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Swadeshi

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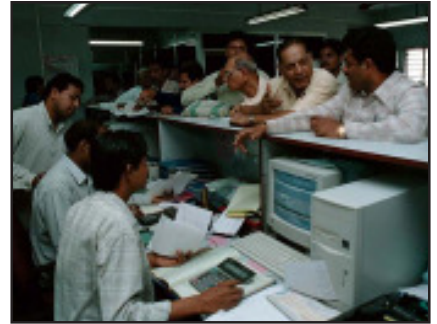


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Swadeshi: The answer to Globalisation

There has been immense impact of globalization on nation states since 1990s and India, which started its journey in 1947 on the ship of mixed economy, is also swimming in the ocean of globalization. Today globalization has become integral part in the life of people. Though some people are aware about the side-effects of the globalization, but for some, it is a fashionable term. Globalization has been defined as the process of integration of economies, breaking the boundaries and the process enabling financial and investment markets to operate internationally, largely as a result of deregulation and improved communications. But in reality globalization is responsible for various problems like climate change and global warming, increase of hidden corruption, lack of employment opportunities for unskilled and semi-skilled people, control of few people in the economy, labour related problems, threat to sovereignty etc.

The solution of all the problems which we are facing because of globalization is Swadeshi. Swadeshi is the core of our culture, custom, and economy. It should be adopted in breadth and length. According to Mahatma Gandhi "Swadeshi is that spirit in us which requires us to serve our immediate neighbors before others, and to use things produced in our neighborhood in preference to those more remote. So doing, we serve humanity to the best of our capacity. We cannot serve humanity by neglecting our neighbors". The Swadeshi Jagran Manch is doing its best to include every citizen of the country under the umbrella of swadeshi. Swadeshi goods should be promoted because it would strengthen economy of families of every section without any discrimination on the basis of caste, religion, gender and so on and not the economic power of any particular sections the Tatas the Birlas and the Ambanies. The sources should be under the control of every citizen and should be used for them, but they are under the control of few people and they use these resources for their own benefit. These industrialists also have the tendency to invest in other countries for the maximum benefit. This is absolutely ironical. At the same time we should not depend upon FDI but should increase IDI (Indian direct investment). The globalization on which we have lot of faith, its roots are based on exploitation, exclusion, alienation and ofcourse destruction of value system, culture and whenever it gets opportunity, challenges the sovereignty of the state. On the other hand, swadeshi empowers the people, it makes people self-reliant and. It is based on inclusion and integration of society as a whole. At present time the government is talking about inclusion of people particularly the weaker section of the society use and promotion of swadeshi goods would be the best tool with the government.

- CL Singh, Assistant Professor, Delhi University

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Quote-Unquote



Israel has technology, Israel has brains, Israel has innovation, and India has the urge to collaborate. It can create a wonderful eco-system.

Devendra Fadnavis

Maharashtra Chief Minister



Development requires resources like water, power and land. The present Government is moving in the right direction.

K Kasturirangan

Former Isro Chairman



Sometimes Suit Boot ki Sarkar is better than a Loot Loot ki Sarkar.

Anupam Kher

Actor



What is unfolding in Yarmuk (Syria) is unacceptable. We simply cannot stand by and watch a massacre unfold.

Ban Ki-moon

UN Secretary-General

Parity in prosperity, please

"When you allow racial disparity and institutional inequity to affect one part of the country, eventually it's coming back to get everyone."

— (Tim Wise)

Voices to thwart the government move to repeal The Handloom Reservation Act, which since 1985 has been protecting traditional Handloom weaves, especially saris are growing stronger, louder and sharper. Speculation that the government plans to amend the handloom Act grew after the power loom lobby accelerated its efforts to get, what they claim 'parity' with the handloom sector. The Southern India Mills' Association (SIMA) in its appeal to the Union Government called to scrap the 'antiquated' Hank Yarn Obligation and Handloom Reservation Act and announce a new handloom policy that would showcase the Indian handloom industry's rich cultural heritage and transform handloom weavers as "respected and highly paid artisans." The Handloom Reservation Act lists goods and textiles reserved for production by traditional craftsmen and weavers and incentives offered to them is being chased target of corporates. The Act is a small but important protection for Handloom weavers, who otherwise struggle to survive. Their yarn, their designs and their markets are under attack. Hand loom weavers and the industry representatives are expressing serious concern at Government's move. They warn that the move will spell doom for nearly six crore people directly and indirectly depending on the weaving sector if the reservation is scrapped. These poor and vulnerable people would not be able to meet the competition of mills and power looms. Powerloom lobbyists are quoting selectively from The Satyam Committee report that made recommendations without soliciting opinion from the weaving sector and their complaints and suggestions were also not recorded specially from the affected weaving committee. Experts having fairly in-depth knowledge of the Handloom sector blame faulty "Make in India" policy, which to them, seems to be about specialized technologies using cheap labour and official incentives and certain myths assiduously being repeated by lobbies out to destroy India's handloom advantage behind this move.

The Handloom Reservation Act of 1985 defines 'handloom' as 'any loom other than power loom', and 'power loom as a 'loom worked by power as defined in the Factories Act, 1948'. The handloom sector has huge employment potential, second only to Agriculture and its turnover is around Rs 60,000 crore every year.. with a market demand of Rs 1,00,000 crore per year, Handloom products have is the most eco-friendly production industry. We need to pay no royalty to Western countries as far as this sector goes. The handloom sector is scattered and hence finds it difficult to function as a lobby. Therefore, there is increased pressure, in particular to remove saris from the list, since saris are the mainstay of the handloom sector. The fundamental USP of the handloom sector is the label 'Handmade'. It is this exclusivity that is being snatched. We all know very well that skilled handloom weavers can create thousands of distinctive regional weaves and designs that no powerloom can replicate. Globally too, more and more ecologically sensitive international buyers look to India as a source for the hand made products. Hence the greedy corporates realise the potential demand and desire to grab this sector. They don't mind destroying art form that has a cultural tradition and a story, each linking us to our social and cultural roots. In spite of lack of reliable data and ignorance that surrounds its importance and contribution to the economy, yet recent guesstimates reach 25 million directly employed much more dependent on this sector through ancillary occupations including festival crafts, recycling, and even the ubiquitous jharoo, chik and patang. It is therefore essential to understand that If we remove the protection and incentives for handloom weavers to continue weaving their traditional products and saris, we would suddenly be bereft of both our past and our future. What is instead needed is to properly study the problems facing the ailing sector and take remedial measures in a manner that ensure parity in the prosperity among all the people connected with the handloom sector. In spite of its contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP), Handloom production is dependent on private moneylending to the tune of Rs 35,000 crore, and pays interests between 18% and 24%. The handloom sector gets a paltry budget allocation of Rs 328 crore. The government needs to increase the budget allocation as a beginning.

Agriculture Credit:

Declining Access of Real Farmers

India is the world's second largest food producer with highest number of farmers and farming-dependent population. This vast section of population has been witnessing ever growing distress with sagging confidence in farming, largely on account of inept policy interventions of the post-reforms period, especially in the last 10 years' UPA rule wherein, the agricultural loans were being diverted to industry and commerce, by deliberate and protracted dilutions in the definition of agricultural credit for the window-dressing of UPA government's achievements. The recent enhancement of the provision for agriculture credit to Rs. 8.5 lac crores, along with a slew of many other measures in the budget for 2015-16 of the NDA government can indeed alleviate the plight of farmers effectively, provided the access of the farmers to agricultural credit is again restored.

Deliberate Dilutions

Policy dilutions, leading to financial exclusion of poor farmers had been initiated as early as in 1993, when Dr. Manmohan Singh was the finance minister. **Till 1993, only direct finance to cultivators was counted as part of the priority sector lending, for meeting the target of 18 percent bank credit for agriculture.** But, from October 1993, indirect finance was also allowed to be counted together with the direct finance to cultivators for fulfilling the priority sector target of 18% loans for agriculture. The government has thereafter, kept on diluting the definition of 'indirect credit to agriculture' to include even the corporate borrowings as well as infrastructure project fundings in indirect agriculture credit. By virtue of this, even the loans given to the multinational companies like ITC and other contract farming and agri-processing companies too are now being counted into the quantum of loan extended to farmers, which amounts to almost up to 50% of farm sector indirect loans in states like West Bengal etc. Only four of such one dozen dilutions made by the government are enough to be



Indirect loans, which are never accessed by the farmers, have now crossed over to 25% of total agri-credits after being permitted to be counted together with the direct finance to cultivators for fulfilling the priority sector target of 18% loans for agriculture in 1993, reveals

Prof. Bhagwati Prakash Sharma



given hereunder to expose the tactical deprivation of real farmers from agriculture credit under the decade long regime of Manmohan, Sonia and Rahul's trio. These dilutions are:

- i The loans given to even power distribution corporations or companies, emerging out of the bifurcation or restructuring of SEBs as part of power sector reforms were ordered to be considered as indirect finance to agriculture from July 2005.
- ii The loans to food and agro-based processing units with investments in plant and machinery up to RS 10 crore (other than the units run by individual, Self Help Group and cooperatives in rural areas) are also being considered as indirect finance to agriculture since April 2007.
- iii From April 2007 onwards, two-thirds of loans given to corporates, partnership firms and institutions for agricultural and allied activities (such as bee-keeping, piggyery, poultry, fishery and dairy) in excess of Rs 1 crore in aggregate per borrower have been declared to be considered as indirect finance to agriculture. The rest of the one-third amount was to be treated as direct finance.
- iv From October 2012 the loans

Table 1: Amount-wise distribution of outstanding agricultural advances of scheduled commercial banks.

Loan size (Rs)	Share of amounts outstanding in various ranges in %	
	1990-91	2010-11
Less than 2 lakh	82.3	44.7
2 lakh to 10 lakh	4.4	22.9
10 lakh to 1 crore	7.9	6.2
1 crore to 10 crore	4.1	6.1
10 crore to 25 crore	1.2	2.6
Above 25 crore	1.2	17.4



given to corporates, partnership firms and institutions for agricultural and allied activities in excess of Rs 2 crore in aggregate per borrower are also defined to be treated as indirect finance. Even such loans of amount less than Rs 2 crore are being treated as direct finance.

Indeed, the indirect loans which were less than 15 percent in 1980s have now crossed over to 25% of total agri-credits, which are never accessed by the farmers.

Growing Dominance of Big and Non Cultivating Borrowers

Since 2000, the advances of Rs 10 crore and above, and even up to Rs 25 crore are on increase while no ordinary ordinary farmer can afford to borrow such huge sums. Table No. 1 clearly shows that the share in total of advances of the loans of size "less than Rs 2 lakh" have contracted from 82.3 per cent in 1990-91 to 44.7 per cent in 2010-11. On the other hand, the share in total advances above Rs10 crore increased sharply from 1.2 per cent in 1990-91 to 20 per cent in the year 2010-11. Farmers normally cannot take a loan of Rs 10 lakh or more. Mostly the cultivators do not take a loan of more than Rs. 2 lakh. So, probably the increasing share of agri-credit must be going to the input dealers or agri-business firms or corporate groups involved in agricultural and

Table 2 Share of agricultural credit outstanding with rural and urban branches from 1990-2011

Year	Share (%) of agricultural credit outstanding from				All branches
	Rural branches		Urban or metropolitan branches		
	Total Agri. Credit	Direct Agri. Credit	Total Agriculture Credit	Direct Agriculture Credit	
1990	85	88	15	11	100.0
2005	69	84	30.7	15	100.0
2011	67	74	33	25	100.0

allied activities.

Urban Centric Loans on Rise

The real farmer is mostly village dweller, while, there is an increased absorption of agricultural credit from urban and metropolitan branches, depicting a fall in the share of agricultural credit in rural areas. (vide table 2). In 2011, about one-third of total agricultural credit and one-fourth of direct agricultural credit were outstanding from bank branches located in the urban or metropolitan areas reflecting continuing diversion of agricultural (indirect) credit towards urban-based dealers and agricultural (direct) credit to urban-based corporates (as part of direct credit) and altogether depriving the real farmers based in rural areas.

Uneven Disbursement Across the Year

It is most astonishing that over 40-45% of annual agriculture loans are often disbursed in the last quarter of the financial year by most of the commercial banks, probably just to meet their targets. Of this fraction also about one third to half of it is often disbursed in the last month of FY i.e. March itself. The last quarter of a financial year or the month of March is not the normal period of borrowing by the farmers when the sowing is over.

Growing Dependence on Non-Institutional Lenders: Continuous deprivation of real farmers from institutional credit has been compelling them to depend more upon the exploitative and non-institutional lenders. Therefore in the All India Debt and Investment Survey of the National Sample Survey Organisation in the 70th round reveals that



There is an increased absorption of agricultural credit from urban & metropolitan branches.

non-institutional agencies played a major role in advancing credit to the households. Particularly in rural India. The non-institutional agencies had advanced credit to 19% of rural households, while the institutional agencies had advanced credit to 17% households.

Prohibitive Pre-Sanction Costs: Since, almost 50% of the farmer are small and marginal farmers and the agriculture loans are not cost free and the farmer approaching a bank for a loan of over Rs.1 lakh, has to spend more than Rs 3,000 just for documentation. This expenditure of 3% of the loan value even before the loan is disbursed is a prohibitive levy.

Plight of Farmers: In 2013-14 as well as 2014-15 the unseasonal heavy rains, thunder and hailstorms have ravaged the due-for-harvesting chana, lentils and wheat

in Madhya Pradesh, wheat mustard, cumin and all other crops in Rajasthan and onions and grapes in Maharashtra. Instead of an expected bumper harvest on the back of excellent monsoons, farmers reaped only misery.

To conclude, India needs a better customised and well targeted farm sector loans policy for the exclusive benefit of real cultivators, including tenant cultivators. Indirect agricultural loans be altogether be stopped from being reported as agriculture loans, atleast to arrive at the priority sector lending targets. In addition to it the insurance outreach for farm sector too needs to be spread fast, as hardly 5-10 percent of the farmers are able to avail crop insurance benefits. Plight of the ordinary farmers can be well understood from the mere fact that if 3 lac farmers have committed suicides since 1991 in the country, the remaining 100 million farmers and their families too are surviving in the same socio-economic circumstances, in which those 3 lacs have committed suicide. Hence, agriculture needs a 360° approach for the redressal of their problems to alleviate the plight of Manmohanomic reforms. □□

Ensure the survival of Indian small farmers

Indian honourable Minister of State for Agriculture Sh.Mohanbhai Kundaria informed Rajya Sabha on 20 March 2015 that on an average, returns from crop production have been positive and cultivation was the most important source of income of agriculture households in India as per the “Situation of Agricultural Households in India” survey conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) between July 2012 to June 2013. The Minister further confirmed that ‘the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices in its latest reports on Kharif and Rabi Price Policy has also observed that gross value of output has exceeded the sum of all paid out costs and cost of family labour (A2+FL) for major crops’. Meaning: Indian agriculture is remunerative and farmers are earning on it. Another meaning: Agriculture is not the reason for farmer’s suicides. The revealing Policy message: Indian small farmers are unable to gain on agriculture even when it is remunerative and it is desirable to corporatize Indian agriculture. BJP government hopefully will not focus on these findings and create space for corporatization of agriculture. These type of surveys and studies and their conclusions can be placed in ‘Believe it or not’ category and it is desirable for government to ignore it as these findings have not much relevance to Indian small farmers and their small land holdings. Indian small and marginal farmers are struggling for their survival and there is, in fact, lot more is required to bring them out of poverty and indebtedness.

Focus on Agriculture production is not enough

First, Small farmers were never the priority for Indian plans. Right from the independence, Industrialization was the prime objective and agriculture was more a supplier and a consumer of the industrial sector. Agriculture was considered surplus with manpower that is of farmers and agriculture labourers, and, industrialisation was thought as the best remedy. True, initially, India faced a problem of poverty and hunger and Indian government was concerned more about the agriculture production than the survival of small famers. For many



Corporatisation of every socio-economic sector may endanger survival of small and marginal farmers, deprive them off their small piece of land leading to socio-economic conflicts. The need is to make conscious efforts to help small farmer survive, says
Anil Javalekar



years, there was no specific agriculture policy as such. The deficit of food grains was met by import and combating floods, famines and droughts was an important priority concern for Indian government. Most of India's agriculture land was already under cultivation and the option for extensive farming was limited. The strategies adopted were thus for intensive farming. More and more efforts were made to increase production and productivity of fertile lands with irrigational facilities and important crops like wheat and rice. High-yielding varieties and multiple cropping programmes were main thrust areas with supportive strategies like strengthening rural infrastructure with major and minor irrigation, energisation of pump sets, supply of inputs for plant nutrition and protection, promotion of machinery for farm operations, reorganisation of agriculture credit, providing better marketing facilities and creation of adequate storage for farm produce. Resultant green revolution has indeed helped increase agriculture production. But then, that has not helped reduce Indian poverty nor helped small farmers to prosper.

Commercialisation of agriculture is questionable

Second, the policies made Indian agriculture become the base for industrial build up and state interventions made Indian agriculture a sub sector of industrialisation that allowed commercial agriculture to grow at the cost of agriculture resources and farmer's sacrifices. More and more agriculture land and water sources were allotted to urban areas and to urban industries. The use of

energy in agriculture increased but for lifting water from deepened wells. Farm mechanization and transportation system only helped benefit traders and processors of agriculture produce rather than farmers. Thus, the commercialisation and growth of agriculture only increased indebtedness of farmers leaving options either of suicides or give up of farming. The agriculture land also became a great source of profit to real estate operators that displaced farmers from their livelihood source.

Small farmers are loosing

Third, progressing Indian agriculture has not reflected in prosperity of small and marginal farmers even after Sixty six years of agricultural development in post independent India. Most Indian farmers continue to depend on monsoon and live in debt and not only die in debt but even commit suicides. There is no denying that the access to Irrigation, use of fertilisers and other inputs and cropping intensity has increased in regard to small holdings and small farmers in the irrigated areas and it is true that Small farmers also took advantage of changing cropping pattern and allocated more land to fruit and vegetables and other cash crops contributing significantly to the agriculture output. Their contribution however, varied from region to region and their success is limited to a small portion of farmers. The observations of the Royal Commission on Agriculture (1929) are still valid for most Indian farmers. The Commission found that the Indian farmer was born in debt, lived in debt and died in debt. Data shows that over 50 % farmer households were indebted in 2012-13 com-

pared to only 26% in 1991. The tragedy is that these Small farmers are being pursued to go for high value cash crops with costly inputs and farm practices without ensuring sufficient income generation. The agro-processing and market reforms are more favourable to large farmers and high yielding crops than traditional crop varieties. Indian new prosperous liberalized economy mostly excluded small farmers from its purview.

Make small farms profitable

Thus it is important that small agriculture lands are made profitable and free small farmers from survival tensions due to crop failures. As is known, bankruptcy, failed businesses and loss of business assets have least impact on the personal or family lifestyles of Indian industrial class and they are tension free even in jail. In contrast, farmers are committing suicides in open field. Note that this is happening not because of natural calamities alone. All the manmade systems of new cropping practices and commercialisation of agriculture have helped it happen. Everyone, including government, is imposing high value cropping agriculture practices and commercial agriculture on Indian farmers and inducing him to borrow more. But none share the costs and losses of farmers in the event of crop failures. Government does partially rescue some farmers and the system of crop insurance has little impact. The need, therefore, is to change agrarian and its support systems. Everyone, right from seed, fertiliser and pesticide industry to market agents, processors and government are the partners of high value commercial agriculture system and should share risks and losses with farmers. One way

is to create a special long term fund with mandatory contributions from all partners so to assure income to farmers.

Ensure survival of small farmers

India is still a country of villages and agriculture is main sector not in terms of its contribution to GDP but its livelihood support to majority of Indian population. This status will not change much in near future though Globalisation and liberalisation has changed the face of Indian economy and Indian government and its institutions are promoters and propagators of integration of Indian economy with that of world economies. The corporatisation of every socio-economic sector may endanger survival of small and marginal farmers and may possibly deprive them off from their small piece of land. The efforts are also to give good price to their land instead of remunerative price to their crops. This will prove dangerous and may lead to socio-economic conflicts. There is therefore, a need to make conscious efforts to help small farmer survive.

First, there is a need to stabilise the long term rights of farmers on their land. Urbanisation and agro-processing as also infrastructure pressurising farmers to sale their land even by offering good price. Additionally, there is already a move to promote contract farming and leasing of land to big brothers. The land is ancestral property and no current owner has full rights to sale the land and sacrifice the rights of future generations. It is desirable that the ownership remain with farmer even if the land is contracted for other use. The income generated in whatever form by the land should continue to go

to farmer family proportionately irrespective of its use or whoever uses it for whatever purpose.

Second, there is a need to promote family farming on consolidated farm land. The declining size of land holding may endanger the existence of small farmers as the liberalised world insists for its profitability and economic viability. It is desirable that all benefits of government sponsored programmes should preferably go to family farms.

Third, development of appropriate farm practices for small farms are crucial for survival of small farmers. Present production level and productivity of small holding is not sufficient to give a comfortable living standard to farming family. Small farmers may see gains in adoption of GM technology as happened in the case of cotton and will oppose any move to ban this technology irrespective of its outcome. The research and development if not moved to increase the productivity and production of small holdings for normal crops suitable to small holding of rain-fed areas may force small farmers to go for GM crops just to fetch more income.

Fourth, there is a need to help small farmer women's survival. More and more women are taking over the agriculture and are becoming farmers with small land holdings. As is known, every institution involved in agriculture development is dominated by men and their attitude and behaviour towards women is of dominion. Present technologies and farm practices are also not convenient to women farmers. This marginalises women farmers and affect the dissemination of information

There is already a move to promote contract farming

in regard to the new and innovative agriculture practices.

Fifth, there is a need to ensure localised use of resources for local development particularly by helping small farmers to make efforts to ensure their own food security first. The most important of all is the changing agrarian economy of Indian villages. The exploitation of local resources for urban industrialization has endangered local self-sufficiency and has left depleted natural resources like land and water to local people. This has made local areas dependent on outside support in every aspect of their survival be of water, food or livelihood source and made people to migrate to other areas. This exploitation of local resources without reference to local development and making local people and area dependent on outside support is dangerous and potentially not sustainable.

Survival of small farmers crucial to rural society

The mighty irrigations systems and dams and minor irrigation facilities and green revolution technologies have failed to free Indian agriculture from monsoon vagaries. The commercial agriculture has also not helped small farmers. Showing and proving by surveys and studies that agriculture is remunerative and farmers are earning therefore are of no use. Small and marginal farmers are prime to Indian rural societies and their survival is crucial to Indian economy. □□

Memorandum submitted to Hon'bl. Prime Minister of India Shree Narendra Modi by SJM through District Magistrates

Dear Sir,
Namaskar,

SJM firmly believes that the economic policies followed in last 25 years have resulted in multiplying problems faced by the common people in India besides widening disparities, shrinking employment opportunities and almost dismantling economic structure of the country. Crony capitalism of UPA government helped few chosen Business houses and MNCs to maximize their profits through corrupt means. People of India gave an unprecedented mandate to NDA under your leadership to escape further marginalization and to put an end to the policies unfairly benefitting MNCs and super rich in the name of economic reforms.

SJM welcomes economic policy initiative like Prime Minister Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) and MUDRA Bank aimed at financial inclusion of large sections of population. But we will hasten to add that people expect this govt. under your leadership to frame all the policies keeping farmers, small and medium scale entrepreneurs, poor and disadvantaged groups in the centre.

Land Acquisition Ordinance

SJM is constrained to bring to your notice the fact that LAAR (Amendment) Ordinance 2015, Permission to conduct field trials of GM food crops, FDI in insurance and pension, FDI in e-commerce etc. are some of the decisions of this government that are not in the larger public interest and are simply extension of earlier policies pursued by UPA government. SJM is of the considered view that the LAAR Act 2013 passed by the parliament unanimously was replaced by LAAR (Amendment) ordinance 2014 in undue hurry.

Re-promulgated LAAR (Amendment) ordinance issued on April 3, 2015 contains several detestable and unacceptable sections, even after incorporation of several amendments that have been included in 2015 ordinance under intense public pressure like providing employment to at least one member of each affected family of farm labourers, exclusion of Forest & Tribal Areas from acquisition and stopping acquisition of land for private projects including education & health institutions.

Impact assessment of big project on society, environment and economy is a well established international practice. Land requirements are determined on the basis of that assessment. This well-established practice

has been violated in the new ordinance.

Ordinance also has dropped the consent clause section of 2013 Act that requires obtaining consent of 80 percent of land owners for private projects and 70 percent for PPP projects.

SJM emphasizes that It is important not to acquire multi-cropped irrigated land for ensuring food security of the nation. Ordinance does not stick to this position. Government on record has promised that multi-cropped irrigated land will be acquired in very rare cases. Ordinance does not mention this. The clauses regarding the return of unutilized land, has also been diluted without any justification.

Stop open field Trials of GM food crops

Parliamentary standing committee on agriculture had recommended in 2013 discontinuation of all field trials of GM food crops until its impact on land, people and biodiversity is fully comprehended. Technical Expert Committee (TEC), constituted by Supreme Court of India that consists of experts, scientists also underlined the hazardous consequences of GM food crops and their open field trial. The TEC has recommended moratorium on such trials till an effective regulatory mechanism is put in place. BJP in its manifesto has also promised not to allow open field trials till long term scientific evaluation is not done.

The fact of the matter is that there is no scientific evidence available to suggest that GM crops enhance productivity. Supporters of GM technology also do not even claim that.

Mr. Prime Minister, we need not to equate ourselves with USA, where farm practices are totally different both in scale and the way of farming. Also, Seed companies are trying to have monopolistic control over the seed market in India. If allowed this will make our farmers dependent on private companies. MNCs engaged in marketing of BT Cotton are making huge profits by disproportionately selling it at Rs. 940/- that costs them just Rs. 20/-. Control of private players in particular the foreigners is an effort to disrupt our food chain.

FDI in E-Commerce

Despite the fact that FDI is not allowed in E-Commerce, foreign companies are spreading their business in India. Riding on their financial muscles, E-Commerce MNCs are using predatory pricing in the name of heavy

discounts and thus killing competition. On the one hand small and medium shopkeepers are going out of business; due to heavy tax evasion by these MNCs E-commerce companies, a huge loss is being incurred by the exchequer as a result of this. Government is unable to spend on most essential social sectors like education and health. E-commerce MNCs are also taking advantage of the grey areas in the rules and regulations. Need of the hour is that, keeping in mind the wider interests of the consumers and small business, foreign E-commerce companies are debarred from doing business in India.

In view of this brief background, Swadeshi Jagran Manch demands from the government that -

1. Land being a scarce resource, instead of looking at the issue of land acquisition in pieces, government should come out with a comprehensive Land Use Policy, under which, ceiling be fixed for the use of land for agriculture, forests, industry roads etc.
2. Issue a White Paper about the acquisition of land by the governments since 1947 stating its present status, unused land lying with government and also with big industries.
3. Acquisition of agricultural and forest land should not be allowed to be acquired for any other purpose.
4. Government should not own the responsibility to acquire land for the needs of private industries.
5. Ensure judicious use of land acquired for infrastructure projects and excess land out acquired for Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and Industrial Parks should be used first, before acquiring any new land.
6. Consent of farmers ensured before land acquisition on any kind.
7. Have a comprehensive assessment about need, social and environmental impact of the land acquisition before actual acquisition.
8. Permission given at different levels about field trials of GM crops is withdrawn forthwith and GM crops be banned in India.
9. Ban foreign E-commerce companies.
10. Stop FDI in Insurance sector.
11. Nation has witnessed the ill effects of the strategic disinvestment (such as Modern Food Industries Ltd., BALCO, Hindustan Zinc Ltd etc.). Therefore policy of strategic disinvestment announced in Budget 2015-16 is withdrawn forthwith.
12. Definition of small industries should not be changed under any circumstances. Along with domestic liberalization in economic policies, protection is provided to small industries.

Swadeshi Jagran Manch

Allow Indian companies to make generic drugs of patented medicines especially for cancer

Following is a letter that SJM has received from Dr. U. Y. Rege, a concerned, affected and worried citizen of the country who is in distress and expresses his pain in effective manner to raise an important issue of national importance. We thank Dr. U. Y. Rege and are publishing the letter without any change. Editor

I read your patriotic article in today's top business national newspaper— Business line about debate on new IPR policy for which I wish to present my genuine views for your kind consideration & reference .

I am also known to Shri. Ram Madhav ji , thanks to my close family friends, Shri. Suresh Prabhu ji and Shri. Manohar Parrikar ji.

I am Consultant Foods and Dairy Technologist Senior Scientist having studied in US for my double Ph.D in Foods and Dairy Technology from highly prestigious Oregon State University (ranked 8th best in world as per QS rankings 2014 in Agriculture and Foods) with full scholarships and distinction marks in record 3 years way back in 1961 and then came back to India immediately for good to support my family and also for patriotic reasons. I never went back abroad since 1961 & worked to contribute in my own small way for our great country. I come from very modest family upcoming and grounds.

My elder son, Yeshwant is suffering from thyroid cancer in last stage last many years. He was first prescribed for basic chemotherapy treatment for his terminal illness named sorafenib which MNC company-Bayer is selling at Rs. 3 lacs per month whereas generic drugs of same medicine is available at fraction of that costs made by top reputed Indian pharma majors, Natco Pharma and Cipla. Its great boon for lacs of poor Indian cancer patients indeed. Unfortunately basic chemotherapy tablets treatment didnt work well for my son and he has been now advised to take advanced chemotherapy tablets treatment which is Vandetanib made by MNC, Astra zeneca -UK which is Rs. 3.25 lacs per month and very longterm therapy for him. As there is no generic drug of that medicine available due to patent laws and issues, we have to pay this highly exorbitantly steep price unfortunately. If Government of India allows generic companies to make generic versions of such highly costly patented drugs, it will be great boon to lacs of poor cancer patients in India who will otherwise die without fight against dreaded disease unfortunately. All Oncologists in India whom I met tell me generic cancer drugs made by Indian companies like Natco Pharma and Cipla are as good & effective as their MNC counterparts absolutely at very small fraction of their costs.

I wish to sincerely request you to take it up with Government of India from your great nationalist patriotic Institution forum to allow Indian companies make generic drugs of these patented medicines especially for cancer which is life threatening dreaded disease which will make lacs of cancer patients like my son fight dreaded disease more comfortably and maybe possibly live long which otherwise most of these cancer patients in terminal stages will be forced to die without even fight against dreaded disease which they wish for their family and to serve our great country by living long.

Hoping to hear from you very eagerly and positively, Many thanks, I remain,

Yours sincerely,
(Dr. U. Y. Rege)

India on Top in Global Recession

Signs of an impending global recession grow by the day. Growth has been negative in Japan in the recent past. Growth rate is declining in Europe with Greece, Italy and Ireland nearing crisis. China too is faltering. The United States is on a high growth path but that only underscores the problems in rest of the developed world. Prosperity in the zamindar's household is not an indication of prosperity of the village.

Global economic growth was driven by technological innovations in the twentieth century—mostly in the US. The innovations of the automobile, missile launchers, jet airplane and the internet led to the creation of new areas of economic activities. The stream of new technologies did not keep up though and the US fell on hard times. It did not have new products that could be sold at high prices. Its share in the world economy has declined to about 25 percent today. The US economy slowed down in 2003-04. The US Central Bank “The Fed” loosened the purse strings and encouraged people to borrow to buy homes. The borrowers, however, were not able to repay the debt since the US companies were not able to ride on new technologies. The crisis of 2008 was triggered by this inability of the borrowers to repay the debt. This was followed by the Fed bringing in a series of stimulus packages. The US economy continued to grow on the basis of these artificially induced consumer demands. But income cannot be generated by printing notes. The underlying US economy remained weak. Now the Fed has started withdrawing the stimulus package. And, Lo! We have a global slowdown on our hands even though the US is on high growth path for the present. The underlying crisis that started in the late nineties has been pushed back by a decade or more but it is rearing its head again, and more vociferously.

Signs of an impending global recession grow by the day. Growth has been negative in Japan in the recent past. Growth rate is declining in Europe with Greece, Italy and Ireland nearing crisis. China too is faltering. Growth in the last hundred years has largely been propelled by technological innovations of motor car, nuclear power, jet airplanes, personal computer and the internet. The presently



Signs of an impending global recession grow by the day. Growth in the last hundred years has largely been propelled by technological innovations of motor car, nuclear power, jet airplanes, personal computer and the internet. The presently unfolding global crisis is due to the absence of new technological developments that would open up a new stream of economic activities, thinks Dr Bharat Jhunjunwala



unfolding global crisis is due to the absence of new technological developments that would open up a new stream of economic activities.

“Fracking” or production of shale oil is the new technology today. The United States is producing about five percent of global supply of oil from this source now. It has led to an increase in global supply of oil. But fracking has not generated a new stream of economic activity like the automobile. It has only led to increase in supply of oil in the global market. The US consumer has got no new job opportunities from shale oil. The US stock markets are buoyant because corporations are making profits but the common man is in trouble. The demand for imported goods from the US is down. China, Japan and the EU are facing the brunt of this. They are sliding into a slowdown just as the sinking ship pulls down small boats along with it. The price of oil has crashed from USD 100 to 60 in last six months because of this lack of demand from the US and China.

The spreading of global slowdown has got the foreign investors jittery. They want to come back to the safe haven of New York. Tapering of the stimulus in the US has led to increase in interest rates here and provided another incentive to bring back the money. Foreign Investors are selling in the weaker emerging markets and repatriating the monies back home; and they are staying away from “stronger” emerging markets like India despite positive outlook of the rating agencies.

The key features of the present scenario are exit of foreign investors from emerging markets and declining price of oil. These



***United States
is benefiting
from return of
foreign
investments.***

are impacting countries differently. The United States is benefiting from return of foreign investments and also increased availability of shale oil. It is therefore stable. China, European Union and Japan are in trouble because of slowing of exports to the US and exit of foreign investors. They are benefiting from the lower price of oil but this benefit is small in comparison to the loss of exports and capital to the US. Proof of this is the declining rate of growth in China and deepening crisis in Greece, Italy and Ireland. Russia, Venezuela, Iran and other oil exporting countries, needless to say, are on the receiving end. They are seeing their oil incomes evaporate into thin air and also helplessly watching foreign capital flee their shores.

The impact of this unfolding scenario on a country depends on two factors. Countries that are export- and foreign investment oriented stand to lose. Their exports to the US are dwindling and foreign investors are fleeing. Those that are importers of oil stand to gain. They get cheaper oil.

India is better placed than most major economies on both fronts. The share of exports in our economy, thanks to the resistance by the Left parties and Swadeshi Jagaran Manch, is less. Our dependence on foreign investment, de-

spite the best efforts of Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi, is also less. So the loss from dwindling exports and fleeing foreign investors will be less than China. The gains from cheaper oil, on the other hand, will be large. Therefore, India will be able to withstand the emerging crisis reasonable well. There will be immediate hiccups due to fleeing of foreign investors but these will die down soon. We may even gain. New opportunities will open in the BPO sector. Developed countries will turn to India to reduce their cost of production as they had done in the aftermath of the 2008 world crisis.

Modi must resist the foreign investment focus being pushed by his bureaucrats. He must look inwards both for investment and markets. India is a rich country that is supplying capital to the west. Modi must make it attractive for Indians to invest their money in India. He must also put in place policies to generate demand from his own people. Policies to redistribute incomes from the rich to the poor should be considered. Indian businesses should be encouraged to produce goods for consumption by the people of India instead of producing for consumption by people of America. Modi must “look inwards” to face the impending crisis. □□

Estimating the illicit funds in global tax Havens

The financial crisis of 2008 had an interesting collateral benefit for many emerging economies. Developed countries like Germany/France/USA etc. have begun to look at closely the illicit tax avoided funds kept by their citizens in various tax havens. This is because there was a clamour among their citizens about black money kept abroad by the rich when the economy was having major unemployment and recession etc.

As early as February 2008- German authorities have collected information about illegal money kept by citizens of various countries in the Lichtenstein bank and the German Finance Minister offered to provide the names to any Government interested in the list. The UPA1 (United Progressive Alliance) Government unfortunately did not act for many months and after much prodding by opposition, asked for the list in late 2008.

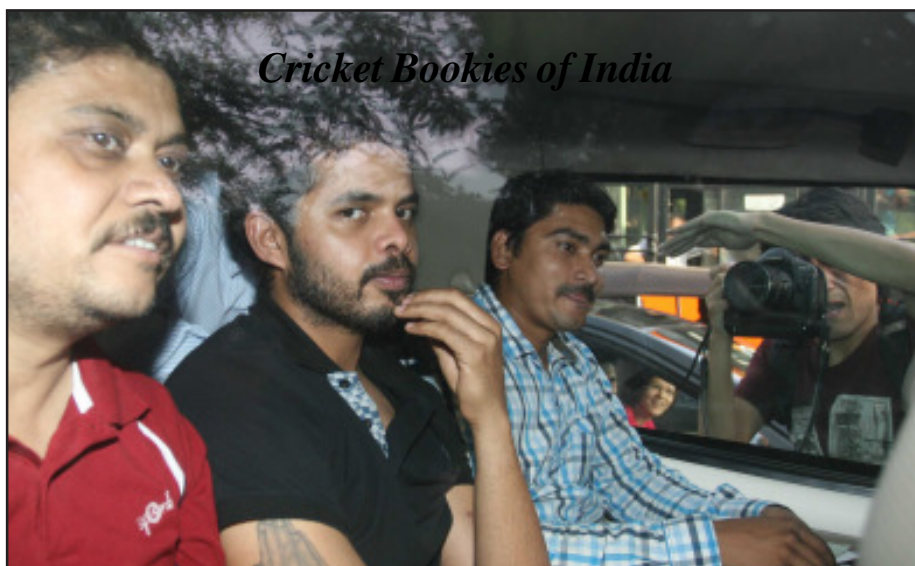
Germany's intelligence agency seems to have paid an unnamed informer more than \$6 million for confidential and secret data about clients of LGT group a bank owned by the Liechtenstein Prince's family. The revelations have already led to the resignation of the head of Deutsche Post which is currently the world's largest logistics company in the world. The Lichtenstein leaders were furious and have focused all their ire at the theft of the data rather than on the facts of the case. The German Government has announced that it would share information on accounts held in the tax haven with any Government that wanted it.

They had a list of 1400 clients of whom only 600 were Germans. The spokesman for the German Finance ministry Thorstein Albig had indicated [March 2008] that they would respond to requests without charging any fees for the information. Finland, Sweden, and Norway have got the data. This is perhaps the *first time* a sovereign Government stole data from a bank of a tax haven to



Measuring the size of the offshore economy is an exercise in night vision. It is hard to define it; it is fragmented and messy, and it is swathed in secrecy.

Official international efforts to measure the various aspects of the phenomenon have been inadequate, explains Prof. R. Vaidyanathan



expose tax evaders. There are in all more than 70 tax havens and we will elaborate on these later.

Similarly France purchased stolen data from HSBC (Hong Kong Shanghai Bank Corporation) Geneva branch. Additionally, US was waging a running battle with UBS (Union Bank of Switzerland) about the illicit funds kept by its citizens in the Swiss bank.

These illustrations show how the economic crisis of 2008 was a catalyst for going after tax havens by developed economies.

What is the Size of the problem globally?

The estimates pertain to total amount hoarded in these Tax havens on a global basis and that of Individual countries including India. Then there are estimates of India’s illicit money in Switzerland since that country has been a long time favorite of Indians.

Raghuram Rajan the governor of Reserve Bank of India observes that in reply to a question on how to stop people from parking money outside, “No one knows how much black money is stashed outside the country, as there are many speculations doing the rounds.”

As another measure to curtail generation of black money, Rajan said, “**We need to cut the black money at source and make it difficult for them to hide their ill-gotten wealth**”. [25-11-2014 Times of India]

He should know better but there are different types of estimates which are inferred and available about the nature of the problem. Of course by definition it is black money and so it will be difficult to have an exact estimate regarding the same.

Measuring the size of the off-



Estimate of the responsible financial bodies of the world has shocked the world.

shore economy is an exercise in night vision. It is hard to define it; it is fragmented and messy, and it is swathed in secrecy. Official international efforts to measure the various aspects of the phenomenon have been **inadequate**. We are concerned above with financial flows that are harmful and abusive, whether or not illegality is involved. So we are concerned with **tax avoidance**, for example, as well as with phenomena such as **tax competition**.

Mostly individual countries’ data is analyzed for “trade mispricing” as a major source of generation of illicit funds. This mechanism and implications we will discuss later.

Listed below are some of the Global estimates followed by other regional estimates.

Estimate of Global illicit funds
1. IMF estimates global black money

– excluding Switzerland, China, Taiwan and Oil exporting economies — at \$18 trillion; and that is still an underestimate, says IMF.

This estimate of the responsible financial bodies of the world has shocked the world. The extent of black and unsupervised financial economy in the world is now believed to be almost a third of the global GDP. [Cross–Border

Investment in small international Financial Centers by Philip R. Lane and Gian Maria Milesi-Ferretti – IMF working Paper -2010]

The study reports that there may be as much as \$18 trillion of foreign dollars parked in small international financial centers, which does not include Switzerland. This does not exhaust the world economies, particularly those economies, which generate lots of export and cash surplus. Leading, cash-rich economies such as China, Taiwan and many of the oil-exporting countries do not participate in the IMF’s survey. This is only for what are called Small International Financial Centers numbering 32.

[Andorra, Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, The Bahrain, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Gibraltar, Grenada, Guernsey, Isle of Man, Jersey, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Macao, China, Mauritius, Monaco, Montserrat, Nauru, Netherlands, Antilles, Palau, Panama, Samoa, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Turks and Caicos, Vanuatu, Virgin Islands (British)]

Gian Maria Milesi-Ferretti, an economist for the IMF in Washington, said statistical information on Luxembourg, one of the largest offshore financial centers in Europe, illustrated the extent of the

Analysis

problem. The economist said:

“Luxembourg is one of the few offshore centers that disclose detailed statistics on assets and liabilities held in the financial sector, which makes it invaluable to understand cross-border money flows.”

The latest available IMF figures show portfolio assets held by foreigners in Luxembourg to be worth \$1.5 trillion at the end of 2008. But looking at statistics provided by the Luxembourg Government on portfolio investment liabilities for the country – the mirror image of the asset information held by the IMF – there is a big discrepancy. The investment liabilities in Luxembourg were \$2.5 trillion – \$1 trillion (•726bn) more than the assets reported.

Milesi-Ferretti said, “This is a huge difference, almost 40%, and is unlikely to be entirely accounted for by the fact that some countries do not report their portfolio investments or their destination to the fund.”

Richard Murphy, the well-known Economist and accountant and founder of Tax Justice Network, commented:

“I admit I can’t resist the temptation to say that some of us

Date	Description
Dec. 11, 2013	Illicit Financial Flows from Developing Countries: 2001-2010 – Global Financial Integrity, Dec 2013. Estimating that the developing world lost from 2002 to 2011 developing countries lost US\$5.9 trillion to illicit outflows, and \$954 billion in 2011 alone.
May 22, 2013	Oxfam: At least \$18.5 trillion is hidden by wealthy individuals in tax havens worldwide. Original here.
Feb. 25, 2013	Gabriel Zucman: the Missing Wealth of Nations Estimates that 8% of the global financial wealth of households is in tax havens, 75% of which is unrecorded. (This ‘unrecorded’ relates to information available to cross-border statistical analysis, rather than to tax authorities.)
July 2012	The Price of Offshore Revisited. TJN’s in-depth and unprecedented study into the size of the offshore system. Main report here. Also see: Appendix 1: The pre-history of offshore estimates Appendix 2: Explaining Capital Flight Appendix 3: Details. Part 1 (large file); Part 2 (large file) TJN responds to attack on estimates by Jersey Finance, June 2014.
July 2012	Inequality: You don’t know the half of it: TJN’s assessment of why inequality is much worse than we think, because of offshore secrecy.
Nov. 2011	A Tax Research briefing paper on the \$3.1 trillion annual costs of tax evasion worldwide. With country by country breakdown. Original here.
March 2010	New IMF research showing huge discrepancies between portfolio assets and liabilities in selected offshore centres. For instance Luxembourg reports portfolio assets of US\$1.5 trillion at end-2008 versus portfolio investment liabilities at US\$2.5 trillion. The Cayman Islands reports a \$750 billion: \$2.2 trillion assets-liability split. Click here for more.
Feb. 2010	Global Financial Integrity estimate that developing countries lose \$98 – \$106 billion each year due solely to re-invoicing.
May 2008	Death and taxes: the true toll of tax dodging,” Christian Aid. Calculating that nearly 1,000 children die every day just from tax evasion.



have been saying this for a long time. The Tax Justice Network wrote on this in 2005, suggesting there were £11.5 trillion of assets offshore. Time and again this has been attacked by organizations that should have known better and by academics with a right wing axe to grind. But now, like so much else I and others have argued, it is being validated. And the issue itself, once dismissed as inconsequential is now being considered seriously.

The IMF’s \$18 trillion number dramatically exceeds previous

studies, and even it acknowledges that it probably underestimates the amount of money floating around in tax havens.”

2. Christian Aid/ Oxfam estimates

Christian Aid’s False Profits: robbing the poor to keep the rich tax-free estimates that between 2005 and 2007, the total amount of capital flow from bilateral trade mis-pricing into the EU and the US alone from non-EU countries is estimated conservatively at more than US\$1.1 trillion (£581.4 billion, •850.1 billion)-Update: March 2009.

Oxfam estimates that developing countries miss out on up to \$124 billion every year in lost income from offshore assets held in tax havens.—Update: March 2009

Source: <http://www.taxjustice.net/2013/10/08/illlicit-capital-flows-and-the-offshore-economy/>

3. Tax Justice Network (TJN) Estimate

According to “Price of offshore revisited” which is thought to be the most detailed and rigorous study ever made of financial assets held in offshore financial centers & secrecy structures —

Global super rich has at least \$21 trillion hidden in secret tax havens. At least \$21 trillion of unreported private financial wealth was owned by wealthy individuals via tax havens at the end of 2010.

This sum is equivalent to the size of the United States and Japanese economies combined.

There may be as much as \$32 trillion of hidden financial assets held offshore by high net worth individuals (HNWIs), according to this Report. We consider these numbers to be conservative.

This is only financial wealth

Date	Description
May 29, 2013	Illicit Financial Flows from Africa, 1980-2009. Global Financial Integrity. Between 1980 and 2009, the economies of Africa lost between US\$597 billion and US\$1.4 trillion in net resource transfers away from the continent. Original here.
May 24, 2013	Action aid: Almost half of all investment into developing countries goes through tax havens. Original here.
October 2012	Over \$800 billion drained from Sub Saharan Africa. Original here.
October 2012	Over \$450 billion drained from North Africa.
March 2009	False Profits: robbing the poor to keep the rich tax-free, Christian Aid. Between 2005 and 2007, total capital flow from bilateral trade mispricing into the EU and the US alone from non-EU countries is more than US\$1.1 tn (£581.4 bn, •850.1 bn).
May 2008	Death and Taxes: the true toll of tax dodging, Christian Aid. Estimates corporate tax losses to the developing world at US\$160bn a year (£80bn), more than one-and-a-half times the combined aid budgets of the whole rich world.

and excludes a welter of real estates, yachts and other non-financial assets owned via offshore structures.

Other Global estimates

The table -1 below shows estimates of Global Black money compiled from various sources over a period of 5 years...

Regional estimates

The table-2 below shows estimates of Black money compiled from various sources in specific regions over a period of 5 years...

World Bank Says: In a Speech by **World Bank Managing Director and COO Sri Mulyani Indrawati at Event on Tax Evasion and Development Finance** World Bank Managing Director and COO Sri Mulyani Indrawati Washington, D.C., United States April 17, 2015 – says.

UNCTAD estimates that more than 60 percent of global trade occurs within multinational groups. That creates the potential for failing to declare profits and to shift profits from high-tax to

low-tax jurisdictions. This is often done through illegal tax evasion.

But sometimes it is also done through legal forms of tax avoidance and manipulation – including trade and transfer mispricing; dubious payments between parent companies and their subsidiaries; and profit-shifting mechanisms designed to hide revenues.

A recent UNCTAD study indicates that about \$100 billion in annual tax revenue is lost to developing countries in transactions directly linked to offshore hubs. The total “development finance” loss – counting both revenue and reinvested earnings – is estimated in the range of \$250 to \$300 billion. This prevents developing countries from stopping the outflow of money – which thus bleeds them of essential resources.

This brings us to the larger issue of tax cheating by corporate giants and also annual loss to many jurisdictions. This issue we will be looking at in the next few articles along with the issue of individual countries like India. □□

The List of Swadeshi-Videshi Commodities

Product Name	Swadeshi Product - Use
Bath Soaps	Sintoor, Nirma, Savstik, Maisoor Sandal, Vipro-Sikakai, Madimix, Ganga, Synthol & Home Products etc.
Deterzen Soaps	Nirma, Aankto, Vimal, Hepolin, T-Series, Dait, Fena, Ujala, Shudh, EG, Ghadi, Gentle, Manjula and Home Products etc.
Beauty Products	Tips & Toj, Shrangar, Synthol, Santoor, Emami, Boroplus, Tulsi, Viko, Termaric, Arnika, Hair and Caire, Hemani, Perashoot, Faim, Kedila, Sipla, Dabar, Franki, Efka, khandelwal, Torant Farma, Unicum, Jhandu Farma, Himalya, Maharishi Ayurved, Balsara, J.K. Dabur, Jhandoo, Sandoo, Vaidhnath, Himalya, Bhaskar, Borolin, Bajaj Sevashram, Kokoraj, Move, Creck Cream, Park Avenue and Home Products etc.
Toothpaste	Babool, Promise, Viko, Ankar, Dabar, Misvak, Ajay, Harbodent, Ajanta, Garwary, Brush, Clasical, Egle, Bandarchhap, Vaidhnath, Emami and Home Products etc.
Shaving Cream/ Eraser	Godrej, Emami, Super, Super-Maix, Ashok, V-Zon, Topaz, Premium, Park Avenue, Lazer, Vidhut, J.K. and other Home Products etc.
Bisket, Chocklete Milk's Products	Nutrin, Shangrila, Champion, Ampro, Parle, Sathe, Bekman, Priya-Gold, Monaco, Krackjack, Gits, Shalimar, Pairy, Rawalgaun, Clasical, Amul, Nutramul, Vijaya, Indana, Syfal, Asian, Verka, Madhu, Mahan, Gopi, Himghi, Vita & other Home Products etc.
Tea, Coffee	Girnar, Tata-Tea, Asam-Tea, Society, Dankan, Brahmputra, Tej, Tata Cafey, Tata-Tatli and other Home Products etc.
Cold Drink	Guruji, Oanjus, Jampin, Nero, Pingo, Fruity, Aswad, Dabur, Mala, Rajars, Besleri, Rasna, Humdard, Mepro, Rainbo, Culvart, Cetemblika, Ruhafja, Jai Gajanan, Haldiran, Gokul, Bikaner, Vekfield, Noga, Priya, Ashok, Mothers Resapi, Uma, H.P.M.C Product, Him & other Home Products etc.
Ice-Cream	Amul, Himalya, Nirula, Mother Dairy, Vinde, Verka and other Home Products etc.
Food Oil, Food Products	Maruti, Postmen, Dhara, Rokat, Ginne, Swikar, Kornela, Rath, Mohan, Umang, Vijaya, Span, Perashut, Ashok, Sphola, Kohinoor, Madhur, Engine, Gagan, Amrit, Vanaspati, Ramdev, MDH, Avrest, Bedakar, Sahkar, Lijit, Ganesh, Shaktibhog Aata, Tata Salt and other Home Products etc.
Electrical Product, Home Use Product/ Watch	Videocon, BPL, Onida, Slora, ET&T, T-Series, Nelco, Westen, Uptron, Keltron, Kosmic, TVS, Godrej, Crawn, Bajaj, Usha, Polar, Ankar, Surya, Orient, Sinny, Tullu, Crompton, Lyads, Blu Star, Wholtas, Cool Home, Khaitan, Eveready, Jeep, Novino, Nirlep, Elight, Jaico, Titan, Ajanta, HMT, Maxima, Alvin Ghadi, Bengal, Maisure, Hawkins, Prestige, Pressure Kukar and other Home Products etc.
Write's Product	Giflo, Wilson, Kaimlin, Rehwlan, Rotomac, Cello, Estic, Chandra, Montex, Camel, Bittu, Plato, Triveni, Flora, Apsra, Natraj, Hindustan, Lotus, Cammy, Link and other Home Products etc.
Shoes, Chappal, Bootpolice	Lakhani, Liberty Standard, Action, Paragon, Flash, Crona, Welcome, Rexona, Lotus, Red-Tep, Phenix, Vayking, Billi, Karnoba, Kiwi Shoe Polish and other Home Products etc.
Readyment Cloths	Peter England, Hawan Husan, Lui Philip, Colourplus, Alen Sali, Maphatlal, Trende, Cambriz, Duple Wool, Jhodiak, Arvind Denim, Don, Prolin, TT, Lux, Amul, VIP, , Rupa, Raymond, Park, Avenue, Altime, Newport, Killer, Fling Machine, Dux, Kolkata, Ludhiana and Tripura

The List of Swadeshi-Videshi Commodities

Product Name	Videshi Product - Not to be Used
Bath Soaps	Lux, Liril, Lifebuoy, Piyers, Rexona, Humam, Jai, Moti, Caime, Dev, Ponds, Pamolive, Jonson, Clearcil, Detol, Lesansi, Jesmin, Gostmist, Lakmay, Amway, Kwantum, Margo.
Deterzen Soaps	Sunlight, Wheel, Ariel, Check, Duble, Trilo, 501, OK, Key, Rebail, Amway, Kwantum, Serf, Excel, Rin, Vimbar, Robin Blue and other products of Hindustan Liver Ltd.
Beauty Products	Johnson, Ponds, Old Spice, Clearcil, Brilcream, Fair & Lovely, Velvet, Medicaire, Lavender, Nicil, Shawar to Shawar, Kyutikura, Liril, Lakmay, Dainem, Organix, Painten, Roots, Head & Sholder, Amway, Kwantum, Clinic, Nihar, Coco Caire, Gluxo, Newwrights.
Toothpaste	Colget, Siwaka, Closeup, Pepsodent, Segnal, Maclins, Prodent, Amway, Kwantum, Akwa Fresh, Neem, Oral-B, Forhuns.
Shaving Cream/ Eraser	Pumolive, Old Spices, Niviya, Ponds, Playtinum, Zelet, Seven-O-Clock, Vilmen, Viltage, Erasmic, Swis, Lukmay, Danim.
Bisket, Chocklete Milk's Products	Britania-Good day, Tiger, Marry, Neslay, Kedvary, Bornvita, Horlix, Boost, Milkmade, Kissan, Maigi, Phairex, Anixpray, Complaign, Kitket, Charge, Eklayer, Modern Bred, Britenia Bread, Maltoa, Hiwa, Mylo.
Tea, Coffee	Bruck Brand, Tajmahal, Red-Level, Daymond, Lipton, Green Level, Tiger, Nescafe, Neslay, Delka, bru, Sunrise, three flowers.
Cold Drink	Layer, Pepsi, 7-up, Mirenda, Team, Coca-Cola, Mecdowel, Magola, Goldsport, Limca, Citra, Tumps-up, Sprit, Dux, Fenta, Kedvery, Kenda dry, cresh.
Ice-Cream	Kedvery, Dalop, Nice, Product's Brook Brand, Quality Wals, Baskin-Robins, Yanki-dudals, Carnetto.
Food Oil, Food Products	Dalta, Cristal, Lipton, Anpurna Salt, Aata and Chapati, Magi, Kisan, Tarla, Brook-Brand, Pilsbari Aata, Capton Cock Salt and Aata, Modern Chapati, Kargil Aata.
Electrical Product, Home Use Product/ Watch	GIC, Philips, Sony, TDK, Nippo, National-Penosonic, Sharp, GE, Whoolphool, Samsung, Devu, Toshiba, LG, Hitachi, Thamson, Electrolux, Aky, Sansui, Kenwood, Awa, Alwin Freeze, Career, Konka, taperwayer, Japan Life, Omega, Timex, Rado.
Write's Product	Parker, Paylet, windser-nutton, feber-caicel, lugzer, vik, mat-black, Koras, As, Rotring.
Shoes, Chappal, Bootpolic	Bata, Fluma, Power, Chairy-blasm, Aadidas, Rebok, Nike, Lekoooper, Gaisolen.
Readyment Cloths	All product of Lee, Berlington, Aro, Lacost, Sonphisco, Levis, Paipe Jins, Renglar, Benaton, Red & Tayler, Boyford.

This List is published on demand from the Readers.

Indians, too, can make in India

It is now more than eleven months since Narendra Modi took over as Prime Minister. Though many flagship programmes such as Jandhan Yojna, Swachata Abhiyan and many others have been implemented and are being appreciated, the economy is yet to experience a turnaround. Inflation is now getting calmed a bit, thanks to the easing of global crude prices and efforts of the government. Though automobile sector shows some revival, the country is yet to come out of manufacturing stagnation, after nose diving to -0.7 per cent in 2013-14.

It is ironical that condition of poor does not show any noticeable improvement, despite high rate of GDP growth. It is notable that per capita income has been showing significant upward trend in the last 25 years, with rising GDP growth. GDP grew at an average rate of nearly 8 per cent in the last two Five Year Plans; however, we find that nearly 30 per cent population is still reeling under poverty. For improving the condition of the poor, it is essential that they are made part of the development process. Financial inclusion in this regard could be an important tool. Jandhan Yojna may prove to be a milestone but for real financial inclusion we have to go miles ahead. Education, skill formation, health, promotion of SSIs, artisans and cottage industry could provide suitable employment and respectable living for the poor and deprived.

Nobody can deny the importance of policy reforms to make conditions for development better. However, contents and direction of reform need debate. It is unfortunate that reforms so far have been based on a set of policy suggestions made by international financial institutions like IBRD (World Bank), International Monetary Fund etc., what John Williamson termed as the Washington Consensus. These so called 'reforms' included a set of policy measures for opening up boundaries for foreign goods, services and capital by removing tariff, non-tariff and institutional barriers, changing intellectual property regime etc. to facilitate foreign companies even if they were contrary to the interests of Indian economy and



Need of the hour is to ensure that ease of doing business for domestic entrepreneurs is improved and to build their competitiveness, so that such businesses, especially the smaller ones, thrive. Starting a business should be made easier, pleads
Ashwani Mahajan



people. For instance, the new intellectual property regime was harming public health and opening up of imports was harming the interests of SSIs. It is notable that there was no consensus about these so called reforms.

India has never got good ranking in terms of ease of doing business. It is generally believed that India is not a good destination due to unfriendly business environment. According to World Bank rankings, India stands at 142nd position out of 189 countries on this count. A close perusal of the World Bank report shows that India stands at 158th position in terms of ease of getting permission to start business, 184th in terms of getting permission for construction, 137th for ease of getting electricity and 121st regarding registration of property. With regard to international trade, the report says that we are at the 126th position. About ease of enforcing contract, perhaps we are the worst at the 186th position. Thanks to our banking institutional development, we are better placed at 26th position regarding credit, while we are much better in terms of protecting interests of minorities, at the 7th position.

With such inconveniences, how can we strive for economic development of the country? Our nation is known for its abundance of natural resources and our banks also have overflowing funds. Adverse environment of business, which is vitiating due to our institutional drawbacks, has been making us uncompetitive. It is unfortunate that in the last more than 23 years, despite talk about economic reforms, all efforts have been to open up imports, allowing and raising FDI cap in different sectors,



Our small scale sector still faces the menace of inspector raj.

tax concessions or changing of rules to facilitate foreign investors, even if it is for being lenient towards their tax evasion activities, through illegal methods of transfer pricing or routing their funds through tax havens. Even after 67 years of independence there was hardly any talk, and no effort to end the inconveniences to do business, as reflected by the fact that we are still lagging at 142nd position in this regard.

It is notable that our small scale sector still faces the menace of inspector raj, difficulties of getting credit, labour law issues and unmanageable web of laws, despite its huge contribution to national economy. However, no effort is being made to end the sector's miseries.

Whether it is policy announcements, international agreements or the budget, all the efforts of the government(s) are concentrated on how to make international trade, especially, imports of goods easy, making foreign business interests happy, even if they are at the cost of the exchequer. A classic example is that making of GAAR (General Anti Avoidance Rules), by the then Finance Minister was considered to be a retrograde step, because they were made to discourage tax evasion by foreign com-

panies. Delaying implementation of GAAR was considered as a progressive step.

To facilitate the provision of land for the business houses by amending the recent Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (LARR) Act 2013, even at the cost of farmers is also being propagated as an economic reform. Recently concluded WTO Agreement on trade facilitation is yet another example of how the international trade agreements are not for facilitating the domestic sector, but for facilitating foreigners to do business.

Need of the hour is to ensure that ease of doing business for domestic entrepreneurs is improved and to build their competitiveness, so that such businesses, especially the smaller ones, thrive. Starting a business should be made easier. Ease of registration of property, ease of starting construction, ease of getting electricity connection, ease of implementing contract etc. are essential for this sector. Indians who have proven their worth in terms of entrepreneurship, brains, skills, hardworking and devotion world over can excel in their own country also. Then there would be no need to invite foreigners saying 'come and make in India'. □□

Consciously kept poor farmers burdened to provide cheaper food to you & me.

New Delhi is in a state of shock. A 41-year-old farmer Gajendra Singh from Dausa in Rajasthan has brought farmer suicides right to its door steps. What was earlier a distant problem, far away from the seat of political power, is now staring at them in a discomfoting close-up. So much so that even Prime Minister Narendra Modi was forced to acknowledge that he is shattered and disappointed, and in a subsequent tweet wrote: “At no point must the hardworking farmer think he is alone. We are all together in creating a better tomorrow for the farmers of India.”

In the past 6 weeks, in the aftermath of unseasonal rains, a little over 150 farmers have taken to gallows in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and in Maharashtra. While all these suicides were tragic and should have shaken up the administration, but I didn't see the kind of shock and awe that we see now for any of those farmer suicides that happened outside New Delhi. In fact, all out efforts by State Governments are to deny that these farmers had even committed suicide because of a lingering crisis on the farming front.

While the politicians are battling it out in and outside parliament, blaming the other party for ignoring the farmers, the fact remains that both the major political parties have blood on their hands. Farmer suicides are not a recent phenomenon. In the past 20 years, almost 3 lakh farmers have committed suicide. On an average about 14 to 15,000 farmers are taking their own lives in a year, with two farmers dying every hour. Those who were committing suicide, and it does require tremendous courage to take your own life, were actually trying to make a political statement with their death. They failed to shake up the callous and insensitive system even by their death.



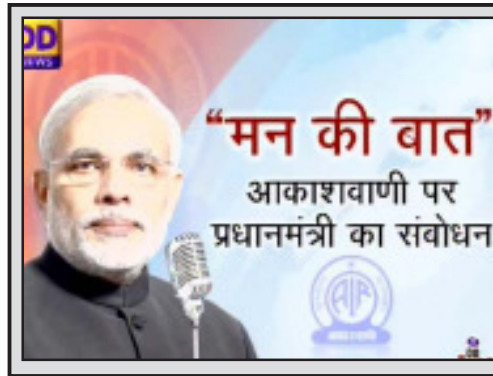
While the politicians are battling it out in and outside Parliament, blaming the other party for ignoring the farmers, the fact remains that both the major political parties have blood on their hands, tells
Dr. Devinder Sharma



Soon after Gajendra Singh hanged himself at Jantar Mantar I find the TV channels have swung into action re-enacting scenes from the film Peepli Live. They are in Gajendra Singh's village in Rajasthan, talking to each and sundry and telling us why he preferred to wear a particular kind of colourful pagri and so on. Every channel is now holding panel discussions calling spokespersons from different political parties who simply are using the media platform to say how white his shirt is by listing the number of steps taken to help farmers. There is hardly an effort to make a serious attempt to track down the fundamental reasons behind this serial death dance. I am getting calls from newspapers who are asking me which areas their reporters should go to. A new face, a new name but the story will remain the same.

If I were to point to the primary and the most significant reason behind the continuing farmer suicides over the past two decades, I would narrow it down to the declining farm incomes. The 2014 report of the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) tells us that the average monthly income that a farm family derives from farming activities is a paltry Rs 3,078. To make the ends meet, a farm family has to work in some other non-agricultural activities, including MNREGA. That makes for an average of Rs 6,000 per family per month. No wonder, 58 per cent farmers go to bed hungry, and 76 per cent want to quit agriculture if given a choice.

To look deeper, a colleague has meticulously done a comparative analysis. In 1970, the minimum support price for wheat was Rs 76



A new face, a new name but the story will remain the same.

per quintal. Forty five years later, in 2015, wheat procurement price is Rs 1450 per quintal. In other words, in 45 years, wheat price has been raised by approximately 19 times. Let's compare this increase in wheat prices for farmers with the increase in salaries for different sections. The average salary of central government employees has risen by 110 to 120 times; of school teachers by 280 to 320 times; of college/university teachers by 150 to 170 times; and of mid to high class corporate sector employees by 350 to 1000 times. In the same period, school fees have increased by 200 to 300 times; medical treatment cost has gone up again by 200 to 300 per cent; and average house rent in cities has risen by 350 times.

Farmer therefore is being made to pay the penalty for keeping food prices low. This year also, the wheat price has been raised by Rs 50 per quintal only so as to keep food inflation under control. Similarly, rice price for farmer has been raised also by Rs 50 per quintal. This increase comes to a paltry 3.2 per cent. Meanwhile the government employees have got a second installment of DA, a jump of 6 per cent. The employees will soon get the 7th Pay Commission where the salary of the lowest employee – a chaprasi – is being demanded

at Rs 26,000 per month.

If I were to go by the lowest rate of salary increase seen in the past 45 years, the wheat price for a farmer should have been raised by 100 times. This means, against Rs 1450 per quintal now, what farmers should have legitimately been paid should be 100 times of Rs 76 per quintal that he was given in 1970. This comes to Rs 7,600 per quintal. That is his due whether we like it or not. Now don't get panicky. I do not want food inflation to go through the roof. All I am suggesting is that instead of putting the entire burden on the poor farmer, the way out should be to pay farmer a higher price and then subsidise the produce for the consumers. It is done in Japan, and it's also done in other rich countries.

Unless the farm incomes are raised significantly, I don't see anything working in favour of a farmer. To say that farmers need to raise crop productivity and utilize every drop of water is simply a way to sell newer technologies. Neither will loading farmers with more credit help them to be out of the debt trap. A farmer does not need credit, he needs income. We have deliberately deprived him of a reasonably good income over the years. Successive governments have deliberately kept him poor. □□

FTP may boost trade, manufacturing if consumer is protected

It is not mere coincidence. Two major events happened together. India's shining landmark Rourkela steel plant's capacity doubling inauguration by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and unveiling of the new foreign trade policy (FTP) 2015-20 by minister of state for commerce Nirmala Sitharaman. They are separate events but look for the same goal – taking the country to new heights, ushering in better economic health and well-being of the citizens.

Indeed the two major events are supplementary to each other. The steel plant signifies India's resolve for being a global manufacturing leader and the foreign trade policy having a larger chunk of the global trade. Steel was the foundation in 1950s and still remains that.

The FTP creates the facilitation process for the ease of business. It provides a framework for increasing exports of goods and services as well as generation of employment and increasing value addition. The focus is to support both the manufacturing and services.

The crucial high is commoditization of yoga as a service export to fulfil the dream of Modi. Yes, now yoga that has earning the country fame would also be a part of a trade policy for earning dollars. It also makes it eligible for tax relief and liable for paying taxes.

The FTP aims at doubling exports to \$ 900 billion from \$ 466 billion in 2013-14. In the 2014-15, it moderated to \$ 265 billion. The aim is for an annual 3.5 per cent of the global trade. At present it is around 2 per cent. Sitharaman says she would focus on addressing constraints within the country, including weak infrastructure and bureaucratic hurdles and turn India into a major player in the global trade sweepstakes.

The country hopes the next four years of Modi government would ensure removal of the major hurdles like ambiguous tax and toll laws, complex rules, land problems, energy shortages, better dialogue between the states and the centre that have kept away large-scale private investments.



Exports should be allowed to grow, but can't be part of a larger strategy particularly as the western markets are crumbling and other markets have stiff competition. Gradually the policy has to change from export-orientation to a domestically consumption-oriented industry, cautions Shivaji Sarkar



The FTP introduces two new schemes “Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS)” for export of specified goods to specified markets and “Services Exports from India Scheme (SEIS)” for increasing exports of notified services, in place of a plethora of schemes earlier, with different conditions for eligibility and usage. There would be no conditionality attached to any scrip issued under these schemes. Duty credit scrip issued under MEIS and SEIS and the goods imported against these fully transferable scrip.

It is good that the policy now instead of being reviewed annually would be reviewed every 30 months to provide continuity in rules and policy.

While we earn through exports, we can only feed some 5,000 people but that does not secure India’s future. However, if we can process our mineral resources through value addition and sell it abroad we can increase our financial resources. The country’s youth should get an opportunity to work in manufacturing and banks should facilitate funding”, Modi said at Rourkela steel plant.

That is the crux. Now international agencies like the UN and ESCAP say export-dependent economies have limitation in growth. So while exports should be allowed to grow, it may not be prudent to orient the entire development and growth to be hinged to exports. Exports as in the past could not be part of a larger strategy particularly as the western markets are crumbling and other markets have stiff competition. If exports can be actually doubled in five years it should be considered a gain.

Exports cannot form a very

large part of the economy unless India manufactures hi-tech exotic quality goods. The “make in India” with large defence and similar other manufacturing aims for it. It is not likely to happen in the next five years. At best there could be a small beginning.

Over two decades of policy vacuum, lack of vision and import centric growth has caused many problems. The market itself has convoluted. The country’s international image has taken a hit. It is neither a manufacturer’s nor an investor’s dream destination. Changing the perception is the greatest problem of the Modi government. The 2014-15 Economic Survey is eloquent about it. It notes that the external sector has turned moderate, imports fell and domestic activity remained weak.

The new FTP has announced measures to nudge procurement of capital goods from indigenous manufacturers under the EPCG scheme by reducing specific export obligation to 75 per cent of the normal export obligation. This will promote the domestic capital goods manufacturing industry. Such flexibilities will help exporters to develop their productive capacities for both local and global consumption.

At the same time e-commerce exports of handloom products, books/periodicals, leather footwear, toys and customized fashion garments through courier or foreign post office would also be able to get benefit of MEIS (for values upto Rs 25,000). These measures would not only capitalize on India’s strength in these areas and increase exports but also provide employment. It is a step towards tailoring exports to indigenous

manufacturing efforts.

In a way this takes care of prime minister’s Rourkela mission that increases steel production capacity – an essential for the proposed “make in India”.

The government has to be careful. It is not a bed of roses for it. Its officials and unethical business are the biggest problems. Gradually it has to change the policy from export-orientation to a domestically consumption-oriented industry. It requires many innovations.

As a first inviting foreign manufacturers to set up their shops may be fine. In the long run that is not the solution. Many of the production houses like Samsung, LG, IFB and even Videocon have anti-consumer policies. This is turning a large chunk of Indian consumers against these immoral companies. For a small spare part worth Rs 50, they charge beyond Rs 1000, because they force the consumers to get it fixed by their own men – a forced service. For each such extortion moving to consumer court is an uphill task.

The manufacturing can grow but there has to be standardization and easy availability of spares to the poor Indian consumers. That has to be part of the manufacturing policy. It is now 11 months of this government. It has to come out of quandary. The manufacturing would grow on two counts. The people have to have employment and purchasing power. They also need a business that would not fleece them.

If the government can ensure the twin objectives, the country can take a leap forward. Allowing manufacturing ignoring the needs of the consumers is not a solution be it domestic or foreign. □□

India-China Border talks: An Analysis



The relationship between India and China has seen significant downturns in past five decades. From the early ‘warmth of relation’ in 1950s with India’s recognition to communist state of China towards signing of ‘Panchsheel’ in 1954 reflecting ‘five principles of peaceful coexistence’, the mutual relationship took downturn with violent border dispute in 1962. The remained ‘hostilities’ in bilateral relations survived the next two decades till ‘policy of re-approachment’ in late 1980s paid off to add some positives in bilateral set off relations. In all these

years ‘border dispute’ and ‘lack of clarification on boundary’ has led to the hostage of other key areas of bilateral cooperation.

On the issue of border dispute the significant breakthrough was achieved during the visit of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to China in June 2003. When leaders of both the states emphasized the categorical need to deepen economic, trade and strategic ties, and also to explore a feasible framework for an early settlement of border question. The visit contributed further enhancement of mutual relation. During this visit nine agreements were signed with China. Of these, the most important related to border trade through Sikkim, simplifying visa procedure to promote mutual trade, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on legal matters, to opening the Centre for Indian Studies in Beijing University and enhancing mutual cultural exchanges.

The Vajpayee’s visit to China in 2003 led to the agreement on appointing special representatives (SR) for talks on border dispute. The visit marked a necessary shift in bilateral relation in a global era infusing ‘lost dynamism’ in bilateral relations. It was emphasized that SR level talks will follow a three stage process towards the resolution of border dispute.

The SR level talks were devised on ‘three stage formula’ to resolve the border dispute between India and China. The first stage was to ensure agreement on ‘guiding principles’ for discussion on border dispute, followed by consensus on ‘framework for boundary settlement’. It then could pave the way for resolution of complex border dispute. In this context, there are three key issues related to ongoing border talks.

Firstly, the key breakthrough was achieved in 2005 when during the visit of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao to India in April, 2005 both the states agreed to have achieved the “Agreement on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the settlement of India-China Boundary Question”. The Chinese Premier clarified that China regarded Sikkim as an ‘inalienable part of India’, and that



*China has not sincerely addressed Indian concern on market access constraints and non-tariff barriers. As the rising trade deficit becoming another thaw in mutual relation between India and China, it necessitates much desired clarity and progress on border dispute in future, believes *Abhishek Pratap Singh*

Sikkim was no longer an issue in India-China relations. However, the ‘snails pace of growth’ on border talks has been a story in the coming years of interaction. With almost no progress in a decade to work out framework of border settlement these talks reflect a sense for ‘public consumption’ and a measure of confidence building between India and China.

Secondly, speculation has been high if anything like ‘out of box solution’ has been sealed in the recent 18th round of SR talks between both the states. Sushma Swaraj, during her visit to China in February 2015 claimed that the strong leaders from the two countries are “keen on an out-of-box solution.” However, while Chinese Ambassador to India Le Yucheng said the talks would be “a new start” in bilateral relations, it fall short of anything concrete and was

directed towards preparatory agenda for Modi’s visit to China in May, 2015.

Thirdly, while leaders from both the sides have stated that clarification of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) would greatly contribute to our efforts to maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas. The same has not been the case so far as Chinese incursions in April, 2013 and more recent of September, 2014 during president Xi Jinping’s visit has largely overshadowed the outcomes of visit. The establishment of Border Defence Cooperation Agreement (BDCA) in 2013 could not pay-off much, as on average there have been consistent Chinese incursion and further consolidation in border areas. Thus, border talks fall short of any ‘concrete outcomes’ and looking beyond the traditional frame.

The recent news reports about growing trade deficit between India and China and assuming to rise upto \$60 billion in the next two years remains another key concern in bilateral relations. China has not sincerely addressed Indian concern on constrained market access constraints and non-tariff barriers. In this scenario, if anything tangible would be achieved on border dispute, it will make a ‘monumental contribution’ for bilateral relations. As the rising trade deficit becoming another thaw in mutual relation between India and China, it necessitates much needed clarity and progress on border dispute in future. Or else, as one of the official ones said, “Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed” would form a bloomy picture of bilateral relation with China. □□

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A historical Overview of Various Samvatsaras



“Time never marks its beginning with a thunderstorm” this quotation of Thomas Mann does very well predicate the lack of concepts of the beginning of time in western world which often termed as Epoch, Era in historical parlance Whereas in *Bharatvarsha*, numerous eras have been in practice since Vedic period. The most ancient eras like; **Brahma-Samvat**, **Srishti-Samvat**, **Kartikeya Samvat** etc are purely the concept of prodigious Indian mind and no such era is being mentioned in any other civilization. Such concepts not only emphatically

establish the antiquity of Aryan or Indian civilization but also indicate its height of advancement in academic, social and political perspective. That's why **Manu** elatedly said that:

एतद्देशप्रसूतस्य सकाशादग्रजन्मनः स्वं स्वं चरित्रां शिक्षेरन् पृथिव्यां सर्वमानवाः।—(मनुस्मृति)

It means, all other civilizations across the globe were being guided or enlighten by this country (*Bharatvarsha*) itself.

As mentioned before, several *Samvatsaras* or Eras described in Vedic and Pauranic scriptures were being practiced in India and being followed by other cultures with subtle changes according to their suitability. Before defining several *Samvatsaras* its concept must be understood first.



In Bharatvarsha, numerous eras have been in practice since Vedic period. The most ancient eras like; Brahma-Samvat, Srishti-Samvat, Kartikeya Samvat etc are purely the concept of prodigious Indian mind and no such era is being mentioned in any other civilization, asserts

Dr. Shyam deo Mishra

Samvatsar:

‘सम्यक् वसन्ति ऋतवः यस्मिन् स सम्वत्सरः’ with this derivation, *Samvatsar* is a period or term in which all six seasons come under once. Hence, it can also be called as year or *Varsha*. The word *Varsha* or *Sharad* clearly manifests its relation with *Ritu* (such as ‘*Varsha*’ & ‘*Sharad*’) or season.

Aitrey Brahmana defines the *Samvatsar*:

‘त्रीणि वै शतानि षष्टिश्च संवत्सरस्याहानि सप्त च वै शतानि विंशतिश्च सम्वत्सरस्याहोरात्रायः’—(ऐ. ब्रा. 7 / 17)

It means, there are 360 *Abaani* (24 hours) or 720 *Aboraatras* (days & nights) in a year (*Samvatsar*).

Synonyms of *Samvatsar* are *Samvat*, *Vatsara*, *Varsha*, *Haayan*, *Shaka*, *Sharad*, *San* etc. Each synonym ensconces different meaning, form and usage of *Samvatsara* in it.

‘*Sam vat sarati*’ is another derivation of *Samvatsar* which means all move accordingly and simultaneously from a particular point. Thus all our activities financial year, academic session, festivals etc move along from *Samvatsara*. Thus it also means ‘a series of sequential years’ that started from a phenomenon like **Yudhishtir Samvat**, **Kali Samvat**, **Vikram Samvat** etc. There must be a social, sacral, gracious

or political cause behind the commencement of any *Samvatsara*. Several sacrifices (*Shraut & Smaart Yaag*) like 'Agraayaneshti', 'Navaaneshti' 'Chaaturmaasya' etc tended to start at the beginning of *Samvatsar*. Whenever a king wanted to introduce a new *Samvat* or era he had to amortize all the debts of his subject. This uniqueness of introducing a new *Samvat* makes Indian civilization more sublime than rest of the world. A brief historical introduction of some of the *Samvatsars* is giving below.

Srishti Samvat:

According to *Surya-siddhanta*, it started about 198 years back when planetary system of sun is moving in present manner.

Kaartikeya Samvat (15800BC):

According to *Mahabharat Van-Parva* (23/8-10), due to 'Nutation' when pole-star shifted from Abhijit Nakshtra (Vega) to Dhanishtha Nakshtra (á Delphini), Indra told Kaartikeya to review the beginning of year with the help of lord Brhama. As a result, Kaartikeya started the New Year when sun entered in Dhanishtha (á Delphini) in 15800 BC.

Parashurama Samvat (6177 BC):

Parashuram Samvat started from the killing of Kartveerya or Sahasraarjun by lord Parashuram. Incarnation of Lord Vishnu in the form of *Parashurama* took place in the *Treta* of descending period which started from 9,102 BC. Since he born in 9th treat during this period, thus his period starts from 9102-8x360=6,222 BC. According to *Mahabharat*, in 6177 BC he killed the *Kaartiveerya Arjun* which is the advent of *Parashuram Samvat*. It is called *Kollam* in Kerala, starting in 6,177 BC.

Yudhishtihir Samvat(3139 BC):

According to *Brihat Sanhita*(13/3), when *Saptarshi* (Ursa Major) was in *Magha Nakshtra* (Regulus), Yudhishtir was crowned in 3139BC. Hence the *Yudhishtir Samvat* started from 3139BC.

Kali Samvat (3102BC):

36 years later from the lord Sri Krishna's demise, *KaliYuga* Started in 3102 BC on *Magh Shukla Pratipada* (17/18 February). Hence, 5117 years have passed since the Beginning of *Kali Samvat* or Era.

Vikram Samvat (57BC):

According to *Bhavishya purana* (3/1/7/14-18), about 3000 years after the advent of *Kaliyuga*(in 101 BC), by the command of *Shiva*, a divine personage *Vikramaditya*, from the abode of *Guhyaka* in *Kailash* took birth as son of king *Gandharvasena* to destroy the shakas and to re-establish *Vedic dharma*. He was crowned in kali 3020 or 82 BC as the King of *Paramara-Agni* dynasty of Ujjain. After 25 years of rule he started *Vikrama samvat* in Nepal in 3044 kali. The *samvat* started from *Chaitra* bright half after sun has crossed *Revati*. *Vikramaditya* started another *Vikrama Samvat* from month of *Karttika* in *Somnath*, Gujarat. He not only re-established *dharma* in the whole of *Bharatavarsha* but, he also revised the *puranas* to suit the astronomical changes. From *Kali* era months started from bright half, after 3000 years seasons had shifted by 1½ months, so month in *Vikrama samvat* starts from dark half. He ruled for 101 years and passed away in 3120 *kali* i.e. in 19 AD.

Influence of Vikrama outside India

Julius Caesar, emperor of Roman Empire in 46 BC tried to

start the year at point of winter solstice, but the practice was to start month from new moon day all over the world. So in spite of government order, the year started 7 days after winter solstice by following the *Vikram* Era. The original intended day of start of year was called Christmas.

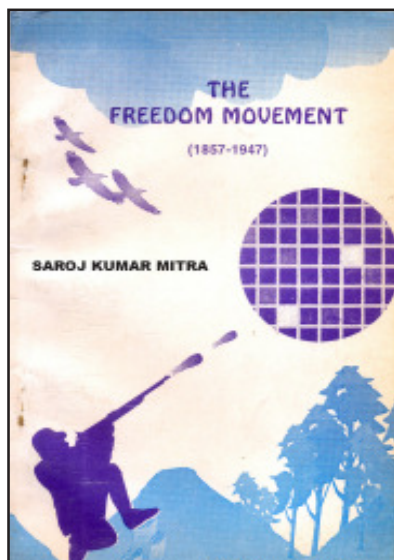
Shalivahan Shaka(78AD):

Shalivahan Shaka is frequently called as '*shaka-samvat*' which has no meaning. It can be either '*shaka*' or '*samvat*. *Shalivahana-shaka* started in 78 AD by king *Shalivahana* the grandson of *Vikramaaditya* when he quenched and chased the *Shakas* out of *Bharatvarsha*. After this incident, he got the appellation '*Shakaari*'. To celebrate his victory, he started the new Samvat called as *Shalivahan Shak*.

Shalivahana is not the only *Shaka*, there are several *shakas* like *Shudraka* in 756 BC, *Shri Harsha shaka* in 456 BC, *Kalchuri* or *Chedi shaka* in 248 AD, and various local shakas started by local kings in *Nepal*(*Newar* in 889 AD, claimed unification in 1769 AD), *Shivaji shaka* in 1673 AD, *Kapilendra shaka* in Orissa 1426 etc.

This article is a small endeavor to have an insightful journey of the historical *Bharatvarsha* (through the chronological vista) which is very fascinating, vivid and beckoning in every perspective. As an Indian, it's our responsibility to be aware of our esteemed history & culture that established this great country as **Jagad-Guru** in the past. □□

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The Freedom Movement

(Untold stories)

— Saroj Kumar Mitra —

Militant Activities (1931-33)

At Midnapore three Magistrates in succession were murdered along with the I.G. of prisons. The Collector of Coomila was shot dead by two girls, Santi Ghosh and Sumita Choudhury. The govt. let loose terrorism through hooligans at Chittagunj for three days. At Hijli Jail (near Kharagpur) the prisoners were tortured and fired upon. The State sponsored terrorism was condemned by Gandhi as violation of his pact with Irwin. Garlick, the Sessions Judge of 24 parganas was killed by Kanailal Bhattacharya on 27 July 1931. Elison the S.P. of Tripura was shot dead in 1932. Pritilata Wadadar and Kalpana Dutt, two young girls of Surya Sen's group bombed the Railway Institute at Chittagung in 1932. Jackson the Governor of Bengal while delivering the convocation speech in Calcutta University was shot by Ms. Bina Das. Anatha Bandhu Panja. Mrigendranath Dutt killed the D.M. of Midinapore in 1933.

The Civil Disobedience was started from 4 January 1932. Govt.

resorted to most uncivilised behaviour from torturing women and children to setting fire to houses of people. Even Police was encouraged to loot and rape. About 90,000 people were arrested. British repression in India when published in World Journals, people learnt the magnitude of the savagery. An Indian League delegation from London headed by Krishna Menon and two ex-MPs arrived in India in August to make a survey of the situation. The delegation with its report left India in September 1932. In a Preface to the report of this delegation **Bertrand Russel described that the British committed mis-deeds in India quite as serious as Nazis doing in Germany.**

When the country was in revolt Gandhi declared fast on to death on Sept. 20 on a side issue like Macdonald's communal award for representation of minority and depressed classes subject to revision after ten years. The emphasis of civil dis-obedience now shifted to saving Gandhi's life. C.R. Das once wrote "The Mahatma opens a campaign in a brilliant fashion, he works it up with unerring skill, he moves from success to success till he reaches the zenith of his Campaign-but after that he loses his nerve and begins to falter." To save Gandhi who opposed separate electorate for "depressed classes" negotiations started with Dr. Ambedkar and under the Pune

pact, instead of 71 reserved seats as per Macdonald's award, Ambedkar got 148 seats supported by Hindu Mahasabha. Gandhi broke his fast on 26 September 1932. Jawaharlal observed, "I felt angry with him at his religious and sentimental approach to a political question and his frequent references to God in connection with it. He even seemed to suggest that God had indicated the very date of the fast."

The Independence day was observed on 26th January. Kasturiba Gandhi was arrested at Basard while leading a procession of ladies and was imprisoned for six months.

The Third Round Table Conference - 17 November 1932. Though Congress did not attend it one white paper was published on the basis of which Govt. of India Act 1935 was enacted. Federal Court, Federal Railways Authority, Federal Service Commission was established. Burma was separated from India. Orissa and Sind became separate Provinces. The constitution of India retained all such structures of Govt. of India act 1935.

Thousands of delegates including Malaviya the President elect and the widowed mother of Jawaharlal were arrested before attending the Calcutta Congress. Despite Lathi Charges the session was conducted by Mrs. J.M. Sengupta in Calcutta and three resolu-

tions were passed on (1) Goal of Independence (2) Civil Disobedience (3) Boycott. After his release Malaviya challenged the Govt. to crush the movement as by then, 120,000 persons were arrested and the agitation was in full swing.

Though Gandhi dissociated himself from this movement and was campaigning against untouchability, asked Congress to suspend the agitation on 8 May 1933 to enable him to conduct a fast for 21 days for self purification. Suspension of a mass movement by the Congress encouraged Viceroy Lord Wellington to refuse interview to Gandhi and release prisoners. Congress put in a dilemma declared to conduct individual Satyagraha. Gandhi was criticised by Vithal Bhai Patel and Subhash Bose from Vienna. K.F. Nariman made a scathing attack on Gandhi and said, "Does it need an Indian National Congress to tell an individual to break laws on his own responsibility and take the consequences?" Nariman commented on Congressmen as "lip-sealed mummies who always shake their heads like spring dolls horizontally or perpendicularly according as the Mahatma pulls the strings ..."

The Congress suspended Civil disobedience Movement on 20 May 1934 and sought entry into Legislatures. Thus Govt. lifted the ban on Congress except in Bengal and North West Frontier Province and started releasing prisoners.

1935-36

Gandhi's influence over the Congress though retained was gradually receding. All India Kisan Sabha was formed under Swami Sahajanand Saraswati. Congress

Socialist Party within the Congress was formed by Jawaharlal and Subhash Bose. While Nehru accepted Communism as the basic Ideal Subhash held the view that Communism and Fascism, were not the two alternates left for India to choose, but a third could be evolved by India, which might be out of a synthesis of the two. Subhash Bose was not captivated by the Russian revolution of 1917 which could be deduced from his talks with Dilip Kumar Roy (son of Dwijendralal Roy) in London. Similarly Nehru to-wards the fag end of his life held Marxism as paradoxical in his letter to Shriman Narayan.

Nehru brought in Jaiprakash Narain, Narendra Dev and Achyut Patwardhan into Congress Working Committee in 1936 but surrendered to Gandhiji who was commanding majority in CWC. The Congress fought elections and got majority. But Jinnah and Iqbal etc demanded for Muslim home land in India.

No Congress session in 1937.

Congress under Subhash Chandra Bose (1938-39)

Subhash Bose was elected President of the Congress in the Haripura Congress. While Bose was preparing for a national struggle against the govt. during the ensuing war (second World War 1939-45) the Gandhities were reluctant to forgo their Ministerial comforts. In the Tripuri Congress in 1939,



Bose was again elected defeating Pattabhi Sitaramaya, a nominee of Gandhi. Gandhi declared that defeat of Sitaramaya was his own defeat and to make things worse Gobind Balav Pant got a resolution passed for the Congress President to form the CWC in consultation with Gandhi. As per the plot Gandhi refused to co-operate with Bose till he resigned. Immediately after Bose's resignation, Rajendra Prasad was made President of Congress and Gandhi became the sole arbiter of Congress. Historian Prof. R.C. Mazumdar commented that during this time congress was advising British Govt. to honour democratic norms in international affairs.

Wrote Dr. Jadugopal Mukhopadhyaya, a revolutionary who was lobbying for Bose in 1939 that Bose was misguided by some sycophants who encouraged him to contest. Nehru and Sarat Bose refused to join the new C.W.C. Subhash Bose formed the Forward Block in 1939.

[To be Conitnued]

Check NGOs for fund duplication

Women and Child Development (WCD) Minister Maneka Gandhi has said that NGOs and welfare organisations seeking funds for Government's schemes should be checked for duplication as many ministries end up funding them for similar purposes. She asked MPs to identify genuine NGOs doing good work at a meeting of Consultative Committee of Parliament attached to the Ministry. The WCD Ministry had recently come across a large number of fake applications under its "Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women" (STEP) scheme, aimed at providing employability skills to women. "Government should assist the organisations in their task of skill development of women. We will try our best to ensure India's money goes to the best," Gandhi said. The meeting was called to discuss various aspects related to skill training to women under STEP scheme. □

Woman sarpanch begs to meet ends

Rajni Bansal, sarpanch of the tribal-dominated Bachhama village, 80km off Damoh, has been doubling as a safai karamchari to clean toilets in a local girls school, and a midwife to make some extra money. If things turn particularly rough - which is often - the 38-year-old woman is also seen begging around the hamlet. To add to her woes, she has not received her honorarium for months. Her shanty - too small to accommodate a family of seven - may not last this monsoon. And on top of it all, the penniless and illiterate woman has been charged with graft and could be facing arrest anytime.

The report about impending action is beginning to worry her. Her eldest son Anil has already fled the village. Last fortnight she went all the way to Damoh to attend the jan sunvai at the collector's office. The officer, says Rajni, assured her of help, but so far no one has visited Bachhama or met her.

Sujat Khan, activist and member of Ekta Parishad Damoh says Rajni personifies the farce of panchayati raj in Madhya Pradesh. "The unlettered and gullible woman has been duped by successive panchayat secretaries to sign cheques and embezzle funds meant for various developmental projects", he says.

Damoh collector Swatantra Kumar Singh, while conceding that one of the secretaries in Bachhama panchayat has been dismissed for bungling says that he has sent a team to probe the matter. "It is a peculiar case and would need a little time sort out," he says.

Licences of nearly 9,000 NGOs cancelled

In yet another crackdown on NGOs receiving foreign funds, the Government has cancelled licences of nearly 9,000 such entities for violation of Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA). In an order, the Home Ministry said that notices were issued to 10,343 NGOs for not filing annual returns for the year 2009-

10, 2010-11 and 2011-12.

The notices were served on October 16, 2014 saying that the NGOs should file their annual returns within a month specifying amount of foreign funds received, sources of such funds, for which purpose it was received and in manner in which such foreign contribution was utilised, according to a Home Ministry notification. Out of the 10,344 NGOs, only 229 replied. There was no reply from the remaining NGOs leading to cancellation of their registration issued under FCRA, the notification issued yesterday said.

Government, defence industry meet

Media reports quoting Sources say that secretary, defence production and other senior officials of the ministry of defence (MoD) recently met a group of industry representatives for discussions on ironing out such challenges. The government is holding closed-door meetings with the domestic defence sector manufacturers to address the regulatory and procedural challenges they are facing in coming onboard the high-pitched 'Make in India' bandwagon. secretary, defence production and other senior officials of the ministry of defence (MoD) recently met a group of industry representatives for discussions on ironing out such challenges.

To be held periodically, these closed-door meetings have been initiated against the backdrop of the huge potential of the defence offset business that remains to be realised by the Indian manufactures. Foreign defence deals between 2007 and 2012 helped realise Rs 20,000 crore for offset business in India. Another Rs 60,000 crore is being estimated to be the potential if India drives home the 'Make in India' cart well in defence sector.

Under India's defence offset policy, a foreign contractor having bagged government orders above Rs 300 crore is required to source components from local vendors for at least 30 per cent of that value.

■ Maharashtra to block profiteering from SEZ land sale ■

The Maharashtra government will soon introduce a special legislation to deter companies that have been allotted land under the SEZ Act for industrial activity, but have done nothing so far, from selling the land at a higher price. Termed 'SEZ Prevention of Land Speculation Bill', which is likely to come into effect in six months' time, will ensure that companies which can't do any 'industrial production or permitted activity' in more than 50 per cent of the SEZ land in two years, will have to return the land to the state government. While taking back the land, the state will pay the developer the same price for the land at which it had 'originally acquired' it. The Maharashtra government has decided to use this land for affordable housing, said the state government's draft housing policy, which ET has reviewed. The draft housing policy also points out that most of the 10,000 acres of land that was acquired under the Land Acquisition Act, 1888, has not been used by these developers.

In fact, the state government believes that most of these companies which acquired the land had no intention of doing any activity on the SEZ land. □

India shares Afghanistan's terror pain

India shares Afghanistan's "pain over persisting terrorism and extremist violence", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said. The terrorist violence has destroyed lives and derailed progress, Modi said, adding India and Afghanistan have a "timeless link of human hearts". Addressing a joint press conference after holding delegation level talks with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, Modi said: "President Ghani and I discussed the historic efforts to rebuild his nation.

"We in India admire the courage and resolve of the Afghan people to seek a future of peace and prosperity. "The relationship between India and Afghanistan is not just between two countries or governments. It is a timeless link of human hearts. "I conveyed our support for President Ghani's vision for peace and stability in Afghanistan. "We share Afghanistan's pain over persisting terrorism and extremist violence that destroy lives and derail progress," Modi said. The prime minister said Afghan children have a special focus in India's efforts. Modi said the Afghan president "shared his impressive vision" for the prosperity of his country "based on its talent, resources and location.

"India will walk shoulder to shoulder with you and the Afghan people in a mission of global importance. "The partnership has blossomed despite barriers of geography and politics. It is an enduring commitment," Modi added.

Heroin found in goods train from Pak

AMRITSAR: Despite claims of strict safety measures taken post November 2nd Wagah, Pakistan, suicide bomb blast, the security officials here recovered 7.480 kilogram heroin from goods train that arrived from Pakistan on Wednesday.

Sources seeking anonymity informed that the contraband was recovered on the specific intelligence input of Border Security Force. The heroin packets were concealed in the vacuum pipe of the goods train informed sources. Customer commissioner Sunil Shaney didn't pick the phone to inform about the seizure. After Wagah bomb blast that claimed 61 lives custom officials here claimed to have made elaborate security arrangements. Earlier also there have been huge recoveries of heroin from goods train plying between India and Pakistan.

Indian fishermen indulge in illegal acts

Indian Coast Guard has told the Madras High Court that Indian fishermen allegedly indulge in various illegal acts such as smuggling and trawling in Sri Lankan waters resulting in action by the island nation's navy. The ICG has told the court that it cannot take responsibility for the security of the fishermen if they entered Sri Lankan waters and there was confrontation between them and the Sri Lankan Navy, Press Trust of India reported.

A counter-affidavit to this effect was filed by Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Deputy Director General, K R Nautial on a contempt petition against officials for not "obeying" the earlier court orders on providing security for fishermen. The stand may not go down well in the state of Tamil Nadu where Sri Lanka comes under flak from politicians and government for mid-sea 'attacks' and arrests of the state's fishermen, according to the PTI report. The affidavit said the Indian fishermen had never been attacked in Indian waters and that neither the Coast Guard nor Navy permitted any of the Sri Lankan vessels to come to Indian territory. □□

US SPL status bill for Nepal victims

Two US lawmakers have introduced a legislation in the Congress that would provide Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for 18 months to the victims of a quake that devastated Nepal last week. Introduced by Al Green and Mike Honda, the 'Nepal Temporary Protected Status Act of 2015' grants TPS for the applicants if they had been continuously and lawfully present in the United States since April 25, 2015, the date when the earthquake occurred.

"The people of Nepal have suffered a calamitous tragedy, and I think providing TPS is necessary to help them attain a sense of stability in the United States while their country recovers," Green said. "A great nation does not force people to return to conditions that are unsafe and detrimental to their well-being. A great nation extends the hand of friendship to all during times of challenge and crisis," he said. □

Indian-origin duo develop app

A team of Indian-American researchers from the University of Washington (UW) has developed an app that uses a smartphone to wirelessly test for obstructive sleep apnoea in a person's bedroom. Unlike other home sleep apnoea tests in use, "ApneaApp" uses inaudible sound waves emanating from the phone's speakers to track breathing patterns without the need of special equipment or sensors attached to the body. "ApneaApp" turns a smartphone into an active sonar system that can detect sleep apnoea events.

Tests in a home bedroom setting showed "ApneaApp" works efficiently at distances of up to three feet, in any sleeping position and even when the person is under a blanket.

The clinical study tested the app, that could be available to consumers in the next year or two, on 37 patients. Researchers put a Samsung Galaxy S4 smartphone on a corner of the bed during the overnight sleep study. During nearly 300 hours of testing, the app tracked various respiratory events including central apnoea, obstructive apnoea and hypopnea with between 95 and 99 percent accuracy, compared to intensive polysomnography. "ApneaApp" correctly classified 32 out of 37 patients in the clinical study.

China to work positively with India

Playing down reports of competition with India in quake relief efforts in Nepal, China said it would like to work with India "positively" to help the Himalayan nation to tide over the crisis. "China and India are neighbours to Nepal. We would like to work together and coordinate positively with India in our assistance efforts in Nepal to help it to over-

come the difficulties and rebuild its homeland," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Hong Lei told a media briefing in Beijing. He was responding a question on the reported remarks by Nepalese foreign minister Mahendra Bahadur Pandey that Nepal has divided areas between India and China for quake relief. Earlier, former Chinese ambassador to Pakistan Zhang Chunxiang who addressed the media on China's relations with South Asia denied any competition between New Delhi and Beijing in trying to help Kathmandu as part of effort to vie for influence in the Himalayan Kingdom.

Earthquake moves Kathmandu

The earthquake that devastated Nepal and left thousands of people dead shifted the earth beneath Kathmandu by up to several metres south, but the height of Mount Everest likely stayed the same, experts said. The massive 7.8-magnitude quake was the Himalayan nation's deadliest disaster in more than 80 years, killing more than 4,300 people and causing massive destruction.

According to early seismological data obtained from sound waves which travel through Earth after an earthquake, the ground beneath the capital Kathmandu may have moved about three metres (10 feet) southward, said University of Cambridge tectonics expert James Jackson. His analysis was similar to that of Sandy Steacy, head of the physical sciences department at the University of Adelaide.

"It's likely that the earthquake occurred on the Himalayan Thrust fault, a plate boundary that separates the northern moving Indian sub-continent from Eurasia," said Steacy.

"The fault dips about 10 degrees to the north-northeast. The relative movement across the fault zone

Shoppers moving towards smaller stores

David Cheesewright, president and CEO of Walmart International, says two things are changing faster than ever. One is the economic condition. Second, shopping habits of people are changing. We are seeing a move towards smaller stores in most countries. The impact of technology on customers is also significant. Increasingly, they are walking around stores with smartphones, checking the best prices available in the market. Historically, behaviour was driven by reputation that you would build over a period of time. Nowadays, it's driven by truth. Convenience is becoming more important, especially in developed markets. As markets mature, they will support smaller specialists. For instance, discounters and smaller top-end specialists are growing very fast in certain markets while hypermarkets are struggling with low traffic. But, generally hypermarkets are becoming less important in global growth. As the basket becomes more fresh, products-oriented, people want to shop more frequently for fresh products. Earlier, they would go to the big stores every 10 days to top up. But now they shop closer to home for the essentials. Five years ago, the quality in small shops wasn't that good. But now, they have upped that as well. □

was on the order of three metres at its greatest, just north of Kathmandu.”

19th Amendment is a historic victory

Sri Lanka's President, Maithripala Sirisena thanked all the parliamentarians who supported the adoption of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution with two-thirds majority. President Sirisena in a statement said the adoption of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution with two-thirds majority is a historic victory of Sri Lankan society as it is the result of a 37-year long struggle of all active citizens of Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka's parliament overwhelmingly approved the proposed constitutional reforms to reduce powers of the executive president and restore democracy by empowering independent commissions and judiciary. After two-days of debate the 225-member parliament passed the second reading of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution by a majority of 214 votes with 215 voting in favor of The Bill. Only one MP voted against the Bill while one abstained from voting and seven MPs were absent.

The third and final reading of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution at the committee stage was also passed with a two-third majority with 212 votes in favor and one against. The President said though presidential candidates before him promised to abolish the Executive Presidency at five previous occasions, it only became a reality now

47 Pak Christians sent to custody

A Pakistani court remanded 47 Christians in police custody for 10 days for allegedly lynching two

Muslim youths after Taliban suicide bombers attacked two packed churches in Pakistan's biggest Christian colony here last month, killing 17 people.

Police produced the accused before Lahore's Anti-Terrorism Court-III Judge Haroon Latif and sought extension to the physical remand of 22 accused and fresh remand of the 25 arrested and identified during the investigation parade held at Kot Lakhpat Jail. The judge remanded all the 47 accused in police custody till May 8.

In one of the worst attacks on the minority community in the country, two suicide bombers on March 15 blew themselves up during the Sunday mass at the gates of twin churches in Youhanabad, the largest Christian dwelling in the country, killing 17 people and injuring over 80 others.

Indian-owned company to launch 'scooty' in Ethiopia

The Indian footprint in Africa just got bigger with Balaaji Manufacturing Plc, an Indian-owned company, launching the brand new electrical motorcycle, popularly known as "scooty", assembled in Ethiopia. The "scooty" brand, which has endeared itself to customers in India, is set to cash in on the Ethiopian market, where more and more people have taken to two-wheelers over the past three years, which has made the market grow at an annual pace of about 30 per cent. "We believe that there is market for our products and these motorcycles are the pollution free alternatives compared to the same means of transport which consumes fuel", Arun Jindal, general manager of Balaaji Manufacturing, told IANS. □□

No US chicken legs, please: India

India has challenged WTO ruling asking it to lift ban on the import of cheap chicken legs from the United States. India's objection is aimed at helping check shipment of low-cost chicken legs which are discarded in America as they are perceived as having higher cholesterol levels. Poultry imports from US are cheaper by about Rs 100 per kg.

India banned US poultry imports on account of avian influenza in 2007, a decision the WTO called 'unscientific' in its judgment. India is not the only country to have imposed such checks. Even China had levied duties, and was asked to remove them by WTO as they were seen to be unfair. India is the fourth-largest producer of chicken in the world, after the US, China and Brazil, with an annual production of 3.5-4 million tonnes. India's poultry industry, worth an estimated Rs 50,000 crore, is the fourth largest in the world after the US, China and Brazil.

Lack of trade finance significant barrier

Director-General WTO Roberto Azevêdo, in a seminar on "Trade Finance in Developing Countries", pointed to a recent WTO Secretariat paper that showed trade financing gaps are "the highest in the poorest countries, notably in Africa and Asia". He said that "lack of development in the financial sector can be a significant barrier to trade", and told participants "let's redouble efforts to work together and resolve this problem".

Up to 80% of global trade is supported by some form of financing or credit insurance, he said. Yet in many countries there is a lack of capacity in the financial sector to support trade, and also a lack of access to the international financial system, he added. Therefore the ability of these countries to use simple instruments such as letters of credit is limited. The impact of these limitations on a country's trading potential can be very, very significant.

India may take action against EU

India may go to WTO if the European Union does not reconsider a decision to suspend the sale of about 700 generic drugs that were approved based on clinical trials by GVK Biosciences Pvt Ltd, the firm's CEO said. The European Medicines Agency (EMA) suspension became effective in January, a month after France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg suspended the sale of 25 generic drugs that were approved based on trials conducted by GVK

Biosciences. The privately-held company, part of India's infrastructure builder GVK Group, conducts clinical research for domestic and foreign drugmakers.

The regulatory actions were taken after the French watchdog inspected a GVK Biosciences manufacturing plant in southern India last year and found manipulation of data from electrocardiograms for at least five years. The French regulator said at the time that suspensions were taken out of precaution and there was no reason to suggest the drugs were ineffective or harmful. The drugs suspended by the EMA include those made by U.S. firms Mylan Inc and Abbott Laboratories, as well as large Indian companies such as Lupin Ltd and Dr Reddy's Laboratories.

After an appeal by the company, the Indian government set up a panel of experts last year to investigate the matter and found no manipulation, GVK Biosciences CEO Manni Kantipudi told media. An Indian government delegation visited the European authorities between February and March to ask for the suspension to be reconsidered, Kantipudi said. If that does not happen, New Delhi is ready to take commercial and legal action, which could include action at the WTO, India's Commerce Secretary Rajeev Kher told media.

WTO cuts global trade outlook

WTO has reduced its forecast for global trade this year, citing sluggish global economic growth and mounting geopolitical tensions as the main reasons for the downward revision.

WTO cut its 2015 growth forecast for global goods trade from 4 percent to 3.3 percent, saying the downward revision was the result of sluggish global economic expansion and rising geopolitical tensions. Noting that growth in global trade last year fell 0.3 percent short of the trade body's estimate of 3.1 percent, WTO Director-General Roberto Azevedo said this would point to "prolonged sluggish expansion in world gross domestic product."

"Looking forward, we expect trade to continue its slow recovery but with economic growth still fragile and continued geopolitical tensions, this trend could easily be undermined," he warned.

Trade is a key measure of the health of the global economy. Growth averaged 2.4 percent over each of the last three years, compared with an annual average of 6.0 percent between 1990 and 2008. According to WTO, trade growth was expected to pick up in 2016 with an expansion of 4.0 percent. □□