various schools and colleges in Maharashtra.

Angela requested an urgent mulaqat, so, Maharukh Adenwalla and Susan Abraham, both lawyers, visited Byculla Jail on 8.4.2015 at 12 noon.

During mulaqat Angela informed that on 1.4.2015, male jail staff arrived at Barrack No. 3, women's barrack (where Angela was lodged) with cables. When the inmates made enquiries, they were informed that CCTV cameras were going to be installed inside their barracks. Angela and the other inmates protested that this would be a clear invasion of their privacy since women inmates change their clothes, apply medicines (as skin infections are rampant in the overcrowded condition of the jail) and in the height of summer without any fans, women use minimum clothes while sleeping in the barracks. Angela also asked that they should be shown the notice allowing CCTVs inside the barracks.

The Jail Superintendent Mr Indurkar came to Barrack No. 3 in the evening and next day morning, and said that he was in no mood to hold discussions with the inmates, and accused Angela of instigating other inmates. He threatened to: (i) put her in 24 hour isolation and (ii) to put a case on her for not allowing jail officials to perform their duties. Angela and the other inmates explained that they have no objection to CCTV cameras at the entrance of the barracks, corridors, court yard, at the gate, steps and offices, but that they cannot be installed inside the barracks.

On 2nd April 2015, after bandhi, at around 6.30 p.m. about 10-12 jail staff came to Barrack No. 3 and took Angela away saying that she was being kept in a "separate" cell – obviously as punishment for opposing the CCTV installation. Angela protested by starting a hunger strike that evening itself. On 3rd April 2015, no jail staff came for rounds because of it being Good Friday and a public holiday. On 4th April 2015, Angela met the Chief Medical Officer and informed him that she was on a hunger strike. The Officer took her weight and taking note of her frail health, he informed the staff to inform the higher officers.

Angela also got to see a copy of the circular issued by Meera Borwankar, I.G., Prisons where it is stated that CCTV cameras ought to be installed at: (i) main gate; (ii) judicial office; (iii) High Security Cells; & (iv) mulaqat rooms. The Circular does not state that cameras should be installed inside the barracks.

Again there was no round taken by the jail staff the next day, i.e.,

5th April 2015, as it was a Sunday. Angela was on continued hunger strike. On Monday 6th April 2015, when bandi was opened, (i.e., the jail inmates are allowed to come out from the barrack into the jail courtyard), all other inmates were told not to talk to Angela. Angela submitted her letter to a prison officer - that she was on a hunger strike and demanded that (i) the CCTV cameras not be installed inside the barracks; and (ii) that she be returned to the barracks. Instead of considering her demands, Angela was further punished by putting her in an "isolation" cell with no contact with other inmates.

Since Angela continued her hunger strike for the 5th day, and her weight had come down to 57 kgs., the Superintendent came to meet her on 7th April 2015, and told her that she was always obstructing measures he was trying to implement. She pointed out that she did not oppose measures which were in the interest of women inmates, and pointed out that CCTV cameras inside the barracks were in violation of women inmates' right to privacy. He finally gave an assurance that he would consider. She was removed from the isolation cell by evening. Based on this, and the assurance given to her, Angela withdrew her hunger strike on that evening.

After the jail mulaqat of Angela, Maharukh and Susan met the Jail Superintendent, Mr Indurkar. They pointed out that installing CCTV cameras inside the barracks was a direct invasion of the inmates' privacy and dignity. When Mr Indurkar explained that only women would operate the cameras, they pointed out that even women staff could misuse the footage and

anyone else can easily have access to the footage. Mr Indurkar gave an assurance that he would consider their suggestions fairly.

CPDR believes that the installation of CCTV cameras within the

women's barracks in jails amounts to violation of the right to privacy and dignity which is a fundamental right guaranteed under the Constitution. It is important to note that the Supreme Court has repeatedly held that merely because a person

is imprisoned, he does not lose all his fundamental rights. It is also most alarming that when a prisoner protests the violation of fundamental rights, she is isolated and threatened with action for obstructing officials from performing their duties!

—Anand Teltumde,
General Secretary,

Committee for the Protection of Democratic Rights

(Continued from Page 8)

in places such as Sheikhpora and Vessu and provided out-of-turn jobs to more than 4000 KP girls and boys, but it did not work the way it should have. Many of them returned to Jammu and Delhi. How many KPs are ready to leave lucrative jobs within India and outside and return to live? Who will stand guarantee for their security when the government stands even on Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) which draws inspiration from the fact that “situation is not conducive for that”.

While separatists have every right to articulate their viewpoint, they too have failed to contribute to any workable solution for the KPs' return. How many times have they reached out to the community with a solution outside the government purview? By taking a particular stand they are also not helping to build an understanding based on logic and practicality. They are stakeholders in the process of resolution of Kashmir of which the issue of KPs is a part but past 25 years have seen that they lack direction. Then comes the “lone warrior for all issues”, MLA Langate Er Rashid who stretches it far by seeking apology from Pandits for leaving the valley. National Conference's maverick Mustafa Kamal talks in the same language. Seeking apology is bereft of logic and reason as the issue of their migration is caught in a narrative and

a counter-narrative. But fear playing a leading role cannot be ignored.

With GoI adamant on rehabilitating the KPs the way they want to, it does not augur well for looking towards a stable Kashmir. Since GoI lacks commitment to engage with people of the state at large for resolving the issues which are bigger than the rehabilitation of Pandits, no proposal will find support on ground. By cherry picking issues in isolation and ignoring larger political issues, the Narendra Modi government is doing no good to Kashmir. It is just to send a message that New Delhi does not care about the ground realities of alienation and its priorities are based on its inherent political agenda. The BJP came to power purely on playing a communal card in elections. But Chief Minister Mufti Sayeed has repeatedly said that he joined hands with BJP to counter the increased polarization between two regions of Kashmir and Jammu. That, however, does not seem to be the case, going by the assertions of BJP leadership, which even goes against the Agenda of Alliance.

Return of KPs is an integral part of resolution of larger Kashmir issue and should not be seen or treated in isolation. It can be resolved by taking Kashmir's civil society on board (not necessarily the political groups) and not by creating isolated

pockets, which in turn can be used by them only as summer houses. But that will further the distances at both political and social levels. Reaching out to Kashmir's majority is must for finding an amicable and dignified solution to the issue.

Madhu Dandavate

By

B. Vivekanandan

Price: Rs. 20/-

Janata Trust

D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir
Bharucha Marg,
Grant Road (W), Mumbai 400 007.

Acharya Javadekar
A Satyagrahi Socialist



G. P. Pradhan

Price: Rs. 20/-

Janata Trust

D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir
Bharucha Marg, Grant Road (W),
Mumbai 400 007.



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 14001–2004 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

janata

Vol. 70 No. 15
May 10, 2015

Moga's shame is India's shame

S. Viswam

Disturbing trend at AMU
 Kuldip Nayar

**Equality of outcome
 or opportunity**
 Satinath Choudhary

**Communal violence
 in independent India**
 Harsh Mander

**Will the World Bank get
 truly climate smart?**
 Dan Imhoff

**Diminishing returns from
 large hydropower projects**
 Himanshu Thakkar

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
 Naushir Bharucha Marg,
 Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Why should the nation's parliament, and indeed why the entire nation, get incensed and feel outrageous over an incident in distant Moga in Punjab the type of which probably occurs regularly and frequently in rural India? The short answer is that after seven decades of freedom there is still a premium on lawlessness and official accountability in India. There are other factors too which make the Moga episode a prototype of incidents that are inhuman and more often than not reflective of total lack of sensitivity to women and children and their needs and care. Both houses of parliament witnessed multiple adjournments over the issue which is a sad reflection on the Shiromani Akali Dal-Bharatiya Janata Party coalition government of Punjab. Members felt that a "mafia raj" gripped the state and influenced the administration.

Let us look at the facts of the case. On April 19, a woman and her 13-year-old daughter were molested by the staff of the public transport bus they were travelling and thrown off the moving vehicle just outside Moga in Punjab. The daughter Arshdeep Kaur died while the mother Shinder Kaur is in hospital. The young son travelling with the mother and sister

was also thrown out of the vehicle. While conductor and his assistant abused the lady and made lewd comments about her, the driver began speeding when she asked him for help and to stop the bus. The bus in which the horrific incident happened was run by Orbit Aviation, public transport company, and owned by the Punjab's ruling Badal family. The state's chief minister is Prakash Singh Badal and his son Sukhbir Singh is the deputy chief. Sukhbir first denied the family's strike, then refused to accept responsibility and then finally probably under pressure hinted that the government cannot but take note of the "brutality" involved and is bound to dole out punishment notwithstanding the fact of company's ownership.

If the government itself was so insensitive, its supporters were even more so. Punjab Education Minister Surjit Singh Rakhra said that it was God's will that the child should die. The Moga MLA Joginderpal Singh said such an accident could happen on any bus. While the public outrage and anger over the incident was palpable, it was noteworthy that no case against the bus staff was filed, no one was suspended and the official reaction has been

Between the lines

Disturbing trend at AMU

Kuldip Nayar

from callous to indifference. Had it been a bus belonging to a private enterprise the follow-up might have been quicker. As it is, what is tragic and noteworthy is that all the hue and cry raised at the time of Delhi Nirbhaya rape case has left no mark on the sensitivities and sensibilities of men and their mindset remains unchanged. Violence against women and children does not produce the kind of reaction one would expect in a civilized society where women are given the maximum respect and treated honourably. In such a society, the guilty would be proceeded against without delay and duly punished. In Punjab's Moga, passengers of the bus did not heed the woman's cries for help. There were 15 passengers and most were able-bodied women. Yet, they chose to remain impervious to the plight of the women and her two children. This is really the shame of Moga which is the shame of India that tolerates the abuse of women and violence against them.

It is possible, indeed very likely, that the staff of the bus is not subject to discipline merely because the bus is owned by the ruling family. It is shocking that inhuman episodes are sought to be covered up and hushed up. This is the worst tradition of officialdom. In urban India such high-handedness by government staff is a commonplace, but the disease is spreading. In rural India, unfortunately, everything is attributed to god's will since the people have been raised up in the belief of the impossible and are extremely gullible. The leader of the opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Ghulam Nabi Azad, has alleged that police action has been only against those involved in the molestation but owners of the bus have been spared.

(Continued on Page 5)

I have returned from Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) disappointed and disturbed. I am disappointed because the students did not seem to have merged into the mainstream yet and disturbed because they were still talking in terms of religious identity.

Perhaps, it would give a vicarious satisfaction to the Muslims of having an identity of their own if the AMU is officially declared as a Muslim university. After having lost the battle in all fields, including Urdu, the Muslims do feel dejected. There is no inconsistency if a Muslim is made to feel that he has an identity of his own, but the overwhelming identity of all people living in India is Indians.

Aligarh is the place where Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the eminent freedom fighter, was abused before the country's partition. The students had found him in a train compartment. He was travelling from Delhi to Calcutta. They took off their clothes and booed him to show all the disrespect which they could.

His fault was that he differed with the Muslim League and opposed the formation of Pakistan. He would argue that the demand had been raised on the false assumption that partition was the best way out to escape the overwhelming majority of Hindus. But after the formation of Pakistan, the number of Muslims in India would go down still further. On top of it, the Hindu would say that you had taken your share and,

therefore, go to Pakistan. This is precisely what happened.

Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, himself went to Connaught Circus and beat up some looters with stick he carried. The AMU students probably did not realize that the identity on the basis of religion led to the partition of India. After the division, the same type of politics could not be repeated and the Muslims, who plugged the line of separation, would suffer. The 80 percent of population, that of Hindus, would not brook the same old talk.

I feel that the Muslims on the whole have turned a new leaf in their life and want to be a part of the mainstream. They realize the dangers of ploughing a communal furrow. The riots between the Hindus and the Muslims ultimately become the riots between the Muslims and the police, which largely has been the case.

It is, however, the mainstream which was not allowing them too much. The soft Hindutava appears to have come to prevail in the country. This is making the Muslims more and more scared. Talking to some of them at the Jamia Millia institution in Delhi, I found that they were scared of the rise of Hindutva followers who cared little about their rights.

In this context I found the report by the US Congress-established panel pertinent. A bit of generalization

has reduced its utility. Otherwise, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom is justified in observing that religious minorities in India have been subjected to “violent attacks, forced conversions” and “*ghar wapsi*” campaigns by groups like the RSS after the assumption of power by the Narendra Modi government.

It is unfortunate that the report has been officially rejected. The country should have debated on it. There is some truth in the perception that the equilibrium which we had developed over the years in the relationship between Hindus and Muslims has got upset since the advent of the Modi government. There is a sense of superiority among the Hindus and insecurity among the Muslims.

True, the strength that the equation has developed in such a way that the bond, however weakened, has not snapped altogether. Maybe, both communities have come to terms with the realities on the ground and had developed an understanding which stands them in good stead during the crises wherever they arise occasionally.

The RSS, which has added violence or, at best, the threat of it has given a new edge to the narrative. The organization which had taken a back seat since the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi is rearing its ugly head again and trying to put up a statute in the memory of Godse who shot Gandhi dead. Not that the Congress party had made the society secular. But its ideology is secular and it raised the voice whenever the communal forces gained ascendancy. Other perception about the Modi government is that the communal elements have got fillip in administration.

(Continued on Page 15)

Nepal is crying for help

Yusuf Meherally Centre, as often in past, has decided to do its bit for the victims of the Nepal’s recent tragedy. Its scale of intervention at present is limited to making the lives of the victims a little less inhospitable and preparing them to take the future a little more optimistically. Making children laugh through games and play resulting in smiles of mothers could be one such intervention. Cleaning the public spaces of rubble and cleaning rubble from homes which can make the families rebuild their homes could be another, and providing small things that the victims need could be still another.

Yusuf Meherally Centre has a lot of experience. It was there in Kutch after the latter got devastated, in Nagapattinam, after tsunami, in J&K, after the quake, and in Raigad, Uttarakhand and Bihar, after floods. Thanks to the annual youth camps it organizes, it has a network of contacts among youth in all parts of the country. They have the necessary motivation, and the needed will to put in hard work and suffer hardships. Many of them are willing to go where their services are needed. And those of us who cannot, can give *money*, of course this is the most essential, and we can give many small things: *candles and torches, disinfectant tablets to disinfect drinking water, clothes, tents, durries, blankets, packed food items, utensils* – the things that we need in a home – which are not used, soiled or damaged. And when we give we also share in some way their grief and their hardships and, in turn, have the feeling that we have done something for humanity.

Give, yes, give generously.

Yusuf Meherally Centre,
D15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg-Sleater Road
Mumbai 400007
Yusuf Meherally@gmail.com

PS. Cheques should be drawn in favour of Yusuf Meherally Centre.

Relief Donation Bank Details

- 1) The Shamrao Vithal Co-operative Bank Ltd
Account No. : Current Account No. 100904180002460
Branch Name : Sleater Road, IFSI No.- SVCB0000009
Branch No. : 400089009
Address : A/3-4, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Prasad Marg, Grant Road (West),
Sleater Road, Mumbai :- 400 007.

Donations to the Yusuf Meherally Centre enjoy exemption under 80-G of the Income Tax Act.

Tighten the belts to build sturdy Socialist Party

“We have to fight both communalism and capitalism simultaneously. For that we have to build grass-roots units of the party. Cadres with firm ideological grounding and masters in communication skills, must be trained and linked to national network stretching from Nagaland to Kerala. I hope the delegates gathered here would take up this task in right earnest” observed Bhai Vaidya while delivering presidential address at the third biennial National Conference of the Socialist Party(India) at Kanhamau, Dist Sitapur, U.P. on 2nd May, 2015. About 200 delegates from the states like Kerala, Telangana, Pudduchery, Maharashtra, Punjab, Jharkhand, Bihar, U.P., West Bengal, Delhi, Chandigarh, Gujarat and Uttarakhand attended.

The conference passed a condolence resolution mourning the death of Ram Sundar Das, veteran socialist leader and former Chief Minister of Bihar and all those men, women and children perished in the terrific earthquake of 25th April in Nepal, U.P., Bihar, West Bengal and other adjoining areas.

Earlier, on the 1st of May, a huge rally of workers and anganwadi sevikas under the leadership of Girish Pandey, traversed the road from Gomati bridge to Gandhi Bhawan where Justice Rajinder Sachar, Pannalal Surana and Sandeep Pandey greeted the rally and extended good wishes on the occasion of the Workers’ Day. Later, while inaugurating the third conference of the Socialist Party(India), Justice Rajinder Sachar spoke elaborately exposing the vicious nexus between the corporate

sector and the Hindutva pariwar who is indulging into threatening deeds and words to the minorities. All persons belonging to the Muslim, Christian, Bouddha, Jain, Sikh, and Parsi communities are very much sons of the Bharatmata. They should not be discriminated against in any manner. We have to build strong Indian nation on the foundations of secularism and socialism.

Sucheta Kumar, president of U.P. State party, welcomed the delegates gathered at such a small village to express solidarity with the village-folk who constitute bulk of the Indian nation and exhorted the comrades to put in hard work to repel onslaughts of the capitalists on the rural people.

Nurul Ameen, General Secretary, while presenting biennial report, extended hearty welcome to young activists of Khudai Khidmatgars (Delhi, U.P. Pudduchery etc.), Lokayat (Pune) and Samajwadi Chetana Manch (Bihar) who recently joined the Socialist Party(India). He also welcomed veteran leaders Ramakant Pandey, erstwhile president of Socialist Party-Lohia and Raghu Thakur of Loktantrik Samajwadi Party who had come all the way to extend fraternal greetings to the conference.

Following were the resolutions, in brief, adopted by the conference.

Expedite relief and rehabilitation of the earthquake affected people and put in Disaster Management machinery in good shape - moved by Goutam Priyatam and seconded by Janaki Prasad Goud

Menfolk to extend respectful behavior to women, the State to accord due security to the females - moved by Suchita Kumar

Accelerate social security provisions to the men and women working in the unorganized sector - moved by Sacchidanand Singh

Stop controversy over Secularism and Socialism which are ingrained in the Indian Constitution of India right from the beginning - moved by Anil Nauriya and seconded by BhagwanSingh Bedi

Publish reports of enquiry commissions of Hashimpura, Mahamaya, Muradabad, Kanpur and punish the culprits - moved by Adv. Shashank, seconded by Bachu Singh.

Stop onslaughts on religious places of the minorities, extend them due security - moved by Hafeez Kidwai, seconded by George Jacob

Give representation to the workers on the management boards - moved by Pannalal, seconded by Balwan Singh Kheda.

Withhold approval of delegating authority to WTO to tax goods and services - that should rest with the Nation States only - moved by Sandeep Pandey, seconded by Warsha Gupte

The Central Government should drop Land Acquisition Ordinance and instead take steps to assure remunerative prices to agricultural produce, supply irrigation and credit to farmers in good time, accord assistance when natural calamities

visit the farmers - moved by Harinder Singh Mansahia, seconded by Anil Mishra.

Six-monthly action plan-(1) Gather ten lakh signatures on the Employment Guarantee and Electoral Reforms petition to be presented to the Lok Sabha Speaker on 10th August, 2015. (2) Organise three regional camps of RSD, (3) Organise hundred primary units of ten active members each.

The delegates paid a visit to Kanhawau village and exchanged ideas.

T a r k e s h w a r S i n g h ,
Dhurchoudhary (West Bengal),
Prof. Sushilkumar(Bihar),

S. Rajshekharan (Kerala),
Harindra Singh Mansahia(Punjab),
M. A. Baig(Telangana), also
addressed the gathering. Faizal Khan
conducted the proceedings.

—P.S.

(Continued from Page 2)

One thought that the BJP-SAD coalition was in full control in Punjab, but Moga shows that there is a breakdown of law and order in the state. Only the states where lawlessness is encouraged and crimes are condoned the safety of women and children is in question. It is the moral and constitutional duty of the Badal family to restore the rule of law in their state. Violence against the weak, against women, against children will continue where law enforcement is weak and the powerful take advantage of people's gullibility. By virtue of the ownership of the bus, the Badals are as accountable as the bus staff for the outrage.

Equality of outcome or opportunity

Satinath Choudhary

Equality is supposed to be the defining feature of socialist ideology. However, there are two kinds of "equality." that are most talked about: (1) "equality of opportunity," and (2) "equality of outcome". The former is heard about more than the latter because of the preference shown to it among the dominant sections of the society, including the media. However, if the difference between these two types of equalities is clearly understood by the public at large, around 80 per cent of them would like to achieve "equality of outcome".

Reservation/quotas for various segments in proportion to population share of the respective sections guarantees "equality of outcome". Anything else obfuscates and avoids "equality".

Simply put, equality of outcome refers to equality achieved (or expected to be achieved) from the measures taken towards "equality", even if it requires offering many positions of power to relatively less qualified persons from the weaker segments, skipping over more qualified persons from the dominant sections; multiple seats at all levels power must be shared equitably by all segments of the society.

On the other hand, "equality of opportunity" refers to simply ensuring all desirous of getting a job are measured by judging all by the same yard there is no discrimination in the recruitment or have to pass the same test without any consideration of who had how bad an opportunity, discriminations and environment

one had to face while preparing for the said test. On the top of all the odds arrayed against persons from weaker section, most entrances for positions of power are guarded by sentries from dominant sections/castes. Under these circumstances "equality of opportunity" means paltry little "equality" for persons from the weaker sections of the society.

The detractors from "equality of outcome" express reservation about reservation, claiming that such a system will perpetuate caste. In answer to these people one can point out that in the West many people have names like Smith, Blacksmith, Goldsmith, Shoemaker, fisher, Booker, etc., that are to a certain extent indicative of what their ancestors did. But statistically speaking there is not much difference distinguishing them from the general population in their financial and educational status. As such, their last names have lost the significance of ancestral job owing to their equalization. Similarly, all of the Indian last names would lose their caste-indicative significance if they are equalized, statistically speaking; and that would be natural withering away of the caste system. Any attempt to erase caste labels would be an effort to cover up the caste system without actually killing the caste system and caste-based discrimination. A hidden snake is more dangerous than an open one!

Currently, in the name of broad classifications like SC, ST and OBC, some castes that are at the top of these categories, financially

and educationally, ran away with most of the quotas allocated for their respective categories, resulting in considerable disparities in those categories. As a result, those opposed to quota system point accusative fingers to the inordinate power of the castes and families that benefited excessively; and the same individuals despising reservation system also point their fingers to many lower castes who could not benefit from reservation, claiming that reservation system does not help and so must be scrapped.

These disparities would not be there had there been sub-quotas within each of the broad categories like SC, ST, OBC. Some states do have such categorization, like in Karnatak they have six sub-categories under OBC category for the purpose of distribution of quota within OBC. But the Supreme Court has thrown a monkey wrench in the movement towards sub-quotas by claiming that in the Constitution there is no sub-quota for sub-category. The upper caste judges of the Supreme Court know very well that in the absence of sub-quotas various sub-castes would be squabbling among themselves for ever, weakening them politically, and that would be good for continued upper caste hegemony. Since that time some other judges were a bit fairer and have directed that if a state is able to show that a specific caste or group of castes is currently under-represented in the civil services, they would be glad to revise the court ban on more than 50 per cent of seats allocated to for the reserved category castes.

However, even in the northern states where the ruling party happens to be an OBC party, the government has not ordered fresh surveys to demand increased quotas for various

categories. I am not sure of the real reasons behind their lethargy; it could be just that - lethargy; else, it could be some kind of self-interest or interest of the party-supremo's sub-caste. Possibly they do not want to disturb the status quo that has put them on the throne. If there is a will, all castes and other sub-groups bigger than a population share of 1 per cent may be assigned quotas equal to the size (percentage) of their caste; Those smaller than 1 per cent will need to be merged with some other castes of similar educational standing, bringing the total percentage to be greater than one for the sake of determining combined quota. If we did that, total number of categories, including those for women and adherents of other religions, will not be more than 100 or so. All governmental appointments could be done within a designated month of the year, say, in the month of January. If an urgent appointment has to be made in between two consecutive Januaries, it should be done on temporary basis. This kind of aggregation of vacancies over a whole year period will give us sufficiently large number of seats at various levels to be filled, facilitating appropriate distribution of those seats among the broad categories first, and as many sub-castes, religions, linguistic and ethnic groups as possible - we must allocate 50-50 distribution of seats among males and females.

All segments lacking equitable share of positions of power are essentially subjugated segments, living in the colonial system, under the rule of those with excess of power (brown sahib replacing the white sahib). Those with excess of power would never want the subjugated section to make much progress, lest the slaves would rise up and free themselves from the

conditions that force them to be the servants of their masters. Tamil Nadu has progressed considerably more than many of its northern counterparts because they have approached 100 per cent reservation with their 70 per cent quota system. It needs to be extended to 100 per cent to each segment (caste, creed, gender, ethnicity, etc.) according to its population share.

As for reservation within the private sector with more than five employees, I believe reservation can and should be implemented with the help of suitable tax breaks for those that observe appropriate social justice index at various levels of employment. For example, out of 14 employees (with indicated percentages in the population of that region) if the number of ST(8%) is 1; SC(16%):2; OBC(42%): 6; Muslims(14%): 2; UC(15%):2 (Upper caste=UC); others(5%):1; such a distribution should be regarded as having Social Justice index (SJI) of one ($14/14 = 1$). Any deviation of the ratio from the stated ratio would reduce the SJI to a value less than one. For example, if the number of UC employees is 5, with some reduction in the numbers among other categories (e.g., SC:1, OBC: 4), making a total of 14, then SJI would be $11/14$. In such a case if 5% tax-break is supposed to be SJI dependent, the tax-break should be $5 * 11/14 = 3.9\%$. Had the employer completely ignored to appropriate distribution of jobs among various castes, etc., by having all 14 employees from just one section of the society, then $SJI = 0$; and tax-break = $5 * 0 = 0\%$.

Vast majority of the population (practically all except upper caste Hindus) would be in favor reservation for each segment of the society.

Communal violence in independent India

Harsh Mander

India won her political independence in 1947 amidst a cataclysm of bloodshed and hate violence which targeted men, women and children only because of their religious identities, and left a million people dead and ten million people displaced permanently from their homelands. This ancient country, traumatically reborn after two centuries of colonial bondage as a secular democratic republic, laid great store therefore in its Constitution on the equal citizenship, security and rights of its religious minorities.

However, beginning with a communal conflagration in 1961 in Jabalpur, 14 years after India's freedom, many parts of the country have witnessed sporadic episodes of hate violence which scapegoat people due to their religious identity. There have been no years of complete nation-wide communal peace. There have on the other hand been periods during which this violence has spiked, especially since the 1980s, targeting Bengali Muslims in Assam, the Sikhs in the nation's capital after Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984 and subsequent years of Khalistani militancy, and Muslims in many parts of India during the Babri Masjid movement since the late 1980s beginning with the massacre in Bhagalpur in 1989 and peaking in the carnage in Gujarat in the spring of 2002.

These recurring episodes of what is generally referred to as communal riots or communal violence are marked through all of free India's history by disproportionate aggression and loss of life and

property among persons of religious minorities. The targets have mostly been Muslims, but in 1984 the violence was against Sikhs, and, especially the last two decades have witnessed growing attacks also against Christians. These incidents typically constitute targeted hate killings, gang-rapes, arson of homes and businesses, large-scale looting, and destruction and desecration of places of worship.

Impunity and non-reparation

Two other features are common to all these episodes. The first is almost universal impunity, by which we mean the failure of the criminal justice system to punish – and often even bring to trial – persons who commit these communal hate crimes. Even less than the foot-soldiers who commit these crimes, the law almost never catches up with those who instigate and organise these mass attacks, and with senior members of the police, civil administration and political leadership who deliberately fail to prevent, enable through inaction, encourage and sometimes actively participate in these acts of mass violence. And the second feature of all episodes of communal violence in independent India is the failure of the State to extend reparations to survivors of the violence at levels which would enable them to rebuild their lives, livelihoods, habitats and social relations.

In extensive research undertaken by the Centre for Equity Studies on major episodes of communal violence, we find remarkably common trends of failures of legal justice, failures of reparation and

failures to hold public officials accountable. Despite the fact that the episodes under study were widely separated by time and geography, and by the religious minority targeted, there are similar attitudes and strategies which systematically deny justice to minorities. We conclude therefore that the denial of justice and protection to India's minorities are not simply random institutional failures, but reflect endemic, widely prevalent and deep-rooted institutional biases against minorities in all arms of the criminal justice system, and that the denial of justice is not the arbitrary result of chance but is systematic and planned. We also find consistent evidence of the State's failures to help extend reparations and support to survivors of communal violence, in ways which would enable them to rebuild their lives, livelihoods, homes and social relationships, as the result of which they suffer not just in the immediate aftermath of mass violence, but for long afterwards, even across generations. Both these State failures – of justice and reparations – to its citizens felled, traumatised and pauperised by communal violence, are the issues at hand.

Communal riots

In South Asia, episodes of violence in which persons are attacked because they belong to diverse religious identities are commonly described as communal riots. The word 'communal' in other parts of the world has quite different and often positive connotations, viewed as a source of integration and social solidarity, and its breakdown a major source of violence and strife. In South

Asia on the other hand, the word has a specific negatively charged meaning of social and political mobilization of persons based on their religious identity, usually in opposition (sometimes violently) to persons of other religious identities. Varshney suggests that ‘whenever conflicting groups from two different religions, which are self-conscious communities, clash, it results in a communal riot. An event is identified as a communal riot if (a) there is violence, and (b) two or more communally identified groups confront each other or members of the other group at some point during the violence’.

It is commonplace to use the word ‘riot’ to describe communal violence, in popular usage, reportage and scholarship. But we have grave reservations with this usage, especially if the word riot is understood in its literal sense. Our difficulty with the usage of the term ‘riot’ is that its popular deployment suggests implicitly that what transpires in episodes of communal violence is that people of two communities battle each other, usually spontaneously. But this may not actually be the case, for instance if the violence is one-sided, or engineered by dedicated social and political groups, and, as we shall see, this indeed is very often the case. For instance, it is especially an obvious travesty to describe the violence against the Sikhs in Delhi in 1984 as anti-Sikh riots, because it was exclusively the Sikhs who were the victims of violence in almost all these attacks. The same is the case with many if not most other episodes of communal violence.

The use in reportage as well as survivors’ own testimonies of other terms metaphors like a storm, etc. are now more popular - the Gujarat survivors we speak to widely

describe the mass violence in 2002 as a toofan or storm - but this alternate terminology is more evocative than analytical. The suddenness of monumental disruption and destruction suggested by the metaphor of the storm is what catches the imagination, but analytically this doesn’t sufficiently reflect the planned, intentional violence that we will argue characterise most ‘riots’. Other terms like carnage, slaughter, massacre or bloodbath, are more apt descriptions evoking the actual character of such violence.

Targeted Groups

The pertinent analytically rigorous terminology for this phenomenon could be hate communal violence or targeted communal violence, and these terms are mainly what we use here. Even so, we still sometimes describe episodes as riots, because this is how these have been described in judicial reports and scholarly studies, but although sometimes we use this term, while using it we do not suggest anywhere that these are spontaneous clashes between people of diverse religious communities.

It is also important to recognise that hate and targeted violence can be directed at people not only because of their religious identity, but also because of their caste (as in anti-Dalit atrocities), ethnicity (such as attacks of persons of India’s north-east in Delhi and other Indian cities), gender, region (such as attacks in Mumbai by the Shiv Sena first on persons from South India and now from UP and Bihar), language (such as riots against Hindi in Tamil Nadu), sexuality (such as attacks against homosexual men and transgendered persons), and occasionally stigmatised ailments (such as attacks on people living with leprosy or HIV/AIDS). These groups of victimised people can also be conceptualised as communities,

just as self-conscious religious groups have been. However, because of the peculiar history of India’s bloody partition on religious grounds and the continued fractures created across South Asia by religious identity, when we speak of communal violence we are concerned conventionally with a specific kind of hate violence which targets people for their religious identity. This is because in the South Asian context, given its specific histories, the prefix ‘communal’ always suggests the context of religious community (or what is more aptly described as a ‘socio-religious’ community), and further carries negative connotations of hate propaganda, mobilisation and sometimes violence.

The word ‘communal’ is also closely tied up with the idea of communalism, or social and political ideologies and mobilisation of people on the basis of their religious identities. Bipin Chandra views communalism as an ideology comprised of these three basic elements or stages; each element functions as an assumption upon which the next is based. The three also form a continuum, feeding into each other. The intensity of hostility against other religious groups increases as people move from one stage to the next. The first stage of beliefs in this continuum is that people belonging to a religious group (rather than a socio-economic – class, caste, occupational - or gender, linguistic, regional, age, disability or other cultural or political categories) have common secular interests. The belief is that people can act politically and protect collective interests only as self-conscious members of these communities. Religious leaders for each community become the only people who can protect the groups’ interests.

Moderate Communalism

The next level of communal beliefs is that secular interests - economic, cultural, social and political - interests of followers of one religion diverge from those of others. 'Liberal' or 'moderate' communalism, as Chandra terms it, is when an individual could publicly profess that (often) conflicting identities and interests are capable of existing in harmony and can be accommodated simultaneously, while holding on to essentially communalist views which privilege religious identities over all others and homogenise people following a particular faith. During India's freedom struggle, Madan Mohan Malviya, Lajpat Rai and Jinnah, according to him, functioned under liberal communal frameworks. The third stage and final stage of 'extreme communalism' is reached when interests of followers of different religions, forming communities are seen to be incompatible, antagonistic and mutually exclusive. Extreme communalists use the language and instruments of hate and violence against people, cultures and beliefs of the antagonist 'other' religious community. It is this third phase which spawns communal violence, although the grounds for its emergence is paved by the first two stages. Chandra goes on to argue that communalism is not specific to India, comparing it to movements such as fascism and anti-Semitism in other countries, which he suggests were produced by similar belief systems.

A few more points are in order in the language of scholars and lay observers regarding communal violence. One relates to the prefixing of the word 'mass' to communal violence. When does a communal targeted hate attack become a mass attack? Is it merely a question of

numbers? Is communal killing of one person not mass violence, whereas if three are killed is it mass violence? But this demarcation is in the end subjective. Also it can render invisible seemingly discrete small acts of communal violence, each not 'mass' in character when seen individually, but which actually are part of a larger orchestrated plan. There is no consensus on which episodes should be described as 'mass communal violence', but all of the incidents described in this volume are so large that this question is not germane in the context of these episodes.

And finally there is the question of what constitutes violence as distinct from discrimination or segregation. There is a great deal of discrimination to which religious minorities are commonly subjected. These include a number of disabilities in accessing housing, jobs, credit, entry into educational institutions, access to basic services in their habitations such as drinking water. These were well documented in the Prime Minister's High Level Committee set up the UPA government in 2006, presided over by Justice Sachar. These can also be seen analytically as forms of passive violence. Even more pertinently, there can be communally charged taunts and insults - in classrooms, work-places, and places of community gathering (the Centre for Equity Studies' India Exclusion Report describes many instances of communally charged taunts against Muslims in classrooms, by both teachers and peers; Sikhs children were also routinely subjected to this in the 1980s. There can be active hate propaganda (such as in the literature of communal organisations like the RSS and the Jamaat-e-Islami, or the speeches and writing of Bal Thackeray during the communal carnage in Bombay in 1992-93).

And then there is active physical, targeted and hate violence, involving attacks on the body and property on persons of the designated 'other' religion, involving culpable heinous offences such as murder, injury, arson, and looting.

It is important also to focus on the particularly gendered nature of hate violence targeted against women. Women are regarded within patriarchy as the property of the men of that community, and sexual violence is the ultimate humiliation of the community and its men. The social and legal impunity for sexual violence is so deep rooted that until recently, sexual violence in the aftermath of targeted violence was in the large majority of cases not investigated, recorded or punished. Often it was not even acknowledged, because victims were openly or subtly coerced by social shame to obliterate these histories. It is entirely due to the intellectual and political struggles of women in social movements in this country that sexual violence is now better acknowledged and understood, and the layers of impunity that covered it are beginning to be peeled. Consequently, India's rape law has been re-examined and amended. During targeted mass violence, sexual violence is used as a double edged weapon - while women bear the torture of rape, it culturally emasculates the men who embody the guilt of not being able to 'live up' to gender expectations: 'I couldn't protect my wife...,' a masculine lament we often hear from survivors.

Instigations to violence

Which of these various forms should one include in a discussion of communal violence? Usually scholars separate questions of discrimination from active physical hate violence including sexual

violence, and hate propaganda stands in a somewhat twilight zone in between. Many recognise that hate propaganda incites violence, and therefore regard it to be criminally culpable violence, even if it is not active violence in itself, because it still instigates such violence. But there are those who are much more fundamentally convinced of the absolute value of free speech and expression, and would not like legal bars and state monitoring of hate propaganda, because this is subject to official interpretation, and can be used equally against people who oppose hate propaganda.

Scholars of communal violence construct diverse and often adversarial interpretations of what the roots of communal violence are, but remarkably most are united in one view: they regard communalism to be a product of modernity, arising out of conditions existing in colonial India and the enterprise of nation-building. In Bipin Chandra's view, 'communalism is not a vestige of the past; it might use ideas that have roots in medieval/ancient times, but it's a modern technology and political trend that expresses urges and serves political needs of particular social groups. Its social roots, economic, social and political objectives lie in the modern period of Indian history.' Nehru too had noted, 'One must never forget that communalism is a latter-day phenomenon that has grown up before our eyes.'

1. See for instance, Kaur, R. 2002. 'The eclipse or renaissance of the community? Career of the concept.' In Jodhka, S. (ed) 'Community and Identities: Contemporary discourse on culture and politics in India'
2. Varshney, A. 2002. Ethnic violence and civic life. New Haven. Yale University Press; pp 309
3. Chandra, B. 1984. Communalism in

modern India. New Delhi; pp 15-18

4. Chandra, B., Mukherjee, M., Mukherjee, A., Pannikar, K.N., Mahajan, S. 1989. India's struggle for independence (1857-1947). Penguin; pp 402
5. Government of India. 2006. Social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community in India. New Delhi.
6. The high level committee presided by Justice. Rajinder Sachar put forth its report in November 2006, highlighting that Muslims in India, compared to other socio-religious groups in India, performed poorly on most indicators of socio-economic status. According to NSSO 2004-05 data, 31% of Muslims were poor (only marginally better than 35% of the SC/ST), compared to 22.7% of the total population. The literacy rate in 2001, at 59.1% was lower than the national average of 64.8%. At higher levels of education, the gap between Muslims and other socio-religious increases; in 2001, 7% of the population above 20 were graduates or hold diplomas, whereas the number was only 4% for Muslims. Compared to figures of 34.2% and 13.1% in salaried employment (in government and large public/private enterprises respectively), for all socio-religious groups, only 23.7% Muslims were employed in the government and 6.5% in the public/private sector (which it attributed to low workforce participation among Muslim women). The average salary of Muslim workers was also lower than other groups. They were found to be grossly underrepresented in Central government departments and agencies. In no state did the percentage of Muslims in government department match their representation in the population. The report noted that a higher proportion of Muslims are engaged in self-employment activities and in the informal sector.
7. See for instance: Frontline. August

2000. What Saamna said. Volume 17, Issue 16. August 5-18 2000.
8. Chandra, B. et al. 1989. 'India's struggle for independence, 1857-1947' pp 401-406

Swachha Bharat

Target for 2015-16	: One crore toilets
Fund reqd	: Rs 12,500 cr
Fund allocated	: Rs 2625 cr

For attaining full household sanitation coverage by 2019, Fund needed: Rs 1,34,386 cr.

Taking 50:50 contribution by centre and states (which is highly unlikely) and the fund provided in this budget as the benchmark, full household sanitation can be achieved in the year 2041.

Can you beat the Modi Magic!

– Sankara Narayanan

Acharya Javadekar
A Satyagrahi Socialist



G. P. Pradhan

Price: Rs. 20/-
Janata Trust

D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir
Bharucha Marg, Grant Road (W),
Mumbai 400 007.

Will the World Bank get truly climate smart?

Dan Imhoff

Throughout decades of efforts to alleviate both hunger and poverty, agricultural support has ebbed and flowed as the World Bank's development strategies evolved. Today "feeding the world" and meeting urgent ecological challenges are prominent goals of its 2013-15 Agriculture Action Plan. With a renewed focus on food policy, the World Bank invests between \$8 and \$10 billion annually in the agriculture sector, including through an emerging programme called climate-smart agriculture (CSA).

CSA is a catchy phrase but a vaguely defined programme with at least three objectives: 1) intensify food production in underperforming arable regions; 2) increase overall food availability; 3) adapt to and reverse climate change. Both the World Bank and UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have joined the Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture (GACSA), an agribusiness-led initiative launched in 2014.

Improving conditions for the world's poorest farmers can be a powerful development strategy. In Africa, **evidence** shows that every 10 per cent increase in crop yields generates an estimated seven per cent reduction in poverty (greater than Asia's five per cent rate). Neither the manufacturing nor service sectors can produce such an equivalent impact. But not all agricultural investments yield the same social and environmental outcomes. Some forms of agriculture promote public health and food security. Others

degrade them — e.g. polluting air and water, diminishing biodiversity through extensive monocultures, generating greenhouse gases, over-using antibiotic medications, and consuming \$250 billion in government subsidies that skew markets and exacerbate corporate concentration of the food supply.

Despite a century of increasing industrialisation of food production, chronic hunger impacts over one billion people. That number is nearly matched by the overweight and obese populations in developing countries (where the cheapest foods are processed and high in unhealthy fats, sugars and carbohydrates). The impacts of climate change put additional pressure on policy makers. Land clearing and ploughing, livestock production, fertiliser manufacturing and other activities make the agricultural sector the largest emitter of greenhouse gases. It is also the industry most immediately affected by rising temperatures and shifting climate patterns. A rise of one degree celsius will lead to dramatic declines in crop yields, particularly in warmer regions.

Numerous studies show that small landholders can grow just as much food and more diverse kinds of crops with organic methods as their industrial counterparts. Planting crops that enrich the soil or repel pests, for example, can boost production, decrease reliance on chemicals and raise income rural levels. A recent study in the *Journal of Agricultural Sustainability* shows that more complex cropping systems,

farmer training, and microfinancing can help nearly double yields of traditional farming systems. Such intensified 'agroecological' farms can enhance food security, maintain greater levels of biodiversity, and provide resilience against climate extremes. But it will take a revolution in financial and economic incentives to allow them to compete with the heavily subsidised industrial agriculture sector.

While the FAO is calling for a 50 per cent increase in global food output by 2050, the irony is that we already produce enough calories to support 10 billion people. Not all of that output reaches **those** who need it most. Nearly one-third is wasted along supply chains. Another one-third is fed to cattle. Five per cent is converted to biofuels.

In July 2014, over 70 organisations and agricultural scientists criticised the GACSA in an **open letter** for, among many things, failing to rule out industrial approaches that "drive deforestation, increase synthetic fertiliser use, intensify livestock production or increase the vulnerability of farmers." The letter's signatories continued, "We recognise the need for action to enable food and farming systems to adapt to climate change. And we believe that to reduce agriculture's contribution to the problem, we must find ways to phase out destructive industrial approaches, and incentivise agroecological methods that work best for the world's small-scale farmers and the planet."

(Continued on Page 15)

Diminishing returns from large hydropower projects in India

Himanshu Thakkar

As per the latest power generation figures just released by the Central Electricity Authority[1] the hydropower generation during the just concluded Financial Year 2014-15 was 4.25% lower than the previous year's generation even though the installed capacity has gone up. Average generation per MW of hydro capacity in India in 2014-15 was over 20% less power than what our average generation was in 1993-94. More worryingly, the hydropower generated per MW installed capacity continues its downward slide. The downward slide has been going on for now over two decades:

The governments and power sector establishment in India have been pushing Large Hydro projects as if they are good in themselves. See the graph below that shows the rapid

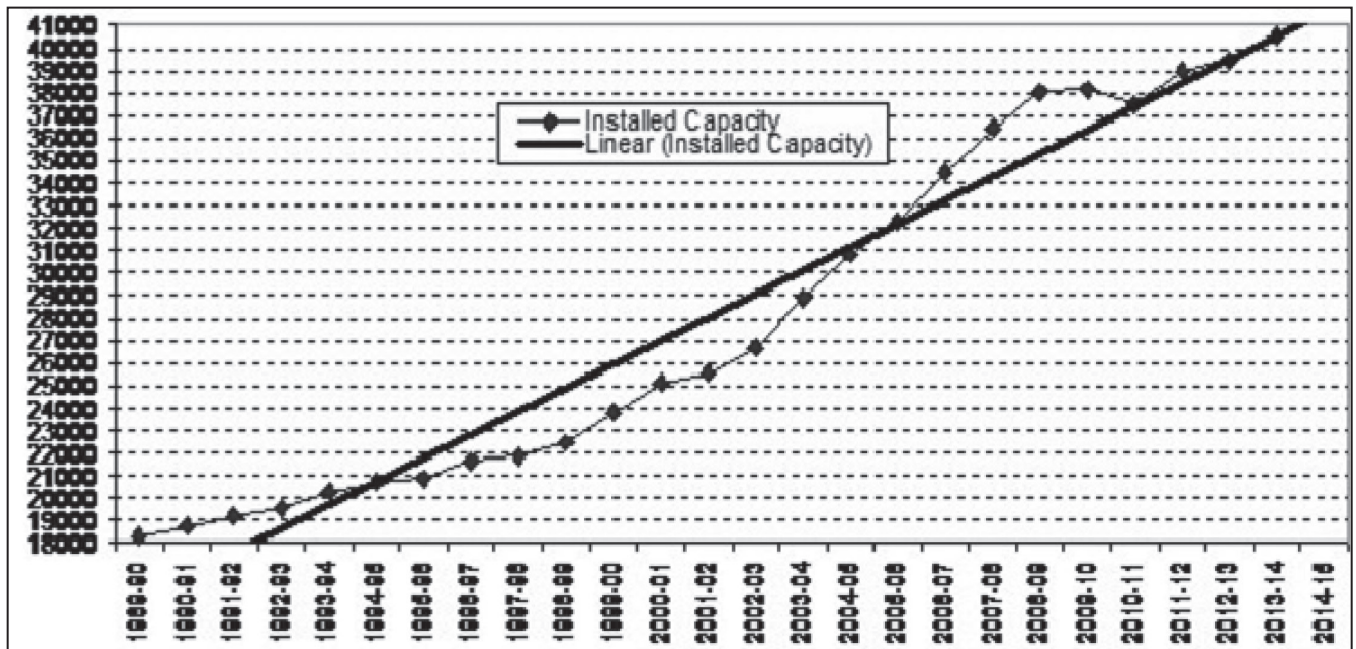
increase in installed capacity of large hydro projects in India[2]. A huge additional capacity of hydro capacity is under construction and various stages of approval and planning.

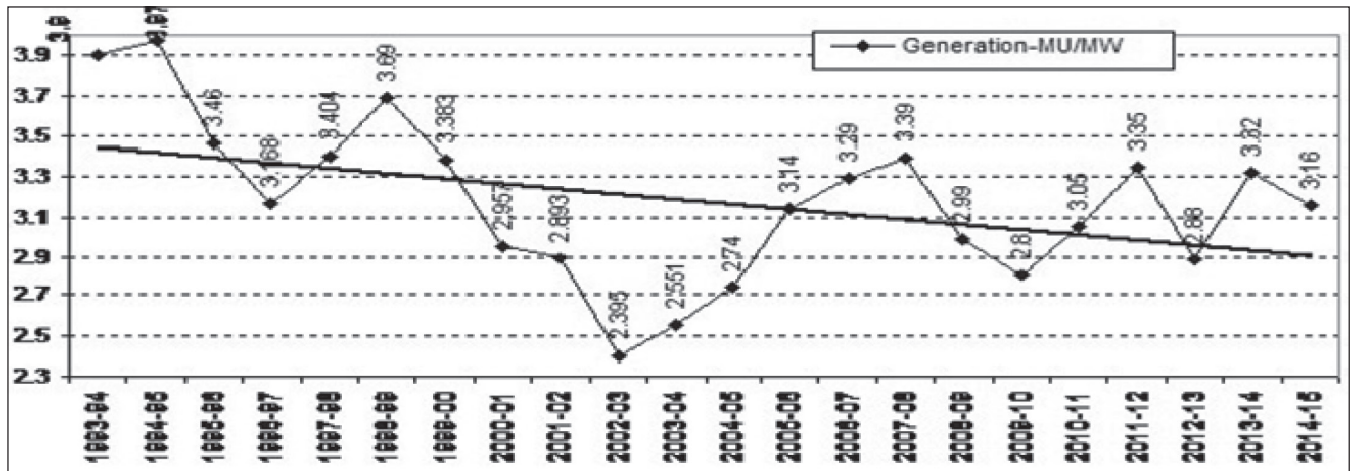
However, there has been no attempt at credible performance appraisal of hydropower projects in India. SANDRP has been doing performance appraisal of large hydropower projects of India for some years. In the graph given below we have plotted the Million Units (MU, one unit is equal of one kilowatt hour of power) power generated per Mega Watt (MW) installed capacity of all operating hydropower projects in India. We have done this based on the official data from Central Electricity Authority for total annual power generated by all existing operating large hydropower projects of India

and total installed capacity of such projects, for each of the last 20 years from 1993-94. The total installed capacity of large (installed capacity over 25 MW) hydro projects in India as on March 31, 2015 is 40885 MW.

The graph also shows the trend line of power generation of Big Hydropower projects for the last 20 years, it is clear the trend-line shows diminishing generation from existing hydro power projects of India.

It shows that per MW generation in 2014-15 has dropped by over 20% from the generation figure for 1993-94. This should be a matter of serious concern, but the CEA, Power Ministry or none of the other bodies are doing such an analysis. Such an analysis can also help us try and understand why this is happening





and what needs to be done to arrest or reverse this trend. The falling generation cannot be attributed to lower monsoon rainfall, since rainfall has been average or above average in most of the years under consideration.

What we can see (see Annexure 1 below) from these monsoon rainfall figures from India Meteorological Department[3] is that in 14 of the 22 years the rainfall was above or near normal (above 98% of normal), so one cannot say that the diminishing generation is due to below normal monsoon.

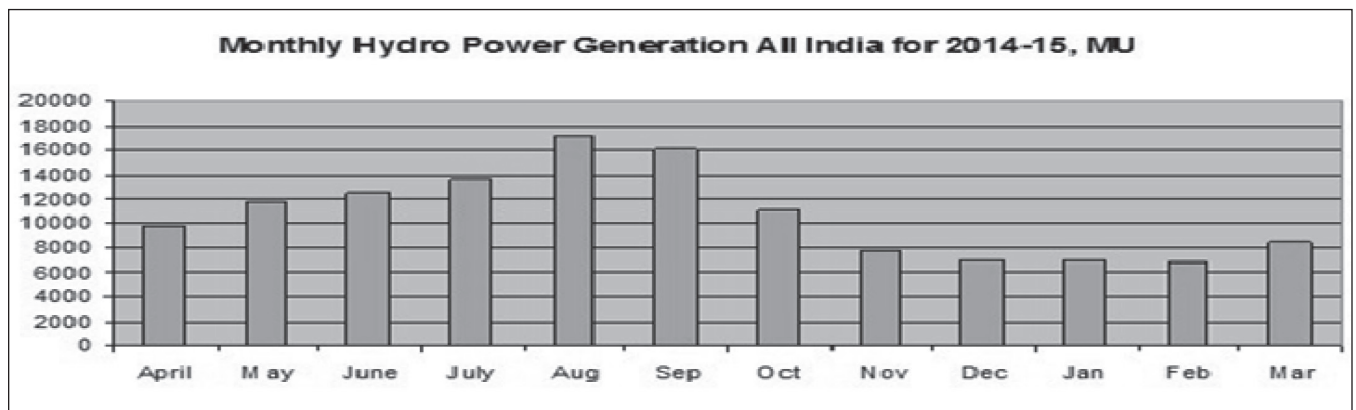
A separate analysis showed that 89% of the projects generate at below the design or promised generation level at 90% dependability. Each large hydro project is given techno economic clearance by CEA based on a promise at appraisal stage that

the project will generate certain amount of power in 90% of the years. When we compared that figure with the actual generation figure for the last 29 years for each of the operating projects, we found that 89% have been under-performing. And among the under performing projects, 50% were generating below the 50% of the promised power generation. And yet no questions are asked, no accountability fixed, in fact such an analysis is not even done by the official agencies. This means, for example that a lot of the projects that are being set up now are unviable projects or that the installed capacities are way above optimum levels.

There are many reasons why the generation per MW is dipping: unviable projects, unviable installed capacities, over-optimistic

hydrological assumptions, over development (development beyond the carrying capacity of the basin), catchment degradation, high rates of sedimentation, inadequate Repair and Maintenance, Run of River projects (this phrase is a misnomer, these projects do not generate power from the run of the river but through a dam and a tunnel), changing monsoon patterns due to climate change, etc.

Here it should be added that the destruction of forests, rivers, fisheries, biodiversity and submergence of lands is also making the impact of climate related disasters worse for the people and also for the hydropower projects, as could be seen during the June 2013 Uttarakhand disaster. All this needs to be part of our impact assessment and decision making process.



The bar chart below provides monthly power generation from hydropower projects at all India level during the just concluded 2014-15. The chart shows that the maximum power in hydro sector (36.3% of annual generation) happens during three monsoon months of July-Sept. During six months of May-Oct, 63.7% generation happens and during the remaining six months, only about 36.3% generation happens, February has the lowest generation.

Underperformers During 2014-15: central sector hydro capacity of 13576 MW generated 1% more power than 2013-14, and private sector capacity of 2728 MW generated 7.32% more power. It was the state sector capacity of 24582 MW that generated 8.1% lower power than the previous year. The biggest dip in generation was seen in the power generation at Sardar Sarovar Project's 1450 MW capacity, which was a reduction of 50.31% compared to 2013-14. Among the central sector hydro organisations, NHDC (1520 MW capacity on Narmada river) saw the biggest dip of 35.9% compared to previous year generation. One of the reasons for the reduced power generation at SSP and upstream Narmada projects of NHDC was the unjustified depletion of the reservoir before the 2014 parliamentary elections[4].

There is no doubt that more detailed state wise, basin wise, type wise, age wise, etc analysis would help, some of which are available in "Hydropower Performance" section of SANDRP website[5]. However, to continue to push large hydro without such informed analysis would only lead to bad decisions, leading to avoidable social, environmental,

economic and opportunity costs.

Considering the diminishing returns from existing hydropower capacity and serious underperformance from 89% of existing projects, the first priority should be to optimise generation from existing projects instead of pushing for new large hydro projects. We are also not doing advance comprehensive project level and basin wide cumulative social and environmental impact assessments, nor getting public consent in upstream and downstream areas.

Even for ensuring power to those that do not have access to power now, there is also a huge potential of sub MW (less than 1 MW or KW scale) capacity hydro projects in most of the Himalayan and other mountain areas. These projects would have least costs, least impacts, and could be implemented in short time with full involvement of the benefiting local communities. Such projects should be a priority before taking up larger projects.

As global trends show, more solar and wind power based installed capacity is now being added than in any other sector. This is also likely to be the trend in India in future since cost of solar and wind based generation is going down. One of the obstacles in this regard is that the solar and wind power is only available during day time or wind hours and storage of surplus (over and above what the grid can consume) power generated during such time is costly and difficult to store. The pump storage hydro projects can provide an option in this regard even at existing dams. Thus surplus power during day time and wind hours can be used to

pump water from lower (smaller) reservoir to upper (larger existing) reservoir of such projects. During night and off wind hours, this water can be released from upper to lower reservoir to turn the same turbines to generate power. This option needs to be explored.

One of the USPs (Unique Selling Propositions) of hydropower projects is that it can provide peak hour power, which coal based or nuclear power projects cannot provide. However, we do not have the necessary data to analyse what % of hydropower generation is providing peaking power. What is surprising however is that there is no agency in India that is doing such an analysis. Without such an analysis it is not even possible even start understanding and optimizing the peak hour power generation from hydro projects. Needless to add, such an analysis should also involve assessing the impacts of peaking power generation. Depending on site specific conditions, the currently under-utilised peaking power potential of existing hydropower projects can be substantially better utilised before going for new peaking projects. The question is, if we are neither monitoring nor trying to optimize peaking power generation, is there a case for pushing more hydro in the name of peaking power demands?

Lastly, it should be added that less than 3% of India's large dams have hydropower component and most of the 97% large dams without hydropower component are irrigation projects. However, in these projects, the social, environmental and economic costs have already been paid. We need to at least assess the possibility of adding hydro component to some of these

projects. But such an assessment is not happening at all. United States of America, whom we look up for many things, has been doing exactly that, assessing the possibility of adding hydro component at existing dams rather going for new hydro projects.

What all this means is that before we go for more large hydro projects at huge social, ecological and economic costs, we have a lot of options. We hope the questions raised in this analysis lead to changes in some of the directions indicated here.

END NOTES:

1. CEA is a Union Power Ministry’s premier technical body, see:http://cea.nic.in/monthly_gen.html
2. The slight dip in installed capacity in 2010-11 is because in the capacity monitored by the Central Electricity

ANNEXURE 1

Year	Monsoon Rainfall	Year	Monsoon Rainfall
1993	101 %	2004	87 %
1994	110 %	2005	99 %
1995	100 %	2006	99 %
1996	103 %	2007	106 %
1997	102 %	2008	98 %
1998	106 %	2009	78 %
1999	96 %	2010	102 %
2000	92 %	2011	102 %
2001	92 %	2012	93 %
2002	81 %	2013	106 %
2003	102 %	2014	88 %

(ht.sandrp@gmail.com)

- Authority, the CEA that year excluded some of the small hydro projects (capacity below 25 MW) that were included in its monitoring matrix earlier.
3. http://www.imd.gov.in/section/nhac/dynamic/Monsoon_frame.htm

4. For details, see: <https://sandrp.wordpress.com/2014/04/13/narmada-dams-levels-depleted-to-generate-more-electricity-threatening-water-security-for-gujarat-and-madhya-pradesh/>
5. http://sandrp.in/HEP_Performance/

Peoples News Network

(Continued from Page 11)

Hans Herren, co-author of the 2008 International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development report, “Agriculture at a crossroads,” asserts that “We do not need more industrial and high-input agriculture to produce more food. Evidence shows that small holder farmers are more productive. We need simply sustainable production and consumption systems that are eco-functional, follow the principles of agroecology and deal with agriculture’s multi-functionality.”

The most intelligent way to tackle the interweaving crises of food insecurity, poverty, and climate change is for the World Bank to make agroecology the centrepiece of both its Agriculture Action Plan and climate-smart agriculture program.

-Bretton Woods Observr

(Continued from Page 3)

The understanding may have developed on the part of Muslims that they have to live with the majority, however impossible. Perhaps both live in separate worlds of their own. Social contacts between the two have reduced to the minimum. Yet, the ever present tension which one could smell has more or less gone.

Even the hostility towards Pakistan, a feature of daily life, is less than before. But it is still there. The common man never abjured goodwill towards people in Pakistan. But now even governments have realized the futility of plugging a line which does not sell. There are good chances of the two sides sitting across the table for a dialogue.

The Punjabis in both the states, one in India and other across the border, are so communal in approach that they do not appreciate the Sufi culture which is the synthesis of

religious values on both sides. The Pakistan government’s allegation that India is trying to change the demographic pattern in the state of Jammu and Kashmir is palpably wrong.

The return of Kashmiri pandits to the valley is something to be welcomed. Their integration with the Muslims is one proof of the Kashmiriyat, representing both the communities. Even the separatists, except probably the fundamentalist Syed Ali Shah Geelani, strongly defend the presence of pandits in their midst on the ground that they were integral part of their society.

In fact, the strength of Kashmiriyat is that it is based on secular ethos. The students at Aligarh should take a leaf out of the Kashmir’s book and learn to resist the temptation of underlining the identity on the basis of religion.



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 14001–2004 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

janata

Vol. 70 No. 16
May 17, 2015

**Lessons from
British Labour's Loss**
D. K. Giri

Rise of the CSP
Bapu Heddurshetti

Acharya Narendra Deva
Yusuf Meherally

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Points to ponder

S. Viswam

Two issues of national interest were under the nation's radar earlier this week. Unrelated to each other, they nevertheless concern matters which the country must ponder over, sooner rather than later. The first relates to a political-social-religious matter, the second to the judicial system overall and the justice delivery system in particular. Let us look at the first concern first.

It is actually an old chestnut, talked about and about in various fora but kept cold storage for now. Should India have a uniform civil code or should it allow the existing ones with all their shortcomings in place to continue? Does it seem that the present system is satisfactory to all the communities since there has been no overwhelming demand for a modification, although social activists raise the issue off and on? The Constitution says that the state shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India.

The issue got media attention because the Supreme Court opined while hearing a marital case that one secular law should be made applicable to all people cutting across communities and religions all over the country. The court

consisting of Justices Vikramjit Sen and Abhay Manohar sought to know why there were different laws for different communities for governing matrimonial issues. The court said that Christian divorce law had a provision making separation for two years mandatory for any couple to get divorce under mutual consent. The court said this provision should be done away with and the period made one year as was applicable to couples of other communities. Many other laws relating to other communities like Hindus and Parsis prescribed only one year of separation. The petitioner in the case argued that only on the basis of religion there existed a hostile discrimination against the Christians.

The ball now seems to be in the Centre's court. It has to take a re-look at the existing code and make uniform divorce laws and also examine the need or otherwise of a common civil code.

Let us take a look at the second issue now. Film actor and cine celebrity Salman Khan was convicted and sentenced to five years' jail in a hit and run case. He was bailed out within three hours the same day. Former Tamil Nadu chief minister Jayalalitha was acquitted by the

Karnataka High Court on charges of amassing assets disproportionate to her known sources of income. A special court had convicted her and sentenced her last September to four years jail on the same charges. She is now all set to return as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.

We are not going into the merits of the Salman Khan and Jayalalitha cases. That is the job of the courts. What we are concerned about is that the judgement in the Salman case was delivered after 13 years, and that in the Jayalalitha case after 19 years. As it happens, the last word has not been said on the subject in either case, since the action is now set to feature in the supreme court. That means adding more time to the stage where we can say the “case is finally closed”. We must all ask ourselves whether we want our justice delivery system to be worked in such a way that litigants have to wait decades before securing justice? Is the system so badly loaded with regressive policies and procedures that a matter that can be settled in months takes decades? If so, does it not make sense for us to change that system? A bold heading in an English language daily in Bangalore screamed on Tuesday morning: “High Court throws out 19-year-old case in two minutes”. Does it not tell the whole story in a nutshell! It is argued that verdicts on cases get delayed because of the demand for frequent adjournments by both the prosecuting and defence sides. The answer is really in the hands of the judiciary which decides on the genuineness of the demand and whether or not it is warranted. The simpler way would be to put a ceiling on the demand. The complaint is often heard that the backlog of pending cases is not in thousands but lakhs. It could well be in crores for all one knows! Justice delayed after all is justice denied.

Lessons from British Labour’s Loss

D. K. Giri

In the British Parliament elections held last Thursday, the 7 May, the results for all the parties contesting defied predictions. The Labour Party, a social democratic party, remembered in India for giving her independence, badly lost. Disastrous and shocking as it is, the defeat of the British Labour Party has serious significance for progressives across the world in general, and the Labour Party in particular.

One is curious about the predictions made by the pollsters. All of them were hopelessly wrong. This reminds us of 1992 general elections when Neil Kinnock, the Labour Leader was predicted by everyone to win, but lost to John Major and the Conservatives. Although a discussion on British opinion polls or poll predictions is beyond my remit here, one wonders if the British electorate speaks its mind.

For the margins of defeat, let us look at the seats secured by the parties, out of 650 seats in the House of Commons, Conservatives got 331, gaining 24; Labour 232, losing 26; Scottish National Party (SNP) 56, with a huge gain of 50; Liberal Democrats (LibDems) got almost wiped out, dropping to 8 from 47 seats in the previous Parliament, United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) 1, a gain of 1 seat; and others 22 seats. The Conservatives got the majority to form government on their own. For the Labour Party, it is one of the worst defeats since the Second World War. The LibDems shrank to a position from which they may find it hard to recover. The nationalist, anti-immigration party, UKIP, became the third largest

party in UK with 12.6 per cent of total votes polled, next to Labour’s 30.4 per cent and 36.9 per cent of Conservatives. In Scotland, the SNP swept the polls pushing Labour out of its stronghold; each of three major parties, Conservatives, Labour, and LibDems got one seat each.

Why did Labour lose? And lose it badly, defying all expectations? Was it the last minute swing in England away from Labour as David Cameron played on the English fears? He had said that Labour might be forced to make concessions to SNP in order to govern. Was it the heavy loss of Labour in its traditional stronghold, Scotland? The reason could be either of these or both, or more than these two. In an article, Andrew Haroop, the Secretary General of Fabian Society cites three reasons for Labour’s defeat. One, the Labour party was not trusted on the economy. Second Ed Miliband, the Labour Leader was not rated as well as the potential Prime Minister, and third was the fallout from the Scottish referendum. Some analysts also talk of Labour’s position on the economy, leadership style, ideological posturing, trade union alliance, etc. In order to rebuild the Labour Party, and fashion progressive politics, a closer look at some of these issues in Labour campaign is in order.

The leader

In the age of plethora of electronic media, the presence and personality of a leader do influence election results. One would expect that in developed democracies, institutions are bigger than individuals, policies are more important than personalities. But this

seems to have changed after Ronald Reagan dramatized the campaign in United States, and defeated the lack-lustre Jimmy Carter. So, charisma backed by oratory of the leader increasingly became a factor in elections. Ed Miliband fell behind David Cameron on this score. Some would contend that the defeat of the Labour was political not personal. But, arguably, Ed Miliband who narrowly defeated his elder brother David Milliband in party leadership contest in 2010 with trade union support lost the Prime Ministership contest on the personality front. Ed Milliband who appeared as urbane, upper class elite, could not relate to the common voters. The impression he carried was that he was a light-weight, could not cope with the pressure of the office of Prime Minister. David Miliband, the elder brother of Ed Miliband said, "The labour lost due to the poor leadership of Ed Miliband. Given the current trends in leadership styles, there is some weight in the argument that Ed Miliband had less charisma than David Cameron. Even Gordon Brown in 2010 elections faded a bit against both, Cameron and Nick Clegg, then the LibDem Leader who became the Deputy Prime Minister in 2010-2015 alliance government.

The ideology

The Labour Party for long suffered from ideological dilemmas. The party consisted of at least three ideological streams - traditional left represented by trade unions and party cadres, 'the left extremism' in the party was curbed by dropping the controversial clause 4 of the party constitution, which was akin to Marxism. The second stream is centre-left represented by the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) and the third the 'centre' that the Labour voters relate to. The second and the third represent the "right" of

the party. The New Labour created and successfully advocated by Tony Blair and his supporters represented the "right" of the party and took the party to the centre, or to be more politically correct, the centre-right according to some observers. The Labour Party under Tony Blair won three consecutive general elections - 1997, 2001 and 2005. Tony Blair said, "Ed Miliband lost the elections, because he ditched the New Labour. Alistair Darling who was the Chancellor in Tony Blair's cabinet said, "The reason we lost and lost so badly was because, in 2010, we discarded New Labour, rather than revitalizing and re-energising it, and making it relevant for the new times we faced. That was a terrible mistake." Ed Miliband positioned the party on the 'left'; he should have positioned it in the 'centre'. Others like B. Vivekanandan, an expert on British and Scandinavian politics believe that Labour lost because it became indistinguishable from the Conservatives. Voters would prefer a genuine Conservative Party to a replica in the form of Labour Party.

On economy

More than the ideology, the Labour Party seemed weaker on economic competence. Roger Liddle, a veteran Labour leader, said, "Labour's offer was fatally flawed on economic competence", Labour's rhetorical populism on Business called into question "whether Labour understood wealth creation at all". Ed Miliband's division of business into predators and producers was not in good taste.

The Labour party focused on a particular segment of voters. It looked as if it was appealing to the population of London, liberal-minded professional, public sector workers, and ethnic minorities. It left out a lot of aspirational

middle ground voters. It is true that Labour rightly focused on the falling living standards and gross inequality. But, this was not matched by a substantial appeal to the aspirational politics that drives centrist voters and many working families in the middle England. There was the promise made by Labour of revamping the famous National Health Service, thereby the welfare state. But, Ed Miliband's "one Nation" approach which was popular in 2012, was given up, as he concentrated on rounding up the traditional supporters belonging to trade unions. At the same time, the people were wary of the "abuse and inappropriate influence of the Unions" as voiced by the champion of New Labour, Peter Mandelson.

The Labour Party failed to combine social justice with the economic competence. This dichotomy affects Social Democrats across the world. Voters do not listen to the massages of equality, fairness, etc., unless they also believe that the social democratic parties can form strong and credible governments, and more important, deliver on the economy.

The Scottish question

The Scottish issue will be more urgent for British politics after this election. It is true that David Cameron exploited the traditional antagonism between England and Scotland, which was suppressed for long. This might resurface with greater force. Scotland now will have a social democratic regional government along with Northern Ireland, while England and Wales follow neo-liberal policies. There is thus a clear ideological and political divide between North (Scotland and Northern Ireland) and the South (England and Wales)

The Tory government may continue on its divisive path and restrict the role of Scottish MPs in the Parliament. That will certainly mean further lurch of Scotland into independence. The referendum on European Union, promised to be held during this government, will also affect the Scottish question. As the Conservatives and Labour are wiped out of Scotland, they will find their voice reduced on the Scottish issues.

Quo Vadis?

Where does the British politics and Labour party go from here? The British politics, after this election gets heavily fragmented. John Weeks, the Professor Emeritus at University of London, suggests, "Soon speaking of "national" parties may become an anachronism. We are close to the moment when the Tories and Labour function as English parties, harassed at the margins by a few minor electoral players, Liberal Democrats, the Greens and UKIP". It will be an uphill task for the governing party to regain the confidence of the voters in Scotland and Northern Ireland. To start with, it should not alienate the Scottish MPs and try to reintegrate them into the Union politics. The unity of four parts of UK - England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland - is more important than anything British politics has seen in the recent past.

The dilemma or predicament faced by the British Labour is typical of challenges confronting the Social Democrats across Europe. For now, the Labour Party will be thrown into a new leadership contest, and along with that, the revival of internal debate between the 'left' and 'right' of the party. The debate as usual will be on, whether to return to New Labour (right) or to its orthodox 'left' position. But that will be a sterile debate. The challenge is to combine the social democratic

values with strong economic policies. A middle path, what one may call 'progressive politics' is to marry economic efficiency with social justice. One need not be a growth fanatic, but certainly should promote efficiency and equity. The new narrative should be "progressive

politics" catering to all, not just a class, an inclusive and solidarity economy, not a confrontational nor a competitive economy that excludes some. The Labour defeat should help us formulate this new approach, a middle path for a balanced economy and society.

Nepal is crying for help

Yusuf Meherally Centre, as often in past, has decided to do its bit for the victims of the Nepal's recent tragedy. Its scale of intervention at present is limited to making the lives of the victims a little less inhospitable and preparing them to take the future a little more optimistically. Making children laugh through games and play resulting in smiles of mothers could be one such intervention. Cleaning the public spaces of rubble and cleaning rubble from homes which can make the families rebuild their homes could be another, and providing small things that the victims need could be still another.

Yusuf Meherally Centre has a lot of experience. It was there in Kutch after the latter got devastated, in Nagapattinam, after tsunami, in J&K, after the quake, and in Raigad, Uttarakhand and Bihar, after floods. Thanks to the annual youth camps it organizes, it has a network of contacts among youth in all parts of the country. They have the necessary motivation, and the needed will to put in hard work and suffer hardships. Many of them are willing to go where their services are needed. And those of us who cannot, can give *money*, of course this is the most essential, and we can give many small things: *candles and torches, disinfectant tablets to disinfect drinking water, clothes, tents, durries, blankets, packed food items, utensils* – the things that we need in a home – which are not used, soiled or damaged. And when we give we also share in some way their grief and their hardships and, in turn, have the feeling that we have done something for humanity.

Give, yes, give generously.

Yusuf Meherally Centre,
D15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg-Sleater Road
Mumbai 400007
Yusuf Meherally@gmail.com

PS. Cheques should be drawn in favour of Yusuf Meherally Centre.

Relief Donation Bank Details

- 1) The Shamrao Vithal Co-operative Bank Ltd
 - Account No. : Current Account No. 100904180002460
 - Branch Name : Sleater Road, IFSI No.- SVCB0000009
 - Branch No. : 400089009
 - Address : A/3-4, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir Prasad Marg,
Grant Road (West), Sleater Road,
Mumbai :- 400 007.

Donations to the Yusuf Meherally Centre enjoy exemption under 80-G of the Income Tax Act.

Rise of the CSP

Bapu Heddurshetti

To mark the 81st anniversary of the Patna Congress Socialist Conference which led to the formation of the Congress Socialist Party we publish here the first chapter, with minor editing, of the proposed brief history of the socialist movement in India. We are also reprinting a biographical sketch of Acharya Narendra Deva, who presided over the Patna Conference, written by Yusuf Meherally as an introduction to the selection of Acharyaji's speeches and writings under the title Nationalism and Socialism published by Padma Publications in 1940s.

–Editor

In its session held at Lahore in December 1929, the Indian National Congress adopted complete independence for India as its goal and in February 1930 authorized Mahatma Gandhi to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement including non-payment of taxes. Mahatma Gandhi had accordingly decided to start Civil Disobedience Movement by defying the law prohibiting making of salt. Hence he started a march from his Sabarmati Ashram near Ahmedabad, Gujarat to the coastal village of Dandi in Navsari district of Gujarat on 12th March 1930 - thus began the famous Salt Satyagraha. He reached Dandi and made salt on 6th April 1930 and people all over the country joined him in the civil disobedience movement by making salt at hundreds of different places. Thousands were arrested and jailed. The movement concluded on 5th March 1931 with Mahatma Gandhi entering into a pact with Viceroy Irwin under which the Viceroy agreed to set free all political prisoners and Mahatma Gandhi agreed to withdraw the movement and participate in the Second Round Table Conference to be held in London in September 1931. However the Round Table Conference failed to resolve the issues on the agenda and folded up in December 1931. Mahatma Gandhi returned to India in January 1932 and resumed the Civil Disobedience Movement.

In the resumed movement, thousands of people offered Satyagraha and were arrested and imprisoned. Many leaders who later organized the Socialist movement in India were also imprisoned. Acharya Narendra Deva¹ - 'The Grey Eminence of the Indian Socialist Party'² - was arrested and lodged in Varanasi Jail. S. M. Joshi³, was incarcerated in the Visapur Jail. Surendranath Dwivedi⁴ was imprisoned in the Patna Camp Jail. It was a coincidence that Jayaprakash Narayan⁵, Achyut Patwardhan⁶, Asoka Mehta⁷, N. G. (Nanasaheb) Goray⁸, M. L. Dantwala⁹, C. K. Narayanaswamy, Charles

Mascarenhas and M. R. (Minoo) Masani¹⁰, who offered Satyagraha and were, arrested, found themselves in the Nasik Road Central Prison. It is this group which later became the pivot for launching the socialist movement in India.

The 'Right' reappears

However, in 1933, Mahatma Gandhi suspended the Civil Disobedience Movement and took up 'constructive work'. Jawaharlal Nehru described the sudden suspension of the movement 'an insult to the intelligence' and 'an amazing performance' for the leader of a national movement. Subhash Chandra Bose and Vitthalbhai Patel¹¹, in a joint statement said: "We are clearly of the opinion that Mr. Gandhi as a political leader has failed. The time has come for a radical reorganization of the Congress on a new method, for which a new leader is essential."¹²

As the heat generated by the Civil Disobedience Movement began to cool down, the influence of the rightists in the Congress began to rise. The tendency to consider the disobedience to law as not favorable and hence to formulate and pursue programs which were legal had begun to increase. Chittaranjan Das and Motilal Nehru had organized the Swaraj Party at Gaya on 31st December 1922 as part of the Congress, with the object of carrying on the struggle for *Swaraj*, in the Councils through legal and constitutional means, by contesting the elections and presenting the country's legitimate demands there. They had led the Swaraj Party in the Bengal and Central legislatures respectively. However, in a short time the party had become inactive.

A conference of Congress leaders was held in Delhi on 31st March 1934 to review the Congress policy. Forty delegates including Dr. M. A. Ansari, B. C.

Roy, Bhulabhai Desai, and K. M. Munshi attended the conference. It was decided to revive the Swaraj Party to enable Congressmen to carry out the constructive program of the Congress and to contest the forthcoming Assembly elections with the object of implementing the country's mandate to get all repressive laws repealed and to insist on the National Demand on the lines suggested by Mahatma Gandhi at the second Session of Indian Round Table Conference. A Provisional Committee with Dr. Ansari as its President was appointed to draft a constitution and program of the Swaraj Party. The proposals of the Delhi Conference were approved by Mahatma Gandhi. On 2nd and 3rd May 1934 about hundred Congressmen representing all provinces met in conference at Ranchi to implement the decisions of the Delhi Conference and adopted the constitution and program presented by Dr. Ansari.¹³

About Mahatma Gandhi's blessings to the Swaraj Party, Dr. Ansari said that "With his characteristic generosity he has cordially welcomed the revival of the Swaraj Party and has endorsed the decision of the Delhi conference to take part in the forthcoming elections to the Assembly. He considers it right and the duty of the Congressmen who are not offering civil resistance and who believe in work in legislatures to prosecute the program which they believe to be in the interests of the country. He goes even further and promises at all times to render such assistance to the Swaraj Party as lies in his power to give"¹⁴. This support by the Mahatma to the revival of the Swaraj Party made the launching of the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) all the more necessary and urgent.

Reacting to the revival of the Swaraj Party, Acharya Narendra Deva said "I have a genuine fear that being deprived of the healthy influence of the revolutionary movement, the autonomous *Swarajist* organization will, in course of time, become a *pacca* (solid) constitutional and reformist body and will run counter to the revolutionary policy of the Congress."¹⁵ At the same time an opinion also started growing that all the socialist forces should unite to give the freedom movement a new turn.

On the one hand the Swaraj Party was revived and on the other M. A. Aney, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Lala Lajpat Rai launched a party called the 'Nationalist Party' on 31st June 1934. The object of this party was to oppose and combat the communal award. 'It condemned the communal award as a grave wrong done to the Hindus. The speeches of some of its members actually

smacked of religious intolerance and religious prejudice against the Muslims and in favor of the Hindus...About fifty of its (CSP's) prominent members held a conference at Benares on 1st October 1934 under the Presidentship of Babu Sampurnanand and condemned the formation and activities of the new Nationalist Party.'¹⁶

While the Right was getting organized inside the Congress through the Swaraj Party, it was also getting organized outside the Congress. In 1934 two parties of the landlords were formed. A National Agriculturist Party consisting of the Zamindars of Agra was organized in the United Provinces under the leadership of Nawab of Chatari and the Raja of Tirva. Another party called the National Agriculturist Party consisting of Taluqdars of Oudh led by Maheshwar Dayal Seth and Kunwar Guru Narain was also formed in 1934.

The alchemy at the Nasik prison

S. M. Joshi says that one of the inspirations for forming the CSP was the feeling that the 'constructive work' that Mahatma Gandhi had taken up after suspending the Civil Disobedience Movement would not be able to generate enough strength in the country. In order to create such strength it was necessary to organize the peasants and workers.¹⁷

It is in the background of these developments that efforts were started to form a party of the Socialists. The first effort to form a socialist party in India was made in 1932. A person named Jamnadas Mehta called a preliminary meeting of Socialists on 24th October 1932 in the then Bombay, now called Mumbai, which was attended by about 30 persons. However, N. M. Joshi¹⁸ opposed the idea of forming a political party because he wanted only a "socialist league to spread the knowledge of socialism and not tying itself down to any program of political agitation."¹⁹ Though a committee was formed to draft the policy, aims and objectives of the party, nothing came of the efforts. Perhaps when these people were meeting in Bombay to form a socialist party, those who later formed it, were participating in the Civil Disobedience Movement and were courting arrest and incarceration.

A meeting of progressive persons, who were disillusioned with the policy of the Congress, was organized in Pune in July 1933 by Acharya Narendra Deva, Purushottam Tricumdas,²⁰ Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya²¹ and Yusuf Meherally²² for the purpose of organizing a Socialist opposition group. This group elected a

committee to draft a constitution and program which later came to be known as the 'Poona Draft'.

Another attempt was made in March 1934. "The Kanpur session of the All India Trade Union Congress²³ held in 1933 passed a resolution emphasizing the need for a political party of workers and peasants 'to give them a correct lead in the political struggle of the country towards its goal of freedom.' A nine-member sub-committee was appointed. In view of this decision, an All India Socialist Party was formed in March 1934 with the objective of establishing a 'Socialist Republic' in India. The party failed to make any progress and faded away owing to the foundation of the CSP in May 1934"²⁴.

Of the detainees in the Nasik Road Central Prison, Jayaprakash Narayan and Nanasaheb Goray were Marxists by conviction, Asoka Mehta and Minoo Masani were influenced by the ideology of democratic socialism, C. K. Narayanaswamy was a Gandhian and Charles Mascarenhas was influenced by M. N. Roy's views. Why were these socialists involved in the Civil Disobedience Movement of Mahatma Gandhi, of whom and of whose methods of struggle for freedom, they were very critical, and what were they doing in the Jail? Jayaprakash Narayan had a very interesting explanation. He later said, "Gandhiji had shown us an alternative to armed conflict in the course of our struggle for freedom. And we had followed him - not so much out of conviction as because his prescription had worked. Nothing succeeds like success - as the saying goes - and Gandhiji's Satyagraha campaigns were topping successes in that they stirred up the people and roused them to action as nothing had done before. All competing programs and ideologies had to accept defeat and take a back seat."²⁵

About his term in Nasik Road Central Prison, Nanasaheb Goray writes "this period was full of events and some of the major decisions which shaped our political career in the future were taken in that jail... We spent our time in reading and endless discussions, reviewing the national movement, reviewing the leadership of Gandhiji and his colleagues, critically evaluating the role that was being played by Soviet Russia and the Communist Party of India and trying to come to certain conclusions.... There were from the start two clear tendencies discernible among the participants, which continued to survive for well over a decade in the Party's life... One tendency, then represented by Jayaprakash Narayan, was Marxist. Jayaprakash Narayan had returned from America an intellectual adherent of

the Communist International. The other tendency, that of Democratic Socialism, was represented by M. R. Masani, who had been a member of the British Labour Party and the Independent Labour Party in his student days in London. Neither side was prepared to surrender on the doctrinal issue of democracy versus dictatorship of the proletariat. An uneasy compromise was made which was to plague the Party's existence for many a year to come"²⁶.

If freedom was the first ideal of the socialist trinity of liberty, equality and fraternity, then national freedom ought to be the first priority of the Socialists in India. And then, how could socialism be established under a foreign rule? These issues made these Marxists nationalists and prodded them to join the freedom movement.

Two serious questions faced this Nasik Group. As Jayaprakash Narayan, Nanasaheb Goray and others were under the influence of the freedom struggle led by Mahatma Gandhi and were hence part of the Congress, the first question was whether to break away from the Congress and start a new party based on socialist ideology or to remain inside the Congress and give it a socialist orientation. The second question was that since the authoritative interpretation of Marxist dogma could then be given only by the Soviet Russia, how far could they accept such Marxism totally.

Those were the heydays of Indian nationalism and movement for securing freedom from the British Rule under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. In view of the characterization of the Congress as a 'bourgeois organization' and the freedom movement as the 'bourgeois nationalist movement' by the Communist International, the Marxists in India who were under the influence of the Communist International had formed the Communist Party of India. They had refused to join the freedom struggle. However there were Marxists who were also nationalists. While for communists, socialism and nationalism were two different inconsistent ideas, for Marxists like Acharya Narendra Deva, Jayaprakash Narayan and Nanasaheb Goray the two were inseparable.

Pointing out the nexus between socialism and nationalism Asoka Mehta says: "There is a close relevance, often intimate links, even if sometimes they turn out to be dialectical in nature, between socialism and nationalism. ...Socialism and nationalism have grown up together and interacted upon one another, now in concert, now in conflict...As socialists had noted and

welcomed confrontation between the rich and the poor, the privileged and the dispossessed inside a country, so did some nationalisms, before, independence, and even thereafter, saw continuing confrontation between the advanced and backward nations..."²⁷

Finally the Marxists among the Socialists decided to launch a socialist party 'within' the Congress and decided to stay clear of Russia's interpretation of Marxist theory. They also had another reason for launching a Socialist Party within the Congress. They said 'The immediate task before us is to develop the national movement into a real anti-imperialist movement - a movement aiming at freedom from the foreign power and the native system of exploitation. For this it is necessary to wean the anti-imperialist elements in the Congress away from the present bourgeois leadership and to bring them under the leadership of revolutionary socialism. This task can be accomplished only if there is within the Congress an organized body of Marxian socialists.'²⁸ And then "Socialism was not an immediate issue (then) and the formation of a mass party on the basis of a socialist program would have been highly premature and instead of furthering, it would have only retarded the development of the anti-imperialist struggle"²⁹.

"The program of the CSP was drafted in Nasik Road Central Prison through the year 1933 as a result of discussions among a group of political prisoners participating in Gandhi's campaign of Civil Disobedience"³⁰ says Minoo Masani. Nanasahab Goray says "the decision that we took at Nasik Road Central Prison was of historical importance". It was in this Nasik Road Central Prison that the idea of forming a socialist party within the Congress was born.

The weaving of the web

"After his release from Nasik Road Central Prison, Minoo Masani met Jawaharlal Nehru in Allahabad in December 1933. Nehru gave him a letter dated 19th December 1933 stating that he welcomed 'the formation of the socialist groups in the Congress to influence the ideology of the Congress and the country'³¹. The Bombay Presidency Congress Socialist³² Group had adopted a program. When Mahatma Gandhi resumed his padayatra on 18th May 1934 in Orissa, Minoo Masani joined him for 10 days to discuss with him the resolutions and programs of the Socialists. He accompanied Gandhi on many of his morning constitutionals also. N. R. Malkarni, who was the secretary to Mahatma Gandhi, has written about one such constitutional thus: "It was Friday,

the 25th of May, 1934, and we had to walk five miles in the morning from Sisua to Patpur. Gandhiji walked barefooted with a cloth on his head, the right hand on Masani's shoulder, the left on mine; his words instructing us, his hands now soothing and now restraining us".

There were already some socialist organizations functioning, in different parts of the country independently. There were thousands of people all over the country who were under the influence of the socialist ideology but were functioning as individuals within the Congress. It was decided in the Nasik Road Central Prison to bring together all these socialist organisations and individuals to discuss their role and future of socialists in the Congress and the country.

"At the time the Patna conference met, there were only two Provincial Congress Socialist Parties or groups existing in the country namely the Bombay Presidency group and the Bihar Socialist Party. There was a District Group in Benares which was organized just before the Conference."³³ In September 1931 at the initiative of Jayaprakash Narayan, the Bihar Socialist Party had been organized with Abdul Bari as the President and Ganga Saran Sinha, Phulan Prasad Verma, and Ramabriksha Benipuri as Secretaries.³⁴ A Bombay Presidency Congress Socialist Group was set up on 25th February 1934. Among its leaders were Purushottam Tricumdas, Minoo Masani and Yusuf Meherally.

Surendranath Dwivedi mentions that the Orissa Congress Samyavadi Karmi Sangh was active in Orissa since February 1933 under the leadership of Nabakrishna Choudhary.³⁵ On 5th July 1934 Jayaprakash Narayan wrote a letter to Nabakrishna Choudhary and as a result the Orissa Congress Samyavadi Karmi Sangh became the Orissa branch of the All India CSP."³⁶

The Patna convention

The All India Congress Committee was to meet in Patna on 18th and 19th of May 1934. In this background, the Bihar Socialist Party passed a resolution saying that it was "essential that all those Congressmen who hold Socialist views should place, through those of their comrades who are its members, united proposals before the AICC when it meets at Patna on 18th and 19th of May. This Party further considers it to be high time for the Socialists of this country to make united and organized efforts for the promotion of the Socialist cause. With these objects in view the Party considers it desirable to hold an All India Conference of Socialist Congressmen

at Patna on 17th of May, so that an agreed line of action with regard to both of these objects may be evolved”.

In pursuance of the above resolution, Jayaprakash Narayan sent out a circular invitation on 5th May 1934 and said that the Bihar Socialist Party had drawn up an agenda for the conference which was enclosed to the invitation. Jayaprakash Narayan said that the Socialist organizations could either send delegates or their members could attend in their individual capacity.

In this background, an all India meeting of the Socialist organizations and individuals was held at Patna on 17th May 1934. The socialists met in the *Anjuman-e-Islamia* hall at Patna. Acharya Narendra Deva presided. S. M. Joshi, who had been incarcerated in the Visapur Jail and Rammanohar Lohia³⁷ who had returned from Germany, also joined.

Abdul Bari, the Chairman of the Reception Committee welcoming the participants said “The masses of India cannot be satisfied with mere political freedom unless that freedom is accompanied by such a reorganization of the economic foundations of the society as will eliminate all forms of exploitation of man by man and offer equal opportunities to all for moral and material progress”³⁸.

Jayaprakash Narayan said that the meeting had been organized with a view to “consider the advisability of uniting the socialist and other radical elements within the Congress into an organization in order to accelerate the growth of the latter into an anti-imperialist body having requisite ideological and organizational basis”³⁹.

Acharya Narendra Deva, inaugurating the meeting said “My task (of inaugurating the conference) is made more difficult by the absence of our beloved friend, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, whose valuable advice and guidance would have been of immense value to us on this occasion...In our endeavor to influence the nationalist movement in the direction of Socialism, we are at once met with the criticism, that it is difficult to reconcile nationalism with socialism...The answer is that we do not wish to isolate ourselves from the great national movement against British imperialism which today the Congress symbolize. (A Socialist) will, no doubt, if circumstances are favorable, try to establish a Socialist State, but if the objective situation is not ripe for such an event, he will not for that reason, frustrate the cause of freedom by refusing to fight the alien power in collaboration with other classes...because for a subject

nation, political independence is an inevitable stage on the way to socialism, even though we believe that in the present Indian conditions, the probability is that both the revolutions may be carried out simultaneously.... Capitalist democracy is any day preferable to serfdom and subjection to an alien rule...Socialism is in the air. We cannot escape it.” Having analyzed the capitalist crisis in the world and the true nature of fascism and rejecting both capitalism and fascism, he said “Socialism alone holds the field. It is no longer a mere principle and a dogma, but is being translated into action, at least in one country (Russia).” Referring to the misconceptions about materialist conception of history, he said “Marx recognizes both mind and matter as formative forces in history. He regards man as an active agent who consciously shapes history. But the mind of man acts on a given objective situation which sets the limits, within which it can act”. Answering the criticism that there was no equality in Russia he said “The proletarian slogan of equality had reference to the capitalist society and was only a demand for the abolition of the classes just as the cry of equality of the new capitalist society of the French Revolution had reference to the abolition of feudal privileges. Says Marx, ‘The real content of the proletarian demand for equality is the demand for the abolition of classes. Any demand for equality which goes beyond that of necessity passes into absurdity’”.

Replying to the criticism that India is an agrarian country and that hence socialism has no chance in India, he said, “It is now necessary to take into account the existence of objective conditions for revolution throughout the whole system of imperialist world economy, which forms an integral unit, for the existence within this system of some countries that are not sufficiently developed from the industrial point of view, cannot form an insurmountable obstacle to revolution, if the system as a whole has become ripe for it...Socialism has come to stay in this country and is daily gaining the strength and prestige inside the Congress as well as the country. We must take our stand on scientific socialism and steer clear of utopian socialism and social reformism.”⁴⁰

The Patna convention passed a resolution for forming the All India Congress Socialist Party. It said, “In the opinion of this conference the time has come for an all India organization of the Socialists in the Congress to be established. With this object in view it is resolved that a drafting committee consisting of the following be appointed to prepare the draft program and constitution

for an All India CSP. Acharya Narendra Deva - President, Jayaprakash Narayan - Secretary and C. C. Banerjee and Faridul Huq - Members". Rajani Mukherji opposed the resolution as she felt that the party should be formed outside the Congress. However the resolution was passed by 58 votes in favor and 22 votes against.

Minoos Masani moved a resolution which contained a 9-point program which was adopted. The nine points were as follows:

Transfer of all power to the producing masses.

- Development of the economic life of the country to be planned and controlled by the State.
- Socialization of key and principal industries, Steel, Cotton, Jute, Railways, Shipping, Plantation, Mines, Banks and Public Utilities with a view to the progressive socialization of all the instruments of production, distribution and exchange.
- State Monopoly of foreign trade, production, distribution and credit in un-socialized sector of economic life.
- Elimination of princes and landlords and all other classes of exploiters.
- Redistribution of land to peasants.
- Encouragement and promotion by the State of co-operative and collective farming with a view to the ultimate collectivization of all agriculture in the country.
- Liquidation of debts owed by peasants and workers.
- Adult franchise on a functional basis.

Purushottam Tricumdas moved a resolution that no socialist could be a member of the Swaraj Party or any communal organization, which was also carried. The convention also passed a resolution opposing Indian involvement in any war in which Britain may be involved and urged the Congress to resist actively the utilization of Indian men, money and resources for the purpose of war and utilize such a crisis for securing Swaraj.

On the Indian States, the convention condemned the 'action of the Travancore, Baroda, Rewa and other States which have taken repressive measures against Congress, labour and States' Peoples' Organisations and movements' and said "Interests of the people of the Indian States are as much the concern of the Congress as those of the people of British India and that the abolition of the rule of the Indian Princes can alone assure Complete Independence for the whole of India and it invites the people of the Indian States to fight side by side with the people of British India in the struggle for Independence".

The convention adopted a resolution sending "its greetings to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru whose absence from its midst is keenly felt and extends its sympathy to him on the grave illness of Smt. Kamala Nehru during his term of imprisonment and condemns the Government for continuing his incarceration in such circumstances". It also adopted a resolution on M. N. Roy's illness and demanded "his immediate and unconditional release on the grounds of health".

The convention appointed Jayaprakash Narayan as the Organizing Secretary and he was given the responsibility of contacting various socialist organizations functioning in the country and of forming, regional organizations and convening an all India conference of the Socialists.

In the meanwhile the Congress Working Committee had decided to take part in the elections to be held to the Central Assembly. The resolution of the Working Committee was to be brought before the AICC. Socialists opposed it in their convention held at Patna. They also decided to move an amendment to the resolution in the AICC which was meeting the next day at Patna, stating 'that the decision of the Lahore Congress imposing a ban on Council entry should not be rescinded except by an open session of the Congress, elections should be run on the basis of the Socialist program'. On behalf of the Socialists the amendment was moved by Sriprakash and was seconded by Acharya Narendra Deva, in the AICC the next day - but was lost.

Soon after the Patna Conference, a Central Office was set up in Benares and was placed under Dr. Sampurnanand. Acharya Narendra Deva helped in forming the Delhi Provincial Socialist Party. Bombay Presidency Group was reorganized and thus came into existence the Bombay City, Maharashtra and Gujarat Socialist Parties. Jayaprakash Narayan toured the country to organize the socialist parties. In Andhra and Kerala there were already socialist parties. Jayaprakash Narayan formed organizing committees of the party in Bengal, United Provinces, Central Provinces (Hindi), Central Provinces (Marathi), Berar, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Warning of the Working Committee

Alarmed by the fact that the progressive forces inside the Congress were getting organized and consolidated, even before the Socialists met in a conference in pursuance of their Patna decision, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution on 17th June 1934. The resolution said: "While the Working Committee

welcomes the formation of groups representing different schools of thought, it is necessary, in view of loose talk about confiscation of private property and necessity of class war, to remind Congressmen that the Karachi resolution as finally settled by the AICC at Bombay in August 1931, which lays down certain principles, neither contemplates confiscation of private property without just cause or compensation, nor advocates class war. The Working Committee is further of the opinion that confiscation and class war are contrary to the Congress creed of non-violence.”⁴¹

Acharya Narendra Deva, Jayaprakash Narayan, Sriprakash and Dr. Sampurnanand issued a statement on 22nd June 1934 from Benares repudiating the charges of the Congress Working Committee and explaining the socialist position on confiscation of private property and class war etc. They said “The resolution of the Working Committee regarding the Congress Socialist movement came as a painful surprise. In the program that was adopted at the Patna Conference there was no mention of confiscation of private property with or without just

cause. ... (but) progressive socialization of means of production, distribution and exchange. .. it does not mean abolition of all private property. As for the just cause, the welfare of the greatest number and the human society as a whole is sufficient a just cause for us. Here it is worthwhile to remind the Working Committee that even the Karachi resolution advocates state ownership of the key industries. How does the Working Committee reconcile, this with confiscation of property. The Working Committee is further of opinion that confiscation and class war are contrary to the Congress creed of non-violence. This is the most surprising assertion which, we feel it will be difficult for the majority of the Congressmen to accept. The creed of the Congress is the attainment of Purna Swaraj through legitimate and peaceful means. There is nothing in our program, as adopted at Patna, which in any sense whatever can be said to be contrary to this creed. Now, how does the idea of a class war offend against, the creed in question. As regards class war, to speak of the necessity of creating a thing which is ever present, is meaningless. The question is not of creating a class war but of deciding which side we should take in that war, the side of the oppressed or the oppressor. The Socialists aim at the ultimate abolition of all class struggles by having a class-less society”.

(to be concluded)

I am attempting to write a brief history of the Socialist movement in India. P. L. Lakhanpal's 'History of the Congress Socialist Party' ends with the mutation of the Congress Socialist Party as the Socialist Party and Hari Kishore Singh's 'History of Socialist Movement in India' ends at the split in the PSP in 1955. I am neither a historian nor a writer. Still I felt that even the treatment of the period from 1934 to 1955 needs elaboration and also that it was necessary to carry forward the developments in the Socialist movement in the country after 1956 at least till 1977 when the Socialist Party merged with the Janata Party. Hence this effort.

Hari Dev Sharma who has edited 'Acharya Narendra Deva's Selected Works' in four volumes and Bimal Prasad who has edited 'Jayaprakash Narayan: Collected Works' in ten volumes have done a very good job. I have taken the liberty of using the biographical sketches of Socialist leaders from both the books which may help in better understanding of the evolution of the movement. However I have given the biographical notes only of important leaders of the Socialist movement. The 'Collected Works of Dr Rammanohar Lohia' edited by Dr. Mastram Kapoor in 9 volumes also has been of great help.

I will be grateful to the readers of Janata if they can help me with their comments, suggestions and material for my efforts.

—Bapu Heddurshetti
B-510, Sangeeta Apartments,
5th Cross Mallechwaram,
Bangalore - 560003, Karnataka
bapuheddur@gmail.coms

1. For a biographical note on Acharya Narendra Deva please see Appendix 1.1
2. Hari Koshore Singh, in The History of the Socialist Movement in India.
3. For a biographical note on S.M.Joshi please see Appendix 1.2
4. For a biographical note on Surendranath Dwivedi please see Appendix 1.11
5. For a biographical note on Jayaprakash Narayan please see Appendix 1.3
6. For a biographical note on Achyut Patwardhan please see Appendix 1.4
7. For a biographical note on Asoka Mehta please see Appendix 1.5
8. For a biographical note on Nanasaheb Goray please see Appendix 1.6
9. For a biographical note on M.L.Dantwala please see Appendix 1.7
10. For a biographical note on Minoo Masani please see Appendix 1.8
11. Elder brother of Vallabhbhai Patel and President of the Central Legislative Assembly in 1925, Founder member of the Swaraj Party.
12. India Today: R. Palme Dutt: P. 353.
13. Selected Works of Acharya Narendra Deva: Ed. Hari Dev Sharma: Vol. 1. P. 30.
14. History of the CSP: P.L.Lakhanpal: P. 16.

15. Socialism and National Revolution: Acharya Narendra Deva: P. 26.
16. History of the CSP: P.L.Lakhanpal: P. 35.
17. 'Mee S.M.': S.M.Joshi. P.
18. Narayan Malhar Joshi (1879-1955) started the All India Trade Union Congress in 1920 along with Lala Lajpat Rai. He was the General Secretary of AITUC from 1925 to 1929 and from 1940 to 1948, died in Bombay on 30 May 1955.
19. Fifty Years of Socialist Movement in India: Ed. G.K.C.Reddy: P. 3.
20. For a biographical note on Purushottam Tricunddas please see Appendix 1.9
21. For a biographical note on Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya please see Appendix 1.14
22. For a biographical note on Yusuf Meherally please see Appendix 1.10.
23. AITUC is the oldest trade union federation in India and was founded on 31st October 1920 in Bombay. After 1945 it has been associated with the Communist Party of India.
24. Fifty Years of Socialist Movement in India: Ed. G.K.C.Reddy: P. 3.
25. Socialism, Sarvodaya and Democracy: Jayaprakash Narayan: Ed. Bimla Prasad: P. 156-7.
26. The Communist Party of India: Minoo Masani : P. 38.
27. Reflections on Socialist Era: Asoka Mehta: P. 41- 43. For Acharya Narendra Deva's views on the relations between Nationalism and Socialism see para 1.32.
28. See Resolution adopted at Meerut conference.
29. See preface to the Constitution adopted in 1949 by the Socialists.
30. The Communist Party of India: Minoo Masani: P. 38.
31. Quest for Socialism: Surendranath Dwivedi: P. 40.
32. See Quest for Socialism: Surendranath Dwivedi: P. 39.
33. Report of the Organising Secretary to the All India Socialist Conference, Bombay, October, 21, 22, 1934.
34. 'Mee S.M.': S.M.Joshi: P. 272 and Fifty Years of Socialist Movement in India: Ed. G.K.C.Reddy: P. 2
35. For a biographical note on Nabakrishna Choudhary please see Appendix 1.12.
36. Quest for Socialism: Surendranath Dwivedi: P. 40.
37. For a biographical note on Rammanohar Lohia please see Appendix 1.13
38. History of the CSP :P.L.Lakhanpal : P. 19.
39. Report of the Organising Secretary to the All India Socialist Conference, Bombay, October, 21, 22, 1934.
40. Selected Works of Acharya Narendra Deva: Ed. Hari Dev Sharma: Volume 1. P. 9-33
41. Quest for Socialism: Surendranath Dwivedi: P. 44

Do not give up on rescue!

In recent years there is a new trend noticeable with international disaster-related work.

This is that within a few days of rescue work, the agencies involved say that there is now no hope of finding survivors and that attention must now shift to rehabilitation work.

Thus they quickly create an "either-or" between rescue and rehabilitation.

In the case of Nepal it was reported seven days after the disaster that the international norm for rescue operations is only seven days and the rescue operations in Nepal were accordingly being wound down.

The fact is that human beings, especially in the Third World, evidently have a higher stamina and toleration capacity.

This is why it has been found in

quakes in Turkey, Iraq and Iran - and I have definite memories of this - that survivors, including old women, have been rescued alive from under the debris even after 40+ and even 50+ days. In addition, some people under the debris still manage to find a source of water (say some leak somewhere) or something edible.

It is therefore of the utmost importance that attempts at rescue must not be abandoned in a hurry, especially in a Third World country like Nepal. Imagine the plight of someone who may be lying somewhere hoping one day to be rescued but the search for whom may have been abandoned only because the international norm does not provide for it.

Unfortunately, Western norms for rescue missions do not factor in these aspects. This is also because rescue is more expensive, requiring drilling machinery and highly trained experts and engineers. Rehabilitation is, by

comparison, a less burdensome task [though still a major one]. This cost-benefit approach and outlook have no doubt influenced international norms on disaster response.

So I hope the word will spread in Nepal and wherever such disasters occur: "Don't give up on Rescue!"

-Anil Nauriya

Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque on
Mumbai Bank

in favour of

JANATA TRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir
Bharucha Marg, Mumbai 400 007

Acharya Narendra Deva

Yusuf Meherally

By common consent Acharya Narendra Deva is the doyen of the Indian Socialists. In a party of youth, he is the senior leader. Today is his 57.*

For several years he has been a front ranker in the twin fields of scholarship and politics - a rare combination. Turning his back on a promising legal career and the comforts of a palatial home, he plunged headlong into active politics in the exciting days of the Non-cooperation Movement. In its wake, the campaign for National Education gathered fresh strength. When Kashi Vidyapeeth was founded in Benaras in 1921, Narendra Deva was invited to join its staff. Five years later in 1926 he became its Principal. His active association with that august institution has continued since then, over a quarter of a century.

For a great scholar of his reputation his literary output has been small. Indeed, very few know how much the cause of historical research in India lost, when a certain youth, torn between two conflicting impulses, decided on politics instead of an exclusively academic life. Narendra Deva's father Babu Baldev Prasad, who was a well known lawyer, was naturally keen that his gifted son should follow in his foot-steps and inherit his practice and influential connections. Narendra Deva himself seemed anxious to become an archeologist and actually joined the Queen's College at Benaras, which was the only educational institution in U.P. at that time, offering courses in epigraphy, paleography and numismatics. But when he took his Master's degree in 1913, he decided that the seclusion of the scholar was not for him. He noted that most of the active politicians were lawyers, and decided upon a legal career. As soon as he had completed his course he returned to Faizabad in 1915 and took up the secretaryship of the local Home Rule League.

From a very young age he had developed an attraction for politics. When only ten years old, he had attended in 1899 the session of the Indian National Congress at Lucknow with his father, who was a delegate. Romesh Chandra Dutt was the President. Side by side, the All-India Soeiai Conference was also meeting, under the distinguished presidentship of Ranade. But for Narendra Deva the hero was Tilak, just released from the Yeravda Central Prison. The proceedings were in English and he

understood nothing, but he sat glued to the spot. This was his first glimpse of Tilak, for whom he developed a great affection.

During his high school days the political horizon was filled with the agitation against the Partition of Bengal. There was great excitement among the student community all over India and passionate sympathy for that province. Narendra Deva who was only seventeen attended the Calcutta Congress in 1906 as a visitor. It was at this session that Dadabhoj Naoroji from the chair, described the goal of India as Swaraj, a word that has since passed into the consciousness of the nation and has become a magic expression, symbolizing its will to freedom.

The tussle between the moderates led by Sir Phirozeshah Mehta and Surendranath Banerjee and the Extremists (Nationalists) led by Tilak and Aurobindo Ghosh was at its height. The great personality of the President helped to keep the two wings in the Congress together on an agreed programme, which increasingly reflected the influence of the Left.

In Calcutta, Narendra Deva heard some of the big guns of the Extremists, particular Aurobindo Ghosh and Bipin Chandra Pal. He was present when Aurobindo's famous address "Tenets of the New Party" was delivered. The following year, the Congress met at Surat and broke up as a result of the acute differences between the two sections. The extremists were expelled from the Congress and the Moderates went their lonely way.

Allahabad during Narendra Deva's under-graduate days was one of the strongholds of the Nationalist Party despite the fact that it was the headquarters of three great veteran leaders of the Moderates - Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru and Munshi Ishwar Saran. When Tilak paid a visit to the town in 1907, none of these eminent leaders troubled to go to receive him. The students were, of course, there at the station in their hundreds. Babu Charu Chandra Chatterji was the only one in Allahabad found willing to lend his carriage for Tilak's reception. The students unyoked the horses and insisted on dragging the vehicle themselves, till the great leader intervened and asked, them to preserve their

* The article was first published in 1946

enthusiasm for a better cause. Narendra Deva was one of the leading figures in the student demonstrations.

The Muir college Hostel at Allahabad where Narendra Deva was putting up was a hot-bed of political unrest. Instead of burning the midnight oil pouring over their college text-books, the students indulged in long discussions about the political future of the country. The expulsion of the Extremists from the Congress had lost to that body a tremendous amount of popular support and its younger and more dynamic elements. Tilak was again sentenced to six years' imprisonment on a charge of sedition in 1908 and transported to Mandalay Jail in Burma. Aurobindo Ghosh was also locked up facing a long and protracted trial.

And the orators of Nationalist Party, among them Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal, Syed Haider Raza, a fiery poet and speaker from Delhi, stumped the chief cities carrying the youth with them. At about this time, Lala Hardayal who had come under the influence of Shamji Krishna Varma in Europe, renounced his scholarship in England and returned to India. He prepared a Course of Study - the reading course for Indian students who wanted to prepare for political work. The books included those of Romesh Chandra Dutt, Dadabhoy Naoroji, History of India, books on a number of foreign countries and specially the writings of Mazzini. This had quite some influence on Narendra Deva.

The Extremist Party supporters were also publishing two journals in Allahabad – one Swaraj, an Urdu weekly, several of whose editors were jailed and another Karmayogi in Hindi. The latter was edited by Pandit Sunderlal, who had been expelled from the university for his political activities and therefore could not take his degree.

It was in that atmosphere that Narendra Deva lived and moved. He was a good student and read avidly whatever books of a revolutionary nature he could get hold of. Books like *Memoirs of a Revolutionary* and *Mutual Aid* by Kropotkin, *Essays in National Idealism* by A. K. Coomarswamy, writings of Aurobindo Ghosh and Hardayal, and stories of Turgenev were his favourites. The life of Garibaldi and writings of Mazzini in six volumes, including the *Duties of Man*, he eagerly devoured. Also books on French Revolution, Bluntschelli's *Theory of the State* and a lot of Nihilist literature from Russia, where the frightful suppression of the Revolution in 1905 had invested its leaders and its people with a new hallow of romance.

It is interesting to note that among Narendra Deva's contemporaries were Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant who was in B.A. when Narendra Deva was in the First Year Arts. Dr. K. N. Katju was doing his M.A. at that time, while Babu Shiv Prasad Gupta and Thakur Chhedilal, now President of the Mahakoshal Provincial Congress Committee were his class fellows and good friends.

How keenly Narendra Deva took his politics will be seen from the fact that after the expulsion of the Nationalists he did not attend the Congress session in 1910 even though it was in Allahabad where he was studying! Sir William Wedderburn, the President made another attempt to bring the two wings of the Congress together, but without success.

It was not until 1916 that unity was re-established in the Congress. The Lucknow Pact between the Congress and the Muslim League, through the joint efforts of Tilak, Gokhale, Jinnah and others was arrived at. Narendra Deva who was practising as a lawyer at Fyzabad and who was secretary of the Home-Rule League, attended the Lucknow Congress for the first time as a delegate. Since that day till now he has attended every session of the Congress except those at Cocanada (1923) and Madras (1927) when he was badly laid up with asthma.

The Non-Co-operation Movement brought about a virtual renaissance in India. National Education received a great fillip and Shiva Prasad Gupta offered a donation of ten lakhs for founding the Kashi Vidyapith at Benares. The venerable Babu Bhagwandas, philosopher and seer became the Principal, Acharya Kripalani, Vice Principal and Babu Sampurnanand Professor of Philosophy. Narendra Deva who had suspended his practice after the Nagpur Congress of 1920 and now pressed by Babu Shiv Prasad Gupta, his close friend and fellow student to join the Vidyapith. It was actually Jawaharlal who persuaded him to agree.

During the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930 the Congress had called for a strident boycott of British goods and especially of foreign cloth. Basti and Gorakhpur in UP, were the chief centres of supplying cloth to Nepal. Babu Purshottamdas Tandon, Shiv Prasad Gupta and Acharya visited Basti in an effort to prevent this and in order to seal the stocks of foreign goods. They were all arrested and sent to prison. Narendra Deva was very ill in jail and continued to be very ill after his release. During 1931, the days of the Gandhi-Irwin truce, he virtually had severe asthma attacks almost every month and was advised to go to Puri. But despite his very weak health and the advice of doctors, he took a leading part

in the 1932 struggle and was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment.

It was the birth of the Socialist movement that ultimately drew Narendra Deva out into the field of controversial politics. Jayaprakash had returned from America in 1929. Sometime after Jayaprakash's own favourite professor came to visit India, making a special tour of National Education Institutions. He visited the Bihar Vidyapith, of which Babu Rajendra Prasad was the head.

The Principal of the Bihar Vidyapith wrote to Acharyaji who was then Principal of Kashi Vidyapith, to receive the distinguished American professor. Jayaprakash accompanied him. This is how Narendra Deva and Jayaprakash met for the first time and felt mutually attracted to each other. When Jayaprakash took charge of the Labour Research Department of the A.I.C.C., they used to meet more often and became intimate. The two together were later to associate with a number of other friends in forming the Congress Socialist Party.

In May 1934, the All-India Congress Committee met at Patna to review the situation afresh and withdraw Civil Disobedience and turn to a Parliamentary Programme. To prevent an outright drift to constitutionalism and to put a more dynamic programme before the country, a Conference of Socialist Congressmen was also convened there. Acharya Narendra Deva was called upon to preside. His masterly address created quite a stir. An all India Congress Socialist Group was formed, with Jayaprakash as Organizing Secretary. From this time onwards, Narendra Deva has been the guide, philosopher and friend of the Socialist movement in India.

In 1936, when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was elected President of the Indian National Congress for a second time, he included Narendra Deva, Jayaprakash and Achyut Patwardhan in his Working Committee. The following year, Acharyaji was elected President of UP Provincial Congress Committee. He also presided over the Secondary Education Reorganization Committee, set up by the Congress government in UP, which produced a report highly spoken of in all quarters.

For past several years Acharyaji has been taking a keen interest in the problems of the Indian peasant. He now set to organizing them. Mohanlal Gautam, one of the most influential leaders of the peasantry in UP, and General Secretary of Central Kisan Sangh as also Seth Damodar Swarup, another well-known revolutionary leader and Pandit Algurai Shrastri, now President

and General Secretary of the UP Provincial Congress Committee also joined the Congress Socialist Party. On the occasion of the second Annual Conference of the Socialists at Meerut in January 1936, a convention of Kisan workers from all over India was also held. Out of this meeting grew the All-India Kisan Sabha. Narendra Deva has twice been elected its president at the session held at Gaya in 1939 and at Bidaul in the Mazzafarpur District of Bihar in 1942.

He also founded Sangharsha, a Hindi weekly that made a hit. Its Editorial Board included besides himself, Mohanlal Gautam, Ramakant Srivastava and above all Prof. B. P. Sinha.

With the formation of Congress Socialist Party, Narendra Deva stepped out of the sphere of provincial politics on to All-India arena. Honours have come to him unsought. Not unoften he has gently avoided them. He has declined the Vice-Chancellorship of the Lucknow University, Ministership in his own province and more than once a seat in the Congress Working Committee.

Narendra Deva was one of our well-known authorities on Indian history. This seems natural enough, for historical memory and modern progress run shoulders together in his home town. Born at Sitapur in 1889, Narendra Deva's family removed to Fyzabad, when he was only two and have stayed there since. The ancient city of Ayodhya, the birth place of Rama, with which are linked the stirring incidents of the Ramayana is only three miles away. Fyzabad itself was the capital of Oudh and a flourishing town when the British annexed it. The loot of the Begums of Oudh by Warren Hastings was one of the principal charges during his Impeachment before the House of Lords and we can still read about it in the eloquent words of Burke, Fox and Sheridan and in the essay of Macaulay. Another Begum of Oudh was one of the most determined leaders of the Rebellion of 1857 and her challenging reply to Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858 takes a ranking place in our revolutionary documents. A far-sighted ruler of Oudh constructed a stately mausoleum, where a number of the Nawabs and Begurns of his dynasty have found their last resting place. It is well known in Fyzabad as the Gul-Badi the 'Garden of Roses'. Today' the street on which it is situated is called the Aeharya Narendra Deva Road.

Though leader of the Left, Acharyaji is respected and liked by all alike - even by his political opponents. The reason is his obliging nature and anxiety to be fair to the other person's point of view. Nor does he permit party differences to come in the way of personal relationships.

There is no bitterness even in his most controversial pronouncements. When he differs from you, he does so with so much grace and humility that the sting is largely taken out of it.

Acharyaji is one of the greatest orator in India. It is not easy to think of even a few names, who combine his great learning and his stately eloquence. And yet, so shy is his nature, that he did not even once speak in the Congress till 1934, though he had been a member of the A.I.C.C. from 1917! In 1934 also, it was the strong insistence of his Socialist friends that got him on to the platform!

He is master of several languages. At one stage the famous Professor Venis, whose favourite pupil he was, tried to persuade him to take up the Professorship of Sanskrit at Mayo College, in an effort to prevent him from taking up law. At the Kashi Vidyapith he taught Pali and Prakrit among other subjects, particularly Indian History. He had translated learned philosophical texts on Buddhism from French and German. His command over Urdu and Hindi is indeed remarkable.

He has a fine sense of humour. On one occasion, the National Executive of the All-India Congress Socialist Party was discussing whether an amendment should be moved to a resolution of the Working Committee. The general consensus of opinion was that the Working Committee resolution should be supported. One prominent member, however kept on insisting that in order to maintain the leftist character, the C.S.P. must move an amendment. To everybody's surprise Narendra Devaji butted in. "Yes, I entirely agree with our friend. The Party was specially formed to move amendments to the resolutions of the Working Committee. If we fail to move an amendment even once, we will be completely lost." There was such a burst of laughter after the remark, uttered in a serious tone that the tension was relieved and the advocate of the amendment could not bring himself to say any more!

What shall we say about the defects? In his own province some of them actually pass for virtues! The first is his inability to say 'no' to anybody and people are not slow to take advantage of this. Another is his excessive politeness. Even for U.P. the traditional home of elegance and refinement, where a cultured person takes

almost as many minutes to say an 'unpleasant' thing, as a normal person in Bombay takes seconds, his courtesy and simplicity are something superb, if not overwhelming.

Though usually so very busy, he is one of the most accessible of men. At his house in Fyzabsd, Benares or Lucknow, it is a common sight to find quite a number of visitors at all times. It is a common experience also to come across persons there, sitting by the hour, without apparently any very special reason. Even when pressing work is awaiting him, Acharyaji cannot bring himself to shake them off. The result is that the most forward and insistent get their work done, while often important business remains unfinished. His over-conscientiousness leads him to do that work at a late hour at night, which completely upsets his delicate health. Indeed, he pays a high price for this lack of firmness with friends and visitors resulting in the consequent defect in organization. Everything about him, however, seems spick and span and in order when he is staying with his great friend, Babu Sri Prakash in Benares. The visitors come flocking here as elsewhere, but somehow everything seems magically arranged, including hours of rest. One does not know whether Acharyaji is insured or not, but if he is, here is a tip for his insurance company.

His greatest handicap and the nation's misfortune has been his uncertain health. For long periods he is completely out of action. Those who have watched him during a severe asthma attack and seen him in an agony of suffering have often expressed surprise at his patience and cheerfulness. Since his release from detention in Ahmednagar Fort in June 1945, he had virtually been an invalid. His delicate health is all the more surprising, since both his parents were robust. His father lived to be 72 and his mother 87.

His captivating manners, his unassuming, but gigantic scholarship, his gifts of character and intellect have endeared him to hundreds of thousands. His is the typical case of a man who lives for an ideal and a faith - the ideal of a new classless society, where poverty, ignorance and exploitation are banished and the faith in the Common Man and his revolutionary ability to create a new world. And he lives his life with so much purity of purpose and dignity of spirit, that it ennobles all who come in contact with him and sets a new tone to public life.

janata

Vol. 70 No. 18
May 31, 2015

Modi's non-rule
Kuldip Nayar

Reality and illusion
Rajindar Sachar

Modi Sarkar's first year
Irfan Engineer

Politics in practice
D. K. Giri

**Land struggle exposes
prejudices against the poor**
Bharat Dogra

**Who Is Responsible for
Indian Farmer Suicides?**
Vithal Rajan

**Allowing children to labour
is a collective crime**
Harsh Mander

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Divorce precedes marriage !

S. Viswam

It has not taken long for the six Janata Parivar parties (the erstwhile socialists) to become the target of jokes and snide remarks in regard to their plans to unite into a single political entity. The parties, the wits say, have established a new pattern in political interaction: they have first divorced each other even before entering into bonds of holy matrimony! In a sense, the target has been well and truly hit, because whoever heard of a divorce without marriage? It is verily the case of the grin without the cat!

It seems that the plan for the revival of the Janata Parivar has turned out to be a non-starter. In any case, going by the track record of the parties and leaders involved, the development is not surprising. What is, however, surprising is that six leaders with unpredictable temperaments and personal likes and dislikes should have thought it possible at all to sink their petty differences and work together for the common good of the states and political turfs they control!

It was a case of "everything sealed and signed, only to be delivered." Now, with the contention separating

two senior leaders of Bihar, namely chief minister Nitish Kumar of Janata Dal United and Lalu Prasad Yadav of Rashtriya Janata Dal, nothing is certain. What is sealed and signed and was ready for delivery is now tattered and torn. Indeed, there is nothing on the table that can be considered for delivery.

The first signs of trouble manifested themselves when Lalu turned down JDU's demand to publicly acknowledge Nitish Kumar as the Janata Parivar's common chief ministerial candidate for Bihar elections October-November this year. Since the two parties were considering seat-sharing arrangements in order to make it more difficult for the BJP, the new development was disappointing, to say the least. It was a typical Lalu ploy, since it is known in Bihar that Lalu will find it difficult to stake a claim for CM's post in view of his conviction by court in a graft case. Nitish Kumar perhaps felt that working hand in hand with the RJD may be a political liability than an asset. Lalu has a solid vote bank in the Yadavs of Bihar but Nitish's calculation could be that the vote bank politics does not work against

his popular image and second, his development plank which sets aside the caste-community factor.

Between the lines

Nitish Kumar seems all in favour of jettisoning the RJD connection as it does not boost the JDU image in any significant manner but while facing the BJP, an alliance of the two parties can be a rewarding vote getter. The two parties together can put the BJP on the defensive. This apart, Nitish seems to think that a secular alliance of JDU with the Congress and the left parties minus the RJD is good enough to take on the BJP. The idea has some merit in it.

One does not understand Lalu's strategy in sidelining Nitish Kumar. Things would have gone along smoothly had not Lalu extended an open offer to Jitan Ram Manjhi to join the anti-BJP alliance in Bihar. The move was clearly cocking a snook at Nitish and asking him to do his worst or best against the gesture. At the same time, no one is able to explain why and how Lalu turned from a supporter of Nitish and his good governance asset into a staunch critic who suddenly became adversarial. The games leaders play!

Lalu has always been an unpredictable factor in Bihar politics. He can afford to play games because a large section of Yadava voters back him notwithstanding his not-so-clean image in politics. The BJP as to be expected attacks both the RJD and the JDU as it knows that their joint strength is a big challenge for any party. Besides, the Congress and the Left are bound to support the two Bihar parties if only because they are secular.

(Continued on Page 11)

Modi's non-rule

Kuldip Nayar

Information Minister Arun Jaitley is inviting editors from different parts of India to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi to underline the achievements of his first-year rule. This public relations exercise is nothing new because all his predecessors have done so.

India's icon, Jawaharlal Nehru, did not have to do so. Still, when India was licked at the hands of China in 1962, Nehru met editors to explain the debacle. Lal Bahadur Shastri had so much goodwill that he did not have to placate them in any way. However, after the 1965 war with Pakistan - both countries claimed victory - Shastri took editors into confidence before going to Tashkent. His humility stood him in good stead because before leaving he told them that his fate was in their hands and whatever they wrote would guide public opinion.

Indira Gandhi was riding a high horse until the crops failed and had to import wheat from America, which gave it against rupee payment. She too informally talked to editors and gave an insight on India's deteriorating economic conditions.

Her son Rajiv Gandhi, who was hit hard because of Bofors scandal, never threw his weight around. One, he was conscious that the dynastic ties had parachuted him from being a pilot to the gaddi of prime ministership and, two, he was aware of his limitations in the political field. He suffered from the complex that his brother, Sanjay Gandhi, was

more suitable for the job something which his mother had instilled in him. He too went out of the way to cultivate editors. His successors, lesser in stature, expanded the PMO to have information advisers.

Modi is his own PRO. He has not appointed anyone as information adviser. Maybe, he has felt the necessity and that explains Jaitley's invitation to editors to meet the Prime Minister. But will this exercise help? Modi may not be guilty of any misrule, yet his regime is that of non-rule. There is nothing spectacular that stands out in his first year's rule.

Take for instance, his visit to China. It was neither productive nor unmitigated disaster. However, it was not successful is not the criterion to judge its merit. He undertook the trip and reportedly conveyed India's unhappiness over China's occupation of Indian territory is good enough. Authentic reports, now available, indicate that he took up even the matter of China's stapling of a visa on the passport if the person is from Arunachal Pradesh, which the Chinese claim is part of their territory.

I personally think that Modi should have cancelled the visit when one day before his arrival at Beijing, the ruling Communist Party paper ran a vituperative piece against India and carried a map without showing Arunachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir as part of the country.

(Continued on Page 4)

Reality and illusion

Rajindar Sachar

Last year when Bharatiya Janata Party with Narendra Modi as Prime Minister romped home with overwhelming majority of its own, people thought that for the next few years, this government was untouchable and any mass discontent would be just wished away. Any such self-conceit amongst the BJP loyalists now remains scattered on the roads of towns and the fields of villages.

The reasons are not far to seek. An old adage that you can fool all the people for some time and some people for all the time but you can not fool all the people all the time is as true today as when it was first formulated.

As it is even the original impression was totally out of reality, because it should be remembered that Modi majority was occasioned by a faulty electoral system wherein 31 per cent of popular votes has given such an overwhelming majority to him in Lok Sabha. That is why there is a general view developing whether two important electoral reforms, namely prohibition of corporate sector contributing to election funds (as was in U.S.A. till a couple of year back), and also instead of the present system, should we not think of list system which is more democratic and reflects public opinion more equitably and is prevalent in Europe.

But in spite of this reality, BJP government continues to remain in illusion as witnessed by its contumacious approach to the mass agitation against Land Acquisition Act 2013 as amended by Ordinances brought in by it and further make efforts to weaken the trade union

movement by making regressive changes in Industrial Law.

As it is Land Acquisition Act 2013 was the result of mass agitation by Narmada Bachao Andolan led by Medha Patkar and a great number of human rights activists, socialists and others. The Congress-led UPA government had resisted it till the last until overwhelmed by massive public protests. Ironical that the UPA constituents should now be boasting of being farmers' supporters, though having resisted the changes like Social Impact Assessment provision - which, I remember was incorporated as far back as 1990, by a resolution of United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (of which I was then a member) and which was soon after ratified by United National Organization. Obviously BJP is inviting ridicule by purporting to act against the views of U.N.O.

At present under Indian Trade Union Act 1926, any seven or more members of a Trade Union can apply for registration as a Trade Union. Central Government wants to raise the number to 100. The result obviously would be to deny right of Trade Unionism to the overwhelming number of workers in small factories which as it is are the more exploited ones. This attack on labour is so blatantly partisan when it is compared with the Companies Act. 2013, where only seven persons can apply for forming public company and the minimum paid up share capital of 5 lakhs, (though its capital can be in millions) – this provision continues to be the same as it was under 1956 Act, but for labour extra unconscionable

burden of having 100 members is being required. Is any more blatant proof of pro-corporate affinity required? Encouragingly the Central Trade Unions have already given a call to nationwide protests against this anti-labour policy of Modi Government.

A further anti-labour legislation being contemplated by Central Government is amendment of Section 25(O) of Industrial Dispute Act, which requires permission of appropriate Government if employer wishes to close the Industrial enterprise. At present it is applicable to enterprises with 100 workmen (i.e. about 75 per cent of total labour force). To weaken labour it is sought to amend the law by applying it to undertakings employing 300 workmen – virtually throwing three fourth of workmen in the lairs of industrial tycoons.

As it is there is the international corporate pressure as is evident from the proceedings of International Labour Organization (ILO) where corporate lobby is desperately making all efforts at providing that that right of workmen to strike should be banned. That such a move should even be debated is a matter of grave concern. How can such a move have even been allowed to be discussed at I.L.O., a body meant to preserve and enhance workers' rights and privileges all around.

The right to strike is a sacred, essential weapon in the hands of the workers and it has emerged as the inherent right of every worker and is of the very essence of the principle of collective bargaining. Modi Government if it wishes to

refute its softness to Big Business must publically announce that it will oppose at I.L.O. any proposal to ban strike.

There is patent falsehood in Modi government's propaganda that changes in Land Acquisition Act 2013 are required as overwhelming number of government projects which are expected to quicken the economic development for the benefit of masses are stalled because of non-availability of land. This excuse is patently false - if details of said 804 projects that are said to have been stalled since February 2015 are examined closely, it will show that 78 per cent of them are in Private Sector. More important of 804 projects that are said to be stalled only 8 per cent are stalled due to Land Acquisition problems.

The government has ready land available but it will not touch it because of its proximity to Big Corporate Sector which got allotted land in special Economic Zone, but at present 50 per cent of the land remains unutilized – under terms of allotment the government is entitled to take back this area without paying any amount to the corporate sector. Why does the government not exercise its power?

If, in spite of this mass agitation against the land Acquisition Act led by Kisans, industrial workers and concerned citizens, Modi government insists on pursuing their present course, one would be unable to find any rational explanation and will have to fall back on the only explanation as to what Shakespeare said; "Those whom God wishes to destroy they first make them mad" which is attributed to Greek Philosopher Hippolytus of 428 B.C. – but then the BJP would prefer homely Sanskrit version namely: Vinash Kale Vipareet Buddhi.

(Continued from Page 2)

Why New Delhi was keen on the visit is beyond my comprehension. On a lesser provocation, New Delhi cancelled its foreign secretary's meeting with his counterpart in Islamabad. The Pakistan High Commissioner in New Delhi had met the Hurriyat leaders before the foreign secretaries' meeting. There is apparently no such yardstick for relations with China. Instead, India is offering it access to the country's large market.

Granted India cannot take on China this does not mean that New Delhi has to be overawed by Beijing. To give a befitting reply, New Delhi should have introduced the stapled visa system to the people visiting from Tibet.

We would be fooling ourselves if we believe that the border issue is spoiling our relations with China. Nehru put it correctly when he said that the clash was that of two giants preaching different ideologies. Only posterity will judge whether or not democracy wins the race against the totalitarian communism.

As of now, totalitarianism has won. Most South Asian countries are under the influence of Beijing, although they follow their own way of governance. Nehru had expected that a democratic polity would have preference. But he had not reckoned with the might of communist ideology. Ballot box has a moral appeal which demands reason, not rustic force.

Modi's worst performance is in the economic sector. Many were taken in by his promise of *achche din aa gaye* (good days have come). The reality is entirely different. The common man has never suffered so much before as he is doing today.

Nevertheless, Modi's regime has been democratic of sorts. Knowing

his credentials, I expected him to train his guns of parochialism from day one. But he did not do so is a reprieve. Yet, there is no mistaking of his policies. He has left the dirty work of dividing the society on religious lines to his party's mavericks, the members of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

Modi and his home minister Rajnath Singh's public assurances that they want all communities, including the Muslims, to enjoy equal rights are positive. But they have hardly helped keep the atmosphere free from the pollution of parochialism. Yet, it looks odd that the exponents of Hindu Rashtra make provocative speeches that do not incite the people to indulge in communal riots. This is a big relief. It would, however, be better if they were not to pollute the atmosphere. Probably, they are conscious of the harm it would do to the society, which is 80 per cent Hindu.

It seems that Modi has drawn a red line which the RSS and its ilk do not cross. This has helped create a healthy secular ambience, however tenuous. One expects communal amity to prevail in the remaining four years of Modi's regime. Maybe, he and his party seem to have realized that communalism is neither conducive to peace nor to the democratic ethos we cherish. He and his party must ensure that mistrust between Hindus and Muslims does not appear in any shape.

There are complaints that Muslim youths are picked up and detained without trials. And it is harrowing to know that hundreds of them are languishing in jails for years without trial. That it happened even during the Congress regime does not make the crime less felonious.

Modi Sarkar's first year

Irfan Engineer

Prime Minister Narendra Modi completes one year in office on 25th May 2015. His swearing-in ceremony was on 26th May 2014. PM's achievements remain contested true to his polarising personality. While the PM's followers exaggerate his achievements as unprecedented, his detractors can only recount the promises that remain undelivered. An honest assessment becomes difficult if not impossible. However, here we are trying to capture some trends and directions of the Central Government headed by Modi.

True to the election slogan, "*abki bar Modi sarkar*", it would be more appropriate to call this Government as Modi Government rather than NDA Government. There have been reports in the media wherein NDA partner organizations have criticised the policies of Modi Government. The Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana, a NDA partner from Maharashtra and Akali Dal have been critical of the proposed amendments to the Land Acquisition Act, the Shiv Sena has been opposed to the Jaitapur Nuclear Power Plant in Maharashtra. In fact, during the Assembly elections in Maharashtra, the Shiv Sena compared the BJP with the army of Afzal Khan descending on Maharashtra. In contrast to the previous UPA Government., the PM may be wanting to convey that he is a tough PM and he alone decides. However, in democracy, one has to carry every section and every interest along. There was a classic photograph published in media wherein PM Modi was sitting on a high chair whereas all the

other cabinet ministers were sitting on a lower pedestal giving clear message to all as to who wielded real authority. The private secretaries of the ministers needed approval of the PMO, ostensibly to ensure that they did not appoint their relatives and acquaintances as their private secretaries. Why a simple instruction did not suffice and why the ministers appointed by the PM were not trusted to follow the instructions and what was scrutinized by the PMO would remain a mystery.

Centralisation

The Modi sarkar reportedly centralized authority in the PMO. The secretaries of all the ministries reportedly had the access to the PMO and the PMO could call for any file from any ministry. The decision making would certainly be faster, but all fast decisions are not necessarily best decisions. PM Modi could decide the fate of Rafael deal in France without involving the Defence Ministry and undertake unprecedented numbers of foreign tours beginning with Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, UK, Germany, US, Canada, Australia, China and ending with Mongolia. The Minister for External Affairs was left handling safety of 39 Indians in Iraq and such other functions. PM Modi was the face of even the relief work in Nepal for the earthquake victims. The PM addressed the NRIs in the countries he visited with an eye on media coverage back home and talked about domestic politics. While addressing the NRIs he would also announce routine decisions on procedures for granting of visa.

Centralising decisions in one authority tends to favour those who are close to and can have better access to the authority concerned. The more powerful an authority is, the more discretion it enjoys and policy discretions tend to benefit politically privileged. The PM enjoys the reputation of being business friendly and hence his campaign – 'ease of doing business' and 'make in India'. These campaigns meant lesser scrutiny and regulations for business, faster clearances and permissions, lowering of corporate taxes, laxer environmental regulations, more liberal hire and fire labour regime weakening the labour unions, pushing the wages down and a state facilitating land acquisition and investing huge amounts of tax payers' money in creating better infrastructure for the industries. Mumbai-Delhi Industrial corridor and running bullet train from Mumbai to Ahmedabad were the priority for the Government. Compare this with some of the priorities of the previous UPA Govt., even though they too were no less business friendly. UPA came up with some spending on welfare schemes like MNREGA, food security, Right To Information Act and so on.

SCs, STs & NITI Aayog

The allocation for Special Component Plan (SCP) for the Scheduled Castes and Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) in the 2015-16 Union Budget was reduced from Rs. 43,208 crores in the previous Budget to Rs 30,851 crores and from Rs 26,715 crores in the previous Budget to Rs 19,980 crores respectively. This

fell much short of the officially accepted requirement of allocations in proportion to population share. According to SCP and TSP Guidelines, 16.6% of the Plan Outlay, amounting to Rs 77,236 crores should have been allocated for SCP; and 8.6%, i.e. Rs. 40,014 crores should have been allocated for TSP.

If the allocation for the SC & ST in the 2015-16 Union Budget was reduced, it was also very disappointing for Muslims because there is no significant (Rs.4 crore) increase in the budget allocation in 2015-16. On the other hand, the government has decreased the allocation in the revised budget for about Rs 569 crore which has affected the functioning of schemes like MSDP and scholarship programmes in 2014-15. The Budget Estimate for the year 2015-16 is Rs 3,738 crores. The revised estimate for current year 2014-15 was Rs 3,165 crores as against the budgetary allocation of Rs 3,734 crores. The Minister of Minority Affairs Najma Heptullah was more concerned with spending money on schemes to incentivise increased fertility of the Parsi community than lack of livelihood and education among other socially and educationally backward minorities.

The Planning Commission was replaced by NITI Aayog by the Modi *sarkar*. The Planning Commission, according to the Modi *sarkar* was a relic of command economy era. Over the period, the Planning Commission was adopting more inclusive policies and had come with the concept of allocation for the SCs and STs in proportion to their population in the Plan Outlays. The Eighth Five Year Plan first mentioned the word “minority” and the need to bridge the

gaps between different marginalized sections of the society and bring them on par with the rest. The Ninth Five Year Plan concentrated on all round development through social and economic empowerment as well as social justice. Implementation of provisions for minorities began in the Tenth Five Year Plan. This plan focused on the socio-religious development of different marginalised groups, including women and minorities. The Eleventh Five Year Plan focused on a more inclusive growth with emphasis on equal opportunities for all. The six major categories out of 27 targets at the national level were - (i) income and poverty; (ii) education; (iii) health; (iv) women and children; (v) infrastructure and (vi) environment. The Twelfth Five Year Plan had even higher allocations for the marginalized sections.

Replacement of Planning Commission with NITI Aayog should be seen in this light. The NITI Aayog would not carry the baggage of inclusion of the marginalized. The Aayog is in the nature of think tank for “transforming India”, focusing on developing infrastructure for the industrial corridors and markets.

Educational institutions

Besides PM Modi, if there was another minister in news, it was the Minister for Human Resource Development, Smriti Irani, most of the time for wrong reasons. The HRD minister had aplenty confrontation with various educational institutions e.g. over scrapping of four year UG programme of Delhi University; withdrawal of Amartya Sen from second term of Chancellorship of Nalanda University, alleging that the Government did not want him to continue; controversy surrounding resignation from the of IIT-B Board

of Governors by former Director of Atomic Energy Commission Anil Kakodkar, and R K Shevgaonkar; replacing German with Sanskrit as compulsory subject upto Std. X mid-term in Kendriya Vidyalays were a few of them. The autonomy of educational institutions was being undermined. In Haryana Gita will be taught in schools and in Rajasthan schools, Surya Namaskar has been made compulsory

Top RSS functionaries including Suresh Soni, Krishna Gopal Dattatray Hosbale along with BJP leader J P Nadda and Ramlal met the HRD Minister to demand “correction” of the history taught in school. The meeting held on 30th October 2014 was sixth such meeting (Yadav & Mathew, 2014). Dinanath Batra-written books were prescribed by the Gujarat State Government to the school students for additional reading. These books contain history coloured with Hindu Nationalist perspective, glorification of past with the objective of instilling false sense of superiority and pride based on unsubstantiated facts. History is mythologised and mythology is historicized. PM Modi himself based his statements during inauguration of Science Exhibition in the Mumbai University stating that in India technology of plastic surgery was known and the proof of it was in Lord Ganesha wherein they knew how to implant elephant head on a human body. We were left wondering how a massive elephant head weighing a few quintals could be carried on human neck even if successfully implanted. As a mythology, the story may be extremely instructive and useful to believers and we must fully respect their right to do so. Similar statements were made by various BJP leaders stating India had discovered nuclear missiles

couple of thousand years ago. Such conformism on part of students limits the critical faculties. Frontiers of knowledge and understanding of truth develop when we critically examine the established beliefs, knowledge and truths.

The Hindu cultural consciousness

The Hindu nationalist cultural consciousness is rapidly diffusing in the society. Hindu Nationalist cultural consciousness is different from Hindu religious consciousness which is varied in its manifestation. It may manifest as notions of purity and pollution that informs practices of with whom one can have *roti-beti* (inter-dining and matrimonial) relations, with whom one can associate and sections that one does not consider equal to her/him. And it can also manifest as spirituality as that of Meera, Kabir, Guru Nanak, Tukaram, Ravi Das, etc., inclusive and representing love, compassion, equality, pursuit of truth and non-violence as best practices of religion. Hindu nationalist consciousness is political consciousness imagining a political community with caste based hierarchies, defining itself more in terms of who is the 'other' of the community and projecting itself to be at constant war with the 'other' so defined. Hindu nationalist consciousness is consciousness that is ready to accept an authoritarian state that would uphold the 'cultural' privileges of elite upper-caste and violently suppress, exclude and even expel the 'other' community.

The polarizing discourse has become bolder with Godse temples emerging in some states and Godse being lauded as Hindu hero. Godse is being invoked for ratchet up belligerency externally against Pakistan and internally against Muslims. The diffusion of Hindu

nationalist consciousness is more rapid and its influence can be seen particularly on the lower middle class urban youth and the rural elite. Increased attack on churches – 11 reported since December 2014, including Delhi, West Bengal, Panvel (Maharashtra), Haryana, Manglore (Karnataka) and MP is one indicator of this rapid diffusion. Ruling party MPs and even ministers are making statements punishable under Sec. 153A of IPC for promoting ill-will, hatred or enmity. Right from Giriraj Singh, Sakshi Maharaj, Yogi Adityanath, Sadhvi Prachi and others. The statements widely reported without Government performing its constitutional duty of registering cases under Sec. 153A, 153B, 295 etc, range from calling those not following Lord Ram (Hindus) as illegitimate offsprings, calling Madrasas as dens of terrorism, asserting that the population of Muslims was increasing rapidly and therefore Hindu women should produce at least 4 children and that those who did not vote for Modi (read Muslims), should settle in Pakistan. All these statements are within the teeth of aforementioned Sections. Yet no action was taken against the assertions, and no deterrent action against those attacking the church. The discourse demonizing minorities is being normalized.

Campaign for ghar wapsi (conversion to Hinduism) was undertaken wherein even the RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat spoke in despicable terms justifying coercive conversion of non-Hindus to Hindu religion in Agra reducing Muslims to chattels stating hamara mal wapas kardo (return our property). The Home Minister instead of taking action against those converting fraudulently or by coercion or by

inducement from other religion to Hinduism called for anti-religious conversion law. Similarly open campaigns were taken to coercively prevent marriages of Hindu girls with non-Hindus against the will of the couple.

All this is normalizing the discourse of Hindu nationalists spewing hatred against non-Hindus. This is diffusing Hindu nationalist consciousness which in turn is justifying construction of a cultural nationalist authoritarian state. GujCTOCA a draconian legislation was passed by Gujarat Assembly. *Modi sarkar* through the President gave its assent to the anti-cow slaughter legislations which is handy to harass the minorities and reduce them to second class citizens. The cultural nationalist state reduces the citizens to subject status some having a sense of privilege while others openly second class subjects and this in turn facilitates free market and aggressive capitalism.

Collision with the Judiciary

Modi sarkar introduced the National Judicial Appointments Commission Bill, 2014 in the Lok Sabha on August 11, 2014 together with the Constitutional (121st Amendment) Bill, 2014, which establishes the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC). The NJAC Act provides for the procedure to be followed by the NJAC for recommending persons for appointment as Chief Justice of India and other Judges of the Supreme Court (SC), and Chief Justice and other Judges of High Courts (HC). If the earlier collegium system was flawed, the NJAC was worst remedy. The Commission would consist of Chief Justice of India (ex-officio) as chairperson, two other senior judges of the Supreme Court next to the

CJI (ex-officio), two eminent jurists – to be nominated by a committee consisting of the PM, Leader of Opposition and the CJI.

Union of India is the largest litigant in India. The Minister of Law and Justice representing the largest litigant – Union of India – sitting as a member of NJAC for appointment of judges of the Supreme Court and the High Court amounts to litigant and the judges hearing the litigation sitting together. Justice must not only be done, it must also be seen to be done. Besides, the Minister of Law and Justice along with an eminent jurist on the Commission would have veto power as the NJAC Act states that NJAC shall not recommend a person for appointment if any two of its members do not agree to such recommendation. The NJAC would facilitate higher judiciary amenable to the Union Government. Rather than focusing on mitigating pendency of cases and improving justice delivery system, Modi *sarkar*'s priorities have been misplaced. As the CM of Gujarat, PM Modi and Ministers of Gujarat Government had to face a number of litigations and two of his trusted aides were convicted – Maya Kondnani and Amit Shah.

The NJAC would weaken the independence of judiciary. Earlier, the PM Modi had called upon the judiciary to have an internal mechanism for self-assessment and introspection, and urged the Chief Justice of India H L Dattu and other judges to reflect if “five-star activists” and “perception” were driving the judiciary today - a public censure of the judiciary by the head of the executive. Calling defenders of human rights as “five-star activists” too was not only unfortunate, but also unsubstantiated. It gave an

impression that the executive was on collision path with the judiciary. The CJI refused to participate in the NJAC proceedings pleading that the SC is hearing the PIL challenging the NJAC.

Modi *sarkar* failed to appoint the Chief Information Commissioner and four Commissioners under the RTI Act. This largely rendered the RTI dysfunctional. In the Central Information Commission six commissioners had disposed of 22,351 cases in 2011, whereas in 2014 seven commissioners disposed of only 16,006 cases! Pending cases get stuck for years and make the law which penalises withholding information for more than 30 days ineffective.

Modi *sarkar* failed to appoint Lokpal. The “Team Anna” enthusiastically cheered by the Hindu nationalists had fought for the legislation for a strong ombudsman as a remedy to corruption. The *sarkar* won the mandate of the people promising anti-corruption measures but has failed to appoint the ombudsman under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act 2013.

Cultural policing

While the moral policing has increased on the streets imposing illiberal and traditional-conservative culture on the society, the Modi *sarkar* ensured moral and cultural policing by appointment of Pahlaj Nihalani as Chairperson of Central Board of Film Certification. Nihalani is little respected film producer. His credibility is that he had earlier made a campaign film for PM Modi called “*Har Har Modi, Ghar Ghar Modi*”. After making it difficult for earlier Chairperson Leela Samson to continue as chair of the Censor Board after Film Certification Appellate Tribunal certified *Messenger of God*,

featuring Dera Saccha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh in lead role, which the Censor Board had rejected, Leela Samson and 12 other Board members preferred to resign.

CBFC members including Ira Bhaskar, M.K. Raina, Pankaj Sharma, T.G. Thyagarajan, Shaji Karun, Anjum Rajabali, Shubra Gupta, Nikhil Alva, Rajeev Masand, Mamang Dai, K.C Sekhar Babu and L.K. Prabhu tendered their resignations on Saturday in a joint email to I&B Minister of State Rajyavardhan Rathore. “The events that led to the chairperson Leela Samson resigning from her position are merely the proverbial last straw. We have been asking for some critical changes, which are imperative if the functioning of the CBFC has to be reformed. However, in spite of sending numerous recommendations and appeals, and having several meetings with the Secretaries and senior officials of the Ministry, and even one with an earlier Minister, not a single positive step has been taken by the Ministry,” the joint resignation letter said. There was a rebellion in the Censor Board against Pahlaj Nihalani's style of functioning. A prominent member Ashoke Pandit called Nihalani “anarchist” in his tweet. Pandit called Nihalani an “archaic monarch” who treated the Central Board of Film Certification as his “personal fiefdom.” Several Board members are believed to disagree with Pahlaj Nihalani's somewhat autocratic decision-making style, his scissor-happy ways and his list of banned cuss words which include 15 Hindi cuss words and 13 in English. The film fraternity has also accused Nihalani of “moral policing”. Filmmakers like Vishal Bhardwaj are accusing the censor board of behaving like the Taliban.

Five-star activists

PM Modi had to face the litigations filed by activists to make him and his Government accountable for its complicity in Gujarat pogrom in 2002. Human rights activists also defended the marginalized sections against aggressive acquisition of land for industrialization leading to displacement of adivasis and dalits and those who fought for justice for victims of Gujarat pogroms. The Modi sarkar therefore targeted the human rights defenders in his five-star activist jibe. NGOs under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act were investigated, particularly Teesta Setalvad of *Citizens for Justice and Peace* and Priya Pillai of Greenpeace. Their sources of funds were targeted and Priya Pillai was even prevented from flying to UK to make a presentation before the MPs on the environmental damage caused in Chhattisgarh by Essar, a company incorporated in UK. These activists were targeted to scare other NGOs from defending the rights of marginalized and preempt any civil society vigilance over violations of environmental laws, labour laws and other laws of the country by corporations and to resist the developmental model proposed by the state.

While the state seemed to be making herculean effort to put defenders of human rights behind bars for alleged violations, the convicted criminals like Maya Kondnani and Babu Bajrangji in Gujarat were able to walk out of jail along with many cops from Gujarat who are facing trials but could get bail in the last one year, including D G Vanzara, N K Amin and others. After being released on bail, Vanzara told his "*achhe din*" (good days) had come. Gujarat State did not give

sanction to prosecute former DGP of Gujarat P C Pande in the fake encounter case of Tulsiram Prajapati. The cops released on bail and still facing trial have been reinstated and even given promotions by the Gujarat Government. Amit Shah, accused in the Sohrabuddin encounter case was discharged by the court in Mumbai. Earlier, the trial judge who had reprimanded Shah for not remaining present in the court was transferred. The CBI prosecutor's arguments were not effective and the CBI did not appeal the discharge in higher courts.

U-turns

The Modi sarkar received a lot of flak for the U-turns. Congress booklet listed 25 U-turns in 180 days, which included bringing back black money within 100 days, depositing couple of thousands of Rupees in the account of every Indian, and so on. Later Amit Shah, the president of BJP said that the black money brought back to India won't be deposited into the account of every Indian as it was mere "jumla" (a point made) during elections rallies.

The Swachh Bharat campaign too has not achieved much. It was a clever move to sloganize people. The campaign was bound to fail as the *sarkar* had pretty little to contribute and required the citizens to act which was not unwelcome. However, cleanliness requires huge resources and equipments keeping land, water and environment and social prejudices clean. The campaign trivialized Gandhiji's contribution to the nation reducing him to mere icon for cleanliness. The *sarkar* also tried to undermine the importance of Christmas celebrating 25th December as Good Governance day.

The Modi sarkar should be commended for some achievements as well. The most important achievement is ratification of Land Boundary Agreement with the Bangladesh which was signed in 1974. The ratification will facilitate exchange of land enclaves in each other's territories. The inhabitants of the enclaves will have the choice to continue to reside within the territories or move to the country of their choice. The inhabitants of the enclaves on both the sides of the border were denied basic human necessities like health services, good education and other infrastructure. The BJP was opposing the agreement. However, this U-turn was welcome.

The financial inclusion of the rural and urban poor facilitating them to open zero-balance accounts with minimum documentation was another good move of the Modi *sarkar*.

The intention in the above write is not to comprehensively evaluate the performance of Modi sarkar. The intention was to merely flag some issues and map the direction. The direction is towards growing inequalities and further marginalization of the weaker sections while the elite corporations exploit cheap human labour, environment and public resources to mount huge profits. Sections of the marginalized, especially in the rural areas are getting disillusioned with the performance of the Modi *sarkar*. We are not saying that Congress led UPA Government was any better. All we are saying is that Modi *sarkar* has proved to be even worse.

Politics in practice

D. K. Giri

Democracy these days is the dominant form of politics, although Aristotle, “the father of political science” while classifying governments put democracy in the category of the distorted version of polity. Yet, democracy as the self-rule has become the aspiration of people across the world. To recall the famous quip of Churchill, “Democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried”. Although democracy has become the most celebrated form of politics, it is perhaps the most difficult to practice. Some avid observer commented: capitalism is easy to practice, but difficult to explain, whereas democracy is easy to explain, but difficult to practice. How true! I came to realize this assertion in my recent visit to parts of Andhra Pradesh. My experience of politics in practice is really instructive. Before I share my insights, let me throw a caveat on democracy.

In a democracy, voters seem to hold the reins. They ought to engage in politics every day, not just on the day of elections as is the case now. Some entrepreneurial citizens do engage in politics seriously, but the nature of their political activism defies any pattern. They are driven by individual interests, not any kind of political values. Politics for them is an avenue for self-aggrandizement, not for a social purpose. Such trends should prompt us to rethink democracy, and to restore it to a normative mode. For a vibrant democracy, we need healthy and modern institutions. One

such institution is political party. People associate with a party for its ideology, organizing principles, sound resource mobilization. In developed democracies, this is more or less the pattern, but in developing countries, this is far from the case. My experience in Andhra, which is certainly the case, elsewhere in India also, shows how!

My first stop was Vijayawada which is announced to be the new capital of Andhra after the bifurcation of the state. The city is agog with excitement that Vijayawada will get a huge face lift, like perhaps Hyderabad. I was received at the airport by one of my party members, a lawyer, and the district president of BSP, an 86-year old Ambedkarite and an IT professional. The leader of the ‘Reception Committee’ was the grand old man who is said to have dedicated himself to the public cause after his retirement. He is known in Vijayawada for sitting on a two-day hunger strike in order to have the statue of Ambedkar installed in the city. One has sympathy with him, as for someone from SC community Ambedkar is the symbol of power and glory. The old man has his own ideas to empower his community, the women and the poor. He is ready to talk even to the Prime Minister about his novel ideas and is sure that the PM will be convinced. I was amazed at his political naiveté with all his experience in public life. The old man put me up in a guest house run by a wealthy BJP man. The BJP man is leader of his caste group in Vijayawada as well as Andhra. He has a reputation in the area, and

could win any election even as an independent candidate. But he decided to change party on the eve of the last general elections, and was denied the BJP ticket. He did not get the ticket from the party he changed to. The BJP won the elections handsomely, so he returned to BJP. He met me to say that if he got the ticket from either party, he would have made it, and become a Minister in the state. He is now spending most of the time for his caste community, and BJP membership is strategic. I got a taste of how caste is put above the country. The third person in the group was the IT guy. He is happily employed. But he does not mind doing bits of extra work including politics if it gave him some extra bucks. The last person I was introduced to was again from the SC community with “deep contacts” with several villages. He is an insurance agent and does some estate business too. Once he came to know my profile, that I am engaged in state, market and civil society institutions, with my political party, Voters Party being the front-runner, he jumped in to become a member of the party, and organize lots of people from the villages he was familiar with. He mostly spoke the local language without any knowledge of Hindi or English. He did not worry much about the ideology, background, or the policies of my party. I was worried about his interest in the party sans any knowledge of it.

I proceeded from Vijayawada to Visakhapatnam by a night-sleeper-coach. That was certainly a more

comfortable bus than any I have ever been in India. It reminded me of European coach services which would rate lower than what I used to travel in Andhra. That is remarkable improvement in road transport. I slept in the bus like a piece of log until I was woken up in the wee hours by the conductor who was shouting out toilet, toilet. He was doing this great service to make up for the lack of toilet in the bus. That is the only deficit compared to European coaches. No wonder, we have a national campaign for toilets in the country. Our Prime Minister is truly credited with putting priority on toilets.

In Vishakhapatnam, I was taken to a NRI from London running a restaurant. He was an ecologist by training, but ran restaurants in London as they fetched greater and more secure returns than whatever he did as an ecologist. I tried to revive his interest in ecology and called upon him to give something back to his country of origin. He did not feel very nostalgic as many NRIs do and he was in India to make money. In his business understanding, Indian economy was growing whereas British economy was not. I struck a bargain with him; I will hire his facilities if he would engage pro-bono in our work with tribal and climate change, etc. As someone staying in England grasped the business sense I made and agreed to be associated with us. I asked him if Indians in Britain thought much about India. His answer was that Indians now are doing well in British politics as the biggest diaspora, so they need not invest their energies in India.

My last stop was a tribal dominated area called Palakonda, a small municipality in the district

of Srikakulam. My host was an educational entrepreneur who runs a school, a degree college, a B.Ed college in Hindi, Telugu and English. He has a farm of over 100 acres where he grows most varieties of fruits, fish, and some paddy. There were two NGO leaders working with him who came to meet me. My host also has set up an NGO in the name of his daughter who died at an early age. They wanted me to value-add to their work in education, community development, and farming etc. I explained to them my tri-sector approach to growth and development that brings in the synergy between the state, business and the communities. As usual, I placed politics as the key sector for social and political development. They were quite aware of the importance of politics and said triumphantly to me that they had good relations with most political parties. To illustrate, the wife of my host was once the elected leader of the panchayat. Palakonda was a panchayat before it became a municipality. She belongs to the Congress. But my host had good working relation with the TDP leaders as well. In fact, he was so close to a TDP leader of his caste that he inherited a full-fledged B.Ed college from the leader. He was not averse to making working links with BJP too. When I asked them if they believed in any particular political tradition or ideology, they were quite surprised. They believed in growing their own work and were ready to receive support from any political quarters.

The practice noticed in Andhra is understandable as politics is used largely for disbursing patronage. To build entrepreneurship or a charity, professionalism and expertise should suffice without

party political patronage. That is not the case. Hence, we live a political contradiction, over-politicization of our business and development leads to de-legitimatization of politics. Many who cannot access political leadership for personal gains lose interest in politics and distance themselves from it. That is when democracy suffers. Politics should be used for common good and social purpose, never for individual gains, which in turn should accrue from collective interest. That is how an individual and society are complimentary to each other. But political practice described above divorces the individual from the collective. To conclude, what I experienced is not uncommon in India and other developing countries. Do we have to change this? Or accept this as a fact of life? The answer is in the nature of democracy itself which is an ever evolving process. There is always room for innovation and course correction. There is scope for doing things for greater good. So the principle which puts people before the personal should drive politics.

(Continued from Page 2)

By being secular, and pursuing strictly secular politics, Nitish has made the challenge facing the BJP even tougher. If Nitish dumps the RJD, he is bound to forge links with the Congress and the Left.

The fate of the Janata Parivar hangs in the balance, but unless the parivar parties prepare an action plan on an ideological platform, there will be no incentive for secular parties to back up the alliance. But first they must unite instead of always bad mouthing the other parties and running them down.

Land struggle exposes prejudices against the poor

Bharat Dogra

Nearly 20000 tribals and other vulnerable people including dalits are struggling to obtain long overdue secure land titles in Dungarpur district of Rajasthan. Two or three generations have worked very hard to make this land cultivable, removing huge stones and filling up ditches. But instead of providing secure land rights the government has been imposing penalties on them. This is scheduled area. Still the decisions of gram sabhas on land rights have not received the due attention. PESA law is being ignored.

The government spends crores on its own to make wasteland cultivable. These tribals and dalits have done this on their own without any help from the government. Instead of providing development funds to these people, year after year the government went on imposing highly unfair penalties on them. In fact the government should have given a huge reward for making so much wasteland cultivable, but instead it has imposed penalties.

The cause of the farmers has been taken up by an organisation called Vagad Mazdoor Kisan Sangathan (VMKS) which had been struggling earlier for employment guarantee, forest rights, empowerment of gram sabhas and other related issues. In a memorandum to the authorities the VMKS has pointed out that the proceedings under Rajasthan Land Reforms and Acquisition of Land Owners' Estates Act, 1963 were drawn against Late Shri Laxman Singh ex-ruler of erstwhile Dungarpur state. In consequence

of these proceedings some 7083 hectares of land was acquired in the year 1977-78

The Government of Rajasthan completed the Survey and Settlement work in these 21 villages and after completion of the settlement, Jamabandies and other revenue records were prepared, for the first time, in the year 1977. The applicant tribal families have been cultivating the land under reference right from the time of ex-ruler but since the land was unsurveyed and there were no land records, their cultivation could not be systematically shown or entered in Government records.

Although a case regarding compensation to the ex-ruler of Dungarpur has been pending the VMKS has pointed out that this pending case has no bearing as far as allotment/regularization or conferment of tenancy rights to these tribal families are concerned. The case is being adjudicated between the State Government and the heirs of the erstwhile ruler solely on quantum of compensation. The heirs of the ex-ruler have not challenged anywhere the judicial process or legality of acquisition of the land in question.

The VMKS has organised several rallies and demonstrations for asserting the rights of farmers. These efforts culminated in a recent massive 11-day dharna from April 6 to 16. The highly disciplined yet determined protest by tribals woke up the government from its stupor and it is hoped that long overdue

action to provide secure land rights to people may be speeded up now.

However the record of last several decades shows that flimsy pretexts have been used to deny justice to people. As a result of this injustice essential facilities like farming loans and land development help were denied to people. Penalties were imposed. This shows that old prejudices against the poor came in the way of granting full rights to them.

In more recent times new vested interests have emerged in the form of mining and land mafias who may be trying to retard land rights for deserving people. It is strange that land rights for farmers were delayed but mining leases in the same area were given all too quickly.

Hence these farmers need broader support from civil society and human rights groups. The local unit of the People's Union for Civil Liberties has already extended support to this demand for land rights.

Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque on
Mumbai Bank

in favour of

JANATA TRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir
Bharucha Marg, Mumbai 400 007

Who Is Responsible for Indian Farmer Suicides?

Vithal Rajan

A question has been raised in high circles in India whether governments can be held responsible for the hundreds of thousands of farmer suicides. It is suggested that surely the taking of one's life is an issue of mental health, unconnected with society's political economy.

It is a fact that a suicide occurs when, as stated in legal terms, the person is not in a sane condition of mind. And such instability can occur in any class of society. There is no such condition as existential happy poverty, however much Bollywood may like to portray poor people singing and dancing. They do sing and dance, but they are equally prone to depressions like anyone of us. Only in the last two decades or so did health workers discover that the poor also fall prey to what were thought of as lifestyle problems, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, insomnia and migraine. We have to go back to Rousseau, who ushered in the Enlightenment, to find the root of the simplistic modern belief that somehow a life of rural poverty spares people the ills all humanity inherits.

Scandinavia has a high suicide rate. Some Japanese students living in a well ordered wealthy society are also prone to commit suicide under stress of competition. A series of teen suicides in America are said to be copycat suicides. So, Indian politicians and their ruling elite, also under stress to achieve power and amass money while the chance offers, could be tempted to relegate farmer suicides to mental disease,

wash their hands of an intractable societal problem, and get on with business as usual.

The experiences of religious ministrations over millennia and the application of modern psychological and psychoanalytic practices demonstrate that people can be brought back from the edge by careful nurturing. The Norwegian painter Munch's most famous picture is called 'The Scream.' It is no longer unheard and scores of citizens' associations exist in most major cities to minister to anyone who feels driven to suicide.

But behind the despair that drives people to take their own lives resides a cause for such an unnatural act. Emile Durkheim's famous study of suicides may now be considered outmoded, especially in some of his formulations, but the basic thesis still holds good as does his four categories of suicides. Recent Indian research has even placed 'jauhar', the mass self-immolation of Rajput women after military defeat, in Durkheim's 'altruistic suicide' category. The present-day suicides of many abused or abandoned Indian women would have been seen by Durkheim as 'fatalistic,' oppressed and choked by family and society as they are.

The present spate of farmer suicides in India unquestionably fall in the 'anomie' category, linked to moral confusion caused by economic ruin, failed aspirations and crushing disappointment. Many have gambled with their lives and fortunes, and put themselves and

their families under tremendous risk by thoughtless borrowing to get out of their families' age-old poverty trap. Many young farmers risk everything in a legitimate aspiration to have a life at least like the middle-class families they view on TV. The confirmed impossibility of achieving this in their lifetime is a crushing blow that can lead to suicide, addiction, or violence on others.

Modern psychoanalytic practice has a far more sophisticated understanding of the mind and the unconscious, but Durkheim's basic tenets still stand. As Shakespeare's Henry V says famously before battle the king cannot be held responsible for any soldier's fate. But a leader is certainly responsible for social tragedy caused by faulty policy. If we can blame European chancelleries for the mega-deaths of World War I, we have an equal right to lay the blame for farmer deaths at the door of the Indian governments.

India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, when he took charge said all things can wait but agriculture, for at that time large parts of agricultural land had gone to Pakistan. A 'Grow More Food' programme was initiated, and the President, Rajendra Prasad, even led with a 'miss a meal a day' campaign. But soon all this was forgotten in the rhetoric of industrialisation, and the grinding poverty of the majority of small and farmers was never addressed, except with fitful subsidies and loan write-offs which mostly benefitted business or better-

off farmers. A late 19th century British scientific study of Indian farming methods found nothing wrong with them and said plainly that poverty itself was the root cause of the woes of the farmers, exacerbated through Mughal and colonial governments squeezing the last penny out of them. The Nehruvian and successor governments plumped for mega dams, canal irrigation and fertilizer factories which all went to support the rural landlord class. The powerless small farmer majority was neglected since their votes would be garnered by feudal power elites.

Elite economists and decision makers till today honestly believe that nothing much can be done for the rain fed small farmers, who are committing suicide in numbers, because the elite believe that their livelihoods are unsustainable. Unfortunately, the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh State, one of the worst affected, was ruled for two decades by two men, Chandrababu Naidu and YSR Reddy, who were fascinated by the money that could be made by supporting corporate India and the rich. Their only solution for agrarian tragedy was to throw largesse in the shape of loan write-offs. Even the central government's much touted rural employment guarantee [MNREGS] is a mere extension of the 19th century British food for work programme, fashioned to prevent rioting but not hunger. Naidu, despite the bitter lesson taught him by farmers at the hustings, now plans to take away over 30,000 acres from farmers for his new state capital and real estate development, and destroy the secure livelihoods of over one hundred thousand people!

Such egregious folly is buoyed by fallacious economic reasoning

(Continued on Page 15)

Allowing children to labour is a collective crime

Harsh Mander

The shocking decision of the Union Cabinet to legalise child work after school hours in family enterprises must compel us to turn an unflinching spotlight on one of our gravest, and collectively forgotten, cruelties: the theft of the childhood and hopes of Indian children whose only crime is to be born into poverty and disadvantaged castes and religions. Even today, the majority of children in the world who are still trapped in labour are born and raised in India.

Unconscionably, the law outlawed child work only in notified "hazardous" occupations, a list to which domestic help was added only a few years ago. Beyond 14 years, even this prohibition disappeared. Both the middle classes and governments did not find it problematic that children of disadvantage are being forced to squander their childhoods labouring on farms and in factories, in waste heaps and roadside eateries and in our homes, while we aspire for the best for our own children.

In the United States, a couple filed a suit against the Department of Labour for opposing their children working in the family business of a pizzeria. The parents' argument was similar to that of the government here: the children are not being paid, they go to school, and they are learning to be a part of family enterprise. But as a legal expert argued in that case: parents aren't alone in having a stake in children. Society does, too. The

children of the poor indeed are also all our children.

The previous United Progressive Alliance government, responding to decades of child rights activism, belatedly proposed amendments to the Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act, 1986. These sought to ban all child work until the age of 14 years. The amendments also proposed prohibiting children between the ages 14 and 18 from employment in hazardous employment. (It is scandalous that there is no legal bar until then to such employment.)

But sadly because of the stalling of Parliament in the twilight months of the last government, and low public priority to child issues, this amendment never came up for voting.

Recently, the Union cabinet approved one progressive aspect of those proposed amendments: the ban on employment of children between 14 and 18 years in hazardous employment. I would have liked to see a complete ban on all child work.

But while requiring every child below 14 years to study in regular school, the new amendment disgracefully seeks to legalise child labour in "non-hazardous" work after school hours or during vacations, helping the family in fields, forests and home-based work. "We don't want to redraw the social fabric of Indian society where

children learn by participating in work with family elders,” a government official is quoted as saying. Another senior officer I spoke to asked, “What is wrong with this? Should not the son of a lohar or ironsmith, learn to be an ironsmith, or of a weaver to be a weaver?”

My answer is: why indeed should the son of a blacksmith learn to be a blacksmith or a rag-picker’s daughter to pick waste? Why can’t he learn to be a poet and she a nuclear scientist, if these are where their dreams soar? And why can’t your son or my daughter learn to be an ironsmith or a weaver?

And secondly, when your child and mine come home from school, they rest, play, watch television, receive tuitions, do their homework, and in general enjoy the delights of carefree childhood. During their vacations, we plan for their travel, recreation, leisure reading, sports and hobbies, the best that money can buy. They never spend these post-school hours, weekends and holidays labouring in farms and shops, in embroidery or weaving, cleaning dishes and sweeping floors, moulding bricks, and sorting waste.

Why then are we so comfortable with such different childhoods for children born elsewhere? Why is it alright for children of the poor to labour after school and for our children to rest and play? And why must working-class children be trained specially in the trade of their parents and children born to the middle-classes exempted from all working class responsibilities and options?

This is nothing if not the idea of caste which remains deeply

embedded in the worldviews of the upper-caste middle classes. The social commonsense persists that children of the poor and disadvantaged castes basically need to be trained not to work their minds but their hands, and upper-caste and upper class children for intellectual vocations. The alternate democratic idea that the potential for intellectual achievement is likely to be evenly distributed within all social, economic and religious groups has not permeated.

We must indeed argue for the dignity of labour. Let us conduct a social debate about including work with one’s hands as an intrinsic part of school education. This was an idea which Gandhi favoured in his *nai taleem*. But for this, first let children of the rich labour with their hands during or after school hours. Let them sweep floors and toilets, mould iron and bricks, weave cloth. I think this would be a magnificent education for them. Only then would I be content in endorsing these exertions for children of poor and low-caste parents.

The new economic growth model is pushing more and more work from factory floors to homes. In cramped, poorly lit and barely ventilated slum shanties, children bend over for hours moulding, stitching, embroidering, weaving and folding. Farm work entails continuous contact with toxic pesticides and fertilisers. All such work is hazardous. No labour is non-hazardous for children.

Making our children labour is a collective crime in which each one of us is culpable. The true reason for remaking child work lawful is the belief that in the global market, India benefits by

lower-priced goods produced by children. Children are preferred to adult workers because they are submissive and low-paid, or because adults refuse work which is very unsafe and poorly paid. But do we really wish to build India’s growth on the thin shoulders of impoverished working children?

(Continued from Page 14)

that sees a future when the bulk of rural people would move to work in urban-based industry, and corporate farming takes over the countryside. They dream of an unrealistic ‘great leap forward’ to catch up with the West. The wealth bubble created almost by happenstance by Information Technology professionals is seen as a result of good governance, and confirms leaders in the belief that only corporate India can produce growth. Fashionable economists advising governments have failed to read economic history and Gunnar Myrdal’s warning made 50 years ago that initial conditions are very different in the economic histories of the West and India. Stagnating manufacturing cannot absorb hundreds of millions of workers. It first needs to grow with strong domestic demand, which itself is dependent on the very same rural poor having an increase of purchasing power.

The only long-term solution for India’s growth problem is to ensure sustainable livelihoods for the small and marginal farmer communities by building supportive infrastructure, with careful linkages to financial and marketing bodies, and advise on farming systems that makes farmers independent of the disastrous pressures brought on them by selfish dealer-moneylenders.

-Transcend Media Service



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 14001–2004 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

janata

Vol. 70 No. 19
June 7, 2015

Indiscreet President
Kuldip Nayar

Preventing heat-wave deaths
Hosting Olympic Games
Bhart Dogra

Hashimpura judgement
Faisal Khan

Guilty Men of
Alternate Politics
Prem Singh

The Salafi war on Sufism
Shail Mayaram

Land acquisition:
myth and reality
Venkatesh Nayak

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Lalu's double isolation

S. Viswam

The cynics, and their number is legion, may well be pardoned for feeling that the socialists of India - may their tribe increase! - are always at loggerheads with someone or the other or among themselves. The socialists get as often together as they break up with each other, and this possibly explains why among the myriad Indian parties struggling for a place under the sun, there is no well-organised functional, effective and ideologically conceived socialist party championing the people's causes.

No two socialists are found to be together for a long time. They are second to none among Indian parties in taking up popular causes but they seem to lose steam too soon on the way. The news that a handful of prominent socialists proposed to come together, merge each other's parties into a single entity and function as a united party caused enormous interest and enthusiasm among the non-Congress, non-BJP, non-communist parties. The news that the proposed Janata Parivar parties' merger had proved a non-starter was a big disappointment.

Since Bihar is going to the polls for the state assembly this year end

(October-November or November-December) there is naturally enormous interest on the political front. Those opposed to the rightist parties like the BJP consider the coming polls as a fitting occasion to defeat the saffronites once and for all in Bihar and prick the propaganda balloon of the BJP that it is an invincible party. It is only to be expected that the non-BJP groups would try to join hands in this opportune exercise to humble that party.

Bihar was once a stronghold of the socialists, but them old days are gone now. Leaders like Lalu Prasad Yadav and Nitesh Kumar have socialist backgrounds and both have been active in politics for decades. Both Lalu and Nitesh Kumar have played significant roles in the state politics, and Nitesh happens to be the chief minister under whose leadership Bihar will go to the polls later this year.

Political pundits say that the proposed Janata Parivar merger had all the potential of success and was being conducted on the right lines but the move was derailed by Lalu Prasad who sought to bring in Nitesh kumar's bête noir in Bihar politics Jiten Ram Manjhi as a full partner.

Between the lines

This led to the break-up of the unity moves, and now Lalu is busy forging an alliance of all non-BJP parties. Interestingly, Lalu who is the chief of the Rashtriya Janata Dal, is isolated from mainstream politics and cannot contest elections for six years since he was convicted in the case against him in the fodder scam.

Now, after his championing of Jiten Ram Manjhi's case, the grand secular alliance to stop the BJP on its tracks is also endangered. Nitesh has walked out of it. He had an additional reason. Lalu refused to support him as the alliance's chief ministerial candidate. The Congress quickly filled the breach and announced that it would back Nitesh as the chief ministerial candidate, a gesture much appreciated by Nitesh and other secular parties. It is difficult to fathom the significance of the games Lalu is playing in Bihar but he is clearly isolated as the Congress, and the left parties have announced their intention to back Nitesh. The JD(U) camp is none too happy with the statement of the RJD leader Raghuvansh Prasad Singh that Nitesh Kumar is unacceptable to the RJD and other alliance parties.

Congress Vice-President Rahul Gandhi reportedly favoured the JD(U) in preference to the RJD. The reason: Lalu pressured the Congress in the three previous elections to accept unfair seat-sharing arrangements with the RJD. The Congress is beginning talks with Nitesh Kumar soon, and one does not know what tricks Lalu has up his sleeves to sabotage the Congress move, but Nitesh has declared that the alliance between him and the Congress will unleash new political equations bearing an impact on the coming elections.

(Continued on Page 3)

Indiscreet President

Kuldip Nayar

Heads of institutions are not generally assailed. The idea behind such thinking is that the criticism may harm the institutions, which are essential for the sustenance of democratic polity. Germane to this idea is the presidency. Therefore, the President is spared even when he or she crosses the line that the office delineates. Because of this consideration, President Pranab Mukherjee has escaped censure even when a person at an equally high office has been crucified. This does not, however, give him any licence. He should not be exploiting the prerogative as he does.

In his autobiography, which he purposely launched while occupying the high office, Mukherjee has justified the Emergency. His act was wrong from all analysis, constitutionally, legally and ethically. During the Emergency, one hundred thousand people were detained without trial. Press was shackled and all fundamental rights were suspended. The government was run by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's son, Sanjay Gandhi, an extra-constitutional authority.

Yet, the critics let Pranab Mukherjee off the hook because of the esteem the office he occupies evokes. However, his latest statement is unfortunate. He says that the Bofors gun scandal was a figment of Indian media's imagination. Having known all about the scandals, how could Pranab Mukherjee make such an irresponsible statement?

That Mukherjee was a loyal functionary of Indira Gandhi is well known. But how can he blame the media? He knows that none in India had even a scent of the scandal, much less the media. Rajiv Gandhi had purposely selected the Bofors guns because he could funnel the kickbacks to his in-laws in Italy directly. That they became affluent overnight is an open secret. Rajiv Gandhi had not whispered about the direct deal to anyone in the cabinet. None had any clue whatsoever.

It was a Swedish radio station which broke the story first. The source was a "deep throat" whose name has not been revealed till today. He passed on the information to Chitra Subramaniam, a journalist who was then working for *The Indian Express*. The "deep throat" was an insider and felt horrified over the bribery, which was first placed at Rs. 64 crore but turned out to be in the neighbourhood of Rs. 3,000 crore.

No doubt, Pranab Mukherjee finds politics a familiar turf but he left it when he was elected President. His grievance with Congress president Sonia Gandhi may be genuine. But that is between him and her. The nation is not concerned with what goes on in a political party.

Mukherjee had taken it for granted that the key role he had portrayed as a fire-fighter during the Congress party's troubled times he could not be ignored for having served the

dynasty relentlessly. But Sonia's determination to make her son, Rahul Gandhi, the prime minister came in the way of Mukherjee's political ambitions. Though he was exasperated, Mukherjee soon realized the mood and announced that he would not contest the 2014 election. Sonia readily agreed to put him in the present position because he had himself cleared the deck for Rahul Gandhi.

Nevertheless, since his election as President Mukherjee has been making speeches verging on politics. He has been commenting on the problems confronting the nation as if he is the Prime Minister of the country. His first Republic Day broadcast beat them all and had naturally evoked some angry comments. Several political parties like the CPI have characterized the speech as political.

What President Mukherjee had said during the speech may be generally correct. For example, his remarks that populist anarchy is no substitute for governance or that there is a rising trend of hypocrisy in public life are right. But he had forgotten that he was only a constitutional head and had to observe the decorum which the elected parliament and state legislatures expected from a person who occupied that position. The office of President is an institution which should not be allowed to be disfigured. Yet the political leaders do that. That Mukherjee should also be doing so is a sad commentary on his sagacity.

President Mukherjee's indiscretion may well be a ventilation of his grievance against the denial of prime ministership, which was due to him. He was an automatic choice for

the post. He was tall enough in the Congress party and had proved his ability at the various offices he had occupied. What he did not know - he realized it later - that Sonia Gandhi wanted to rule herself but feared to do so lest her Italian nationality should jeopardize the chances of her children - the inheritors of the Gandhi-Nehru heritage.

Sonia was looking for a stalking horse, a dummy that she could use to rule herself. She found Manmohan Singh fitting into her scheme of things. He was clean, competent and an ideal shield to attacks from the behind. He had no group, all by himself, and would be dependent on her to continue as Prime Minister.

No doubt, Sonia ruled the country through him for ten years. It was a strange spectacle of power with no responsibility. Official files went to her residence and the notes written on her instructions were carried out without the deletion of even a comma. Manmohan Singh's information advisors who have written books on his regime admit in print that he was a non-entity. The surprising point is why they have written this when he is not in power. Not even once did they bring to his notice the general impression that his government was being run from 10, Janpath, the residence of Sonia Gandhi. They too are guilty of misusing the authority which rightly belonged to the Prime Minister.

My experience is that a Prime Minister pays scant attention to a President. The constitution framers, who preferred parliamentary democracy to presidential form of government, have laid down what the President can do. This has, however, been nullified over the years because political parties take

the President's wishes for granted. But with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the saddle, the change is already perceptible. Mukherjee's comments on topics like the Emergency are decades old and he has not even remotely referred to the present. If and when he does, it would be interesting to watch how Modi reacts.

(Continued from Page 2)

Right now, Nitesh enjoys the support of the Congress, the left parties, the ND(U), and the NCP (Nationalist Congress Party of Sharad Pawar.) He is thus on a good wicket, but Lalu presumably is relying on the Yadav votes to do the trick against Nitesh! It will take a few more weeks for the situation to clarify in Bihar. Till then, Lalu and Nitesh will be fully engaged in cutting each other's support bases and push the other into a corner. Bihar politics will be definitely dull without the presence in it of these two veterans.

**Acharya Javadekar
A Satyagrahi Socialist**



G. P. Pradhan

Price: Rs. 20/-

Janata Trust

*D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir
Bharucha Marg, Grant Road (W),
Mumbai 400 007.*

Notebook

Preventing heat-wave deaths

Recently a very large number of heat wave deaths have been reported from various parts of India. Over 2000 such deaths were reported in May. By far the worst affected states are Telengana and Andhra Pradesh where the situation can only be called alarming. In addition heat wave deaths have also been reported from Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and from Delhi.

Life threatening heat wave conditions are likely to aggravate further in the coming years due to the worsening impact of global warming and climate change. Some of the most scorching years since record-keeping began have been recorded in very recent times. This trend is likely to persist and may be accentuated further. The trends of global warming are further aggravated by loss of bigger shade-giving trees, increasing concretisation of urban spaces, higher pollution and congestion. Access to clean and cool drinking water has also diminished for poorer people.

The most common victims of heat wave deaths are daily wage workers and people who are already suffering from hunger, malnutrition and overall weakness. If someone on an empty stomach is exposed to heat wave conditions for a prolonged period, this can be very dangerous. Elderly poor people are more vulnerable. In villages where a lot

of younger people have migrated, their elderly parents become very vulnerable to extreme heat-wave conditions.

Migrant workers and homeless people constitute groups of high vulnerability in urban and semi-urban areas. Unfortunately the entire concept of caring for the homeless people has remained linked to shelters for winter nights (*rain baseras*) only. This ignores the fact that homeless people (and poor people who come to cities for short periods) also need to be sheltered from extreme heat during scorching afternoons. So provisions should be made to open up all shelters during the daytime particularly during the weeks of extremely hot weather. There should be adequate provisions for clean and cool drinking water as well as sanitation, and also some supplies of ORS, lemons, salt and sugar in these shelters.

The *nakas*, labour-chowks or places where daily wage workers gather should be provided shade and free clean and cool drinking water. In fact the facilities for providing clean and cool free water at public places frequented by the poor need to be stepped up substantially during the weeks of extreme heat. All railway and bus stations and other such places should be adequately equipped for providing clean and cool free drinking water. All places

of pilgrimage and other places of huge gatherings of people should be similarly equipped.

In rural areas special care should be taken to meet drinking water and nutrition needs of most vulnerable groups particularly elderly people left behind in the houses of migrant workers. The timing of NREGA (rural employment works) as well as other such work should be readjusted to avoid the most scorching hours. At stone mining, stone crushers and construction sites, similar instructions can be given, or, at the very least the lunch hour can be extended to avoid the scorching sun to the extent possible.

Precautions relating to prevention of heat-wave related ailments and distress should be widely publicised. Government and health centres should be well-equipped to provide immediate and free care to victims of heat-wave. Voluntary organisations and trade union should also be involved in spreading awareness about this.

The timely adoption of all such precautions and preventive measures can help to save many valuable lives.

While to some extent these specific steps will be helpful, in a larger context overall improvement of nutrition programmes as well as programmes meant for homeless people and other vulnerable groups is necessary.

Hosting Olympic Games - Look Before You Leap

Before the recent talk on India making a serious bid for hosting the 2024 Olympics can become a prestigious national commitment,

we need to take a completely rational look at the hard facts, free from prestige considerations.

Here are some of the less palatable aspects of the London and Beijing Olympics we should keep in mind.

The cost of the London Olympics turned out to be several times the original estimate. At first it was stated to be about four times the original cost estimate of around 3.7 billion dollars. However when all the related costs were calculated some estimates put the actual cost to be around \$ 37 billion, or a whopping ten times the original estimate.

As there cannot be compromise on aspects such as security and as there is a pressure to ensure the best international standards, which in turn go on increasing, it is often not possible to cut costs.

As the experience of hosting the much smaller Commonwealth games made it so amply clear, in India's case costs are also likely to shoot up due to corruption and maladministration. Unjust tasks were first delayed and then speeded up at too late a stage leading to more corruption and mistakes.

Hosting of Olympics and other mega sports have been promoted on the promise for the huge gains these are supposed to bring to the local economy from which most citizens will benefit. But here again there is a need to take a hard look at the facts.

During the Beijing Olympics a large number of poor people living in and around the city were asked to leave the city for some time and in some cases their living places were demolished. In the case of the London Olympics it is the vast security build-up for the Games which rattled many local people.

A justification was sought in the boost-up Olympics could give to the poorer economy of East-End London. But here too there are

doubts. A study by Anne Power of London School of Economics revealed that during the years of build-up to the Olympics income rose more slowly and unemployment more rapidly than in London's East End compare to other parts of the city.

If various longer-term and hidden costs are also included and given due weightage, then even in purely economic terms such a mega-event generally ends up on the losing side. For instance there are the longer-term costs of maintaining the excessive and top-heavy sports and related infrastructure in later years. This is unlikely to be adequately utilised in normal times but will have to be maintained nevertheless.

Even the much-touted tourism gains are actually highly exaggerated. After all, how many tourists can a city accommodate within the short period of the Games, particularly when the security concerns are in the forefront?

Sometimes the large-scale hurried construction work taken up for such mega events plays havoc with the earlier planning for the development of the host city. We in India are all-too-familiar with how the Asian Games and the Commonwealth Games were used as a pretext for sanctioning a lot of dubious projects on the one hand and on the other hand, pushing away hundreds of thousands of slum-dwellers to the outer margins of the city, disrupting the livelihoods of poor people and education of children. Massive corruption accompanied all this. Excessive new construction activity can be damaging for cities like Delhi which have already experience recent construction booms.

These objectives can be brushed aside arguing that after all some country has to host the Olympics, and so why not India. In fact however there is need for long over-due reforms in the organisation of such mega events. Any rational, cool-headed consideration should convince us that if the Olympic Games are spread over many cities/countries and spaced over a period of several months, the costs, burdens and tensions will be reduced while the benefits and enjoyment will increase. If in principle it is agreed that such mega multi-sports events will be spread over a number of countries, the spacing over a longer time period also becomes necessary keeping in view the different periods of suitable weather in different countries.

Sports fans will be able to enjoy various sports events better if these are spaced over a longer time period, instead of many important events taking place on the same day. TV coverage of such spread-out events will also be better.

Another important advantage will be that it will be possible to include more sports events (even cricket!) in the Olympics.

Similarly tourism will on the whole get a much greater boost if the various sports events are spread over a wider area and a longer time period.

These suggested changes while reducing the highly concentrated burden (including security arrangements) on a single city will bring people closer to sports and sports events and the truly representative character of these mega events will be greatly improved.

Hashimpura judgement

Faisal Khan

Khudai Khidmatgar and Socialist Yuvjan Sabha had organised a discussion on "Success and failure of judicial pronouncements and the challenges ahead" where the pivotal point of discussion was the recent trial court judgment of Hashimpura and such other similar happenings. The discussion was organised in Gandhi Peace Foundation's auditorium where social activists, intellectuals and legal experts participated and students from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jamia Millia Islamia and Delhi University also participated. The speakers mainly highlighted the Hashimpura judgment. Prominent Supreme Court lawyer, Anil Nauriya, pointed out that in the judgement it was said that no personal accountability can be fixed for an incident like Hashimpura, and that was a flawed stance because there are offences in criminal law like that of unlawful assembly in which offenders are being punished jointly, so the court was totally wrong in ignoring that parameter. He added that during the struggle for independence Hunter Committee was formed to look into the Jalianwala Bagh massacre which tried to sweep the wrongdoings under the carpet but the Gandhi-Nehru Committee brought forth the truth. Similar is the case with Hashimpura - all the evidence was messed with, the senior police and army officials were never called to court, nobody was held accountable and compensation was not provided. All of this points to the fact that it is a clear case of degradation of human dignity and police have the advantage of impunity even after committing gruesome and illegal acts. We all need to be aware and

more alert and find out collective solutions to such culture of impunity which is practiced by police and politicians through dialogue and empowering ourselves with legal knowledge.

Former Chief Justice, Rajendra Sacchar said: when Hashimpura happened we went for fact finding and we prepared a report and sent it to the then incumbent government of the state of Uttar Pradesh. Then the Gyan Prakash Committee was constituted and a case was registered against the PAC jawans involved. But sadly proper investigation was never done or action was never taken because even after 8-9 years the jawans were still holding their positions and no departmental inquiry was instituted against them. On our request the Supreme Court transferred the case to Delhi. He further added that the gruesome episode that happened in Hashimpura on that ill-fated day cannot be forgotten. The records of movement of vehicle, arms and the jawans were never maintained properly and also the court did not look into those records which led to weakening the evidence. We are not satisfied with the judgement and we would be following up this case with PUCL in the higher courts through appeal.

N. D Pancholi from PUCL said that Hashimpura has been the worst case of massacre that happened in post-independence India. The reasons were both communal and political which took away lives of 42 young men mercilessly. The environment that Hindus were under threat had been created since 1984

through special propaganda. The CB-CID report of this incident took eight long years where 64 people were named as accused and after a wait of 15 years the case was transferred by the apex court and the hearing started only in 2005. The prosecution did not do its job sincerely and honestly. Photographer Praveen Jain a key witness who photographed the incident was never called to court and was only considered when he himself turned up at court. Political parties have their own way and do not value the Constitution. The police and politicians have always been hand-in-glove and that is the primary reason police reforms never happen and the reports of commissions are never implemented.

Prominent social activist Apoorvanand said that the hope for justice should not dwindle in our hearts. If we consider the situation as grim at the outset there will be no hope left. Life is a struggle and it's a constant pursuit of success. Our society is diverse and has diverse viewpoints which cannot be subdued legally. To have an ideology is not a crime until it harms anyone. The justice system has a lot of components and to understand the equation we have to be practical enough. Hashimpura is an example of blatant injustice and there are many such examples in history, but we should not lose heart. The people who were victims of the 2002 program are fighting tirelessly and have not lost hope. Sometimes even you have the correct argument you may not win because the nation is passing through a nationalist phase these days and the targeted

communities are Muslims and Christians. But this does not mean Muslims are alone, the fight is being led by people other than Muslims for Muslims as well because it is fight for the country. Muslims chose to remain in India during partition is fact enough to assert that Muslims have better claims in this country than their Hindu counterparts who did not have to choose between remaining in India or leaving across the border. Muslims in India try to be Indian and make efforts too but it has become a challenge when the media, police, army all are driven by Hindutva to give Muslims their rightful place. We have centuries-old mixed culture and tradition which we need to protect from these polarising forces. We need to make efforts towards secularism together.

Young Supreme Court lawyer Kabir Dixit said judgments good or bad are never final. We should not give up on the justice system and for this efforts to revive the system should also be made. Our active participation becomes relevant in the context that if we look at both sides of the story where offenders are set free and innocent are put behind bars and are tortured we cannot ignore the situation. But this cannot be the reason to totally lose hope or to blame the entire system. He said if fought well justice prevails and provided the example of Priya Pillai's case.

Khudai Khidmatgar Fateh Nadvi said that we are happy that we are completing 67 years of independence but at the same time I am worried about the future because sense of justice is diminishing and when such situation arises in any nation the nation gets destroyed. We all need to rise against such travesty of justice to save our nation and we need more dialogue and joint efforts.

One year of Modi's *Man ki Baat*

The Socialist Party (India) states that in the last one year Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while heading the majority government, has done the task of giving tax exemption and selling out of country's invaluable natural and labour resources to national and international corporate houses faster than the last Congress-led UPA government. The '*Man ki Baat*' that the Prime Minister keeps on talking about on the government radio is actually the *Man ki Baat* of the corporate houses. As a direct result, the already prevalent trend of poverty, hunger, malnutrition, illnesses, unemployment and farmers' suicides has gained even more speed. The trend of the devastation of farmers, tribals, small traders/businessmen, labourers and artisans is continuing in the same fashion.

In the last one year Prime Minister Narendra Modi has changed the image of India in the world from that of a country rich in natural resources, labour and talent to that of a beggar. He is working towards destroying the legacy of independence and self-reliance with even more speed than the last Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and is trying to embroil the country in the trap of neo-imperialism. The Prime Minister, who is a *swayamsevak* of RSS, decisively believes that the foreign companies and governments should develop India. The *baudhik* of RSS and the BJP, who used to sing paeans about nationalism and *Swadeshi*, are keeping complete silence. Thus, not only the anti-labourer-farmer-minority face but also the traitorous face of RSS and the BJP has become evident.

It is not surprising that the media and a small section, benefitted by

corporate policies, are still trying to project the image of Narendra Modi as a saviour-leader of the country. This feeds into their selfish interests. But the reality of selling and breaking up the country cannot stay hidden from the true patriotic powers.

The Socialist Party firmly believes that this anti-nationalist stance of the present government can be contested only on the ideological grounds. Those who recently snatched power in Delhi through slogans and shouts of 'there is no need of ideology', are themselves agents of neo-liberal ideology and are a part of the neo-imperialist group along with Narendra Modi.

In view of the Socialist Party, the building of an independent, self-reliant and equitable India can only take place on basis of the socialist ideology in accordance with the Constitution. During the time of the last general elections, the Socialist Party constantly suggested to put a united fight against the BJP and the Congress in order to achieve electoral success. But its efforts were not successful and BJP could form a majority government merely with 31 percent votes.

In this scenario, there is an urgent need for the parties and civil society organizations, which believe in the ideology of social justice and socialism, to come together. This unity should be based on the legacy and values of the freedom struggle and the Constitution rather than individualism, family/dynasty politics and regionalism. When this happens, the hardworking masses of the country will definitely win against corporate powers in the next general election to be held four years from now.

—Bhai Vaidya, President, SPI

Guilty Men of Alternate Politics

Prem Singh

In this era of globalisation-liberalization-privatization, the work of the creation of a comprehensive political philosophy—the political thought which in the context of this phenomena, springs from the ground of the have-nots to create a self-reliant, equitable economy – is stalled. Neo-liberalism has been successful to a large extent in not letting this kind of political thought come to fruition with its complete strength. Whatever little efforts have been made towards a political thought juxtaposed with neo-liberalism by certain active political and intellectual activists are not able to make their presence felt in the political discourse. The natural outcome of this is that in every aspect of Indian life, the neo-liberal grip is increasingly becoming tighter. In these times of TINA - there is no alternative - Kishan Patnayak, the important political thinker and socialist leader of our times, put forth the claim that the world is not without alternative – *Vikalpheen Nahi Hai Duniya*. It was obvious for the neo-liberal ruling establishment to oppose this significant and relevant endeavour. But his idea of an alternative politics was blocked even by certain socialists, Gandhians and peoples' movement activists having.

In this challenging situation, the legacy of the freedom movement and the anti-capitalist imperialist struggle after that can be and should be made use of. But the neo-liberal ruling class, which includes a horde of veiled neo-liberals, do not leave any stone unturned in distorting

that legacy. This horde mostly includes civil society activists and intellectuals. Whatever remains has been usurped by the battle which has been created about the icons of this legacy.

The unique feature of the modern Indian political philosophy is that it was created mostly by active political personalities. The political thought of modern India has its genesis in the juxtaposition of the conscious concerns and worries of the Indian intellect/psyche against the colonialism. Literature, arts and scholarship have been inspired by and have many a times complemented this political philosophy. It is true that even in the neo-liberal era, good literature has been crafted in the Indian languages. Serious scholarly writing has been done especially in the subjects of humanities and social sciences in English. But in the absence of a comprehensive political philosophy as juxtaposed against neo-liberalism, most litterateurs and scholars offer themselves up to be co-opted in the neo-liberal machinery or get co-opted by the system. It can be said that if there is no political vision, then even literature and scholarship remain bereft of a vision. It is not without reason that one finds that the so-called movement which has been built in the name of anti-corruption, and the so-called political party which has been created 'out of its ashes', are found to be championed by many big writers and scholars. A group, thriving on foreign funding, schemes to grab the political power by strengthening the neo-liberal

and communal nexus, the Indian intellectual class becomes available to fight in its support. They are not able to see what garb is worn by those who call the emperor without clothes.

Under the leadership of Manmohan Singh, there was a 'reticent era' (*chuppa yug*) in favour of neo-liberalism. Manmohan Singh himself worked silently; the intellectuals who supported globalisation also did not make any grandiose claims. Their real work was to silence the agony of the large population reeling under the devastating repercussions of neo-liberalism by telling them that there was a consensus in the country in favour of neo-liberalism; and it is very good because there is no alternative. The scholars who were a part of Manmohan Singh's 'National Knowledge Commission' and the civil society activists who were a part of Sonia Gandhi's 'National Advisory Committee' worked to make neo-liberalism acceptable even to its victims.

Suddenly, India Against Corruption, Anti-Corruption Movement, Aam Aadmi Party, along with a large number of civil society activists, intellectuals, NGO dons, spiritual/religious personalities gathered forces to take the Indian political thought in one jerk from the 'reticent era' to the 'babbling era' (*labaar yug*). Corporate houses and NRIs lent their full support to that 'great movement' carried out in the name of eliminating corruption. A lot of speeches were heaved. The

devaluation of language and speech reached its nether. The condition ultimately reached a point where the civil society became impatient to lash out here, there and everywhere. Delhi's Jantar-Mantar and Ramleela Maidan became the epicentres for this carnival. Along with mainstream media, social media and small magazines, including literary magazines, did not lag behind. All of this was held under the auspices of the RSS. Obviously, intrinsically, all of them were hoping to profit from and hence were supportive of neo-liberalism. Otherwise, the anti-neo-liberal strength which was formed in the last two decades could not have been broken by NGO dons along with the communal forces.

Before we knew it, Indian political discourse had become such an open market that a loquacious religious wheeler-dealer Baba Ramdev dared to take his 'high thinking' to comrade A. B. Bardhan; so many socialist leaders and thinkers, including Bardhan, registered their presence at Jantar Mantar and Ram Leela Maidan. Having emerged from the womb of market capitalism, 'Aam Aadmi' has charmed the Gandhians and the socialists alike. In this way, it can be said, that the worrisome lack of political thought is being compensated by speechifying. This indulgence in prevarication blown imagination to its pinnacle when the images of Gandhi, Lenin and JP were seen at the same time in the players of market capitalism!

Ideas and concepts like Satyagraha, Swaraj and alternative politics were brazenly being depreciated and distorted amidst this din. The term Revolution became akin to the curd-butter of the Braj milk maids, which Krishna used to steal and relish along with his cowherd friends. It is almost

as if fact and rationale have been banished from the world of political discourse. It is not surprising that in this celebration of blabbering, thinkers like Gandhi, Bhagat Singh, J.P. Lohia, Ambedkar, etc. have been so devalued that it hardly seems possible to establish their genuine worth even in the future. This trend of reducing the thinkers and politicians with a socialist vision for the future to thinkers and politicians who see India's future only in corporate capitalism is continuing unabated.

Team Modi rode the wave created by this irreverent use of language and speech through the mainstream/social media and came out victorious in the general election. The ruling class of India came together to do this so that neo-liberalism, which was facing crisis, would not only escape clear but also become strengthened and deep rooted.

Satyagraha and Swaraj are the old and established concepts of the modern Indian political thought. It can be hoped that these will be established again sooner or later. But the concept of alternative politics is comparatively new and still taking shape. It is also the most needed and significant as it has been conceptualized in juxtaposition to neo-liberalism. Alternative politics is a serious attempt to present a holistic ideological alternative to neo-liberalism. An idea of an alternative to politics rather than alternative politics has also been under discussion. This view point believes that the power should rather remain with the society than with the politics. A sub-stream of this perspective is a complete banishment of politics. Another sub-stream acknowledges the role of politics. While the first sub-stream

considers politics to be an evil; the second sub-stream is not averse to politics, but it advocates disciplining politics/political parties through civil society resistance. Here, however, we are not entering into the important debate of alternative politics or an alternative to politics.

Contemplation on 21st century socialism is central to the visualisation of the ideology of alternate politics. Threads of the ideology of the alternative politics are tied up in the burning questions of technology, natural resources, development, environment, inequality, poverty, hunger, displacement, suicides, massacres, weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear and chemical weapons, civil/human rights and gender and identity questions. The ideology of alternative politics places firm emphasis on the decentralised egalitarian model of prosperity while rejecting the centralized wealth creation model. In this is found a decisive rejection of the modern industrial capitalist model of development. This is why alternative politics naturally leans towards Gandhism. From Dr. Lohia to Kishan Patnayak, the indispensability of Gandhism has been stressed. Dr. Lohia, who is considered to be a revolutionary commentator of Gandhi, has delineated a well-thought out discourse of putting Gandhian filter to the socialism which is separated from capitalism and communism.

The incident of the destruction of Babri Masjid, in 1992, is just as important an inspiration behind the creation of alternate politics as the imposition of neo-liberal policies in 1991. The Masjid was destroyed by initiating a 'movement' by a political party and its top leaders. Constitutional institutions, secular

The Salafi war on Sufism

Shail Mayaram

politics, the common legacy of the freedom struggle, the feelings of co-existence and tolerance or the liberal stream of religion could not stop that destruction. Hence, the strengthening of secular democracy is an important dimension of alternate politics.

It is not possible to create the alternative to neo-liberal ideology and the politics based on it in hurry. Even one step, as suggested by Gandhi, is enough, but that is on the condition that the step be genuinely taken in this direction. If there is unity and agreement among the antagonists of neo-liberalism, then a national movement can be created. In such a case, it would not be possible for mainstream politics to not be affected by it. Then, it would be possible to throw off the yoke of neo-liberal slavery in near future.

Keeping in mind this brief description of alternate politics, it can be seen how hollow are the claims of those who call Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), an instrument of alternate politics. That is also hilarious, because AAP is a party born straight out of the womb of neo-liberalism. In this party, some leaders are chanting fresh about alternate politics due to the power-struggle within it. This is an extension of the blabbering which has already been going on for a long time now. These 'Pandavas', who have suddenly started calling Kejriwal a 'Kaurava', have already put at stake the inheritance of alternate politics in the game of power. This has been a long drawn process.

It was people like them only who took Kishanji to the Mumbai show of World Social Forum (WSF). Kishanji constantly tried to politicize the anti-globalization NGO activists.

(Continued on Page 11)

Many would read the global war on terror as a Samuel Huntingtonian self-fulfilling prophecy; witnesses would most likely identify it as a tragically wrong hypothesis. There are clearly many fault lines within Islam, some of which are deepening dramatically. One, there are attacks on Muslim intellectuals, attempts to suppress dissent. Two, there is polarisation between the Shias and Sunnis, primarily due to the Sunnification of Islam that has been continuing since the early 20th century.

The emerging civil war, however, is between Sufis and Salafis. This began in the 19th century when Wahhabis attacked tombs in Arabia (the Wahhabis distinguish themselves from the Salafis). It has intensified in the last two decades with the multiplication of groups that claim to be Salafi or "early Muslims". These groups profess an Islamic creed that is pure and uncontaminated by accretions.

In the last few years, I have visited several Sufi sites that fall roughly in the territories of the former Ottoman and Mughal empires. All over this vast terrain, there are signs of Sufis under siege. In Afghanistan, Pakistan, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, Sufi sites have been targeted in various ways.

Most recently, during a visit to Tunis, I visited the mausoleums of Sidi Bou Said and Sidi Manouba that have been subject to attacks. Adjacent to Tunis-Carthage is the neighbourhood which is named

after the Sufi Sidi Bou Said, and is celebrated for its spectacular architecture in white and blue. Tourists, domestic and foreign, flocked to its market on the sunny Sunday afternoon that we were there. Only a few visited the mausoleum and *khanqah* (hospice) of the Sufi. But this was precisely the place I had been searching for. Ovais Sultan Khan and I climbed up the stairs to find a small shrine over which a woman *mujawar* or ritual specialist presided - most unusual for a Sufi shrine. Another woman guided us to the small mosque just across.

Tunisia in 2015 is a post-colonial society, dominantly Muslim, struggling to democratise in the aftermath of the revolution against the authoritarian regime of Ben Ali. It is also deeply haunted by the spectre of Islamism, as the bombing of the Bardo museum indicates.

On my last day in Tunis I was finally able to perform my *ziyarat* (pilgrimage) to the mausoleum of the great Sufi, Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhili, popularly known as Imam ash-Shadhili or Sidi Belhassan. It was an overwhelming experience. An all-woman *ziker* was in progress when I entered the hall. The men had been relegated to an outer room and the inner hall reverberated with women's voices singing a song about the saint. *Ziker* (dhikr) has many meanings ranging from prayer to recitation to repetition of an expression of praise. Here it culminated in a trance-generating

incantation of ‘Allahu Akbar’ with the repetitive ‘Akbar, Akbar, Akbar’ becoming like an ‘Om’ or a Buddhist chant. I had come to Tunis to participate in a panel at the World Social Forum 2015, part of an initiative of the South Asian Dialogues on Ecological Democracy, to engage in a larger global debate on Islam and democracy. My presentation focussed on the philosophical contribution of Sufi brotherhoods such as Chishtis, Qadiris and Madaris as also of independent qalandars in the Indian subcontinent. The Chishtis and Qadiris are close cousins of the Shadhili (Shazili) brotherhood, which was important in Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. Sidi Belhassen was a Shadhili Sufi who came from Morocco and established his first *zawiyain* in Tunis in 1227. In India, the Chishti order had already been established by Muinuddin Chishti from Chisht, Afghanistan. Some Shadhili and Chishti Sufis are authors of philosophical treatises.

The big question, of course, is why the antipathy between Sufis and Salafis is becoming a civil war in Islam. Indeed, the war itself is fairly one-sided, as the other side is the victim of the attack and has no strategy for a concerted counter-attack. But without romanticising either Sufism - any ‘ism’ is problematic - or the “good Muslim”, we only have to peruse early Sufi medieval texts to see how Sufi philosophies provide major sources of resistance to Salafist and other exclusionary ideologies. They go back to a period when religion and philosophy were not yet divorced. These philosophies also suggest Islam’s civilisational dialogue with Greek and Hindu-Buddhist philosophies.

A few years ago, in Pakistan, I had visited the mausoleum of the great Sufi Abul Hassan Ali Hajvari, popularly called Daata Sahib (990-1077), now behind barbed wire after its bombing in 2010. Abul Hassan Ali Hajvari is the author of *Kashf Al Mahjub* or *The Revelation of the Veiled*, a text in Persian that the philosopher Ghazala Irfan teaches at the Lahore University of Management Sciences. I had also made another pilgrimage to Pakpattan where the mausoleum of Baba Farid, one of the great Chishti Sufis, had been similarly attacked. Baba Farid also visited Jerusalem. Around the site of his meditation an Indian hospice has come into being, beautifully memorialised in Navtej Sarna’s recent book, *Indians at Herod’s Gate: A Jerusalem Tale*.

What cannot be destroyed by arson or attacks, however, are the powerful ideas of some of these Sufi masters that contest annihilatory Salafist ideologies. In India, after a series of celebrated Sufis including Moinuddin Chishti, Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, Hamiduddin Nagori, Nizamuddin Auliya and Nasiruddin Chiragh Dehlavi, the Chishti lineage was taken southwards to the Deccan by Khwaja Syed Shaik al Islam Syed Mohammed al Husaini, popularly known as Banda Nawaz Gesu Daraz (1321-1422). His powerful philosophical text, *Ma’arif al awarif*, is a commentary upon a foundational text of the Suhrawardi Sufi order. It articulates, among other ideas, the ethical idea that one cannot love god and not love all the creatures he has created. Only the first volume of this text has been recently published by the *Da’irat’ul-Ma’arif’il-Osmania*, Hyderabad, edited by Mohammed Mustafa Shareef. This is similar

to the Shadhili teaching that god is everywhere and one can see his face in all creation elaborated in the mystical teachings of Al-Shadhili

This then is the undeclared civil war in Islam. Except that one side is largely armed only with the theology of love.

—Courtesy: The Hindu

(Continued from Page 10)

Hence he agreed to go there with the aim of finding the possibilities in a large gathering. He used to go to the various programmes organized by NGO activists with the same aim. But instead of understanding and accepting Kishanji’s perspective, the NGO activists used his presence to validate their position.

Alternate politics and the NGOs, flourishing on foreign funding, can never get together to create a common platform. It is possible, even though it happens rarely, that a person may leave NGO work to join alternate politics, or, what happens more often is that a person may leave alternate politics and join NGO work. Their co-operation cannot sustain. In fact, in trying to balance both, NGO case usually becomes dominant.

These are the people who were saying that AAP would be made a socialist party. Keriwal would also be converted into one; and if he refused then because of the control of the socialists on the party, he would be asked to leave. The reverse has happened. If their conscience was clear, then they would have admitted, to the members they had roped into the party with promises of making AAP a socialist party, that their understanding and approximation was wrong.

Land acquisition: myth and reality

Venkatesh Nayak

A big question that is begging a credible answer today is - why is the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government hell bent on road rolling amendments on to the land acquisition law without even implementing it despite vociferous opposition from several quarters.

Several spokespersons for the government and the political parties which support it have repeatedly said that the amendments to the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act (LARR Act) enacted by Parliament in 2013, was first promulgated as an Ordinance and then repromulgated because they could not get the approval of Parliament last month, are necessary to arrest the slowing down of the economy and breathing life into the stalled development projects. The mainstay of this argument has been that the process of acquiring privately owned land for developmental projects laid down in the LARR Act is too cumbersome and requires simplification. (The ordinance was again promulgated on May 30, 2015) The state of the economy reported in Parliament by the Government in the form of the Economic Survey 2014-15 (ES14-15), a day before tabling the budget in February 2015 pointed out that the stalling of a large number of projects in the public and the private sector was the primary reason for the slowdown that the Indian economy was experiencing. However detailed data on such projects was not annexed to that report. Official spokespersons repeatedly argued that the amendments to the land acquisition law were necessary to

pull up the economy out of the nadir it had reached. After reading ES 14-15, I sought granular data from the Ministry of Finance under The Right to Information Act, 2005 out of sheer curiosity. Finance Ministry moved with exceptional speed and provided a list of projects within less than a month of receiving the RTI application and surprisingly without demanding any additional fee. Major findings from an analysis of the data about stalled projects obtained through RTI are:

1) The list supplied by Finance Ministry contains a total of 804 projects that have been stalled as of February 2015 for a variety of reasons across 24 States and two Union Territories. Maharashtra with 125 stalled projects topped the list followed by Gujarat (63 projects), West Bengal (55 projects), Karnataka (52 projects) and Telangana (52 projects).

Some States have districts placed under the 5th Schedule of the Constitution where a significant proportion of the population is of tribal origin. Obtaining their consent for implementing any developmental project if it falls in their area is indispensable. 2) The private sector projects (78%) outnumber the public sector projects planned by the Central or State Governments, or public sector enterprises or local municipal boards and autonomous authorities (22%). 3) Only 8% (66 nos.) of the 804 projects are said to have stalled due to land acquisition problems.

If the data provided under the RTI Act is an accurate reflection of the

state of affairs, the argument that the slowdown in the economy is due to land acquisition projects becomes a busted myth - not on the basis of any biased analysis - but simple count of the reasons provided in the Finance Ministry's reply. 4) Of the 66 projects stalled due to land acquisition issues, only 11 (1.36% of 804 projects) directly relate to the well being of the disadvantaged or less affluent segments of society such as slum rehabilitation projects or construction of low budget housing projects or a bus stand (which few affluent people use).

So the proposal to amend the LARR Act to waive the requirement for taking consent of the village assembly in the areas where land is to be acquired for providing affordable housing for the poor will affect a miniscule number of projects. Therefore the justification tomtomed for the amendment becomes untenable. 5) Ironically on the other hand, at least 145 of the stalled projects (18%) are for the affluent and the rich as they are projects involving the construction of shopping malls or elite hotels and resorts (4 and 5 star), multiplexes, elite residences and villas, golf courses and a racing track. Another 25 stalled projects are about setting up townships - nothing in the list provided by Finance Ministry indicates which segment of society they are intended to benefit. 10 of the 66 projects stalled due to land acquisition problems are in this elite category. However, it must also be said that the list of 804 projects also includes power generation, airport construction or expansion, road and railway expansion, pharmaceutical,

textile, software and SEZ projects amongst others. Mining projects for coal and uranium amongst other metals are also part of the stalled projects list. 6) Of the total of 804 projects the list mentions "Others" as the reason for the stalling of 19% of the projects (153 nos.) Reasons for stalling are simply not available for 15% of the projects (121 nos.). Taken together the projects for which reasons for stalling are either unspecified or simply not available amount to more than a third of the total number of projects (34%). 7) The largest proportion of projects that have stalled (38.8%) are due to unfavourable market conditions or lack of funds or promoter interest or raw material or fuel supply problems. Several of these projects are owned or promoted by some of the biggest industrial houses in India and a handful of foreign ownership. If readers are interested they may compare this list of Indian business houses with the list of corporates that made large sized donations to the leading national and State level political parties on the Political Party Watch segment of the website of the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR): <http://adrindia.org/research-and-report/political-party-watch>.

8) Lack of environmental clearances account for a mere 4.2% of the stalled projects whereas lack of clearance from the State Governments amount to 11.8% of the total. It looks like the regulatory regimes have contributed to only 16% of the stalled projects. So the -license-inspector raj also does not appear to be a major contributor to the stalling of the 804 projects, if the dataset is accurate. So it is neither land nor the regulatory regime that appears to have contributed to the stalling of the developmental projects.

Awaas haq satyagraha

It's the year 2015 and the crux of Indian civilization rests on its few big cities. A 1484 km² big political capital of Delhi is made up of a crore people and Mumbai, its financial twin is only 603 km² but accommodates 1.2 crore people. 60% of Mumbai's population lives in just 48 km². Who occupies the other 550 km² is anybody's guess. Total number of slums exceeds 33 thousand in these few cities. 4.5 Crore people live here in appalling conditions. Slums are routinely demolished. The poorest of the poor living in small shanties are considered illegal residents. Their shanties and belongings are swept away by bulldozers which belong to the caretakers of the city – the Municipality. With slums and shanties demolished, its people come to the streets and live on pavements and under bridges. Census 2011 estimated the total number of homeless at 95 lakhs in 2.5 lakh families. Living without a roof over their head, surrounded by the maddening traffic 24 hours of day, living through hot days and heartbreaking nights, see the family of 6 and a pet mangy sleeping peacefully by the pavement under the yellow street lights. When a drunk Salman Khan, India's most loved superstar slammed his car into sleeping day labourers, his friends from the city tweeted that it's not his fault that he smashed his car, it's the fault of the homeless to be sleeping on the streets. The urbanscape has snatched away the right to assert from its marginalized. It's rare in the history of the city to see its marginalized rise up against the matrix of insensitiveness of its elites, police, municipality, its entire structure.

Mandala is the first of its kind. It's time for the city's most exploited to assert their identity, and claim

their share to this city. Awaas Haq Satyagraha, launched by the Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan is a historic housing rights movement where 5000 people who were displaced in 2004-5 from their homes in a demolition drive have returned and occupied 55 acres of prime land and declared mutiny.

Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan is a decade old network working incessantly through slums of Mumbai, bringing them together whose rights to shelter have been snatched by the state in collusion with builder-corporate lobby. Thousands of poor having been raising the question of their rights of housing in front of every ministry, every department, every forum. Time and again, they have been manhandled, beaten up, arrested and tortured. At the heart of the struggle are the instances of inequality, of corruption in Slum Re-development Authority, of leasing out of land at 40 paise/acre to builder Hiranandani, non-distribution of available land to the poor.

Mandala was demolished in 2004-5 along with 85,000 other homes as part of a massive demolition drive by Mumbai administration. Later a Court order had ordered their homes to be reinstated but in 2006 they were again demolished. In 2008-9, after intense struggle, Mandala was chosen to be as a pilot project for Rajiv Awaas Yojana, a government project to provide home to the needy. Six years have passed since the promise and not a brick has been laid. Instead of helping out the poor and the needy, the government is secretly shelving all plans that aim at their welfare. Rajiv Awaas Yojana (RAY) is facing a similar future. Even after surveys are carried out, there is no progress and there are

whispers that like other welfare projects this also might not see the light of the day.

Everybody is frustrated by the false claims of the government, from farmers to industrial and construction labour, but the people of Mandala have set an example of resistance unmatched until now in the urban mindscape. People have taken a leave from their daily jobs, they have come back from their native land of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, left wedding unattended just to be a part of the Awaas Haq Satyagraha. Satyagrahis have demarcated the occupied land and mapped it out to start building their own homes in clear defiance to the tall claims of RAY. A community school has been announced. Already people are badgering the administration to provide toilets and safe drinking water in the occupied land. Earlier, hawkers and vendors who had gathered in the protest grounds selling snacks and drinks were hounded by the police, but the community protected the rights of these small traders by facing the police. A relay fast has now begun and Satyagrahi after Satyagrahi is continuing the non-stop fast until their demands are met. The administration is silent. The city is not used to the voice of people living in slums. But the voices are getting louder and louder. Political factions and progressive citizens are coming forward in support of the movement. It's important for the Mandala movement to succeed, to secure the rights it is fighting for. It is important because the patience of crores of people living precariously in this city is running out. It is important for the future of the city which can no more be built on the foundations of inequality. It is important if one wants the city to retain its soul.

- napmindia@gmail.com

AFSPA must go from everywhere

Announcement of Repeal of AFSPA from Tripura is a welcome move. We, at Save Sharmila Solidarity Campaign, convey our sincere thanks to Government of Tripura as well as MHA for considering the move. We believe that repeal of AFSPA from Tripura is a decision in favor of democracy and humanity.

Save Sharmila Solidarity Campaign (SSSC) view this incident as 'moving from inertia of AFSPA'. It is because since many years and even after continuous demands by people and rights groups, AFSPA was not even diluted a bit. No government or security agencies have taken any positive steps towards its repeal and were isolated from this issue. No one in the government even wanted to talk about the issue and those who were in government never tried to break the ice and ignored people's demand.

As, SSSC had already stated in several other campaigning moments, AFSPA does not have people's mandate. We also believe that by breaking this inertia, there is a signal of something positive. A start was awaited.

As Tripura is one of the states of North East region of India, repealing AFSPA from this state also sends a message of confidence and hope among all other people who are residing in AFSPA zone presently. We also see that this start must become dynamic very soon and governments must try to repeal it from everywhere.

We demand with the government to immediately pay attention towards Manipur also where from Sharmila is

on a continuous fast since the last 15 years. Keeping AFSPA in Manipur is against the will and future of state. We demand with state and central government both to coordinate and cooperate with each other to end the impasse over AFSPA. For Manipur, state leadership of central ruling party had already promised repeal of AFSPA.

SSSC believes that AFSPA that was extended to J&K vide AFSPA-J&K, should also be repealed as victimisation and sufferings cannot be looked separately. A human rights violation is always a violation of human rights regardless of region. In J&K, so many incidents of killings, rapes and disappearances have already been reported and evidences were provided even before courts against many security officials, but due to impunity under AFSPA (section 7), nothing could be done against culprits.

SSSC also see that enjoying such an impunity that AFSPA provides is actually a corruption and it is absolutely not required for any responsible, honest and committed security force personals. In contrary, it becomes dangerous as such absolute powers divert the normal way of working of personals.

SSSC appeals with the state and central government to immediately act upon this long pending demand of Repeal AFSPA. AFSPA is not required not only in Tripura but in no other AFSPA state. AFSPA is a failed law. SSSC will continue its efforts and will be organising protests and active campaigning in coming months for advocating Repeal of AFSPA from everywhere.

Ravi Nitesh
for Save Sharmila Solidarity Campaign



Rural India Focus

PRESENTING THE NATION WITH A REPLICABLE MODEL OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT



ADIVASI GIRLS HOSTEL AT TARA, PANVEL



WEEKLY EYE CAMPS AT THE YMC HOSPITAL, TARA, PANVEL



RUNS THREE HIGH SCHOOLS

YUSUF MEHERALLY CENTRE AND YOU

There are ways in which you can join the YMC movement in bringing education, healthcare, women empowerment, employment generation, relief and growth to our rural villages. Visit our Centre, volunteer your help, buy our products, become a Life Member. You could also support the cause by donating to our various initiatives.

SPONSOR AN ADIVASI GIRL'S HOSTEL STAY

It takes Rs.15,000 per year to meet the expenses for supporting a girl child's stay at the hostel in Tara, Panvel Taluka.

FINANCE A CATARACT SURGERY

10 to 15 eye operations are performed at the weekly eye camp held at the Maharashtra State Government funded hospital building. Sponsor a cataract operation for Rs. 15,000/-.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE SCHOOL CORPUS

YMC runs 3 high schools - 2 Marathi, 1 Urdu medium. With only 2 of these on government aid, the Centre needs Rs.1 crore as corpus to run the 3rd and maintain, conduct extra-curricular activities in all 3 and finance its building expansion plans. Give generously.



Yusuf Meherally Centre
D-15, Ganesh Prasad, 1st Floor,
Naushir Barucha Marg,
Grant Road (West),
Mumbai 400 007

Visit www.yusufmeherally.org,
Call: (022)-2387 0097,
Fax: (022)-2388 9738 or
E-mail : yusufmeherally@gmail.com



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

(An ISO 14001–2004 Company)

REGISTERED OFFICE

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232

Website: gannondunkerley.com

E-mail: gdho1@mtnl.net.in

GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.

GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.

OFFICES AT:

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

janata

Vol. 70 No. 20
June 14, 2015

High stakes in Bihar

S. Viswam

Was Modi's visit productive?

Kuldip Nayar

Myth of impartial governance

Rajindar Sachar

AAP controversy

Bapu Heddurshetti

**Labour Party and
2015 general election**

Suhas Khale

Banning Periyar

Sandeep Pandey

MNCs and Farmers

Bharat Dogra

**The legacy of the INA
or Azad Hind Fauj**

Irfan Habib

In the race for supremacy between the NDA-BJP and the bloc of secular parties, the outcome of the coming assembly elections in Bihar later this year will count for a lot. Bihar will in effect be the crucial testing ground for the people's choice between communalism and secularism.

Till the other day it seemed that secularism, with all its shortcomings and weaknesses was winning out. Even if the decade-long rule of Lalu Prasad Yadav and his wife Rabri Devi was short on governance but long on gimmicks, the Rashtriya Janata Dal's commitment to secularism stayed on. This state of affairs was shaken up when Bihar voted in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. The NDA-BJP was riding high on the crest of a Modi-wave and it secured 31 of the 40 Lok Sabha seats. The other nine went to the RJD(4), JD-U(2), Congress(2) and NCP(1). The Modi wave has more or less faded and it is time to forge a winning strategy for both the groups. The secular parties have to decide whether to fight singly or together. In this context, the unity of the Janata Parivar parties is vital. As for the NDA-BJP, in the absence of a strong local leader, the fight against the secular bloc has to be spearheaded by Narendra Modi himself.

It would appear that an unfavourable conspiracy of circumstances has pushed the efforts towards the merger of Janata Parivar parties into the background. Even so, the socialist-inclined politicians have taken the first steps in challenging the NDA-BJP. Under the leadership of an UP politician, Janata Parivar leader and Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav, they have agreed to project Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar to be the consensus chief ministerial candidate of the new alliance to be formed in Bihar. The significant aspect of this achievement is that persuasion if not pressure has softened Lalu Prasad Yadav's opposition to Nitish Kumar's nomination. Now Lalu sails in the same boat as does Nitish. This was the mediatory work of the Congress (Rahul Gandhi) and leftist leaders. Lalu is under conviction in the fodder scam case and cannot contest elections for six years. He has now been persuaded not to contest by proxy by naming some other member of his family as the consensus. Now the coast is clear. The challenge will be good, and the secular parties stand a good chance to marginalize the NDA-BJP.

It is all to the good of the state that Lalu has accepted the choice of Nitish.

Editor :

G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Between the lines

Was Modi's visit productive?

Kuldip Nayar

Unfortunately, Lalu's image as the chief minister, and later that of his wife Rabri as his successor in office have not been elegant. Lalu's rule was always described as jungle raj. Nitish Kumar as the chief minister of the JD(U)-BJP coalition gave priority to good governance and development. Although the coalition has broken up now, Nitish Kumar's rule is blemishless so far. Indeed, Nitish himself enjoys the reputation of being a clean leader committed to economic progress and development. In a sense, the coming challenge is one between the PM and the CM, since there is no top vote-catching BJP leader in the state itself.

When Lalu Prasad agreed to the nomination of Nitish as the consensus chief ministerial candidate, half the battle was won. But among all Indian states, Bihar is possibly the state most afflicted with the casteist disease. Bearing this in mind, it is always risky to make predictions in electoral politics of the state. While the chief ministerial candidate is ready, other candidates have to be chosen, and it is here that the alliance and its leaders will come up with another challenge. There is the ticklish issue of seat-sharing among the alliance partners. In Bihar such matters are decided keeping caste politics and identities in view. Often, there is a slip between the cup and the lip, and things go out of hand.

Much depends on the Lalu-Nitish combine and on what wave-lengths the two work. There is no doubt that each of them is a vote-getter, but together they can deliver more than the prime minister's men can. It remains to be seen how much interest Narendra Modi takes in Bihar elections. That depends on how seriously he takes the challenge from the Lalu-Nitish duo to be. Bihar

(Continued on Page 4)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Dhaka was mistimed. It looked as if he had gone to shore up the sagging image of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He has only heightened the anti-India feeling graph. New Delhi is not seen neutral.

I do not know why and for how long have we to support the authoritarian rule by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Bangladesh. True, she is the daughter of Sheikh Mujib-ur Rehman, who liberated East Pakistan from distant and oppressive West Pakistan. But that does not give her the right to flout the constitution and the accepted norms.

Take for example, the recent municipal polls at Dhaka and Chittagong. Ballot papers in favour of the candidates of the ruling Awami League were shoved into the ballot boxes to the horror of voters and others. Sheikh Mujib must be turning in his grave. He had restored the people's right to express themselves against the military junta ruling from Rawalpindi.

No doubt, Modi's visit has given a shot in the arm of secular forces against the burgeoning influence of the fundamentalists, led by the Jammat-e-Islam. Hasina would still have had her way. In fact, the cavalier manner in which she has suppressed the dissent arouses doubts about her credentials. Did

she ever have conviction about a free state and the democratic way of governance?

The most glaring example is the manner in which she has humiliated Bangladesh's first foreign minister Kamal Hasan. He was a colleague of her father Sheikh Mujib and was a legend in his lifetime for adhering to the values. The boycott of elections by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was an unthinking act. True, Hasina made it obvious that she would go to any extent to win at the polls. Yet, if the BNP had participated a few of its candidates would have been returned and opposed Hasina's point of view before the people.

Undoubtedly, general elections decide the fate of rulers. But the municipal vote is important to assess whether the party, which won, has fulfilled through the governance the promises made during the poll campaign.

India is lucky that the path on which the first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, put the country - democratic and secular - is being followed diligently. His daughter Indira Gandhi derailed democracy and not only gagged the press but suspended the fundamental rights. But people did not take things lying down. They ventilated their pent-up anger when elections were announced and it was unimaginable that even the mighty Indira Gandhi

could be defeated. Yet that is what happened.

It is another matter that when she returned to power in 1980 she went out of the way to punish even bureaucrats those who carried out their duties. But it is a pity that she took revenge against all those whom she suspected were anywhere near the Janata government.

The Congress party in India, the author of the Emergency, has learnt its lesson. The party has regretted its misdoings. I wish the party had apologized to the nation. There is a lot of difference between regret and apology.

Unfortunately Bangladesh, a product of the people's right to say, has lost the vigour of expression which the nation once had. Such a happening is a sad development by itself. But it becomes all the more poignant when the person changing it is from the family which liberated the people from the clutches of West Pakistan.

No one else is to blame except Hasina. She is herself extinguishing the flame of democracy. True, it should be done by the daughter of Sheikh Mujib is not only disappointing but also disconcerting. She can shackle the nation still further is a harrowing thought. But it can happen since she has effaced the line between right and wrong, moral and immoral.

In this atmosphere of Hasina representing a dictatorial figure, Modi's visit was all the more unfortunate. He should have said somewhere while in Bangladesh that the country was a product of revolution and it should continue to

(Continued on Page 4)

Myth of impartial governance

Rajindar Sachar

Every new Central Government in India is judged after the honeymoon period of one year or so by the public and the Press. Partisan critics normally pose questions on their own so as to deliberately embarrass the government because it is possible that the government on its own may never have claimed success on those counts. So let us be extra fair to the Modi government - judge it only by its own claims, its principles and politics.

According to media reports, Modi recently cautioned BJP members against spreading communal hatred, acknowledging that provocative comments made by some of his party colleagues were totally uncalled for and declaring that the constitutional guarantees of religious freedom and non-discrimination were non-negotiable. As a theoretical proposition, no one can disagree. This is consistent with the accepted wisdom, namely, "that in any country the faith and the confidence of the minorities in the impartial and even functioning of the State is the acid test of being a civilized State". But how different the ground reality is!

This principle was grossly breached by a Muslim minister of the Modi government when, justifying the ban on beef on TV, he felt bold enough to make an atrocious statement advising Muslims to go to Pakistan if they wished to eat beef. This should have resulted in the summary dismissal of the minister, but one has not even read a public rebuke of him by Modi. Not only that, the BJP seems to justify this

policy on the excuse that since a large number of people (meaning Hindus) are against it, the ban is justified. This is a curious reasoning. Since there are at least 14 crore Muslims in India (a population exceeding almost every country of Europe), then why not ban pork and ham? The eating habits of people of various religions cannot be a matter of government policies unless, of course, the real purpose is to hit the economy of these communities who may be living by that business.

Personal safety and equal treatment by the State is another test by which the minorities will judge the Modi government. Take the recent happenings at Atali village (Ballabgarh, Haryana). A team of the Socialist Party (India) and the PUCL that visited Atali village revealed the partisan and communal face of the BJP government in Haryana. It was on 25th May, 2015, that a mob of Hindus attacked Muslim houses and destroyed a part of the mosque which was being built by Muslims on admittedly the wakf land. Muslims in panic had to flee from the village and take refuge in Ballabgarh police station and could only return on 3rd June, 2015. There is still panic and a state of uncertainty. But Haryana's BJP Chief Minister has not deemed it necessary to visit the village and assure the Muslims that justice will be done to them. Rather his callousness in the matter is frightening. The Chief Minister went on an official tour to Faridabad on 7th June, 2015, a distance of about 15-20 km from the village which

has been in news throughout India for the last three weeks. But such is his shameful indifferent conduct that he does not consider it necessary to visit Atali village and offer (leave apart a solid concrete assurance of police protection and compensation for the damage done to Muslim properties) some consoling words to the minorities. But then, I am told, the Chief Minister's eligibility for the post was not his political ability and work but his exclusive RSS work over the last two decades. It seems his anti-Muslim bias, a trade feature of RSS training, continues to still guide him in his duties as the Chief Minister. In that context is it any surprise if the claims of Modi's concern for the minorities are treated only as empty verbosity.

Should not Modi consider in the interest of his own credibility to publicly admonish the C.M. of Haryana and remind him of the obligations and principles of "Raj Dharma" so expounded by Hindu 'shashtras'.

BJP leader Amit Shah, who is really running the party, is a quiet conspiratorial personality. He very innocently seeks to avoid entering into arguments on building a Ram temple and the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution by pleading that the BJP has not been given the mandate on these issues. And yet surprisingly lesser BJP minions indulge in the provocative slogan of completing the project of "Ram Mandir" and abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution. Modi keeps conspiratorially silent.

Modi's visit to Israel is being projected as a big event, but surprisingly he is not combining it with a visit to the Palestine. In my view this decision, apart from

reflecting anti-Muslim bias, is bad for the reason that Israel has been criticised by an overwhelming majority of U.N. members and even by the U.S. government (Modi's close ally President Obama) for over decades for not vacating its illegal occupation of Palestine territory which is recognised as an independent nation by the U.N. This is also a breach of India's own consistent policy right from the beginning which has been demanding the vacation of the Palestine territory. Is it any surprise if Muslims in India (and for that

(Continued from Page 2)

is an important state for the BJP and he cannot let it go without offering a firm battle. It will be interesting to see what strategy he brings to employ on this occasion.

(Continued from Page 4)

radiate the same kind of thoughts. But he preferred to placate her even though the people of Bangladesh were disappointed because they expected India to give some sign that it is not happy with the way Hasina was functioning.

True, Modi was able to implement a long-standing agreement on the exchange of enclaves. But this understanding had the support of all parties when the matter was discussed in parliament. Of course, the credit for implementing the accord goes to him. But he should have used the opportunity to thank all the political parties in supporting the accord with a useful and endearing neighbour. For him to take the credit of demolishing the "Berlin Wall" is churlish.

I wish he had refrained from criticizing Pakistan. Not that the

matter an overwhelming number of Hindus even) consider such a limited visit as an indication of the anti-Muslim bias of the Modi government?

That is why when Modi stresses that his sole agenda is development for all it does not cut ice with the minorities apart from the fact that in reality Modi's development programme is corporate friendly and anti-labour. I am sorry the review above is certainly not complimentary to Modi's claimed impartial governance.

criticism is uncalled for but on a foreign soil when he was talking about amity in South Asia, he should have avoided singling out Islamabad. He should realize, as his predecessors have, that the countries in South Asia, some day must have a common market and lend a helping hand to each other in business, trade and development.

The people of Bangladesh were expecting some agreement on the Teesta waters. But foreign minister Sushma Swaraj's statement was unhelpful because even before undertaking the journey to Dhaka she said that Teesta waters was not on the agenda during the current visit by Modi.

West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee's visit along with Prime Minister Modi was an important development. It should indicate to Dhaka that New Delhi is serious about settling the problems of Teesta waters. That it did not happen during Modi's visit should not be taken as if India was adamant in having its own way. In fact, Mamata's visit should please Dhaka that the settlement may take some time but the process has started.

AAP controversy

Bapu Heddurshetti

The recent controversy of a constitutional spat between the Lieutenant Governor and the Chief Minister of Delhi smacks not only of ignorance but also of arrogance on part of the Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. The controversy was started by the Chief Minister by not accepting Shakuntala Gamlin as the Acting Chief Secretary of the Delhi Government.

The necessity of appointing an Acting Chief Secretary arose due to the incumbent Chief Secretary going on a leave for 10 days. It appears that the Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia recommended the names of Shakuntala Gamlin and another officer for the appointment. It also appears that the Chief Minister agreed with the recommendation and the file was sent to the Lieutenant Governor. Citing the seniority of Shakuntala Gamlin the Lieutenant Governor appointed her as the Acting Chief Secretary for 10 days. The order of appointment was issued by Anindo Majumdar, the Secretary, Services, of the Delhi Government. However, the Chief Minister said that he wanted the other officer as the Acting Chief Secretary and locked Anindo Majumdar out of his office for having issued the order and later transferred him.

Some simple questions arise here. If the Chief Minister had the power to appoint the Acting Chief Secretary, why was the file sent to the Lieutenant Governor at all? If the Chief Minister did not want Shakuntala Gamlin as the Acting Chief Secretary, why was her name recommended at all? Was the Chief Minister ignorant of his own powers?

Apart from such common sense queries, the issue raised legal and

constitutional questions also. Who had the power to appoint the Acting Chief Secretary? The arguments advanced on behalf of the Aam Admi Party are that their Government is an elected Government and that hence the Chief Minister should have the right and power to choose his own Chief Secretary, even if an Acting one. The Chief Minister, it appears, also wrote a letter to the Lieutenant Governor that the latter's action was unconstitutional. The Lieutenant Governor, it appears, retorted that he was acting within the purview of the Constitution.

Part VI of the Constitution which deals with the powers and functions of States is not applicable to Delhi since it is only a Union Territory and special provisions have been made in the Constitution for administering Union Territories in Part VIII thereof. Even amongst Union Territories, a special provision has been made by adding Article 239AA for administering Delhi.

Article 239 (1) states as follows: *Save as otherwise provided by Parliament by law, every Union territory shall be administered by the President acting, to such extent as he thinks fit, through an administrator to be appointed by him with such designation as he may specify.*

Article 239AA (1) states that Delhi shall be called the National Capital Territory of Delhi and the Administrator of Delhi shall be designated as the Lieutenant Governor.

Article 239AA (4) which, provides for a Council of Ministers states as follows: *(4) There shall be a Council of Ministers consisting of not more than ten per cent. of*

the total number of members in the Legislative Assembly, with the Chief Minister at the head to aid and advise the Lieutenant Governor in the exercise of his functions in relation to matters with respect to which the Legislative Assembly has power to make laws, except in so far as he is, by or under any law, required to act in his discretion:

Provided that in the case of difference of opinion between the Lieutenant Governor and his Ministers on any matter, the Lieutenant Governor shall refer it to the President for decision and act according to the decision given thereon by the President and pending such decision it shall be competent for the Lieutenant Governor in any case where the matter, in his opinion, is so urgent that it is necessary for him to take immediate action, to take such action or to give such direction in the matter as he deems necessary.

Thus it is obvious that the advice of the Council of Ministers is not binding on the Lieutenant Governor as in the case of full-fledged States. In the case of appointment of the Acting Chief Secretary, it cannot be said that there was a difference of opinion between the Lieutenant Governor and his ministers since the concerned minister himself had recommended the name of Ms. Gamlin and even if the concerned minister had recommended some other name, the Lieutenant Governor could have either referred the matter to the President or could have gone ahead with the appointment on the ground that the matter was 'so urgent that it was necessary for him to take immediate action'.

(Continued on Page 9)

Labour Party and 2015 general election

Suhas Khale

On 7th May I was sitting with a few friends in the evening playing Bridge. At the end of the session I lost and was not in a good mood. I thought I will cheer myself up by looking at what has happened to election process. All of us were very keen and hoping that we will have some good news of getting rid of nasty Tories.

Over a nice cup of tea and coffee, we were watching the developing situation in a number of constituencies in the country. Suddenly the news flashed that the Exit Polls results will be available in five minutes. Throughout the last 40+days all the opinion polls were showing that Tories and Labour were neck and neck and we were hoping that Labour might edge ahead with many voters undecided.

We and many millions around the country got a severe shock when the exit polls were flashed on the TV. Conservative 316, Labour 246, Scottish National 55, Liberals 9 and UKIP 2 seats. Past experience had shown that the exit polls were generally accurate. Yet some of us hoped that this time the exit polls might have got it wrong as opinion polls were predicting that the two major parties were very close. We were thinking that at least the Tories will not have an absolute majority and Liberals were decimated. We were not the only one - "I've been involved in a lot of elections and, I have to say, I am sceptical of this BBC exit poll," Spencer Livermore, Labour's General Election Campaign Director, wrote at the time. "It looks

wrong. Exit polls have been very wrong in the past."

The next morning it was even worse Tories 330, Labour 232, Scottish Nationalist 56, Liberal 8 and UKIP 1. Tories with absolute majority in a house of 650. There were shock waves throughout the country. Three party leaders resigned. Miliband of Labour. Clegg of Liberal and Farage of UKIP (who has since come back as the leader). Last 10 days have been full of analysis by Labour Party leaders and sympathisers about what went wrong.

I have been a member of Labour Party for over 30 years although was hardly involved since 1997 when Blair came to power with New Labour. The direction and policies were far from the socialism rooted in working class. Some policies and implementations relating to equality and social justice were different from those of Tories but market oriented approach which pandered to big businesses and failed to challenge the hegemony of banks and Multi-Nationals. Friendship with Murdoch and his media empire enabled Blair and co. to be elected three times. The question was what was the point of Labour Party being in the Government if it is to be a diluted version of Tory party? Also Blair and his cabinet took no notice of what the local Labour party units wanted. Lip service was paid to them and at times they were shown scant respect.

After 2010 defeat, my school of thought expected that we will

have some opportunity to change something. What we did not understand that most of the new leadership were schooled under Blair and were only going to be marginally different (on the left) from the previous leaders. The ultimate goal was to get into power immediately rather than willing to build the grass root party for equality and social justice. Most of the working class particularly in Scotland which was the strong base of Labour movement had lost faith in the party. The party took ethnic minorities for granted and did not see the shift in vote. A number of Asians and Africans who have done well in businesses and jobs have slowly shifted from Labour Party to Tories. Intellectuals to Liberals and Green. Some were just not interested in voting.

Can Labour party gain ground and win election in 2020? Based on the current thinking of the writers, Labour leaders and above all myself, I will put across the issues.

Why did Labour do so badly?

In short, lack of Labour leadership to learn lessons from the past and to understand the dynamically fast changing demographic of British society .

Labour were not responding positively to Tory criticism. No clear cut reply to Tories about economic competence and coalition with SNP. This was due to lack of a strategy and self-belief in Labour as a socialist party (or even as a social democratic party).

In my opinion Labour never learnt the lessons of their loss in 2010. After the elections in 2010, Peter Hain, former cabinet member and prominent Labour leader was asked to consult local Labour party members about their views in London. I attended that meeting. The overwhelming view was that the Blairites paid scant attention to the concerns of the local Labour party members. I knew Peter from the days of anti-apartheid movement and told him at that meeting that Labour party must pay more attention to the ethnic minority concerns and not take them for granted. Peter himself was genuine in listening to what the opinions of those present however, I do not think that the then emerging leaders were interested in it. Not surprisingly Labour lost a considerable share of ethnic minority vote.

23 per cent of BAME voters voted for the Tories. Large numbers were Indians. Asians have done well as business people and in jobs and Labour had nothing to offer to them.

Labour party appealed to their core voters but not to, middle-class ones. They talked about the very bottom and very top of society, about the minimum wage, bedroom tax, zero-hour contracts, about mansions and non-doms. But they had too little to say to the majority of people in the middle.

The election strategy was too limited to get a 35 per cent coalition of core vote, targeting left votes of Lib Dems, Greens . The appeal should have been to much larger section of voters to support it, including those who backed the Tories in the south. UKIP took votes away from both Tories and Labour. In effect it was offering

“micro-policies”. Most important in Scotland which was once the stronghold of Labour Party, they lost 40 seats. Scottish National Party emerged as the third largest party in the UK parliament

They did not tackle the legacy of recent past so did not allay the concerns some voters had about them. They should have done far more to challenge the ludicrous claim that our investment in public services caused the crash. Labour inherited a debt-to-GDP ratio of 42 per cent in 1997 and had got this down to 37 per cent by 2008; and under 18 years of Tory rule before 1997, the deficit averaged 3.2 per cent of GDP. The failure to nail this argument allowed doubts to arise about our competence. Tories as usual scored by telling voters that Labour party lacked economic competence. Labour had appeal in London but different parts of the UK were convinced by Tory criticism.

Finally the Tories have to be given a credit that they won. Tories sliced £120 bn from public spending and missed their reduction deficit target, they cut down welfare benefits and introduced bedroom tax and yet won. Well Karl Marx once said that UK will never be a socialist country !

Future for Labour

As a socialist living in Europe, I am very dissatisfied as I see that socialism is on the decline. Recent election in Greece offers hope but their economy is in tatters. The economic crisis in the last few years has swung most of the voters to vote for the conservative right wing parties. The reality is that the crisis was caused by the bankers, multi-national corporations with their tax evasions and the financial greed of the industry leaders. The

blame is given to political parties on the left, public industries, the trade unions, etc. The cunning and subtle public relations through the newspapers owned by Murdoch and other controllers like him have been successful in putting across the message to voters at large that “more austerity” is the answer to the economic chaos. The question is “more austerity” for whom? The poor, marginalised communities, those who have been forced on the welfare benefits due to unemployment and cuts? The bankers and CEOs of large companies are still getting their millions. Major banks who have been primarily responsible for the financial situation have been bailed out in the UK using tax payers money.

In this climate, what can be done by Labour party? The next five years are going to be very tough. Tory party’s machine with their government unbridled by coalition with Liberal Democrats is already thinking about securing a majority of 100 seats in the year 2020.

Jon Cruddas, who led a policy review for Labour, said his party lost because it was offering “micro policies” and now needs to fundamentally rethink its purpose. He said the situation facing the next leadership is arguably one of the great crises of the Labour party’s history.

Currently there are two schools of thought. Blairites like Liz Kendall (contesting for Labour leadership) who is supported by Chuck Umhara and others are already proposing to move back to Blairite type of policies. My question to them is assuming they come to power what will the country have? A mildly progressive version of Tory party?

The Labour MP Stella Creasy who is contesting for Deputy Leadership of Labour party has urged her party to stop acting like a “machine that turns up at election time trying to harvest votes, but become a movement “. She is dead right!

Labour needs a broad-based coalition of people to vote for them in order to be in power to get rid of Tories. Labour had a good campaign and positive policies about the future, on housing, on reforming the energy market, bedroom tax and child care. The question is whether all these policies came together in a way that was being heard, that people could feel was meaningful for them and their families. The party concentrated on bedroom tax but what about the people who are not affected by the bedroom tax, who are in work and play by the rules and are decent people. Labour did not have any clear message for them. If Labour is to win the next election they must get a clear understanding of aspirations and needs of those voters who are struggling to raise their living standards. The nature of core Labour vote has changed and they need to appeal to them and not take them for granted and not concentrate just on swing voters. Ethnic minority votes in the country as a whole which Labour took for granted voted for the Tories. Loss of seats in Scotland was a major blow. Both the parties have neglected the aspirations of Scottish people but it was Labour who suffered because they lost many seats there. A political party need to take into cognisance the fast changing socio-economic dynamics as well as increasing diversity in order to be able to appeal to people.

(Continued on Page 16

Banning Periyar

Sandeep Pandey

The Human Resources Development Minister Smriti Irani coerced the IIT Madras Dean into banning the Ambedkar Pariyar Students Circle - ban has now been lifted after a nationwide outcry from progressive organizations and individuals. The group was charged with spreading hatred against Narendra Modi and Hindus as it had criticised the decisions by some state governments to ban beef, make use of Hindi compulsory and the ‘ghar wapsi’ programme of RSS-affiliated organisations.

This was a clear violation of Article 19 which guarantees citizens of India freedom of speech and expression, to form association and unions and to assemble peaceably and without arms. How can the criticism of government’s policies or some programmes of Hindutva organisations be construed as spreading hatred against the PM or Hindus? It is not necessary that all Hindus agree with the view of Hindutva organisations. For example, there are a number of devout Hindus who cannot speak Hindi because their mother tongue is some different language. Making use of Hindi compulsory for them will be grave injustice to such people. Similarly, all adults have freedom to choose their life partners irrespective of their caste and religion. How can there be a policing of relationships? A relationship between two individuals is their private matter and nobody else should interfere in this. Similarly, the habits of some individuals or communities may include non-vegetarian food. This is also a personal choice. Recently

in Bangladesh Narendra Modi exercised his personal choice to have vegetarian food on public occasions when everybody around was having non-vegetarian food. This choice of individuals or communities must be respected.

The most hypocritical aspect about beef from the point of view of Hindutva organisations is that while some BJP state governments want to place ban on beef and some self-styled sadhus want people to be hanged for cow slaughter, during PM Narendra Modi’s visit to China the Government of India was seeking greater market access for its products, important among which was bovine meat! China has banned Indian meat in the past due to complaints of disease carried by it. India desperately wanted this ban to be lifted so that it can achieve its export target of \$1 billion of bovine meat to China.

The Hindutva groups this year on Ambedkar Jayanti, probably for the first time in the life of these organisations, observed the event. There is a clear attempt by BJP to woo the dalit voters. But Ambedkar was not happy with Hindu religion and therefore changed his religion to Buddhism. He also convinced a number of his followers too to convert to Buddhism. Ambedkar had said that even though he was born as a Hindu he would not die a Hindu. It is amazing that RSS has taken a decision to recognize Ambedkar as a social reformer.

Ambedkar is still easy to handle for Hindutva groups. Periyar became

an atheist after his visit to the Hindu holy city of Kashi as a result of facing caste based discrimination there. Periyar had burned copies of Hindu scriptures containing anti-dalit writings. Hindutva groups would never be able digest the fact that Periyar once also burned the picture of Lord Ram in 1956 at Chennai. Mayawati during her initial days when she was a strong critic of Manuvad or Brahminism used to have Periyar as a dalit icon among Ambedkar, Kanshiram, Narayan Guru, Chatrapati Sahu ji Maharaj, Jyotirao Phule, Savitri Phule, Gautam Buddha, Kabir, etc. However, when BSP had to align with Brahmins as part of a political compulsion, Periyar was surreptitiously removed from the dalit pantheon. Since then Mayawati has also stopped criticizing Manuvad or Brahminism. How important a position was held by Periyar among the dalit icons is clear from the change in stance that Mayawati had to undertake. Presence or absence of Periyar determined whether Mayawati would or would not criticize Brahminism. Mayawati has not built the statue of Periyar among the various dalit icons which stand tall at different dalit monuments in Lucknow today.

Periyar E.V. Ramaswamy stood for self-respect, especially of non-Brahmin Dravidian people. He was the founder of Dravidar Kazhagam, parent of both the parties today in Tamil Nadu between whom political power alternates. He was strong critic of the caste system because there was no logic in simply one's birth, over which one had no control, determining one's position in the hierarchical system. Periyar fought against untouchability practised against the dalits. He was opposed to child marriage but supported the idea

of widow marriage. He advocated gender equality and supported the idea of choosing life-partner for oneself from any caste or religion. He also cared for the destitute and abandoned in society. He stood for the philosophy of humanism.

Periyar opposed the imposition of Hindi language over non-Hindi speaking people as he thought that Hindi would be used as a tool by north Indians for exploitation of others.

RSS in its attempt to coopt Ambedkar were taken aback by the name of Periyar associated with the student group in Madras. It didn't know how to deal with Periyar. Hence they advised the MHRD to first ban it but then under public pressure had to yield to the demand of lifting the ban.

It would be interesting to see how the Sangh pariwar deals with

(Continued from Page 5)

Three issues are clear:

Since under the constitution the Council of Ministers ought to have advised the Lieutenant Governor, the Council of Ministers did not make the recommendation as the recommendation was made only by a Minister and was endorsed by the Chief Minister. This was wrong unless the Council of Ministers had delegated the power to the concerned Minister or Chief Minister.

Secondly, even presuming that the Council of Ministers had delegated the power to the concerned Minister or the Chief Minister, since the Lieutenant Governor has to refer the matter to the President of India only in case of *difference of opinion between the Lieutenant Governor and his Ministers on any matter* and since the recommendation had been

Ambedkar now? Will they continue with their decision to try to include him among the national heroes they revere or will they try to maintain a distance as they'll necessarily have to do with Periyar? RSS will have to resolve this, their dalit dilemma.

But placing a ban has provoked a strong reaction in all parts of country. At some places new units of Ambedkar Periyar Student Circle have come into existence while at other places different dalit groups have become assertive.

A government which cannot handle very basic criticism cannot last very long. Narendra Modi has an autocratic style of functioning and cannot tolerate any dissent. Democracy cannot afford to have a leader like him because he would stifle the spirit of free debate at various levels in society. Either he'll have to change or people will replace him with a saner leader.

made by the Chief Minister himself there was no need to refer the matter to the President.

Thirdly, since the Chief Minister had recommended two names, he had obviously given a choice to the Lieutenant Governor to choose any one of the two and the Lieutenant Governor only picked one of the two names recommended. Even if the Lieutenant Governor had chosen a third person, not recommended by the Chief Minister, the Lieutenant Governor would have been well within his powers to do so since the proviso to Article 239AA(4) gives him that discretion.

As for the argument that the Delhi Government is democratically elected Government and that it should have more powers than an appointee of the Central Government, it should

(Continued on Page 11)

MNCs and Farmers

Bharat Dogra

Food processing industry is the oldest and the most widely spread industry. Traditionally, this industry was confined mainly to the processing of grains and oilseeds to meet the basic food needs of local people. In recent years, however, the scope of the industry has widened considerably to cater to the more sophisticated food demands of the economically well-off sections and the export market.

The sheer size of the industry, defined here to include all processing of food in traditional as well as modern sectors is reason enough to give careful attention to the growth path of this industry. However, additional reasons of its importance also need to be stressed, as these perhaps are even more important. This industry caters to a most important requirement (food) of people where considerations of health are very important. There have been several glaring examples of wasteful processing by this industry and also several examples which constitute a serious health hazard. Hence there is a very real need to protect the interests of consumers vis-à-vis this industry, or to place matters in a more positive way, it is very important to give such an orientation to this industry that it respects and protects the real interests of consumers, with special emphasis on health and nutrition considerations.

On the other side, the food processing industry is closely linked to farmers for obtaining its raw materials. Improvement of the living and working condition of farmers with special emphasis on small farmers being a widely accepted

objective it is important that the food processing industry should give a fair deal to farmers.

In this context it may be interesting to look at the behaviour of some leading US food companies in a neighbouring country, Mexico, which has emerged as an important source of several fruits and vegetables for processing by this industry.

In 1973 Del Monte paid American asparagus farmers 23 cents a pound for their crop; in Mexico, contractors of the same firm paid Mexican farmers 10 cents a pound. The contractors paid the Mexican seasonal workers only 23 cents an hour. Dr. Ernest Feder's study on strawberry cultivation in Mexico for USA strawberry industry revealed that for the same work wages in Mexico averaged only one seventh of those in California. In fact for US strawberry industry these low wages were so important that, in the words of Dr. Feder, enforcement of minimum wage-laws would "tend to drive the U.S. strawberry industry back to the U.S. or some other Latin American country."

This should not appear too shocking considering that it was mainly the search for cheap labour which took these companies to Mexico in preference to domestic farmers. Availability of cheap land was another consideration and so it is not surprising that in complete violation of long-term protection and conservation of land, it was plundered with reckless farming methods and chemical sprays.

By 1970 over 150 million pounds of strawberries were being exported

from Mexico to the USA. However, the study by Dr. Feder revealed that the real control remained with the American investors and food wholesalers. They controlled the quantity and type of inputs, the varieties to be grown, prices and profit margins. Even strawberry plants came from nurseries in the U.S. Even after fifteen years of commercial strawberry growing, Mexico did not have its own source of high-grade strawberry seedlings based on varieties best adapted to conditions in Mexico.

Initially the prospects offered by the coming up a resourceful industrial units which use their produce may appear bright to farmers, but having talked them into producing the specialist (generally perishable) crops required by the industry, it can confront them with unpalatable offers as having once agreed to grow this crop or having invested into machinery for this purpose or taken loans from the company, the farmers are hooked to supplying the needs of this industry.

A commonly used plan to deprive the farmers is to maintain the price but raise the quality standards. So farmers find that there is a market for only a part of their crop, the remaining crop, which fails to meet the high norms, may perish for want of a buyer. Later the same industry, or one of its affiliates, may buy this crop also at a distress sale rate and use it for manufacture of some by-product, say, a soup or a pickle.

A report on the price paid to the asparagus growers by the U.S. transnational Del Monte says that

while the price for “acceptable” canning asparagus was 23 cents a pound, the price for asparagus ‘rejects’ which the company later sold as asparagus soup or asparagus cuts, was .0005 cents a pound.

A related way in which the bargain turns out to be much less advantageous to farmers than it initially appears is the rigid insistence of the company relating to the inputs and machines used, and the methods followed by the farmers – sometimes to ensure that the inputs manufactured by the company or its affiliates are used, sometimes to ensure that the size, growth, colour, etc. of the crop or the meat is in keeping with market preferences, however irrational these may be. Such insistence can impose a lot of financial burden on farmers and cut into their margins in a substantial way.

The plight of poultry farmers of North Alabama USA, working on the basis of such contracts with big American companies, was summed up by a reporter of Des Moines Register in these words: “The farmers I talked to said that every time it looked like they were going to get the loan paid off, the integrators would come up with a new ‘improvement’ like gas heaters, insulated chicken houses and automatic feeding equipment. Once in debt, the farmer had to stay in business, but to stay in business they had to get deeper in debt. One of the farmers described himself and other poultry farmers as “the new slaves.”

However some of the big farmers and contractors who work with the big companies may also stand to gain - after all the industry also needs a powerful group of well-wishers who identify their interest with that of the industry and have influence at the local level. On the other hand,

there are also farmers - generally the weakest ones who may never work for this industry but nevertheless suffer due to it as they may have to be evicted to make room for the plantations or ranches operated by big companies or for supplying their needs by other, more influential farmers and contractors.

Bud Senegal, an affiliate of a California and Brussels based transnational, set up giant garden plantations in Senegal to supply fresh vegetables to European countries, in the process evicting several villagers and felling trees very useful to them.

In Bukindon region of Philippines, an American priest who was arrested for helping resisting peasants, described a multinational’s land-grabbing: “They bulldozed people right off the land. Now they’re using aerial sprays harming farm animals and giving people terrible rashes.”

At other places the cultivation of luxury crops by these companies or by influential farmers supplying them has led to pre-emptying of scarce resources such as water to meet the requirement of these influential producers, depriving more needy and poor farmers.

In Zamora, Mexico strawberries used up 75 per cent of the water on only 20 to 30 per cent of the total area under cultivation.

In countries where several food-processing MNCs have entered in a big way they have had a regressive influence on land-reforms as they, or their suppliers, want large holdings for cultivation, and so a spate of exemptions making a mockery of land reform laws have to be granted. In India it is well-known that exemptions from land-ceiling have been given in the past also for horticulture and orchards. With the spread of processing industries

requiring fruits and vegetables, violations of ceilings in the name of cultivation of fruits and vegetables may take place on an even larger scale.

(Continued from Page 9)

be noted that the elected Government of Delhi also will have to act within the limits set by the Constitution as the Constitution has been adopted and accepted by the people of the entire country. Hence he will of the people of the country as expressed through the Constitution overrides the will of the people of Delhi, if any, expressed through the AAP Government.

Delhi is not a full-fledged State in the Indian Union. It is a Union Territory. The effort of the previous Delhi regimes to get a full-fledged State status failed. The AAP, it appears has stated in its election manifesto that it will try to get full Statehood for Delhi. However, as of now, Delhi is only a Union Territory. The question also is whether Delhi should be made a full-fledged State. Since Delhi is the capital of the country and all important Union Ministries and offices of the Defence Establishments are in Delhi, it is not advisable to make Delhi a full-fledged State, particularly with powers over the Police Forces. An anarchist Chief Minister like Arvind Kejriwal of a full-fledged State may stage a *coup d’etat* any time and bring the whole country to its knees.

Recently when Arvind Kejriwal went on a Dharna on the road and the media criticized him saying that he is creating anarchy, he had said that he is an anarchist. It would be a misnomer to call his party as Aam Aadmi Party since the common man not only has a robust common sense but also has a robust political sense both of which his party appears to lack. It may be better to call it Arvind’s Anarchist Party.

The legacy of the INA or Azad Hind Fauj

Irfan Habib

I was a schoolboy when information about INA burst up on India in 1945. I think it would be fair to say that Indian people only knew about INA when Japan surrendered, or was about to surrender and members of the INA were brought to India and put on trial. It was then we learnt about Rani of Jhansi regiment and the organization of Azad Hind Government and Azad Hind Fauj. We also learnt how Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs fought shoulder to shoulder for our freedom with great pride.

Before embarking on the subject of the INA, I should speak little about the conditions during which it was created. There was not only continuing enslavement of India by Britain but it was also at a particular stage of our national movement. Everybody knows that Subhash Chandra Bose's re-election, as the President of Tripuri session of AICC in 1939 was a major event in the national movement. Mahatma Gandhi's candidate Pattabhi Sitaramayya was defeated so the first question to ask is how Subhash Bose came to that position and why this happened in the national movement. Clearly the national movement had come a long way away from the period when it was a middle class movement which it remained even after the Khilafat movement and non-cooperation movement of 1920-22. Gandhiji played an undoubtedly notable part in bringing the masses into the movement; it was he who brought simple peasants and workers into the national movement. It was he, of course, who organized the

Champan Satyagraha of 1917, but after that leftists entered the national movement which included people like Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose. Subhash Bose's mentor C. R. Das had said that national movement should speak for 98 percent and this was something new to the civil disobedience movement of 1930 and was also something new in Indian history in that peasants were brought into national movement for the first time in such struggles.

It was the peasants who lost their lands when these were confiscated by the British government, who went to prison and their numbers exceeded more than one hundred thousand. For the first time women also participated in the jail-bhara agitations. And this new, changed character of national movement was recognized by the Karachi resolution passed by the Congress session in March 1931 after the suspension of civil disobedience movement.

That formed a new programme for the Congress, that there should be adult franchise, man and woman should have equality, worker rights should be protected, basic industries should be state controlled, land to the cultivator, deep agrarian reforms, all these were promised for the first time. From then onwards both worker organizations and peasant organizations gained in strength and this was reflected in Tripuri session of the Indian National Congress.

Subhash Bose was undoubtedly one of the major leaders of the

left along with Nehru, perhaps if somebody had asked who represented the national movement most, people would have answered Gandhiji, Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose, probably in that order. This was not merely based on their personalities, but the character of the national movement had changed. There were differences within the left, Nehru had announced in 'Glimpses of World History' and in his autobiography that he was an atheist, that only idiots believed in the afterlife, that he did not believe in God, Subhash Bose till the end of his life remained a believer in God. These were basic differences, not peripheral. Nevertheless they both recognized a kind of a Socialist India would be the only goal that would bring the masses of India together. Their views on socialism may have been different but they realized that the capitalist-landlord system would be unfair for the Indian masses.

The left included the socialists and the communists at that time, and the Tripuri session represents perhaps the most powerful movement of the existence of the left in the national movement. At that time the world situation suddenly changed, the war began on October 1939, and the Congress ministries resigned because Britain included India in its declaration of war against Hitler. Hitler's cause was unspeakable, the Nazi racialist theory could not appeal to non-Aryans or non-white Indians, nevertheless because of the fact that India was enslaved by the British, there was an innate lack of

sympathy in the ranks of the national movement for Britain.

And therefore, the feeling that this was not India's war was quite rampant in the national movement, in fact when Gandhiji spoke in favour of Britain and France, he probably did not represent popular opinion. Here the first rifts in the left were seen. Nehru knew about the nature of fascism and was therefore totally hostile to Germany. In his autobiography he said that there would be a time when Russia and America would enter the war against Germany. This was not the opinion of Subhash Bose and his followers. Subhash admired Mussolini and thought any enemy of England was a friend of India. This was the beginning of two strategies within the nationalist left. Bose remained a friend of the Soviet Union, he didn't have equal sympathies with the Chinese resistance against Japan, but it seemed in the first one and a half years of the war that there was, if not an alliance and understanding between Germany, Soviet Union and Japan and this was an understanding within the anti-imperialist powers, and therefore Bose's decision to escape India and go to Germany via Russia is understandable.

We must remember that he left India in January 1941 when England was practically alone in standing up to Germany and Italy, while Russia and Germany were bound together by the non-aggression pact of 1939. No outsider could know that Germany was preparing to invade Soviet Union. It was also very difficult to know as Soviet leaders perhaps ought to know at that time that there were issues like Yugoslavia and Greece, Finland. Soviet Union and Germany had fundamental differences. Bose could not have known it if he arrived in Berlin in April 1941. Things became immediately complicated

when Hitler attacked Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. We now know that this put Bose in a mental crisis, his understanding of the two lines drawn during World War I were completely shattered, but he didn't join Germany in any denunciation of the Soviet Union. Of course with Japan it was another case, because Japan did not go to war with USSR. However once he had arrived in Germany he began to prepare for an army. There were a large number of Indian POWs, which the Italians had captured and who were transferred to Germany, an Indian division was being trained in Germany. Then the situation suddenly changed when early in December, 1941, Japan too joined the war not against Soviet Union but against America by attacking Pearl Harbour.

Therefore, when the Indian Independence League formed in Thailand by Gyani Preetam Singh accompanied the Japanese into Malaya, Indian troops over there, led by their British commanders surrendered, so to speak, to the Japanese, then they began to respond to Preetam Singh's appeal that they should form a separate army, an army of the Indian Independence League and Captain Mohan Singh, was certainly the major figure who first formed the Indian National Army, INA; he belonged to the earliest detachment of the Indians who as I said surrendered to the Japanese under their British officers in Malaya.

Mohan Singh is sometimes forgotten but I think he is a very notable figure and ought to receive his due. British intelligence paid its own tribute to Mohan Singh. Mohan Singh, we are told, "has got no weakness", unfortunately they should have added, "in form of greed, lust, women, drink, etc, as far as one can find out", they also say that he was an eloquent

speaker, and certainly his speech two days after the fall of Singapore to Japan on 15 February, 1942 was remarkable for the effect it had on Indian soldiers who were brought to listen to it in their thousands. With Rash Bihari Bose, an old revolutionary who had fled to Japan in order to escape prosecution in India and perhaps execution, he formed the INA. Preetam Singh unfortunately died in an air crash. What is important in Mohan Singh's case was his ability to gather Indian soldiers despite the fact that they belonged to different regions and religions. His main colleague was Captain Akram, first sign that there was a very strong belief in the INA that religious differences were immaterial. Unfortunately Akram was also killed with Preetam Singh. Mohan Singh was ultimately able to, according to the British Intelligence, build up the INA to the effective strength of 12,000.

You must remember that they had very great financial difficulties, Japanese would not fund them sufficiently, would not give them arms, except small arms, except what they had from the British. Also three million strong population of South East Asia was also not sure how far they should help the INA, reports of the British agents suggested that there were differences, because Muslims of South East Asia supported the Muslim League, and Preetam Singh and Mohan Singh had declared their loyalty to Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress.

Nevertheless it was the farsightedness of Mohan Singh that he continued to make appeals to the Muslims, he made the song of the INA Iqbal's famous poem '*sare jahan se acha hindostan hamara*', which despite its naiveté - everyone considers their own country the best in the world, so there was nothing

new about it - it made great appeal to Indians everywhere and I believe it is also today, owing to the INA, the army song of our country. How long it will remain so, I doubt now, under the present dispensation.

Mohan Singh was only able to send small groups to the front. British Intelligence reported in 1942 that in some attacks on their frontier positions, there were war cries in Punjabi both by Sikh and other soldiers. There were also desertions in the INA, one major desertion being by Major Dhillon with the complicity of his superior Col. Gill who was then imprisoned by the Japanese. This incident intensified Mohan Singh's difference with the Japanese and ultimately Mohan Singh was dismissed by Rash Bihari Bose on 27 December 1942.

Militarily the best time for INA was late 1942. Britain and America had not been able to bring large numbers of troops into Assam. That was the time when any invasion of Assam had perhaps some chance of success. Germans were advancing towards Stalingrad, Japan seemed almost dominant in the Pacific and South East Asia and within India the Quit India Movement had taken place in August 1942, this was a great morale booster for INA - Gandhiji's and Nehru's arrest was shown by the INA propaganda that these leaders were also on the same side as INA, it was forgotten that in the Quit India resolution it was made clear that the Congress was on the side of the allies in World War II. But the fact that a movement against the British had been launched was an important morale booster for the INA, but unfortunately even that advantage was wasted in the desolation of the INA in December 1942.

We must remember the point that if Subhash Bose had been present, things might have turned differently.

Subhash Bose left Germany in a U-Boat on 8 February, 1943, by that time the tide of war had turned. Hitler had been defeated at Stalingrad, throughout 1943 his eastern front crumbled, the offensive *Zitadelle* failed miserably, and much of Ukraine and Belorussia was regained by the Soviet Union. Japan also began to suffer air raids from USA, not only on its territories but Japan itself. Subhash Bose was able to reach South East Asia only in May 1943 by submarine and on 5th July he took salute of INA men at Singapore.

Subhash Chandra Bose was called Netaji in Germany, and over there the name Azad Hind Fauj had been coined. The INA flag, the Congress tricolour with the jumping tiger on it was invented and *Jana Gana Mana* also was taken as national anthem. Bose knew the Muslim hesitation to, perhaps unreasonable hesitation to accept Vande Matram, although the Pathans used to shout '*Allahu Akbar Vande Matram*', but otherwise the Muslims had some objections, therefore *Jana Gana Mana* was the song that Bose had adopted. With this baggage of nomenclature, let us say ideas, and with the slogan '*chalo dilli*', Bose injected new life into the INA, and then he formed the provisional Azad Hind Government on 21 October 1943. He obtained from Japan which Gen. Mohan Singh had been unable to obtain, a recognition of the government of the Azad Hind, at par with other states like the government of Thailand, the Nanking government - puppet government perhaps but also recognized by Japan as independent, the government of Philippines, all rather subordinates and puppet governments, and that of Burma, and now Azad Hind Government. The point to remember is that Azad Hind Government despite having no territory under it, was perhaps the most independent and freest

of all these government. Subhash Chandra Bose was able to obtain recognition from Japanese which others, so called partners of Japan had not been able to obtain.

It was now under Subhash Chandra Bose that INA began to enter into military operations effectively first in Arakan and then on the Indian border of Assam, or what was then the province of Assam. The area involved in so-called the Imphal campaign is today partly in Manipur and partly in Nagaland. When the invasion of Manipur and Nagaland was undertaken by the Japanese, it was perhaps already too late for any military campaign as by 1944 Japan was harassed by American raids and invasions of its SE Asian possessions. With effective four divisions and no air cover it was difficult to say, why the Japanese, against the views of their own commander-in-chief in Burma, General Ayabe, this invasion.

It is now apparent that this was under the pressure of Subhash Chandra Bose himself, this shows the influence that he had now come to exercise over Japan, that they were prepare to launch an invasion which was ultimately to weaken very badly their military position in Burma. Because when they attacked in early summer of 1944, they attacked Manipur and Nagaland, they did not have the strength to launch a campaign alone which could have any success, and that was to go through the passes and seize Dimapur, which was on Assam-Nagaland border.

For over two months they did occupy Morang, south of Imphal which is fairly deep into Manipur territory, and that was one area which the INA controlled for two and half months from where their flags flew. But the Japanese were defeated and badly mauled, as you

know Japanese soldiers fought to death perhaps this was another mistake they retreated far too late, because the INA did not have any heavy weapons, they asked INA to retreat first. So INA was not mauled as much as the Japanese themselves, and the road was therefore clear for the British advance into Burma.

In the meantime Subhash Chandra Bose had to leave Rangoon and come to Bangkok, and then owing to the atom bombs dropped on Japan, first on Hiroshima and then on Nagasaki, and the then Soviet invasion of Manchuria, Japan surrendered on 15 August 1945. The fact that it would be surrendering came to be known to Bose three days earlier. We know that Subhash Chandra Bose wanted to go to Russia, he still thought that Soviet Union would be the only power that could stand up to British and American imperialism, but this particular adventure of his was never brought to test. He had been accompanied in his U-Boat journey to Japan, by a Muslim officer from Germany Abid Hasan, he would now be accompanied by another Muslim officer Habib-ur-rahman from INA who lived to tell the tale.

These were the great reasons why and when INA prisoners began to arrive to India, and the news about INA organization and INA's Azad Hind Government began to be popularized in India, every newspaper printed it, its secular character, its exhibition of organizing abilities of Indians, its ability to fight the British. As we know now, British intelligence reports also indicated from the fronts that fighting qualities of INA was good. The Japanese noted that desertions from INA were few and far between, that many people in SE Asia, poor and rich, donated to INA, the greatest donor to INA, we are told was one Habib of Rangoon, who donated all his property to Azad Hind Fauj.

In a polity which was then so far divided into two communal camps, unfortunately as Gandhiji freely admitted despite its secular views, the Congress in effect had become a caste Hindu party. These are not my words but Gandhiji's words. So despite its trying the Muslims had rejected, as they would in 1946 the Congress. And over 80 percent would vote for the Muslim League. Then there was the virulence of the Hindu Mahasabha.

To all this the INA posed a totally different model. Their mode of salutation, '*Jai-Hind*' had become normal in Indian political discourse. The British had their discussions, which are now clear, in transfer of power and others that, how to treat the INA became a problem, not because the British wanted to wash-off, what was in their views was treason but because of Indian public opinion.

They first tried a direct trial of the early prisoners of INA headed by Major General Shah Nawaz, Colonel P. K. Sehgal and Colonel Gurubaksh Singh Dhillon, they were to be tried in Red Fort. And it was then to be tested what this prison trial would evoke from the public opinion. What it would evoke from the public opinion was shown by the unanimous decision of the Congress working committee to go for a defence committee which was headed - surprise of surprises by the most moderate of moderate leaders, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru had been a consistent collaborator with the British Government, a very fine Urdu scholar, with very good secular views, but a great sincere admirer of the British constitutionalism, side by side with a person he never liked Jawaharlal Nehru, Bhulabhai Desai, K. N. Katju, P. Saran, Badridaas and Asif Ali.

I think that the Congress working committee deserves our praise; they made it clear that their opinion was different from opinion of the INA, but they also made it clear that the INA men were patriots. Now this feeling was shared on the ground, and I think one of the major contributions of INA was apart from its resistance, apart from its martyrs in the fight, was its effect on the Indian national opinion. On 21-23 November, Calcutta demonstrations, in which Forward Bloc, Congress and Communists demonstrators took part, against INA trials and for their release, showed that Britain could not rule in the old way. For the first time British troops were used against Indian crowds. And it was found that despite firing, in which 33 were killed that the crowd would not disperse. This was followed in Calcutta by the sentence of seven years rigorous imprisonment of Abdul Rashid, who was put on a separate trial and whose defence was undertaken by the Muslim League. This also resulted in a common demonstration in Calcutta from 11-13 February 1946, in which 84 were killed.

We know that in the meantime Shah Nawaz Khan had been sentenced to life imprisonment, but that had been reduced to a mere dismissal by the Commander-in-Chief.

It was clear that such imprisonments would have enormous consequences. But there was another event which only INA could have brought about, and that was the Royal Indian Mutiny (RIM) in Bombay on February 18-23, 1946 involving 78 ships of the Indian navy and total strike and crowd violence against the British in Bombay. The British brought in the British troops; the Leicester regiment, the Essex regiment, the British artillery and the royal marines to suppress

RIM and civil disturbances. The RIN mutineers not only called for unconditional release of INA men, apart from their own demands, but in their final statement when they said they were surrendering to India and not Britain, their statement ended the cry Jai-Hind. Now the RIN mutiny was therefore again an extension of the INA struggle, it was impossible to visualize it, had not INA have been there as a model and had not INA slogans been imbibed by Indian sailors and soldiers.

One of the tragedies in India is that after the RIN mutiny we seemed to have forgotten both the INA and the RIN mutiny. The RIN mutineers also raised both the Congress and Muslim League flags; their leaders was one M. S. Khan, a sailor. Hindus and Muslims fought together in RIN mutiny, so also the crowds in Bombay. A cousin of mine whom I saw later, who was in Bombay, told me later that the crowds wanted all the ties to be removed, one could only walk on the streets on Bombay in this period if you didn't have a tie, so he has to remove his tie and keep in his pocket. So strong was the Anti-British feeling in Bombay among all Indians. But soon within a year, the Hindus and Muslims would be at each other's throat, and within a year and a half the country would be partitioned.

One must remember that the INA always spoke of a united and undivided India, both under Mohan Singh and Subhash Chandra Bose. Subhash Chandra Bose too would want all the concessions given to Muslims, but not the partition of the country. Clearly the mutual slaughter was a kind of a rejection, a rebuff to all that the INA stood for, therefore today, I think it is doubly important

that we continue to pay tribute to the INA, but also to hold high the banners that Azad Hind Fauj had raised, the banners of national dignity, unity and communal brotherhood, and also secularism, not the kind of secularism of the Supreme Court in which all religions are good, and if you have religious instructions that is all right and constitutional provision of the prohibition of religious instructions can be set

aside but real secularism, in which every community, every section of the population has a place.

So for that reason I particularly welcome the fact that we are celebrating the memory of one INA soldier Captain Abbas Ali, and through that celebration we are also celebrating INA and its great achievements. Rae peritimus maximodit.

(Continued from Page 8)

The rise in economic inequality is matched by voting trends. Among voters in households earning less than £20,000 a year, Labour's lead widened from 3 per cent in 2010 to 7 per cent this year. While the Tories increased their leads by five points among the two highest-income groups: from 8 per cent to 13 per cent among those earning £40-69,000 a year, and from 23 per cent to 28 per cent among those earning more than £70,000 a year. It is the middle income voters who deserted labour.

Decentralising the state is a big part of this challenge. A massive devolution of power to cities, regions and towns and hence reducing what is done in Whitehall by consolidating and merging departments and cutting the number of ministers. This will cut costs as well enable the local councils to have much needed authority to provide solutions to their local challenges.

Finally, the party needs a clearer vision of Britain in the world. If Labour is truly the party of internationalism and openness then it must explain how global change can be harnessed, how Britain can use its strengths - universities, industry and innovation, diverse population,

global alliances (especially the EU) - to make life here better. It must also fight the root causes of anti-immigration sentiment utilised by UKIP and right wing of Tory party, like the housing crisis, rather than pandering to it.

It is high time that Labour party needs a drastic political reform. They should start by changing the party: cultivating networks of supporters and civic society organisations and making it more of a force for progressive change in the communities every day, not just every five years. It's worth noting that if Labour had as many members as the SNP, relative to population, it would have 1.2 million. They need to understand that we live in an age where people want politics not to be broadcast at them, but interactive, where they do not just want to be told or bombarded with messages. People think that the Labour party members only turn up at election time. Labour needs to be a party more than a series of campaigns on important issues. It has to become a movement rather than a vote seeking organisation. Biggest challenge for the future leaders would be motivating the party to change else there could be severe consequences for Labour.

janata

Vol. 70 No. 21
June 21, 2015

BJP's predicament

S. Viswam

Smt. Gandhi's misrule
Kuldip Nayar

Emergency (1975)
Rajindar Sachar

Undermining institutions
Irfan Engineer

Survival Crisis
Bharat Dogra

Socialists on Emergency

The coming assembly election in Bihar (October-November) holds some significance for the state's political class. The outcome will clarify certain assumptions and suppositions the various parties of the state and outside hold in regard to the political clout of four parties active in Bihar: the Congress, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (Lalu Prasad Yadav), the Janata Dal (United) now controlled by chief minister Nitish Kumar, and the Bharatiya Janata Party. Of these the party that is dominant in public patronage and support is the JD(U), largely because of Nitish Kumar's good image as a clean leader delivering good governance and devoted to development. But elections in India have a tendency to alter the status quo when one least expects it and to make parties and politicians bite the dust. In Bihar, the present is an hour of crisis and confidence for the entire political class. The run-up to the polls has also introduced some unusual and uncommon features into the campaign which is yet to gather steam. Let us take a quick look at the political situation on election eve. The Rashtriya Janata Dal in only a secondary player in this election. Lalu Prasad Yadav is debarred from personally contesting the poll since he was convicted in the fodder

scam case. His party and his own family members can contest. Lalu has therefore wisely entered into an alliance with JD(U) and Nitish Kumar. Moreover, much against his own inclination, he has also agreed, to accept Nitish Kumar as the consensus chief ministerial candidate of the alliance. Describing this decision as tantamount to drinking poison, he said it was necessary to undertake this gesture in order to keep the BJP from winning the polls. In his characteristically jovial way, he said he was prepared to drink any amount of poison in pursuit of the goal of putting the BJP in its place in Bihar by which he means the political eclipse of the saffron party.

As far as these two secular parties are concerned, the polls present an encouraging prospect. The alliance can expect the vote banks of the two partners to deliver: the Yadava votes in the case of the RJD and the Kurmi votes in the case of the JD(U). The JD(U) is already in political control having adroitly rested power back from the so-called usurper Jiten Ram Manjhi. Lalu's political clout is somewhat diminished, but he is still a political force to be reckoned with in electoral battles in Bihar.

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Between the lines

Smt. Gandhi's misrule

Kuldip Nayar

The question that follows is about the two major rivals, and their identities and relevant strengths and weaknesses. With the Congress party having ceased long ago to be a major player in Bihar, the fight is confined to the saffron block on one side and the strong challenge group on the other. Here the RJD-JD(U) alliance has a good chance of mounting a strong challenge to the BJP. The BJP was never a strong force in Bihar, which is why apart from the short duration when it went into an alliance with the JD(U) it did not count for much. Because it was an also ran party, it did not produce strong leaders who had a mass base and could advance the saffron cause and ideology. The only known face in Bihar BJP's politics has been Sushil Kumar Modi, who was Nitesh Kumar's number two in the government.

There would have been no problem for the BJP in projecting a strong and "winnable" party leader to take on Nitesh Kumar. The party would have cheerfully done so had it such a leader in its ranks. Yes. Sushil Kumar Modi is good enough, but unfortunately he is not the only front-runner. He has some rivals also, the strongest of them being Leader of the Opposition in the assembly Nand Kishore Yadav. This has created a problem. The BJP is in no position to name a candidate as its consensus chief ministerial nominee.

This is the reason why Ananth Kumar, who happens to be the state-in-charge of the BJP, has been forced say that the election will be contested under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his development platform. This is a bad dilemma for the party since obviously it is not a logical

(Continued on Page 4)

Forty years may seem to be a long period. But it is not long enough to efface the memory of a jungle raj which followed the imposition of the emergency in 1975. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, mother-in-law of Congress president Sonia Gandhi, should have stepped down after the Allahabad High Court disqualified her for using the official machinery during election. The Supreme Court's vacation judge gave her reprieve by pronouncing a stay order.

Still she was not certain about the final outcome. There was reportedly a time, after the judgment, when she thought of stepping down till her exoneration and making Jagjivan Ram or the then UP chief minister, Kamalapati Tripathi, the Prime Minister.

But her son, Sanjay Gandhi, who subsequently became an extra-constitutional authority and ran the government, knew her mother's weakness. He, with the help of Bansi Lal, then Haryana Chief Minister, hired the crowd and paraded her "supporters" outside the Prime Minister's residence. After that Smt. Gandhi was really convinced that people wanted her and only a few disgruntled elements in politics were against her. Hereafter, her dependence on Sanjay Gandhi was absolute.

Sources from her residence revealed that she would talk about politics to Sanjay Gandhi alone

and ignored Rajiv Gandhi who, she thought, was apolitical. It is equally true that he too took little interest in politics and excelled himself in flying. He was considered an ace pilot in the Indian Airlines which was then the only airline running the domestic traffic. It is another matter that Smt. Gandhi imposed politics on him and he, in turn, imposed his Prime Ministership on the nation.

Strange as it may sound, the resistance was put up by parochial forces, the Jana Sangh which is now the BJP, and the Akali Dal comprising the Sikhs. The secular forces including the Communist Party of India accepted Smt. Gandhi's autocratic rule without a demur. The Marxists were unhappy but preferred to lie low.

Pathetic was the role of the press. (There was no electronic media then). It preached valour and values, but a few people and papers showed resistance. Smt. Gandhi's remark that "not a dog had barked" was authoritative in tone and tenor. Nevertheless, it was a fact that the press had caved in.

Stung by her remark, I was able to collect as many as 103 journalists (I still have the list) at the Press Club by visiting personally the offices of some newspapers and the two news agencies. Among those present was Girilal Jain, then the Resident Editor of *The Times of India*. I read out the resolution I had drafted to condemn the Emergency

and the imposition of censorship. One journalist mentioned that some editors had been detained. I told the journalists present there to sign the resolution. I said I would forward it to the President, the Prime Minister and the Information Minister under my signature.

Before leaving the Press Club, I took the copy of the resolution along with me lest it should fall in the hands of the police. Hardly had I reached home when Information Minister V. C. Shukla, till then a friend, rang me and asked if I could drop in at his office. I was shocked to find a different Shukla, authoritative in tone and threatening in posture. He asked me to give him the paper on which the journalists had signed. When I said 'no' he warned me that I could be arrested. "You should understand it is a different government, run by Sanjay Gandhi, not Indira Gandhi," he said.

Still I followed up with a letter to Smt. Gandhi which said: "... *Madam, it is always difficult for a newspaperman to decide when he should reveal what... In a free society – and you have repeatedly said after the Emergency that you have faith in such a concept – the press has a duty to inform the public. This is sometimes an unpleasant task, but it has to be performed because a free society is founded on free information. If the press were to publish only government handouts or official statements, to which it is reduced today, who will pinpoint lapses, deficiencies, or errors?..*"

However, when I tried to pick up the threads after I came out of jail following three month's detention, I found to my dismay that journalists were afraid to support me openly. The then Jan Sangh leader, L.K.

(Continued on Page 4)

Emergency (1975)

A permanent scar on the soul of India

Rajindar Sachar

Nations which do not remember their immediate past are in danger of repeating the same tragedy. This thought comes to me when on random questioning of the significance of June 26th 1975 (the Emergency Day) from the age group of 35 and below (who constitute 2/3rd population of India) one draws an overwhelming blank look, and not so encouraging even from up to the age of 55. Even newspapers never frontpage it – some do not even carry the information, and a few may just mention it casualty somewhere in the corner of inner pages. Many opposition parties which were the victims of Emergency choose to keep low key. Even though PUCL and other civil liberties organizations, as usual hold protest meetings, TV and newspapers designedly avoid any mention of these, overwhelmed as they are with the Governments' neo-liberal policies. Or is it a sense of fear because the perpetrator of Emergency was the ruling party for most of the immediate past period? And yet tragically it was a day when India lost its democracy and the USA President sarcastically boasted that USA was now the largest democracy. It is a different matter that thankfully, because of the sacrifices made by Indian people under the inspiring leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan, the boast of US President was to end, but only after 18 months.

It is not that there was no resistance to the Emergency. Thousands went to jail which included ex-Central Ministers, ex-Chief Ministers, ex-Governors, lawyers, legislators and a few brave journalists. Many Human

Rights activists went underground but there is a limit beyond which unarmed people can fight an intolerant and a near-fascist State which India had become those days.

In times of crisis, judiciary is expected to act as bulwark against the excesses by the executive like those committed during the Emergency. But to our shame fatal blow to freedom was struck by Supreme Court judgment in ADM Jabalpur holding that right to life does not survive during Emergency – this disgrace will continue to proclaim the pusillanimity of the Supreme Court in refusing to act as a sentinel to safeguarding Human Rights.

Supreme Court Ruling in (ADM Jabalpur case in 1976) which overruled the view of nine High Courts that the legality of detaining order passed by the governments could still be set aside for illegality - in fact in some cases the High Courts had ordered release of detainees. Had this view been upheld, by the Supreme Court Emergency would have collapsed. But to our shame the Supreme Court by a majority of four judges against one honourable exception (Khanna, J.) laid down thus: "In view of the Presidential Order dated June 27, 1975 no person has any locus standi to move any writ petition under Article 226 before a High Court for habeas corpus or any other writ or order or direction to challenge the legality of an order of detention on the ground that the order is not under or in compliance with the Act or is illegal or is vitiated by mala fides factual

or legal or is based on extraneous considerations.”

The Supreme Court to its shame accepted Attorney General's argument that if a policeman under orders of his superior was to shoot a person or even arrest a Supreme Court judge, it would be legal and no relief available. Naturally in this situation, no peaceful opposition to Emergency could continue. I am shocked how the majority decision could rely on *Liversidge Vs. Anderson* given during wartime in 1942 by House of Lords (U.K.), but with a (memorable dissent by Lord Atkin) when English Courts subsequently felt so ashamed of that decision that a conscious effort was made to throw that decision into a dung heap.

In 1963 Lord Radcliff referred dismissively to the very peculiar case in *Liversidge Vs. Anderson* and said “it should be confined apparently to a war time context and that it is already clear that the decision was regarded as an aberration”. *Law quarterly Review* (1970) clearly spelled out how embarrassing the decision in *Liversidge* was becoming for English judiciary. Some commentators have ironically described majority in *Liversidge* case as the court's contribution to the war effort of England - similarly many in this country are inclined to describe majority in *Jabalpur* case as Supreme Court's contribution to the continuance of 1975 Emergency. Had Supreme Court taken the same view as nine High Courts, the Emergency would have collapsed immediately, because no court could possibly have upheld the detention of stalwarts and patriots like Jayaprakash Narayan, Morarji Desai, Raj Narain, George Fernandes, Madhu Limaya and brave journalist Kuldip Nayar and thousands of others on the

ground that they were a danger to the security of the country. The inevitable result would have been the immediate release of these leaders leading to overwhelming opposition movement which would have swept away Indira Gandhi government by mid-1976. Alas, how sometime fate of nations can be influenced by the pusillanimity of a few individuals - in this case embarrassingly by the highest judiciary - which it can never live down.

Soon after change of Government in 1978, Justice Chandrachud and Justice Bhagwati publicly expressed regret and conceded that their decisions were wrong and that they

(Continued from Page 2)

or coherent position for a political party and that too one aspiring to seize power to be in. The JD(U) has already raised the question whether the Prime Minister will resign his position to face the electorate. The only possible answer, and this is what was given as a reply, can be that

(Continued from Page 3)

Advani, was quite correct in his remark: “You (journalists) were asked to bend but you began to crawl!”

If I were to explain the Emergency to today's generation, I would repeat the adage that eternal vigilance is required to defend the press freedom is as much true today as it was when India won freedom some 70 years ago. Never did anyone expect that a Prime Minister after the High Court's indictment would suspend the Constitution when she should have stepped down voluntarily.

Former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri would often advise to his colleagues: Sit light, not tight. That is the reason why he resigned as Railway Minister after a big accident

should have joined Justice Khanna which would have constituted the majority. But this crying over their disastrous earlier view is like crying after having deliberately split the milk. So much distrust in judiciary had been generated that the Parliament took precaution of passing 44th Amendment to the Constitution (1978) which has taken away the power of the President to suspend Article 21, but still we must continue to remember that “eternal vigilance is the price nation must pay for safeguarding the liberties of individuals”. And the press should keep reminding the public of this frequently.

the chief ministerial candidate will be named at the appropriate time!

For the rest of the country, the Bihar polls should be highly interesting to see how the BJP gets out of its sorry predicament!

at Ariyalur in Tamil Nadu. He took moral responsibility for what had happened.

It is difficult to imagine anybody following that precedent today. Yet, India is still looked upon by the world as a country where the value system exists. Parochialism or posh living is not the answer. The country has to go back to what Mahatma Gandhi told the nation: Disparities drove people to desperation.

There is a point in harking back on the days of independence struggle. All had joined hands to oust the British. I wish the same spirit could be revived to oust poverty. Otherwise, the independence comes to mean a better life only for the haves.

Socialists on 'emergency'

It is said that amnesia is a blessing since if one cannot forget unpleasant memories his life will become miserable. There are pleasant memories which one should always remember, but there are certain unpleasant memories which one should never forget. 26th June is one such unpleasant day in the life of Indian nation which one should never forget. On that day in 1975, the Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, had proclaimed Emergency and foisted a dictatorship on the country, muzzled the press, the judiciary and incarcerated thousands of her political opponents, including some even from her own Congress party. Even England, the mother of democracy, had its Oliver Cromwell. Like measles in children, these dictators in democracy come and go, but they do come.

The number of persons arrested under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act was 34,988 and under the Defense of India Rules was, 75,818. In all there were 1,10,806 political prisoners during the Emergency. S. M. Joshi says that this was more than the number of persons who courted arrest during the 'Quit India' movement which was 91,836.

There certainly is a need not to forget 26th June. In Ram Jethmalani's comment that Narendra Modi is an 'Avatar Purush', do we find an echo of Dev Kant Barua's "India is Indira and Indira is India".

Like hawks, Socialists had always kept a watch on the liberties of the people. Even when the Constitution of India was being drafted by the Constituent Assembly, they had drawn the attention of the leaders as also of the people to the possible abuse of the powers of proclaiming 'emergency'. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, and the least the Socialists can do is neither to forget, nor allow the people of this country to forget, those dark days of the Emergency of 1971.

–Bapu Heddurshetti

“Extraordinary powers have been vested in the President and the Governors under the heading 'emergency'. Emergencies can be created and maintained, as in the case of the Weimer Republic of Germany which ultimately led to the dictatorship of Hitler. Some of our

leaders may not have such dictatorial ambitions, they may not wish anything but the good of India. But there may be some others, or some ambitious power politicians may come up in course of time and take advantage of these defects in the Constitution”.

–Jayaprakash Narayan to Jawaharlal Nehru on 21st April 1948, about the defects in the Draft Constitution presented to the Constituent Assembly)

“Shri Shashi Bhushan, a prominent young Congressman, has been repeatedly saying that the situation in India has become so desperate that only a “limited dictatorship” can help the country to tide over the crisis. Some have ridiculed it while some others have poked fun at him. But by pouring ridicule could this suggestion be killed? Should we not inquire whether this is his brain wave or some one else is inspiring Shri

Shashi Bhushan to put it forward so that the consequent debate would reveal the mood of the people? We shall not be surprised if in the absence of a serious debate and a credible alternative emerging, what Shri Shashi Bhushan has been advocating as his personal opinion might turn into the government decision and one fine morning the Indian people will wake up to learn that they are under a dictatorship, limited or otherwise”.

- N. G. Goray in the editorial written in Janata of 22nd July 1973

“The country today faces a crisis unequalled in the past. In 1919, when the then Government put on the statute book the Rowlatt Act [limited to a period of three years], Gandhiji roused the whole nation against the “lawless law”. ‘The Rowlatt Act’, in the words of Surendranath Banerjee in his autobiography, “A Nation in the Making” ‘became the parent of the non-co-operation movement’. The Act proved a dead letter, and the Nation discovered its soul. The emergency clamped down on the country on 26th June, 1975 imposes a more ‘lawless’ regime on the country than any implied under the infamous Act of 1919. Can our response be anything less than that of non-co-operation as taught by Bapu?”

-Asoka Mehta in his letter to Choudhari Charan Singh on 10th July 1976)

“The President’s powers with regard to proclamation of emergency are also very wide, not free from dangers to the very existence of democracy. If its proposals (of the Drafting Committee) are accepted it will be possible for the federal executive to reduce to subservience the executive authorities of the units and to establish its dictatorship on the plea of threat of war or domestic violence. For the continuance of such dictatorship beyond six months the cooperation of the federal legislature would no doubt be needed. But if the federal legislature is prepared to approve the proclamation of emergency the period of operation of proclamation might be extended to as much period as the federal authorities may choose and during this period the election of the new federal legislature may also be suspended by the President of the Republic. Hitler acquired dictatorship

through constitutional means and with the consent of the legislature. It cannot, therefore, be said that the federal legislature of India will never permit the federal executive authority to establish dictatorship through the proclamation of emergency. Indeed, the federal legislature might be tempted to have a deal with the federal executive authority and allow the President to issue proclamation of emergency so that the tenure of the federal legislature may be prolonged and its jurisdiction may extend even to matters and over officers of the unit. It is not difficult for aspirants of dictatorship to create a panic and to so manipulate the situation that it may be possible for them to raise the plea of threat of war or domestic violence, especially when a proclamation of emergency is allowed before the actual occurrence of war or domestic violence.”

(Appendix to the text of the Constitution of India drafted by the Socialist Party in 1948)

Emergency plan

A confidential handwritten note published in a new book reveals that the stage was set for the imposition of Emergency in India - mass arrests of political opponents and suspension of fundamental rights - by the Indira Gandhi government at least six months before it was actually declared on June 25, 1975.

“The plan to be put into operation” was drafted in the note - dated January 8, 1975 - written by the then West Bengal Chief Minister Siddhartha Shankar Ray to Gandhi, according to the book, *The Emergency - A Personal History*, written by Coomi Kapoor, contributing editor to *The Indian Express*.

In the note, Ray writes: “A secret telex message should go at once to every chief minister (Congress) directing him to prepare a list of all prominent Anand Marg and RSS members in his state. He need not be told of any [Emergency] ordinance but he should have the list ready. The idea is to swing into action

immediately after the ordinance is ready - and it has to be ready in 24 hours’ time from now.”

“I hope the President will be readily available to sign the ordinance. Also a special cabinet meeting should be called either tomorrow morning or night or very early in the morning the day after (This in case the ordinance takes more than 24 hours to be finalised),” the note adds.

Referring to the note, Kapoor - she was a reporter with *The Indian Express* when Emergency was declared - writes that it was drafted after “the idea of an internal Emergency” was conceived at a meeting between the “smooth-talking Ray, who fashioned himself as a progressive liberal”, the then Law Minister H R Gokhale, Congress president D K Barooah and Bombay Pradesh Congress committee “bagman” Rajni Patel.

Explaining that Gandhi knew Ray from childhood, Kapoor also

writes in the book’s opening chapter, titled “Darkness at Dawn”, that the “actual execution of the Emergency followed Ray’s proposed plan of action to the letter”.

She writes that “it is significant that at the time Ray wrote this note, there were no very pressing problems on the law and order front for him to advocate such extreme measures”.

The Emergency was finally imposed 13 days after the Allahabad High Court rendered Gandhi’s election from Rae Bareilly null and void, and three days after the Supreme Court issued a conditional stay that forbade her from voting in Parliament.

President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad signed the ordinance on the night of June 25. According to Kapoor, the list of prominent politicians who were taken into custody subsequently was “personally vetted by Gandhi, who removed and added names till the last date”.

—The Indian Express, June 13, 2015

Undermining national institutions

Irfan Engineer

The students of FTII are agitated over appointment of Gajendra Chauhan as President Chair of the Governing Council of the Institute. About 150 students pursuing various courses at the FTII are on an indefinite strike against the patent political appointment because of Chauhan's affiliation with the BJP. When we google Chauhan, all the information we get is that he acted in films like *Andaaz* (2003), *Baghban* (2003) and *Tumko Na Bhoole Payenge* (2002). Wikipedia informs us that he acted in 150 movies and 600 TV serials. However, links to only some of the movies Chauhan acted in are given and when we follow the link, often his name is not even mentioned in the star cast of the film. Chauhan claims that he has worked in 600 serials, however only one TV serial in which Chauhan acted was popular – *Mahabharat* - where he played the role of eldest of Pandava brothers, Yudhishtir. He may have acted in 600 episodes. Students felt that Chauhan lacked the vision, stature and experience and was not qualified for the post which was once occupied by Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Girish Karnad, Shyam Benegal and Adoor Gopalkrishnan. Noted film makers like Anand Patwardhan have expressed their serious concern over the appointment of Chauhan when the short list included Gulzar, Shyam Benegal, Saeed Mirza and Adoor Gopalkrishnan. The previous incumbents of the Chair were winner of prestigious awards, including Padmashree, Padma Vibhushan, Sahitya Akademi, Dadasaheb Phalke and Jnanpeth. Gajendra Chauhan has no such credentials.

There is lack of transparency in the appointment.

There is no explanation forthcoming from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on the appointment of Chauhan. Nor has Chauhan been able to explain his eligibility for the job. All he has said is that the opposition from the students will only make him work better. He has not been able to spell out his vision for the Institute. Appointment of such a low profile person as chair of such a prestigious institute when persons like Shyam Benegal, Adoor Gopalkrishnan and Gulzar were shortlisted, can be explained only by the fact that Chauhan was special invitee to the BJP National Executive for two terms. The other explanation that is doing the rounds is that the RSS backed his appointment. The RSS involvement gains credence as four of the eight members nominated under 'Persons of Eminence' category to the institute are from the Sangh Parivar. Anagha Ghaisas, has a strong RSS background and made documentary films supporting Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Her husband was a long-serving Sangh pracharak – 17 of his 21 years as pracharak were in Gujarat. Another member is Narendra Pathak who was the Maharashtra president of the ABVP for four years. Pranjal Saikia is an office-bearer of the RSS-linked Sanskar Bharati. Rahul Solapurkar was in contention for a BJP ticket in last year's state Assembly elections.

These political ladies and gentlemen, having links with

the Sangh Parivaar, have been selected in the category of 'persons of eminence', on the governing council of FTII as they do not have any independent vision for the institution. When *Indian Express* contacted them, they responded that they wanted the FTII students to have nationalistic (read Hindu nationalist) feeling. FTII in the past has groomed students to think freely, differently and boldly. Creative arts and aesthetics rarely come from conformist thinking, and even less from those who accept hierarchies of race, caste, community, ethnicity, nationality, gender, regionality or whatsoever; and accept hierarchical structures as natural and desirable. They produce conformist arts for propaganda. The objective of the FTII includes among others, "*to constantly endeavor at raising the technical standards of Indian films and television programmes so as to make them aesthetically more satisfying and acceptable; to facilitate regular inflow of fresh ideas and new techniques in the field of Cinema and Television and a corresponding outflow of trained personnel imbibing these ideas and techniques; to create a new awareness among the future workers in film and television of the potentialities of their media not only as means of entertainment but also of education and artistic expression*". Does the present appointee to the Chair and the four Governing Council members seem suited to ensure these objectives of the FTII when their vision is to have students with nationalistic feeling?

Prime Minister Modi proclaimed himself to be a Hindu nationalist in his election campaign. The Hindu nationalists have always justified caste system and patriarchal traditions to be unique Indian values and superior. The Indian cinema is coming of age and moving away from the portrayal of cultural traditions of feudal upper caste elite with ethos like *pativrata Bharatiya nari*, observing *kadvachauth vrat* even if her husband was evil and indulged in all kinds of vices as *the* 'national culture'. There is increasing trend of films depicting live-in relations (*Cocktail; Pyar Ke Side Effects*) films with explicit and erotic scenes like (*Shuddh Deshi Romance*) bold portrayal of an assertive woman (*Dirty Picture*) questioning the motives behind wrongly accusing a Muslim as terrorist (*Khakee*) films portraying the deceits of godmen (*PK*) etc. One way of reversing this trend within the Indian Cinema is to influence and control the thinking and creativity of the students passing out of the FTII. Reduce them to be propagandist rather than creative artists questioning and critiquing what they witness around them and pushing cinematic boundaries, creating space for new creations. This can be done by ensuring, to the extent possible, that inflow of students is predominantly from elite and privileged social background as they love to be conformist; and by controlling the curricula which teaches them to be conformists and nationalists rather than creative artists. Being nationalist is to portray superior virtue of submissive wife and terrorism as *the* problem with terrorists belonging to one community.

NDA had earlier appointed Mukesh Khanna who had campaigned for the BJP, and was

caught on camera calling Modi, "the Shaktiman (a character that he played) in Gujarat", as head of Children's Film Society. Mr. Khanna had played Bhisma in Mahabharata. Similarly, Pahlaj Nihalani, a film maker who made promotional videos on Modi was appointed as censor board chief, the I&B ministry also appointed Malayalam actor and BJP supporter Suresh Gopi as the chairperson of the NFDC, in another controversial decision. Zafar Sareshwala, a businessman confidante of PM Modi was appointed as Chancellor of Maulana Azad National Urdu University even though he has little knowledge of the language.

The larger concern is that not only FTII, but the Hindu nationalist organization is systematically and in organized fashion percolating into the vital institutions of our democracy to undermine it, constrict the liberal secular space and promote hegemonistic Hindu nationalist ideology. The NDA Government is facilitating and partnering with the Hindu nationalists to achieve their objective of undermining academic autonomy and freedom to explore truth and frontiers of knowledge. The Hindu nationalists largely believe that all knowledge is in ancient epics, Vedic scriptures and Vedanta, and all one need to do is be immersed in these scriptures. PM Modi while inaugurating science exhibition in Mumbai University said that ancient India already knew how to make aircrafts as evident from the *pushpak viman*. Likewise Ramanand Sagar's depiction of Mahabharat on TV screen is evidence that India knew how to make nuclear missiles. Hindu nationalist would want to mythologize history and historicize mythology. Even when the BJP was not in power, the Hindu nationalists

were in conflict with the academic freedom and autonomy of academic institutions. ABVP demanded that A K Ramanja's 300 Ramayans be removed, Aditya Thackeray pressurized the Mumbai University V.C. to remove Rohinton Mistry's award winning book *Such A Long Journey* from syllabus.

In order to accelerate the trend of mythologizing history and historicizing mythology, the NDA Government appointed Y. Sudershan Rao as chair of the ICHR, a premier body to encourage research in history. Just like the rest of the appointees, Prof. Rao is little known in history circles and was Head of Department of History and Tourism Management in Kakatiya University. In Prof. Rao's opinion, caste system was not such a social evil, and that rigidity and distortions had crept in after Muslim invasion and as a result of it. This position is close to the Hindu nationalist position.

The NDA Government created a situation wherein Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen had to resign from the Chancellorship of Nalanda University only because he was critical of the policies of Modi Government. Anil Kakodkar, former chairperson of Atomic Energy Commission of India and Chairperson of Board of Governor of IIT also wanted to resign on differences regarding selection of IIT Directors, but later withdrew his resignation. Earlier the HRD Ministry caused IIT Delhi Director Raghunath Sheogaonkar to resign on dubious grounds.

The other posts on which less eligible persons who were appointed mainly on their being camp followers of Hindu nationalist ideology are – Prof. Inder Mohan Kapahy as a

member of the University Grants Commission (UGC); Vishram Ramchandra Jamdar as the head of Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology, Nagpur; Baldev Sharma, former editor of RSS mouthpiece *Panchajanya*, as chairman of National Book Trust.

Academic freedom for student activities is an important part of academics. Under NDA Government even that space has been threatened. Human Resource Development Ministry made an 'inquiry' into the activities of a students' group – *Ambedkar Periyar Study Circle* in IIT Madras and caused to withdraw its recognition merely over comments being made against the Prime Minister. School Students were forced to hear PM Modi's radio talk – *Mann Ki Baat*. Hindu religion inspired culture is being forced down the throat of citizens with a circular that was issued to central schools saying that December 25 would be observed as "Good Governance Day" to mark the birthday of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the birth anniversary of Madan Mohan Malaviya. The circular asked the schools to "ensure active participation of your students". Similarly, Yoga Day is being forced even on unwilling citizens and students with Government involvement.

The NDA Government is homogenizing culture and aggressively promoting Vedic and Hindu Epics based mythologized culture of a small section of Hindu upper-caste on the entire people of India. Hindu culture is rich and diverse reflecting democratic aspirations of the people if we draw from great saints like Narsi Mehta, Tukaram, Mira, Ravidas, Gyaneshwar, Chokha Mela, Kabir,

Bahinabai and many others from all regions, castes and from both genders. The great Hindu saints, particularly from the oppressed castes sang love, equality and opposed hierarchies and authorities of all kinds. Why doesn't the NDA Government draw from these traditions? Are these not, according to them, Hindu traditions? Why the NDA partners like Lok Janshakti Party holding on to apron tail of the NDA Government? Is it only for power?

In the process of aggressively promoting Vedic-Vedanta-Hindu Epic based mythologized culture as national culture, the NDA Government is not only undermining autonomy of our institutions, but democracy itself. Democracy and fundamental rights of the citizens gives power in the hands of the

organized citizens to check naked crony capitalism seeking to grab land, natural resources, cheap labour and large chunk of Government budget spending. The NDA aggressively promotes Vedic-Vedanta-Hindu Epic based mythologized culture as it creates submissive followers accepting hierarchies and hierarchical authoritarian structures that does not question why social and economic inequalities are growing, but accepts with pride that 'nation is developing' just because a few industrialists are making super profit from exploitation of land, natural resources, cheap labour and with huge budgetary support of the Government. Regimented, mesmerized blind followers only hero worship – they do not question. Hindu nationalists want national institutions to help create regimented minds.

Shocking Jingoism

We are shocked at the level of jingoism being peddled by the ministers of the Modi government, members of the ruling BJP and sections of the mainstream media in India over the recent action by the Indian army in Manipur.

While several questions are being raised and newer facts are emerging as the details still unfold – whether or not it was a cross-border case of hot-pursuit, whether it was a retaliatory or a pre-emptive action etc, the manner in which this action is being linked to a general justification of such hot pursuit vis-a-vis Pakistan and China is deplorable and dangerous.

India and Pakistan are both nuclear-armed nations with such close geographical proximity that a nuclear exchange between both would lead to large-scale devastation and irreversible climatic changes. And as the post-Pokharan history of South Asia suggests, the rhetoric and escalation of conventional war has a real potential to lead to nuclear sabre-rattling.

The fact that this action was carried out against India's own alienated citizens and not some external enemy itself is far from being a cause of jubilation. For real peace in longer term, we demand that the Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) must be removed immediately from the North East and Kashmir and sustained and open dialogue with people in the regions be initiated at the earliest.

– *Achin Vanaik, Praful Bidwai, Lalita Ramdas, Anil Chaudhary, Abey George, Kumar Sundaram*

Emerging survival crisis

Bharat Dogra

In the middle of several problems which need attention, it is necessary not to lose track of what is most urgent. It should be possible to build a broad-based consensus that those factors which threaten the life-creating, life-nurturing conditions of our planet deserve the most urgent attention. The most defining feature of the 21st century is the existence of such human-made threats to earth's life-nurturing conditions.

Such threats are related to climate change, crossing of other 'planetary boundaries' and 'tipping points' of life-giving conditions (including water and land use), accumulation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction as well as rapid spread of highly hazardous technologies and products particularly those capable of inflicting irreversible damage.

Edward Goldsmith and his co-authors warned in the widely discussed report 'Imperilled Planet' (MIT, USA), "The danger is that we have gone beyond simply damaging ecosystems and we are now disrupting the very processes that keep the Earth a fit place for higher forms of life. For life as we know it to continue, the balance of gases in the atmosphere must remain within certain limits. ... Beyond a certain point, the system may 'flip' to an entirely new state which could be extremely uncomfortable for life as we know it."

The concept of a tipping point argues that global warming beyond 2⁰C can result in irretrievable drift towards disasters and adverse weather conditions. In its Emissions

Gap Report of year 2010, the United Nations Environment Programme concluded that the currently forecast 2020 emission levels were consistent with pathways that would lead to a likely temperature increase of between 2.5 to 5 degrees celsius by the end of the 21st century.

Even a 2⁰C change in temperature will cause very large-scale disruption in several life-sustaining activities apart from leading to the loss of vast low-lying areas (related to rise in sea-level) and worsening 'natural' disasters. But beyond 2⁰C, the earth's natural processes begin to break down and cause more warming.

The United Nations Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Global Sustainability (UN SHPGS) which drew pointed attention to the Emissions Gap report mentioned above has also highlighted the work of a group of scientists from the Stockholm Resilience Centre based on a framework of 'planetary boundaries'. These scientists have said that once human activity has passed certain thresholds or tipping points, defined as planetary boundaries, there is a risk of "irreversible and abrupt environment change." Nine such boundaries have been identified. These scientists have said that human activity appears to have already "transgressed the boundaries associated with climate change, rate of biodiversity loss and changes in the global nitrogen cycle." Further the world may soon be approaching the boundaries for interference with the global phosphorus cycle, global freshwater use, ocean acidification and global

change in land use. There are strong inter-linkages among these boundaries, so that crossing one affects others. (UNSHPGS, 2012)

In the last decade of the 20th century the world had accumulated nuclear stockpiles which added up to a destructive potential nearly 700 times that of all the explosive power used in the three major wars of this century, enough to kill all human beings (as well as most other forms of life) many time over.

Use of CFCs and related chemicals over a period of just 5 or 6 decades was enough to endanger the protective layer of stratospheric ozone which had evolved over millions of years to create those conditions in which life could flourish on this planet.

A significant aspect of modern life is that new products and technologies which yield high profits can spread very quickly all over the world. Very few people stop to ask whether any hazards associated with new products and technologies have been suitably assessed. Corporate interests intervene frequently to prevent available information on hazards from reaching people. The result is that the risk of the very rapid spread of hazards has increased very significantly.

Russell Train, former chief of the Environmental Protection Agency, USA said, "There are today more than 30000 chemicals in actual commercial production. Every year, this list grows by some 1000 new compounds. Of the more than two million known chemicals, only a

few thousand have been tested for carcinogenicity and-aside from those used in food additives, drugs and pesticides-only a few hundred have been adequately tested. We know, in fact, very little about the health effects even of the 30000 chemicals already in commercial production. We have no way of systematically screening the chemicals that go into production, we have no way of knowing precisely which chemicals go into production every year. In other words, we not only don't know whether what's going on out there is dangerous - we don't even know what's going on out there. We have, however, learned one thing: it's what we don't know that can really hurt us, even kill us."

Dr. Vyvyan Howard, former development toxicopathologist at the University of Liverpool, U.K, says in a paper published in *The Ecologist*, "Recent research has shown that the synergistic effect among chemicals used in different combinations is much more dramatic than was previously thought. Yet we continue to test chemicals for their possible carcinogenic or mutagenic potential in isolation from each other. This procedure can no longer be justified. We have in our bodies today what is estimated to be between 300 and 500 chemicals that simply would not have been there 50 years ago, because at that time they did not exist or were present in the environment at undetectable levels

Attention may be drawn particularly to those hazardous technologies and products which can cause irreversible loss or loss which cannot be reversed, on a very large scale. This is particularly true of GM crops and GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms).

An eminent group of scientists from various countries who

constitute the Independent Science Panel have said in their conclusion after examining all aspects of GM crops - "GM crops have failed to deliver the promised benefits and are posing escalating problems on the farm. Transgenic contamination is now widely acknowledged to be unavoidable, and hence there can be no co-existence of GM and non-GM agriculture. Most important of all, GM crops have not been proven safe. On the contrary, sufficient evidence has emerged to raise serious safety concerns, that if ignored could result in irreversible damage to health and the environment. GM crops should be firmly rejected now."

This threat becomes very serious and of a permanent nature when we remember that it is almost impossible to fully recall GM crops which have been released once. As Professor Susan Bardocz has noted, "GM is the first irreversible technology in human history. When a GMO is released it is out of our control; we have no means to call it back.... Since GMOs are self-replicating, releasing them might have dire consequences for human and animal health and for the environment and can change evolution."

The World Health Organisation in its annual World Health Reports (WHR) has warned time and again about the seriousness of global health challenges. The WHR has warned, "We stand on the brink of a global crisis in infectious diseases. No country is safe from them.... Antibiotic resistance in hospitals worldwide threatens to leave medical and public health workers virtually helpless in the prevention or treatment of many infections. Various factors have combined, this report says, to create, "perhaps the richest opportunities ever for the spread of infections." In particular this report has focussed attention on

the threat of new emerging diseases - "During the past 20 years, at least 30 new diseases have emerged to threaten the health of hundreds of millions of people. For many of these diseases there is no treatment, cure or vaccine and the possibility of preventing or controlling them is limited....Any epidemic anywhere must now be seen as a threat to virtually all countries especially those that serve as major hubs of international travel."

The Global Environment Outlook Report (GEO-1997) prepared by the United Nations Environment Program has said on a note of warning, "In the future, the continued degradation of natural resources, shortcomings in environmental responses, and renewable resource constraints may increasingly lead to food insecurity and conflict situations. Changes in global biogeochemical cycles and the complex interactions between environmental problems such as climate change, ozone depletion and acidification may have impacts that will confront local, regional and global communities with situations they are unprepared for. Previously unknown risks to human health are becoming evident from the cumulative and persistent effects of a whole range of chemicals particularly the persistent organic pollutants. The effects of climate variability and change are already increasing the incidents of familiar public health problems and leading to new ones, including a more extensive reach of vector borne diseases and a high incidence of heat related illness and mortality. If significant major reforms are not implemented quickly, the future may hold more surprises."

These warnings from authoritative sources clearly indicate the extent to which human beings as well as all

other forms of life are threatened and the reasons why such threats to all forms of life and to life-creating conditions are likely to increase in future.

Faced with such an alarming situation, what has been the response of the world leadership so far? In the context of the most critical problem of climate change the UNSHPGS has reported, "Despite the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, annual global carbon dioxide emissions from fuel combustion grew by about 38% between 1990 and 2009, with the rate of growth faster after 2000 than in the 1990s."

The GEO is therefore quite justified in lamenting that "A sense of urgency is lacking. Internationally and nationally, the funds and political will are insufficient to halt further global environment degradation and to address the most pressing environmental issues even though technology and knowledge are available to do so...The gap between what has been done this far and what is realistically needed is widening."

Greenpeace leader Jeremy Leggett has rightly said, "...the uniquely frustrating thing about global warming - to those many people who now see the dangers - is that the solutions are obvious. But there is no denying that enacting them will require paradigm shifts in human behaviour - particularly in the field of co-operation between nation states - which have literally no precedents in human history. This is the challenge. There is no single issue in contemporary human affairs that is of greater importance..."

The efforts to reduce the risk from nuclear weapons have not made any significant progress. In

fact depleted uranium weapons are being freely used, and the chances of use of tactical nuclear weapons have increased. There is no guarantee yet that full-blown nuclear weapons will never be used. The nightmarish risks of terrorist groups gaining access to nuclear weapons have been discussed from time to time.

According to Time magazine, terrorist outfits, particularly when they have the help of a foreign government, can use nuclear weapons to kill around a hundred thousand people. The same magazine reported that the Aum Shinrikyo cult in Japan had accumulated material to manufacture chemical weapons which could kill 6 to 8 million people.

The US Air Force has estimated that in the event of a full-scale nuclear war between India and Pakistan, as many as 100 million people will die. The first hour of such a war itself would claim 17 million lives in Pakistan and 29 million in India. (Reported in the Statesman, 22 June, 1998)

Even without the wartime use of nuclear weapons, merely maintaining a huge nuclear complex either for direct military purposes or for supporting it can pose a threat to the health and well being of hundreds of thousands of people.

These various threats to earth's life giving conditions also cause massive distress to human beings as well as all other forms of life. The distress caused to other forms of life is not even mentioned even when countless birds fall dead in intensifying heat waves and prolonged droughts, or when millions of fish perish in rapidly drying and/or polluted water bodies. The fact that the extinction of species is now many times higher is absorbed just like that, without any

intense feeling or sensitivity for the massive distress (and the associated injustice).

Both due to the massive distress caused to various forms of life (including of course human beings) as well as (or even more) due to the often irreversible nature of the threat to life creating conditions on earth, the issues identified above should get the highest priority. While not many people question this, recent record confirms that effective and adequate remedial action is nevertheless very uncertain and in fact unlikely in the existing situation.

One problem is that decisions are taken at the level of various nation states keeping in view the perceived self-interests of the country only. Secondly, the decisions within a country are often influenced too much by the powerful groups and strong lobbies keeping in view their own narrow interests. Quite often some powerful corporate interests have a dominant say. At the international level, in the prevailing distribution of power, it is often what the few rich and powerful countries say which is more crucial for decision taking regardless of how unjust this may be. The more urgent concerns of the poorer and less influential countries are invariably neglected, or accorded very low priority.

To what extent can the United Nations, as the most important international organization of our planet, make up for these shortcomings in tackling the most urgent problems? The record so far is not at all an encouraging one, as is evident from the fact that remedial action on the most urgent issues has lagged far behind the real needs.

One serious problem of the United Nations is that in its General

Assembly a nation which has a population of one hundred thousand has the same representation (one vote) as a nation whose population is more than a thousand times.

The only privileged nations to have extraordinary (veto) power are the five permanent members of the Security Council who are among the worst pollutants and human rights violators in the entire world. Increasingly the form that the United Nations intervention takes in several crisis situations is closely linked to the foreign policy of the USA, even as the USA gets the dubious distinction of being the biggest defaulter on its contributions to the UN budget.

Unfortunately, narrow minded lobbies and vested interests have also become an integral part of the functioning of the UN, further reducing its ability to approach the most urgent issues in a non-partisan way which could get very widespread, broad based support. Due to its increasingly bureaucratic ways, the UN has not been able to create and motivate a very wide and strong network of volunteers and activists to work on the most urgent issues.

The record of the United Nations can of course be improved for tackling the most urgent issues by initiating long overdue reforms. It can be repositioned as a more volunteer based, activist driven international organization dedicated above all to the more urgent 'survival' issues. It can set a clear time frame for urgent actions on these 'survival' issues. But before this can get wider acceptance the existing unjust structure of the United Nations (particularly the Security Council and the Veto power for its five permanent members) must change. However as things stand today, this appears to be very difficult.

So the role of people's movements is a very critical one. Well organized social movements with clear aims can mobilize people on a large scale to pressurise their national governments, the world leadership and the United Nations to initiate justice based effective remedial actions on survival issues before it is too late. The movements for justice and equality as well as movements for peace and environment protection supported by movements for gender justice, animal rights movements and several other movements, all can contribute to this by better co-operation and integration with each other for wider objectives.

If such movements can create strong public opinion for justice based solutions to survival issues, then true and sincere internationalism, with the objective of saving our earth and uniting all people for this can progress much beyond limited reforms of the United Nations. It should be possible then to think of creating a world government with a mandate for initiating adequate and effective remedial actions on the most urgent survival issues.

To start with the mandate of the world government can be restricted to urgent survival issues like climate change, weapons of mass destruction and a few other such issues. To form the world government, one representative can be selected from a constituency of about 20 million people, ignoring national boundaries. The election campaign should be conducted mainly on urgent survival issues. In addition, various professional bodies (such as organizations of climate scientists, nuclear scientists, medical scientists, etc.) should be asked to select their most capable representatives to assist the world government.

The tasks of the world government can be the following-

- Ensuring complete prohibition of nuclear weapons or any other WMD in the arsenal of any country. However the world government will be entitled to stock limited say about 5% of the existing stocks at 3 or 4 places in the world to check any efforts of terrorists to acquire and misuse such weapons.
- A detailed justice based agenda for checking global warming and climate change to tolerable limits should be prepared and enforced by the world government. Similar action should be taken on other environmental issues which pose survival threat. The industrial countries, with their historical responsibilities, should be asked to accept justice based financial responsibility for reducing GHG emissions.
- Over a period of time all national armies and weapons expenditure should be curtailed by about 90 per cent or so. The task of border disputes settlement should be taken up by the World Government. (Global production of all arms can be reduced by over 80 per cent or so).

At the next stage, if the internationalism and one earth consciousness of people can continue to rise, the mandate of the World Government can be expanded to include additional issues or urgent matters. Gradually our world should move from artificially created boundaries to one world based on equality of all human beings at all levels and concern for all other forms of life. At the same time, however, decentralization and local self-government should be strengthened everywhere.

Damage to India's ethos

A civil society report of one year of Narendra Modi government is an attempt to document intense and multi-pronged attack unleashed on the democratic rights of citizens and secular values enshrined in the constitution of India. The purpose of documenting this multi faceted attack on our diversity and pluralism is to make the damage visible.

We could document only a fraction of what has happened during the past year due to paucity of resources, both human and financial. This report however clearly breaks the myth that there have been no riots under the present regime. The strategy has changed, Sangh has realized that large-scale violence attracts international media attention, and therefore now, meticulously planned high-intensity localized violence coupled with high-pitched hate campaigns is used across India to polarize the people and further marginalize the minorities.

In order to weaken the India democracy, the administrative, legal, scientific and educational structures created during the past sixty year have either been demolished or tempered.

The damage done in the last one year to India's ethos of secularism, communal harmony and freedom of expression may be irreparable with the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, BJP chief ministers, and the top echelons of the Sangh Parivar moving fast in changing policy, people and programmes in education, social security and the protection of religious and ethnic minorities. The cultural DNA of

India of pluralism and diversity is being threatened.

The meddling with the judicial system at the highest level threatens to foreclose the one option that is left to the citizens to challenge, stop and reverse this trend. The welfare network is rapidly being demolished, many policies changed at the behest of the corporate sector..

This is highlighted in a report "365 days – democracy and secularism under the Modi regime", edited by John Dayal and Shabnam Hashmi with assessments by Harsh Mander, Ram Puniyani, Cedric Prakash, Apoorvanand, Karen Gabriel, PK Vijayan, Seema Mustafa, Kriti Sharma, VB Rawat, Dhruv Sangari and PVS Kumar.

The civil society analysis of the period May 2014 to May 2015 shows a seamless integration and adoption of the policies of the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh by the NDA government entirely dominated by the Bharatiya Janata party. This has led to almost total impunity, seen in the failure to act in cases of speeches by Sangh leaders to incite violence against Muslims and Christians.

Shri Modi has made a few remarks condemning violence, but has refused to identify the perpetrators of violence. No politician or Sangh activist has been punished. The RSS general secretary, Mohan Bhagwat, has continued to make outrageous speeches targeting minorities. In June he was given z-Class security cover, at par with that given to the Home Minister of India.

The Sangh's own campaign to malign, isolate, criminalize and

target Christians and Muslim, inciting mobs to commit violence against them, has been overlooked by central and state police forces. Never in free India has the public discourse been so poisoned by MPs and ministers of the elected ruling alliance. BJP MP Sakshi Maharaj labels madrassas as 'hubs of terror' and exhorts Hindu women to bear four children. He calls Nathuram Godse, Gandhi's assassin, as a 'patriot' and 'martyr'. Another BJP MP Yogi Adityanath says 'for every Hindu converted, 100 Muslim girls will be converted as retaliation.' Minister Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti describes those who do not worship Ram as 'haramzade' or bastards. A Shiv Sena MP force-feeds a Muslim canteen functionary during his roza fast. Another, Sanjay Raut, calls for the disenfranchisement of Muslims.

All too often, police has been complicit in the violence. In Chhattisgarh, villages are passing orders banning the entry of priests of faiths other than Hinduism.

At least 43 deaths, 212 cases targeting Christians and 175 cases targeting Muslims, 234 cases of Hate Speech have been recorded between 26th May 2014 and June 2015, marking almost one year of the National Development Alliance government of Narendra Modi. The number of dead is other than the 108 killed in Assam in attacks on Muslims by armed tribal political groups.

Over 90 per cent of the cases recorded in this report are over and above the 600 cases documented by the Indian express investigative series in August 2014.

In the very first few weeks of the new government, by its own admission, 113 communal incidents took place in various parts of the country during in just the two months May-June 2014 in which 15 people were killed and 318 others were injured,

The government's efforts at reassurance of minorities have been pathetic. Instead of investigating the violence, it has sought to trivialize it by its explanations on several incidents that caught international attention, and invited comments from various dignitaries including President Pranab Mukherjee.

The new government is intolerant of civil society and dissent. Organisations like INSAF, People's Watch, Sabrang Trust, Citizens for Justice and Peace, Greenpeace India among others were systematically targeted, maligned and harassed. Others have been subject to direct and indirect intimidation. Select activists have been individually targeted.

During the past one-year we have also witnessed an unprecedented four pronged attack on scientific temper, rational thinking and scientific establishment of the country. This includes providing credibility to myths and superstitions, official platforms for anti-science activities, budget cuts and crippling scientific institutes by political interference.

There are serious efforts to undermine diversity and pluralism and convert India into a monocultural, standardized society. Should the idea of cultural chauvinism and nationalism succeed, it would be nothing short of a death knell for all that India stands for.

Although not documented in this report but the past year has also seen strong resistance to the nefarious designs of the Sangh, across India. We hope that this report will help in further strengthening the people's

resistance against these divisive forces.

The soft copy of the report is available at : <http://www.anhadin.net/article280.html>

– *Shabnam Hashmi, John Dayal*

AFSPA must go from everywhere

Announcement of Repeal AFSPA from Tripura is a welcome move.

Save Sharmila Solidarity Campaign (SSSC) view this incident as 'moving from inertia of AFSPA'. It is because since many years and even after continuous demands by people and rights groups, AFSPA was not even diluted a bit. No government or security agencies have taken any positive steps towards its repeal and were isolated from this issue. No one in the government even wanted to talk about the issue and those who were in government never tried to break the ice and ignored people's demand.

As Tripura is one of the states of North East region of India, repealing AFSPA from this state also sends a message of confidence and hope among all other people who are residing in AFSPA zone presently. We also see that this start must become dynamic very soon and governments must try to repeal it from everywhere.

We demand with the government to immediately pay attention towards Manipur also where Irom Sharmila is on a continuous fast since the last 15 years. Keeping AFSPA in Manipur is against the will and future of state. We demand with state and central government both to coordinate and cooperate with each other to end the

impasse over AFSPA. For Manipur, state leadership of central ruling party had already promised repeal of AFSPA.

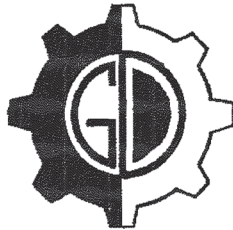
SSSC believes that AFSPA that was extended to J&K vide AFSPA-J&K, should also be repealed as victimisation and sufferings cannot be looked separately. A human rights violation is always a violation of human rights regardless of region. In J&K, so many incidents of killings, rapes and disappearances have already been reported and evidences were provided even before courts against many security officials, but due to impunity under AFSPA (section 7), nothing could be done against culprits.

SSSC also see that enjoying such an impunity that AFSPA provides is actually a corruption and it is absolutely not required for any responsible, honest and committed security force personals. In contrary, it becomes dangerous as such absolute powers divert the normal way of working of personals.

SSSC appeals with the state and central government to immediately act upon this long pending demand of Repeal AFSPA. AFSPA is not required not only in Tripura but in no other AFSPA state. AFSPA is a failed law.

– *Ravi Nitesh*

With Best Compliments



GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.

An infrastructure company established since 1924

REGD. OFFICE :

*New Excelsior Building, (3^d Floor),
A. K. Nayak Marg, Fort, Mumbai – 400 001.
Tel : 022 2205 1231 Fax : 022 – 2205 1232*

Offices : Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai & New Delhi.