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Say No to GM

As if the destruction wrought on our agriculture by the Green Revolution and Bt cotton was not enough, now the government is anxious to introduce GM food crops in the name of increasing productivity and reducing imports! GM mustard is being hailed as a Swadeshi technological invention! "Swadeshi" technology should not be a home-grown version of a destructive "terminator" technology developed elsewhere that is patented, non-renewable and antithetical to the very concept of life, but rather one that is sustainable both ecologically & economically, absolutely suitable to the native soil.

GM mustard is based on the harmful barnase gene (apart from barstar & bar genes) and is engineered to be resistant to the herbicide Glufosinate which when sprayed in fields kills all other intercrops (like wheat) except the herbicide-tolerant GM mustard, while also leading to the emergence of superweeds, as has happened in the US. It has also been pointed out that the argument of a large volume of GM oils like rapeseed, soya, corn being imported into our country is a myth, for these oils add up to only 10-11%, while it is palmolein oil that is the most imported!

Based on their bad experience with GM cotton flowers towards which bees were seen to avoid going, last September beekeeper associations from across India protested at Jantar Mantar the promotion of GM mustard, fearing a drop in honey production if mustard goes the GM way, as 60% of Indian honey (of which 40% is exported) is of mustard origin. We already know of how bees, which are estimated to offer "ecosystem services" worth \$235 billion- \$577 billion (of annual global food production through pollination), are being harmed by the neonicotinoid pesticides used for treating GM seeds before planting. For the GM proponents to argue that nothing calamitous has happened to us all these years while consuming GM foods like Bt cotton oil etc., is ridiculous because no ill-effects from something as complex as a GM food will manifest immediately. Haven't we seen how years of pesticide and insecticide use from the much-vaunted Green Revolution-style farming has become the cause of cancer (esp. in Punjab) and diabetes (according to the researchers of Madhurai Kamaraj University)?

Hence, time to take a wise call on GM mustard is now, for "indication of harm, not proof of harm, is our call to action"! Let not the governments & agri-research institutes play with the lives of people.

- C.V. Krishna Manoj, Hyderabad, Telangana

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Quote-Unquote



Our festivals are directly connected with the upliftment of poor. It drives their economic activities.

Narendra Modi

Prime Minister



Pangriya represented the same stream which is running under the name of capitalism, liberalism.

Arun Ojha

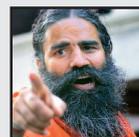
National Convenor, SJM



If I were at 40, then I would have got job anywhere... the kind of job I have at Columbia is almost impossible to get at this age.

Arvind Pangariya

(Explaining why he is resigning from NITI Aayog)



China has always betrayed us. Buying Chinese products is like helping the enemy. Every nationalist Indian should boycott Chinese products.

Baba Ramdev



Trade deficit with china is a matter of concern.

Nirmala Sitharaman

Commerce & Industry Minister

Yes, Government can also stem Chinese imports

People of India are boiling with anger against China, after fresh border dispute raised by it in Bhutan and Sikkim and threat of war. This has prompted the public to start yet another round of boycott of Chinese goods. Due to boycott of Chinese goods at Diwali last year, the demand for Chinese goods in Indian markets had dropped by 30 to 50 percent. This boycott had caught a lot of enthusiasm on social media platforms such as 'WhatsApp', 'Facebook', 'Twitter' etc. last year. On the same lines, voices of boycott are once again gaining people support due to resentment towards China. Significantly, import from China in 1996-97 was less than one billion, which increased to \$ 61.7 billion in 2015-16. Initially, the trade deficit from China was insignificant, which increased to \$ 52.7 billion by 2015-16, due to ever rising imports and almost constancy of exports. Although in the year 2016-17, there is a marginal decline in imports from China trade deficit with China is still whopping \$ 51.1 billion. This not only causes huge burden of foreign exchange payment on the country due to heavy imports of toys, power equipment, mobile, computer and other electronics accessories, project goods, power plants etc., our industry and businesses have also have been destroyed and there is a huge loss of employment.

We should not forget that China, though is still enjoying huge surplus from the trade, has been fast losing this advantage. China's trade surplus once reached 627.5 billion dollars. However, due to global slowdown, trade surplus has dipped to \$ 419.7 billion by 2015-16. Given a trade surplus of \$ 52.7 billion from India, which was 12 percent of China's trade surplus, boycott of Chinese goods in China can significantly hurt Chinese interests and can give a major setback to the Chinese economy. Thinking that preventing China's imports will harm consumers is also not right. Rather, its other way. With increasing dependence on Chinese, China can exploit consumers by increasing the price of their goods. For example, India's API industry has largely been destroyed due to the import of cheap active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) from China. Now taking advantage of the Indian drug industry's dependence on China, it has started increasing the prices of APIs. For instance, the price of folic acid (ingredient for vitamin B complex) has been raised by 10 times and price of amoxicillin has been multiplied by 2 times which is used in anti-biotic medicines. This shows that, China has now started exploiting our pharmaceutical industry. We shouldn't forget that Chinese economy has been passing through a worst phase today. Spiralling Inflation and the resulting increasing wages is bringing competitive power to a halt it enjoyed for long. Global recession has increased its problem manifold by slowing down their exports. Its infrastructure development has come to a halt due to excessive infrastructure in the past and problems at the fiscal end. Attempts of US, after Donald Trump taking over the reign of power, and growing adverse atmosphere against China, due to de-industrialization and youth unemployment in Europe are multiplying woes for China. Generally people, who are against boycott of Chinese, argue that since we are bound by World Trade Organisation (WTO) we cannot stop Chinese products by raising tariff or non-tariff barriers. However, we shouldn't forget that Chinese goods are generally of poor quality. Import of poor quality goods can easily be curbed by imposing standards. Therefore, to stop Chinese imports we have to simply make standards and implement them. Government, so far has made and implemented standards in case of plastic goods, power plants etc and have successfully banned import of Chinese plastic goods and power plants. Apart from this, under WTO rules, there is a provision of imposing anti dumping duty, based on the complaint of domestic players, to discourage imports, when goods are being dumped at a price lower than the production cost and causing injury to the domestic producers. This provision has been used number of times in India and world over.

It's surprising that on the one hand some experts in the country give reference of WTO provisions against curbing Chinese goods, whereas China itself has been using direct and indirect measures to stop imports from many countries, which do not comply with the dictates of Chinese government. Some time back when Mongolia hosted Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama against the wishes of Chinese government, hundreds of trucks loaded with coal were stopped at the border. When South Korea deployed USA's missiles system 'THAAD' against the warning by Chinese, citing security concerns, China banned Korean Cosmetics to enter Chinese land. Import of Norwegian Salmon fish was disallowed to enter China, when Nobel Prize Committee decided to award Nobel Prize to China's dissident leader. Norway opposed the ban and threatened to approach WTO but nothing happened. Finally, Norway had to pledge to accept 'one-China policy and respect for China's territorial integrity'. Therefore, why can't India use trade as a weapon to give China a fitting reply for his deplorable acts?

Chinese Hegemony Warrants A Worldwide Boycott

China is engaged in most aggressive hostilities against Bharat in economic as well as military arenas. Yet we have been economically empowering the Chinese economy by purchasing Chinese products, worth more than 4-5 lakh crores a year, leading to unabated industrial closures, large scale unemployment and wide trade deficit for the country, ranging between \$45 to \$52 billion a year in last 3 years, the highest and 45% of the country's total deficit. In the bilateral trade of \$71 billion last year, China has exported goods worth of \$58.33 billion to us, and imported goods worth mere \$11.76 billion. Consequently, due to wide trade gap, the value of Rupee has sharply declined by 30% in 6 years, from Rs 50 in 2011 to Rs 65 per dollar now. Besides more than 300 industry verticals, 200 industry clusters and 3 lac small and medium scale units are facing imminent closure, whereby more than a crore persons may be rendered jobless either directly or indirectly. All types of large and small scale industries ranging from cycle, cycle parts, furniture, stationary, toys, glass, plastics, LED bulbs to electricals, electronics, computer hardware, solar panels, telecom, radical tyres, machine tools, steel, textile, leather wears, pharma, agrochemicals and so on have been turning sick, one after the other, as a result of trade war being waged by China, aimed at deindustrialization of one sector after the other and one industry cluster after the other.

China first targets a sector to lead closures by cheap dumping and then raises price to exploit us. For instance, after causing closure of several bulk drug and Active Pharma Ingredient units, now China is exploiting India in several industry



So, India can now well pull the trigger to give a decisive blow for precipitate a crisis in the Chinese economy,

says
**Prof. Bhagwati
Prakash Sharma**



COVER STORY



verticals. It has doubled the price of Amoxicillin in a year and raised the price of Folic Acid 11 times from Rs. 4,500 per kg to Rs. 50,000

per kg in 2016. India has been adding value to Chinese brands, for instance more than 50% smart phones being sold in India are

Chinese and several Chinese brands have gained international repute solely from the patronage of Indian buyers. In March 2017, Indian buyers have contributed 73% of total international sale of Vivo brand of Chinese smart phone, 67% for Xiaomi, 48% for Oppo, 42% for Lenovo, 25% for Gionee and so on. In the computers, the largest selling P.C. is the Chinese Lenovo, and its cheap dumping in the last 5 years has led to the closure of both the computer hardware manufacturing units of India viz. the Zenith and Wipro. Today, more than 80 percent of the solar panels and allied equipments being imported are Chinese, almost rendering the domestic

Table-1

Head	China		India		Ratio China: India
GDP	2016	\$11.2 Trillion	\$2.2 Trillion	2016	5.1:1
GDP per capita	2016	\$8,113	\$1,701	2016	4.8:1
Expenditure	2015	\$3,515 billion	\$629 billion	2016	5.6:1
Expenditure (%GDP)	2015	31.32%	27.90%	2016	1.1:1
Expenditure Per Capita	2015	\$2,558	\$475	2016	5.4:1
Defence Expenditure (B.\$)	2015	\$217.8 billion	\$50.1 billion	2015	4.3:1
Defence Expenditure P.C.	2015	\$159	\$38	2015	4.2:1
Moody's Rating [+]	5/24/2017	A1	Baa3	11/16/2016	-
S&P Rating [+]	12/16/2010	AA-	BBB-	1/30/2007	-
Fitch Rating [+]	11/21/2016	A+	BBB-	5/02/2007	-
Exchange Rate Euro /Chinese yuan	7/06/2017	7.7443	73.7325	7/06/2017	0.1:1
Inflation: CPI (overall index)	May-17	1.50%	3.60%	Nov-16	0.4:1
Motor vehicle production	2016	2.8 crore	44.8 lac	2016	6.2:1
Vehicles / 1,000 people	2014	104.13	21.62	2014	4.8:1
Exports [+]	2016	\$2098 billion	\$264.0 billion	2016	7.9:1
Exports as % GDP	2016	18.70%	11.70%	2016	1.6:1
Imports	2016	\$1587 billion	\$359 billion	2016	4.4:1
Imports as % GDP	2016	14.15%	15.91%	2016	0.9:1
Trade balance	2016	Surplus of \$510.7 billion	Deficit of \$106 billion	2016	-
Trade balance as % GDP	2016	(+) 4.55%	(-) 4.21%	2016	-
Population	2016	1,382,710,000	1,326,802,000	2016	1.04:1
Life expectancy	2015	75.99	68.35	2015	1.1:1
Number of homicides (Murder) [+]	2012	11,286	41,623	2014	0.3:1
Rate Homicides per 100.000 [+]	2012	0.8	3.2	2014	0.25:1
CO2 Emission: Tons per capita [+]	2015	7.73	1.87	2015	4.1:1

Source: <http://countryeconomy.com/countries/compare/china/india>

COVER STORY

equipment manufacturers sick. The import surge from cheap dumping by China has been causing severe industrial sickness and closures, leading to huge non-performing assets (NPAs) for banks. The cost-of-production of solar panels in China is \$0.51 per kw, while they are dumping them at a price of \$0.40 per kw, solely to cause closure of Indian units. The US had to impose 238% antidumping duty on Chinese panels to save its industry. India too may impose all three types of protective duties on cheap Chinese dumpings. The three kinds of duties are the safeguard duty (to save and safeguard domestic industry), the countervailing duty (to offset the Chinese subsidies) and antidumping duty (to prevent dumping at below the domestic costs and prices).

China has acquired 22% share in world manufacturing, even pushing the US at number 2 with mere 17.6% share in world manufacturing, whereas India has only 2.1% share in world manufacturing. By importing Chinese goods worth Rs. 4 lac crores on record and a little less than this of the record or

Title	Table-2		Ratio China: India
	India	China	
1. Active Duty Military Personnel	Regular 1.3 Million	Regular 2.3 Million (World's Largest)	1.8:1
	Reserve 1.1 Million	Reserve 2.3 Million	2.1:1
2. Armoured Strength:			
a. Main Battle Tanks	1500	7950	5.3:1
b. Other Tanks	2400	1200	0.5:1
c. Armoured Fighting Vehicles	6500+	4600+	0.7:1
3. Projectiles:			
a. Self Propelled Guns	290	1710	5.9:1
b. Towed Guns	7500+	6246+	0.8:1
c. Multiple Rocket Launchers	300+	1770	5.9:1
4. Air Force (Fixed Wing Aircraft):			
a. Air Superiority Fighters	370+	662	1.8:1
b. Other/Ground Attack Fighters	258	1115	4.3:1
c. Transport Aircrafts	240+	782+	3.3:1
5. Air Force (Rotary Wing Aircraft):			
a. Helicopters (Including Army)	600+	832+	1.4:1
b. Attack Helicopters (Including Army)	Around 30	240+	8:1
6. Naval Prowess:			
a. Aircraft Carries	1 (with 5 th Gen stealth Aircraft) 6 More to be added	1 (With 4 th Gen Aircraft) 1 Under construction	-
b. Destroyers	10	26	2.6:1
c. Frigates	14	47	3.4:1
d. Corvettes	26	25	0.9:1
e. Submarines	15	68	4.5:1
f. Other Vessels	Around 87	Around 450	5.2:1
g. Air Arm	Fighters 39	Fighters 324	4.4:1
	All Others 91	All Others 245	
	Helicopters 232	Helicopters 114	0.5:1
7. Strategic Missiles	54	In Hundreds	1.9:1
8. Nuclear Missiles	90-100	260+	2.6:1



by under-invoicing. So, we are empowering a formidable enemy like China, by adding Rs. 6-7 lac crores per annum into their GDP or manufacturing, by importing and buying their goods. China is already five times larger economy than Indian economy, with a ten fold higher contribution in the world manufacturing our growing imports and buying of Chinese economy would create even bigger gap. A comparison of some economic indicators is worth mention and is being given in table 1.

Chinese hostilities are perpetuating ever since the installation of

communist regime in 1949 and it has attacked in 1962 and forcibly grabbed 38,000 square kilometer area of in India Aksai China, approximately equivalent to the area of Switzerland, having an area of 41,000 square kilometer. Now, it has been relentlessly committing boarder violations ranging between 150-400 in a year, atrociously terrorizing our citizens residing in the boarder areas, obstructing our entry into prestigious international fora like the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and vetoing our anti-terror proposals in the UNSC.

China has seven times vetoed against India's proposal to get Maulana Masood Azhar declared as an international terrorist, the most dreaded LeT terrorist released after Kandhar plane hijack and who had established Jaish-E-Mohammed, another terrorist outfit. It has also vetoed India's proposal in the UNSC brought against Jammatt-ud dava on 3 occasions, once in case Al-Akhatar Trust once each in cases of Abdur Rahman Makki, Azam Chima, Hizbul Mujahuddin and Salauddin. In these one dozen vetoes no Chinese interest was involved, except to inflict insult and humiliate India.

Recently in this June, China has even begun constructing a road from Doklam in Bhutan (inspite of fierce Bhutani resistance and India's oppositions), to illegally pass through Sikkim and for upto Siliguri, from where it can pose threaten to the chicken's neck, connecting the North-East with the rest of India. It has even, forcibly dismantled two bunkers of Indian army in Sikkim by bulldozers, and our army had to forcibly evict

the Chinese security forces, last month. Moreover, by increasingly buying Chinese goods, we are profusely contributing to the Chinese exchequer, more than what China is spending to create hostilities on Indian boarder.

On a turnover of around 6 lakh crores (4lakh crore on record and 2 lakh crore unaccounted) the revenue contribution to Chinese exchequer from over purchases comes to around Rs. 72,000 crore, if we presume a flat 12% Tax-GDP ratio on Chinese goods. Already, China is much farther in defence preparedness with 2 fifth generation stealth fighter aircrafts in its arsenal, while we are still working on non-stealth 3rd generation fighter and straggling to buy 4th generation Rafale and aspiring to assemble another non-stealth fourth generation fighter F-16. Stealth fighters are those which can evade radar. A comparison of the armed forces of the two is worth mention here, and is being given in table 2.

The Chinese had even diverted water from a tributary of Bramputra in retaliation against our surgical strike in Pakistan, expressing solidarity with Pakistan. China has also been developing the "China-Pak Economic Corridor (CPEC)" and the "One Belt One Road (OBOR)" through Pak occupied Indian Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, defying our objection. Once the OBOR, connecting 65 countries through rail, road and maritime routes with Chinese domain over this new silk route, China would emerge as a more formidable neo colonial super power for the world.

It is worth mention here that Chinese economy at present is in

the worst doldrums, after 25 years of relentless growth, wherein the China has itself estimated lowest ever economic growth rate for 2017, almost after 25 years.

The International Rating Agency Moody has also downgraded Chinese Credit rating, first time in 28 years. Chinese corporate debt has shot up to \$18 trillion, almost equal to 170% of their GDP and the total debt of the Chinese economy is at \$28 trillion, almost equal to 250% of its GDP. At a time, when the US is already going to eliminate, its huge trade deficit of \$350 billion with China and on this occasion, if in India we would also boycott Chinese goods, then the Chinese economy is bound to falter. But, if we would continue to bolster the Chinese economy by purchasing Chinese Products and brands, then this formidable enemy of India and of the global mankind, would be difficult to handle and tame. People, worldwide must be encouraged to boycott Chinese goods, through calls on social media, as China is the largest polluting country in the world, causing worse ever human rights violations not only in the China, Tibbet and Hong Kong but, into several other countries across the Asia and Africa.

So, India can now well pull the trigger to give a decisive blow for precipitate a crisis in the Chinese economy, by boycott of Chinese goods and inspiring people around the world, to curb the hegemony of this neo colonialising Chinese regime, grabbing vast resources in Africa and elsewhere, and for posing serious threat to the environment, global peace, tranquility and human rights violations across the world. □□

Boycott China: Interview with Dr. Ashwani Mahajan

[Shobha Warriar/Rediff.com talked to Dr. Ashwani Mahajan on wide ranging issues linked with Anti China Campaign of Swadeshi Jagran Manch]



The Swadeshi Jagran Manch has been talking about boycotting Chinese products for some time. Now you are pursuing it quite aggressively. Has it got anything to do with the India-China standoff?

For the last 3, 4 years, we have been asking people to boycott Chinese and other foreign goods including products from multinational companies.

Yes, the recent skirmishes in our border areas have added more fire to our movement.

However, this is not the only reason behind our campaign against Chinese goods.

Last year, during Diwali, we campaigned against Chinese firecrackers quite aggressively and it had the desired results. We found that people on their own were boycotting Chinese goods and the sale of Chinese goods declined by 30 to 50 per cent.

We had also requested traders not to import Chinese products. People have been with us and now the general mood is against Chinese goods.

Why are you against Chinese goods?

In 2015-2016, we imported goods worth \$51.7 billion or Rs 420,000 crore from China. This is equivalent to 24 per cent of our total manufacturing output. This is happening through official channels.

Unfortunately, Chinese goods enter Indian mar-

kets not only through legal channels, but also through illegal channels and hawala.

Besides, lot of under-invoicing also happens.

For example, someone may be importing goods worth \$100, but officially it is shown as just \$20.

That's why we say that imports from China is much more than what is officially known.

In effect, it can also be 50 per cent of our manufacturing output and not 24 per cent as is officially said. Is it worth killing our small scale industry and keep our youth unemployed by giving the most favoured nation tag under the WTO (World Trade Organisation) to China?

Seventy per cent of mobile phones sold in India are made in China. Can anyone stop a consumer from buying something that is cost effective?

At the Swadeshi Jagran Manch, we are of the opinion that we are not just consumers, we are also producers. It's okay if we do not produce anything and only consume, but that is not the case.

Indian phones may be compared to those made in China, but you can't ignore the fact that Indian phones are after all made in India.

There is a cycle in the whole thing -- you set up a factory with Indian labour, buy machinery, and produce goods also with Indian labour. These labourers are also consumers. That is why we say there are producers and consumers in this cycle. But when you import, say, phones you are only trading and not providing employment to local people. You are importing equivalent to 50 per cent of your manufacturing output from China. If you can reduce it by half, you can increase your industrial production by 25 per cent, and also employment by 25 per cent.

Is it not like going back to the old days when India had trade walls that did not allow any imports and in that protected Indian market, only Indian products were available?

You must understand that we are not asking to

stop imports completely. We want unequal, dishonest and illogical trade to end. It is not that the Chinese are able to produce cheaper goods; they are actually not cost effective. It's only because the Chinese government is supporting industry and subsidising exports, they are able to sell at a lower price. They are doing this deliberately to kill all industries.

The whole world is their market now...

And the whole world is suffering because of this. Look at this data. The Chinese economy is half that of the US, but the Chinese money supply is double that of the US.

They have four times more money supply than the US. That is because they give undue subsidies to their industry to make their goods cheaper in the international market, thereby killing the US, European and the Indian industries -- in fact, every industry in the world.

This is how China became the manufacturing hub of the world, not by fair means. Other countries have also started talking about stopping Chinese products. There is no other way you can protect your manufacturing industry except by stopping Chinese imports. Because of the decline in demand from the US and European countries, the Chinese economy and the Chinese manufacturing industry is already under recession. With India also calling for a boycott, they are a worried lot now.

If China is the manufacturing capital of the world, India is known as the service capital of the world. Now, if other countries stop using India's services in IT, will it not affect us?

We have to have balanced development. You can't say that we will import all manufactured goods from China while we will provide all the services.

What we are saying is, trade with China has become lopsided and unequal. This has resulted in a huge trade deficit with China.

Yes, you cannot have a balanced trade with countries from where we purchase oil as we do not have oil fields. On the other hand, imports from China have been increasing steadily over the years.

It is not that we are not producing say, electronic or electrical appliances.

What is unacceptable is China is dumping cheap products into our market. We were importing these goods for less than \$1 billion in 1996-1997. By 2015-2016, it has gone up to \$61.7 billion.

Just imagine the jump in the volume of Chinese



What we are saying is, trade with China has become lopsided and unequal. This has resulted in a huge trade deficit with China.

goods in our market. It is not that we have not been producing goods which we are importing now. This has killed our industry.

This is not the case in India alone, it is happening all over the world, and they have realised this and are rising to the occasion. Earlier, China was growing at 15 to 20 per cent and they could absorb all the currencies they were printing.

Now, GDP growth has fallen to less than 5 per cent and the Chinese economy is not in a position to absorb this much currency. The Chinese bubble has already started bursting.

You mean, you are not against import of Chinese products per se but there should be a balance in the trade?

Yes. At the Swadeshi Jagran Manch, we are not against equal or fair trade. But when you are dumping goods, how can it be fair trade?

We are bound by WTO rules, but China was not interested in free trade earlier. It was not a member of WTO in the initial years. When they were confident that they could capture the international market, they joined the WTO. The fact is, they are not interested in free and fair trade.

Chinese firms are today investing in Indian companies. Alibaba has invested in Paytm, Tencent in Flipkart...

We are against that as well.

It shows they are not only interested in our commodity market, they want to capture our service sector too through such investments. That is because they

have plenty of surplus cash with them.

The big question is, should we go for it? We are against Alibaba investing in Paytm. We are against the concessions given to Paytm.

In fact, we want Paytm to close down because of its alliance with Alibaba. We even wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the China Railway Rolling Stock Corporation established a factory in Nagpur. They have bagged the contract to manufacture 69 coaches for the Nagpur Metro and 100 coaches for Kolkata Metro. We do not want them to enter our manufacturing sector, it is dangerous.

The government is wooing foreign companies to invest in India and when somebody is interested in investing money in India and start

ed 1 crore signatures from people supporting the boycott of Chinese goods.

Last time when we spoke, you said you would be happy if there are walls between countries. But no country can manufacture everything its people need; they have to import things they do not have and export the things they make. Don't you think there has to be a movement of goods so that all countries get whatever they want?

I am of the opinion that the world was happier before globalisation.

I say this because the wealth of just 58 individuals is equal to the 50 per cent of the world's population after globalisation.

The world is not a happy place today.



I say this because the wealth of just 58 individuals is equal to the 50 per cent of the world's population after globalisation.

a factory, will it not provide employment?

I don't agree with this argument, as wherever the Chinese have invested, whether it is in agriculture or industries, they do bring in their own people as labour. Also, anything that affects the security of the country, should not be allowed.

China wants to invest in the border areas and the north-eastern part of India.

We have requested the prime minister to cancel the MoUs with the Chinese companies.

Allowing them to have factories in India is more dangerous than Chinese imports.

On the other hand, if you sign an MoU with Indian companies, they are not going to bring in Chinese labour to work here. So, Indian investment is better than Chinese investment.

Through our campaign, we have already collect-

The slogan, globalisation with a human face, is old and the fact is it doesn't have a human face. Regarding movement of goods, Mahatma Gandhi had said, swadeshi is using goods produced in my village.

It has to be like this. If I don't get what I want in my village, I go to the next village. If I don't get them there, I go to the national market. If I don't get them in India, I will get from some other country. But if some country is using unfair trade practices like China, we are against it. We are not against fair trade that does not kill local industries.

Why is it that we are not able to revive our manufacturing sector? It's only because of the import of cheap Chinese products. Unless we stop the dumping of Chinese goods completely, our manufacturing sector will continue to suffer. □□

Courtesy: www.rediff.com



Let us not look at China using Western Lens



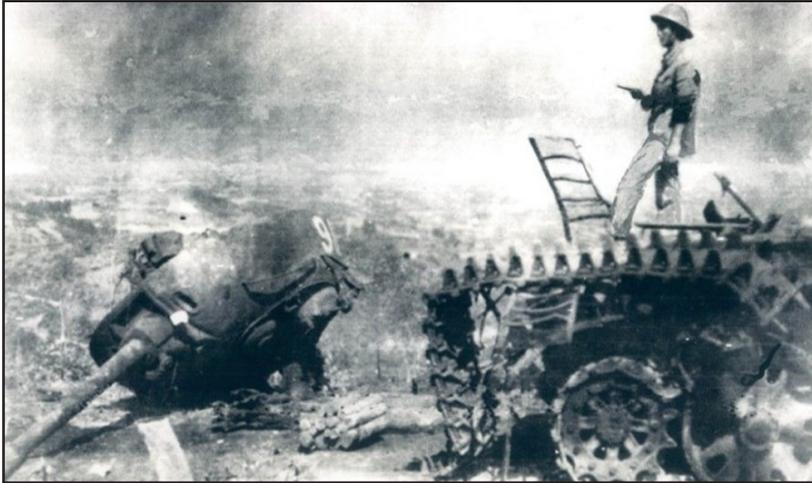
China is at the threshold of change. Many groups and sects from Western countries are trying to spread their influence and message—since this is an opportunity for them, says

Prof. R. Vaidyanathan

July 2014 is an important month for global economics and China. It is the first time in recent history that China has overtaken USA in GDP [adjusted for purchasing power parity or PPP] and has become number one country in the world according to Euromonitor. Now the order is China/USA/India/Japan in terms of GDP at PPP. Of course in per capita terms, USA has ten times more gross income than China given the population size of the latter.

Still China's growth has been phenomenal and in the next two decades, it is poised to become numero uno even in nominal terms out running USA. This has implications for India from an Asian perspective and also we need to formulate our strategy about China. Traditionally in the last few decades, we have been looking at China using US or UK lens. This is due to the fact that we have not developed many China centers all over India. Hence we have few experts who understand their language and try to look at China with Indian glasses rather than Anglo-Saxon lens.

Unfortunately for India—we look at India also using White man's lens since we are genetically wired to them. Our children study in the west and our experts are all trained in the west.



If US say yoga is good for health we will start to practice it. West will decide if China is good or bad and we will follow them!

For the last 000s of years we never had any war with China—Rarest occurrence in the world particularly for the Abrahamic world which thrived on wars and genocide. 1962 was an aberration due to Nehru. In the words of Hu Shih, former Ambassador of China to USA [1938-1942] “India conquered and dominated China culturally for 20 centuries without having to send a single soldier across her borders.” Ship loads of Sanskrit and Pali original works taken away by Chiang-Kai-Shek from mainland to Taiwan bear testimony to it. These are exhibited in the Taipei museum even today.

The major change that is taking place in China is not related to their growth rates and Three Gorges Dam and the shopping malls and Olympics stadia. That is a typical Western way of viewing China. The main change is in religious affiliation and assertion of Islamic followers and development of large scale underground Church. The middle classes have given up rice [perceived to be for the illiterate poor] and are embracing Chris-

For the last 000s of years we never had any war with China—Rarest occurrence in the world particularly for the Abrahamic world which thrived on wars and genocide.

tianity since it also helps in job mobility particularly in global companies where the heads could belong to the same Church. Many Chinese students in the US call themselves Christian names like George or Vincent even if they have not converted. The Muslim population is less dispersed and more concentrated in specific locations like western part.

But there is also a growing interest in China about its past. The Ming dynasty tombs in Beijing which are made in marble were painted in red color during the great cultural revolution of the sixties and even today laborers are washing it to make it back in to white color without success. The guides are not reluctant to talk

about it. The ten handed Buddha in the Summer Palace of Ching dynasty near Beijing has significant relationship with our idea of Lord Vishnu who destroys evil and even this is mentioned clearly.

More importantly, China is opening what are called Confucius Institutes in more than fifty countries which is similar to British Council efforts but more focused on China’s ancient wisdom. . The first thing we should learn is to stop looking at China with Western glasses.

The economic boom in China has given rise to issues related to their faith/religion and associated things. First and foremost, China is facing a severe separatist [called splitters by Chinese] in their western region namely Xinjiang by Uighurs. The region is populated by followers of Islam religion and seeing unrest for the past two decades. But recently it has reached violent proportions. For instance, last year Chinese claimed that at least 100 have been killed in disturbances in that region. Not only that, some portion of the Uighurs has carried the battle to Beijing itself. In other words, one form of regional separation combined with Islamic terrorism has become a major problem in China. There are also reports that the Islamists are taking shelter in the Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK).

On the other hand, China is also waging a battle with “unrecognized” Church in its territory. Once a hub of Christianity, worshippers in Wenzhou fear their faith is facing its biggest threat since the Cultural Revolution. The recent visit of the Pope to South Korea as part of his engaging Asia has fueled concerns in China since China has

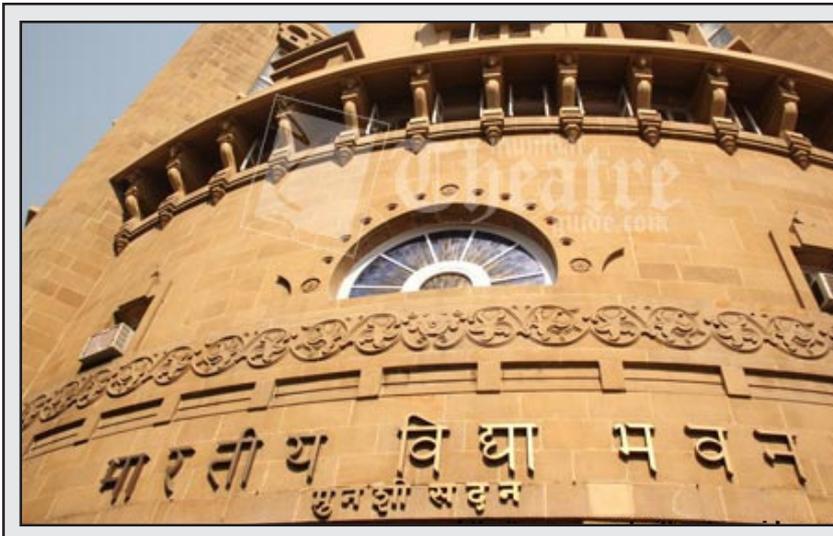
COVER STORY

its own church and does not recognize Papal authority.

“By my calculations China is destined to become the largest Christian country in the world very soon,” said Fenggang Yang, a professor of sociology at Purdue University and author of *Religion in China: Survival and Revival under Communist Rule*. But for China, both the Abrahamic religions are alien to its culture going back several thousand years. So they are trying to revive “Confucianism” by encouraging the study of it as well as opening several centers to prop-

It says that religion can play an important role in realizing a ‘harmonious society’ which is the new political role of the party. That is the main issue we at India should be interested in. A 2007 study conducted by two professors of China Normal University based on more than 4500 people concluded that more than 300 million people namely 31 percent are religious and more than 60 % of those are in the 16-40 age group. The number of followers of Christianity has increased to 12 % from a low of less than 8% in the nineties.

Hence, India should be sending Sri Sri Ravishankar/Mata Amirtanandamayi / Swami Ramdev/ Pramukh Swami/Sankaracharyas/ Vaishnavite Seers and other spiritual leaders, Bharatha Natyam experts, musicians, other artists in hundreds to China to “Conquer and Dominate” by our soft power. We need to print millions of copies of Ramayana and Mahabharata and our Puranas and Gita and Jataka stories in all modern Chinese languages and widely make them available. The CDs of Mahabharata and Ramayana etc.



We should start some fifty Bharatiya Vidya Bhavans in China. Actually China needs this more than USA

agate it. Buddhism is their ancient religion and Hindu influences are significant.

The keynote speech by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China- Hu Jintao to the 17th Party Congress in October 2007 – devoted a paragraph to religion. He stressed that religious people including priests, monks and lay –believers played a positive role in the social and economic development of China. Hence religion is not any more the opiate of the masses. The state controlled Xinhua stresses that there must be freedom of belief.

This last fact is interesting since a huge underground Church has developed in China and Zhao Xiaojiao, a former Communist Party official and convert to Christianity, thinks there are up to 130 million Christians in China. This figure is much more than the official figures of 21 million –16 million Protestants and five million Catholics. If the latter figure is true—which is corroborated by other like Pew Forum –then there are more Christians in China than the Communist Party membership which is pegged at 74 million in the last count.

can also be given free. We should start some fifty Bharatiya Vidya Bhavans in China. Actually China needs this more than USA even though all our soft power is currently on show in the USA. We should create a fund of at least Rs.10000 crore for this effort. There is a statue of Kalidasa in the Shanghai theatre unveiled by the theater academy. I do not think of any metro in India including the so called “cultural capital” Kolkata, having a statue of Kalidasa. At Kolkata, the Theatre Street became Shakespeare Sarani and not Kalidasa Marg!

We should strategically recognize the weak point of China and also the need of its masses in the absence of Communism. Many a Chinese even today believe that their next birth should be in India to reach salvation. Culture and religion are not taboos any more.

There are other issues. Officially China recognizes or permits only five religions namely Buddhism, Islam, Taoism, Protestantism and Catholicism⁷. Hence we should take steps to include Hinduism as one of the permitted religions. The Indian Government should take appropriate steps in this regard. The point is that our soft power in culture is interwoven in a tapestry form with the religion. You cannot separate it howsoever one tries it. Carnatic Music without Bhakti is neither music nor art. But our Government of all hues has never raised this issue with the Chinese.

The strategy should be to envelop China with music, dance, art, Yoga, Ayurveda, spiritual texts like Ithihasas, Gita, Puranas etc and capture the hearts of the middle classes as we have done for centuries.

The second issue is related to our own mind-set. We tend to look at China either through the Western spectacles or through local Marxist spectacles—which have more thick glasses. We need to come out of it. Even when invitations come to Indian spiritual leaders, the Government of India remains unenthusiastic and indicates its dis-interest in the false assumptions regarding China’s political orientation. The policy formulators are still living in the sixties and seventies while as China is undergoing a gigantic social crisis due to material prosperity and spiritual vacuum. Unfortunately, as a Chi-



We must distinguish between Government and society—same way Church does in India.

nese colleague of mine at Shanghai University commented last year, “both our countries are ruled by rootless deracinated foreign educated wonders that do not have any idea of the civilizational roots or the cultural richness of our lands.” Hopefully now it should have changed!!

China is enthusiastically waiting. To quote late B K S Iyengar, the doyen of yoga, “Mr. Iyengar told The Hindu during a visit to Beijing that he saw China as a future home for yoga. When he travelled to Guangzhou to give a lecture, he was stunned to find that organisers had rented out a stadium – more than 1,300 students had come to listen to him”.

But this is the opportunity to us since it is better to have a competitor and neighbor sharing the

past cultural commonness. This will be very useful when the world is going to have two super powers from Asia unlike the conflict of last century between two super powers—USA and USSR- who did not have any shared cultural roots.

It is interesting that by now many Indians are aware that MSM of US/UK peddles lots of lies about India. But when the same rags say something about Chins we swallow it hook line and sinker.

We must distinguish between Government and society—same way Church does in India.

Chinese society is yearning to have good relationship with us. Let us remember that Buddhism is rebel Child of Hinduism—All rebel children are embraced as they grow old and absorbed in the mainstream.

China is at the threshold of change. It is yearning for spiritual solace. Many groups and sects from Western countries [with or without permission] are trying to spread their influence and message—since this is an opportunity for them.

Are we ready to undertake such a mission? Or continue to mouth worn out clichés dished out by NYT and WSJ and Western Governments? □□

China's invasion on Indian Festival Economy



India has the great cultural diversity and called the land of festivals, temples, holistic congregations and *teerth-yatras* (holistic voyage). As per the Upper House of Indian Parliament data India celebrates 51 festivals throughout the year, of which 17 are nationally recognized and remaining 34 are celebrated at regional level and local level. As our Honorable Prime Minister said, our festivals are directly connected with the upliftment of the poor and it drives their entrepreneurship and economic activity. In addition to these festivals, as per 2011 census, we have 2.1 million temples across the country (M.D. Srinivas)

which attracts enormous stocks of wealth through offerings and donations in both cash and kind by the locals and devotees with the utmost faith and trust.

Temples and festivals together boost-up the whole economy, prosper the business and keep Indian economy vibrant through balanced expenditure by the majority, who celebrates the festival with their family members, relatives, neighbors and friends in a blissful environment. Festivals integrate the economy and society into oneness where happiness and sustainable expenditure live together and give the stimulus to the whole market forces which keeps Indian economy away from being sluggish for a long time.

The People of this holy country have rejected the western growth theories and development models particularly J.M. Keynes who encouraged the consumerism in the western societies as well as partially in India owing to adaptation of mixed economic model and demonstration effects. Western growth theories discourage the saving system and pattern; while in India people save money for family functions, social relations, cultural festivals, temple donations, *teerth-yatras* along with precautionary expenditure. 1.28 billion population of this country do needful consumption in sustainable manner especially on auspicious moments and festivals like Dussera, Diwali, Holi and Raksha Bandhan, etc.

Festival economy is rapidly increasing with sizable growth rate year on year as the rising population of this country middle and upper classes. ASSOCHAM estimates that Lord Ganesh Festival generates about Rs. 20,000 Crore business across the Country with 20 percent Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR), particularly in Maharashtra and Telangana. The State Capital of Telangana, Hyderabad alone generates about Rs. 5,000 Crore business in a nine day Ganesh Chaturthi Festival (Lingamurthy) and provides employment for more than 20,000



We must promote Indian manufacturing products during festive seasons and should celebrate Swadeshi Festival with Swadeshi Products, says
Dr. S. Lingamurthy

families throughout the year and during peak season of Ganesh festival (July-September). Around 60,000 people get employment opportunities in unorganized sector such as idol manufacturing sector, transportation sector, event management, flags and apparel manufacturing activities, etc.

Like Ganesh Chaturthi, Goddess Durga Puja festival generates about Rs. 40,000 Crore business in India with 35 percent CAGR, particularly in the State of West Bengal. The size of Durga Puja economy is almost equals to one-third of the West Bengal State Annual Budget. Thousands of families are traditionally involved in idol making activity over the decades across the nation. Many branded electronic companies are involved in sponsoring the Goddess Durga puja pandals in Kolkata and artists from different countries, even from Pakistan come to Kolkata during the festival to give the decorative finishing touches to *Maa Durga*. Event management companies from France and U.S. are engaging in Kolkata in easing the entire activities of advertisements and cultural event programs at Durga Puja pandals. All these artists and event management companies from different countries are capturing the festival economy and profiteering out of these festivals in a significant manner. During nine day Maa Durga Puja festival food and beverages alone generate the volume of Rs. 50-60 crore business in the country.

All the festivals in India encourage the unorganized economy on a large scale and provides massive employment opportunities for low skilled traditional household manufacturing sector and small and micro entrepreneurs. Raksha

Bandhan festival generates about Rs.400/- crore business and provides employment to more than 4,000 families in Gujarat.

During Diwali electronics, automobiles and apperals dominate the lion' share of business. 52 percent of the apparel products sale takes place during this auspicious festival and every individual makes 20 percent additional expenditure for various reasons. According to Tamil Nadu Fireworks and Amorges Manufacturers Association (TNFAMA), crackers industry plays a dominant role with Rs. 10,000 crore business and provides

Festival economy is rapidly increasing with sizable growth rate year on year as the rising population of this country middle and upper classes.

employment to thousands of families of Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu.

India celebrates Kite festival during Uttarayanam period and this festival generates about Rs.500 crore business in the country particularly in Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. Kite industry is traditionally based on household occupation which provides employment to more than 6000 families of Gujarat. By considering the due potential of Kite industry in terms of business and employment, the then Chief Minister of Gujarat promoted this festival as an International Kite Festival through Vibrant Gujarat Programme.

China's onslaught on India's Festival Economy

India is a largest trade partner for Chinese products (nearly \$62 billion) and over the years import of toys, furniture, building hardware, crackers, lighting and electric fittings, furnishing fabric, office stationary, electronic appliances, consumer electronics, kitchen equipment & appliances, gift items, watches etc from China has increased to a great extent. Majority of these items are produced in small and micro industries in India where investment, technology and update skill is lacking. All these products have been largely purchased in India during festive season and the lion share of these products market has been captured by China through large scale dumping into India with cheap price.

ASSOCHAM surveyed on 1,000 families of Holi color manufacturers in different parts of the country i.e., Allahabad, Agra, Hathras, Mathura, Brindavan, Delhi, Kanpur, Lucknow and Patna. It is revealed that 8-10 lakh job losses were happening through Chinese invasion on auspicious Holi festival colors and reported that 75 percent of the colors of China have been used during last year Holi in India. China is also capturing the accessories, plastic products and color sprinkler guns of Holi festival at the worth of Rs. 18,000 Crore.

China overrun illuminous lightings and fireworks during the festival of Diwali. According to the TNFAMA and Industry executives, out of Rs 10,000 crore business of fireworks, 40 percent of the market is captured by Chinese firework products which adversely affects about 2.5 lakh Indian

[Conitnued on page no. 27]

Mansarovar Yatra and Restoring Faith in India-China Relations



The current set of bilateral relations between, India China is not that much in 'good shape', due to recent jostling and standoff between the both at strategically important and until-now obscure Himalayan territory sitting at the intersection of India, China, and Bhutan. As coming out of news reports the exact place of impasse is near the Doka La pass in Doklam near Sikkim. In the meantime, rhetoric in both the countries has reached 'new low' with op-ed writers and commentators taking huge pains to highlight the other side's transgressions.

One of the immediate repercussions of the standoff was China's denial for the entry of Indian pilgrimages on June 23 citing damage to roads, forcing several people to return to Sikkim's capital Gangtok. Given these developments India China relations remains an interesting subject of observation for the scholars of China studies in India and abroad.

The kind of 'preventive engagement' between both sides and still surviving 'trust deficit' has much role to play towards this dynamism. Moreover, the strong 'anti-China constituency' in India often finds rationale with its arguments due these incidents at the border. Unlike the previous incursions this time the escalation of despite has reached new heights.

Meanwhile as the impasse continues, the highest leadership of both the states met at SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization), first such meet after the full time membership was granted to India. While Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India (GoI) noted that both the leaders had discussions on 'range of issues'; the noted Chinese daily noted that, "despite recent frictions at the border the participation of India, reflects that relations remain unaffected by this". However, despite these shortcomings bilateral relations has seen an upswing considering some recent developments in terms of increased cooperation between both on global climate change talks, management of North Korean crisis, stability in Afghanistan, reform in global financial governance system, cooperation under multilateral institutions like BRICS and SCO. Interestingly, the bilateral relations can not be seen only within the framework of 'zero sum game' since both the states are sincerely striving to uphold their 'national interests' which might not often find 'strategic convergence' between the objectives of their conduct of diplomacy.

In the given context of bilateral relations, the successful completion of third successive year of Kailash Mansarovar Yatra 2016, between both would certainly



Though in trouble, reopening of Kailash Mansarovar yatra still can offer new source of cultural synergy and confidence in bilateral relations between India and China, says

Abhishek Pratap Singh

have been a moment of positive significance for bilateral relations. Earlier the yatra used to be conducted via Lipulekh, Uttarakhand pass but the opening of new route via Nathula pass, Sikkim (June, 2015) has been hailed as 'good gesture' from Chinese and in due recognition to the fact of 'building cultural ties' across the Himalayan range.

Kailash, the holy mountain, is located in Tibet, the autonomous Region of China. For Indians, Mansarovar yatra holds key religious and spiritual significance. According to Hindu classical texts and beliefs, a 'holy dip' in the Manasarovar and completion of the parikrama of Mount Kailash makes a devotee absolved of its sins and are liberation from the cycle of birth and death. This experience makes an individual to realize 'state of oneness' causing all 'sensory activities' being ceased to exist. It makes the 'holy unification' with sacred brahmin (*Atman*) the ultimate soul represented by Mount Kailash as lord Shiva.

Both the states had signed a 'bilateral agreement' on the alternative route via Nathula pass during Chinese President Xi Jinping's much 'celebrated visit' to India in September, 2014. While the opening of new route through the Himalayan pass of Nathu La in Sikkim, 4,000 metres above sea level, was officially announced during Prime Minister Modi's visit to China. The border trade via Nathu La pass was opened in 2006 under Vajpayee government.

The new route offers a different experience in comparison to Lipulekh pass, which mostly comprises of tough terrain, inhospitable condition and high trekking.

The new route reduced the 'pilgrimage time' from more than 20 days to about 8 and also enabled pilgrims to travel the 1,500 km-long routes from Nathu La to Kailash by buses. These modalities particularly count for the elderly yatris. Noting the importance of new route, External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj said, "The route via Nathula pass is completely motorable so now people can just take a vehicle to reach there". Moreover, "It is not only a big event for the yatris, but also a milestone in China-India relations", said Le Yuchung, then China's Ambassador to India.

It is well to acknowledge that these 'people centric initiatives' provide strong bonds for interaction between both the 'civilizational states'.

When the yatra began through new route on behalf of the ministry of foreign affairs of China and the Chinese embassy in India, he was personally present there to greet and welcome the first batch of yatris in June, 2015. In addition, Chinese side also offered every yatri from India a 'pilgrimage gift bag', which included dawn coats, hats and blankets in order to facilitate the comfort of yatris. It also witness efforts from Chinese side in the form of building four stay points, necessary makeshift facilities and other related amenities in order to provide the yatris from India a peaceful, clean, comfortable and life learning experience.

It is well to acknowledge that these 'people centric initiatives' provide strong bonds for interaction between both the 'civilizational states'. Interestingly, it also proves to be a new gesture towards consolidation of the cultural foundations and inject 'positive synergy' in China-India relations.

Given the context of present frictions in bilateral relations between both, the reopening of Kailash Mansarovar yatra will surely offer new source of cultural synergy and confidence in bilateral relations between India and China. While China has refused to give reasons for not allowing pilgrims on the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra to cross the border, saying the two foreign ministries were in "communication". There were reports that China might consider opening of yatra in the near future. The rhetorical editorial columns from both sides cannot be allowed to downplay the long term goal of 'developmental partnership' between both the states as desired by their leadership. India firmly believes in 'civil military relations' where Supreme Commandership rests with His Excellency the Presidency of India.

The successful completion of Mansarovar yatra, 2017 will infuse the 'timely contribution' to bring back on track bilateral relations between both. With great power comes great responsibility. China must show the 'strategic maturity' and with a sense of easiness and de-hyphenation in relation to India. To quote great Chinese philosopher *Confucius*, "Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall". □□

The author is Doctoral Candidate, JNU and was recently in Fudan University, Shanghai, China as an Indian Delegate for BRICS Program 2017.

Boom-bust: Record stocks upsurge hint mayhem for banks, economy?

The stock market is booming. It is said to be a global trend despite not so boom in the world economy. Why and how is it happening? Is it real or an indication of a global crash? Whatever goes up comes down, is the stock market dictum. The Indian stock market is on an upswing. It touched the record (it goes on setting such records) 32074 at the Mumbai sensx indicator on July 17, 2017. Though, next day, it fell by 363 points, the highest in seven months. Two days later again it fell by 50 points to close at 31,904. It jumped by 124 points on July 21. The Nifty of the NSE is also in a similar surge-fall cycle. Is it good time for investors? It is difficult to say. Speculative investors put their money during such “boom”, the real investors wait for good time – the bearish phase.

Market experts are awaiting a correction, the euphemism for finding the realistic level, or a fall in the trading. The last week's fall was led by GST Council's decision to impose cess on cigarettes and the largest tobacco company's stocks led the fall. The stock market can be affected if some more shots are fired on the Indo-Pak border or if Doklam stand-off between India and China aggravates. But Doklam as of now may not be the reason. However, there are stock specific concerns as many shares are trading at high valuations. Some are priced so high that these may lead to stagnation.

The Indian economy's high growth rate is touted as the major reason behind the major rally. The belief is that high economic growth should lead to higher earnings and this leads to support of higher prices. But the market also says that nothing can be infinite and prices have a limit to their rise.



A market crash is inevitable. But when will it occur? Nobody can say. If it happens there can be a mayhem,
warns
Shivaji Sarkar



The global markets are in a bull run. That means some people are putting in large sums in the capital market. Does this mean that falling bank interests and inflation lead to improvement in the health of the capital market? If it is so, it is a danger for the economy. It is an indicator that bank deposits are being utilized to buy shares and do speculative trading. Interest rates are low and so are the commodity prices. It means while the common bank depositors are gasping as their interest hedging is coming down, equity market speculators' earning is going up. In other words as the poor suffer, the rich are gaining.

This is a danger both for the economic and sociological factors. Some large companies have come out with results of huge profit in the April-June quarter. It is said that some more may be doing it. While announcing profits, many of these companies carefully conceal their debt in the balance sheet.

In other words, the performance of these groups may further be affecting the health of the banking sector. It may be recalled that two of the worst stock scams – Harshad Mehta and Ketan Parekh – were funded by the public sector banks. The UTI and LIC scams were of similar nature. Public money was lost and the public institutions bore the brunt. The lurking question is whether the better performing equity market would increase bank NPAs.

That the fears are not unfounded is supported by the Comptroller and Auditor General's (CAG) latest report that found that major telecom companies – Bharti Airtel, Vodafone, Idea, Reliance Communications and Aircel – revealed "total understatement

of adjusted gross revenues (AGR) of Rs 60,064.5 crore" between 2010-11 to 2014-15. The CAG says it is for saving taxes. But such understatements are not uncommon. The Satyam had also grossly inflated its statements.

The CAG said that the understatement of AGR was linked to promotional schemes, which included free talk time, discounts as well as non-inclusion of profit from sale of investment. The recent boom in prices is significantly linked to the announcement of many such free schemes by one of the biggest operators.

The government in 2014 had

A strong leadership, political stability and a pro business attitude of government has set a solid ground for future growth.

issued show-cause notices to some of the top telecom firms for under-reporting revenues.

So the fear of bank money being utilized for speculative investments may be real. It means there are larger threats to Indian economy than being perceived. An interesting aspect is that mid-cap and small-cap stocks have seen greater increase in their prices based on "future" earnings growth. If it fails to keep up with expectations, a sharp fall in their prices would be the only possibility. The risk factor is serious as many of these companies lack a strong track record

of sustainable earnings.

India's own macros and micro environmental factors are stable and in a much better shape than it was a few years back, it is often said. A strong leadership, political stability and a pro business attitude of government has set a solid ground for future growth. If all goes well we could be at the beginning of mother of all bull runs. But a lot depends on how demand picks up locally and globally from here in coming years and how fast corporate can translate them into their quarterly results.

Presently, if the CAG report is to be believed much of it is window dressing despite the rules having been made more stringent by SEBI and other government agencies. There are, however, a few positive factors. India is doing better than slow moving Europe and the US, which cannot grow more than 1-2 percent a year. Indian growth is to hover around 7 percent.

The second aspect is that global and domestic liquidity is stated to be high. While the west is awash with cash, in India large amounts of money are flowing into stocks with bank money. Another factor is helping the stock market. It is the underperformance of other assets like gold, real estate and even debt. In short term, the revival of these assets is not foreseen. So the money flows in to the stocks.

The mutual funds are also playing big. They have invested Rs 2,21,033 crore between May 2014 and June 2017. During the past three months itself they invested Rs 26,503 crore. So would not the market fall? A market crash is inevitable. But when will it occur? Nobody can say. If it happens there can be a mayhem. □□

Worry about small industries, not about the banks

The Government is worried about the poor financial condition of the Public Sector Banks. They are beset with inefficiencies and corruption. But the basic problem is that the role of banking in the economy is shrinking, There has been a slowdown in bank credit. An analysis of Reserve Bank of India data shows that bank credit growth in the previous year 2015 was 10.6 per cent. It has grown at a mere 5.1 percent in 2016, which is slowest in the last 19 years.

The first reason seems to lie in the growth of the services sector. The Gross Value Added by the manufacturing sector increased by 32 percent between 2012 and 2017. The Gross Value Added by the services sector increased by 51 percent in the same period. This shows that the engine of growth has now become the services sector. The requirement of capital investments is relatively less in this sector. A software development company needs to invest only in an office and computers. One engineer sitting in front of a computer worth Rs 50,000 can produce software worth many lakh rupees. The requirement of credit is only for working capital such as discounting of bills. A manufacturing company has to invest in a large factory building and machines, in addition to the working capital. There is less demand for bank credit because growth is coming from services sector which does not require huge capital investments.

The second reason for the decline in bank credit is the emergence of a strong bond market. Companies are issuing bonds directly to retail investors to raise the capital for investments. They mortgage their property with the Registrar of Companies. Then they issue bonds to retail investors against this mortgaged property. The investors feel secure because their money is backed by this property. Essentially the same process is adopted by the banks. The company mortgages



The small industries create most employment in the country. This includes small service providers like beauty parlours and hotels as well small manufacturing units, says
Dr. Bharat Jhunjhunwala



its property with the bank. The bank accepts deposits from retail investors and gives that money to the borrowers. However, the banks take a cut of 4 to 5 percent for providing this service. They accept deposits at an interest rate of 7 percent, and lend to the borrowers at an interest rate of 12 percent. They make a profit in the middle. The bond market eliminates the banker as the middleman. The company pays, say, 11 percent and the investor gets 11 percent. It is better both for the borrower and the investor to undertake the transfer of money directly through a bond. Big companies, therefore, prefer to raise the money in the bond market. A report by Livemint says that the share of bank credit in the total flow of financial resources to the commercial sector has dipped to 22% this year from 45% four years ago. The share of the bond market has risen in the same period to 33% from 22% a year ago.

The third reason is that many businessmen have round tripped their incomes and used their own money to meet the capital requirements instead of borrowing from the banks. Say, a businessman has black money of Rs 10 crores. He sends it abroad by Hawala and then brings it back as foreign investment in his own company. He returns the loan taken from the bank. He saves on the interest payments to the bank.

I think the decline in bank credit is fundamentally positive for the country. Our natural resources such as water and iron are limited. Manufacturing is hard on the environment with huge problems of air and water pollution. We are short of energy as well. Manufacturing is increasingly being done with the help of automatic ma-

chines hence there is very little, if any, net creation of jobs. Old factories are employing lesser persons by installing automatic machines. The jobs created in new factories are barely able to make up for the reduction of employment in older factories. The global demand for physical products like cars and clothing is also getting saturated.

The services sector is suited to our resource endowments. It requires more use of mind, the invigoration of which is the strong point of our culture. It requires less use of minerals and energy. Therefore, we are being pushed by circumstances in the right direction despite

The services sector is suited to our resource endowments. It requires more use of mind, the invigoration of which is the strong point of our culture.

ourselves wanting to move in the wrong direction of manufacturing.

We are exporting services such as software and processing of insurance claims, and using the money to import goods, especially from China. This means that there will be more requirement of bank credit in China and also more environment degradation. We should not worry about this because it is fundamentally good for the environment and for the incomes of our country.

The situation of small industries is quite different. They are not able to raise loans through the bond market because of their small size. They continue to be depen-

dent upon the banks. This area is still catered to by the banks. But the policies of the Government have been negative for the small industries. The Government is trying to attract large Multinational companies that produce with automatic machines. These companies kill the market of the small businesses. Demonetization and now GST has made their live very complicated. Thus the small industries are under stress. A report by India Infoline News Service says that loans to large industries decreased by 4.4%, and to small industries declined by 7.4% this year. The small industries create most employment in the country. This includes small service providers like beauty parlours and hotels as well small manufacturing units. Most employment is presently generated in these small units. The decline of credit to this sector therefore should send the alarm bells ringing.

The way forward for the Government requires three steps. One, we should focus on the development of newly emerging services sectors such as health tourism and space travels. Two, we should give substantial protection to our medium and small service providers and industries both from domestic large industries and imported goods made by foreign large industries. Three there is a need to prepare for a much more difficult future for our banks. Their market is shrinking and they will come under increased pressure. The Government must privatize the Public Sector Banks as soon as possible, before they incur higher losses and become unsalable just as the shopkeeper sells the medicines before the expiry date. □□

Author was formerly Professor of Economics at IIM Bengaluru

GM Debate

Why is the Scientific Basis of Genetic Engineering Increasingly Questioned?

Particularly in the context of agriculture and animal husbandry, this technology has far reaching implications as it allows the introduction into plants and animals of entirely new characteristics, including genes originally found in unrelated plants, animals or micro-organisms. This is very different from traditional breeding practices, and we need time to consider all its possible impacts. However the technology is spreading so fast that very adverse consequences can result even before we have the time to understand the implications. At a very early stage of its development this technology has got heavily concentrated in the hands of a few giant corporations which are interested in its quick commercial exploitation to recover their investments and reap profits. In the process, critics fear, very serious and irreversible damage can be caused to our environment, to our food system and to the health of millions of people.

In 1994 several scientists involved in studying the implications and impacts of genetic engineering got together at the International Conference on 'Redefining of Life Sciences' organised at Penang, Malaysia, by the Third World Network. They issued a statement (the Penang Statement, or PS) which questioned the scientific basis of genetic engineering. This statement said :

"The new biotechnology based upon genetic engineering makes the assumption that each specific feature of an organism is encoded in one or a few specific, stable genes, so that the transfer of these genes results in the transfer of a discrete feature. This extreme form of genetic reductionism has already been rejected by the majority of biologists and many other members of the intellectual community because it fails to take into account the complex interactions between genes and their



Supporters of GM claims are a reflection more of arrogance than of scientific analysis,
says

Bharat Dogra



cellular, extracellular and external environments that are involved in the development of all traits.

“It has thus been impossible to predict the consequences of transferring a gene from one type of organism to another in a significant number of cases. The limited ability to transfer identifiable molecular characteristics between organisms through genetic engineering does not constitute the demonstration of any comprehensive or reliable system for predicting all the significant effects of transposing genes.”

In a widely quoted paper titled ‘The Biotechnology Bubble’ Dr. Mae-Wan Ho (who heads Bio-Electrodynamics lab of the Open University in the UK), Joe Cummins (Professor Emeritus of Genetics in Canada) and Hartmut Meyer have summarised the results of several experiments, trials and commercial releases of GMOs. They write : “There are many signs of the problems caused in genetic engineering organisms. For every product that reaches the market, there are perhaps 20 or more that fail. It is particularly disastrous for animal welfare.

- The “superpig” engineered with human growth hormone gene turned out arthritic, ulcerous, blind and impotent.
- The ‘supersalmon’ engineered, again, to grow as fast as possible, with genes belonging to other fish, ended up with big monstrous heads and died from not being able to see, breathe or feed properly.
- The latest clones of the transgenic sheep Dolly are abnormal and eight times as likely to die at birth compared with ordinary lambs.
- Even products that reach the

market are failing, including crops that have been widely planted.

The authors of this widely quoted paper (published in the Ecologist) concluded : “It is important to realise that the failures are not just teething problems. They are very much the result of a reductionist science and a hit or miss technology. The transgenic foods created are unwholesome, because they involve stressing the developmental and metabolic system of organisms out of balance. There are bound to be unintended effects including toxins and aller-

It is important to realise that the failures are not just teething problems. They are very much the result of a reductionist science and a hit or miss technology.

gens, which current risk assessments are designed to conceal rather than reveal. The major problem is the instability of transgenic lines.”

The Independent Science Panel (ISP) is a panel of scientists from many disciplines and countries, committed to the promotion of science for the public good. In a document titled ‘The case for a GMO-free Sustainable World’ the ISP has stated, “By far the most insidious dangers of genetic engineering are inherent to the process itself, which greatly enhances the scope and probability of horizontal gene transfer and recombination, the main route to creating viruses and bacteria that cause dis-

ease epidemics. This was highlighted, in 2001, by the ‘accidental’ creation of a killer mouse virus in the course of an apparently innocent genetic engineering experiment. Newer techniques, such as DNA shuffling, are allowing geneticists to create in a matter of minutes in the laboratory millions of recombinant viruses that have never existed in billions of years of evolution. Disease-causing viruses and bacteria and their genetic material are the predominant materials and tools for genetic engineering, as much as for the intentional creation of bio-weapons.

More recently 17 distinguished scientists from Europe, USA, Canada and New Zealand wrote to the former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh of India warning against “the unique risks (of GM crops) to food security, farming systems and bio-safety impacts which are ultimately irreversible.” This letter adds, “The GM transformation process is highly mutagenic leading to disruptions to host plant genetic structure and function, which in turn leads to disturbances in the biochemistry of the plant. This can lead to novel toxin and allergen production as well as reduced/altered nutrition quality.”

Marcello Buiatti (Plants Genetics Dept., University of Florence), has concluded in an essay, “GMOs-facts and Fiction, “Far from being the new science, which will solve all the problems of humanity in a short time, present day genetic engineering is based on obsolete knowledge and an equally obsolete and wrong conception of life.”

Cesare Gessler, The ETH Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, says, “The products of genetic

engineering today are still at the level of a dinosaur technology. We use genes, which are foreign to a species, not knowing where they are inserted or what else will change in the whole chain from gene to protein.”

Dr. Peter Wills, theoretical biologist, Auckland University, says, “By transferring genes across species barriers, which have existed for aeons between species like humans and sheep, we risk breaching natural thresholds against unexpected biological processes. For example, an incorrectly folded form of an ordinary cellular protein can under certain circumstances be replicative and give rise to infectious neurological disease.”

Robert Mann, biochemist, University of Auckland, says, “The

gene-manipulators claim they can foresee the evolutionary results of their artificial transposing of human genes into sheep, bovine genes into tomatoes, altered bacterial genes into eggplant, etc. But such claims are a reflection more of arrogance than of scientific analysis.”

“Thus, genetic engineering takes artificial combinations of genes that have never existed together, forcibly inserts them into random locations in the host genome and then clones the results; it is clear that the process differs from natural breeding”. -Jeffrey M. Smith in ‘Genetic Roulette’

According to an article in Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering Reviews, “Traditional breeding methods are based upon natural reproductive processes and involve

selection at the level of the organism [breeders choose which plants to cross], the precise orchestration of thousands of genes, relatively infrequent mutations and products that have been selected for safe use over several thousand years. In contrast, GE crop technology abrogates natural reproductive processes, selection occurs at the single cell level [breeders choose which cell to clone], the procedure is highly mutagenic [causing DNA mutations] and routinely breaches genera barriers, and the technique has only been used commercially for 10 years. Furthermore, normal breeding never introduces a cassette of bacterial genes for drug resistance along with strong.... promoters to express foreign proteins at high levels in all parts of the plant.” □□

[Continued from page no. 18]

China's invasion on Indian...

artisans who earn a chunk of their total income during Diwali days.

Apart from crackers, Chinese toys are also impacting the Indian toy industry. According to the ASSOCHAM, the Indian market is full of Chinese toys, so the Indian toy industry is struggling hard to survive. Nearly 40 percent of Indian toy companies have been closed in the last five years, and rest 20 percent are struggling to break even. Cheap Chinese products have become the reason for the shutdown of nearly 60 percent of the industrial units in Bhiwandi and Thane.

China is illegally dumping its products during the festival season into India. As per the Indian pink media, ports in Maharashtra and

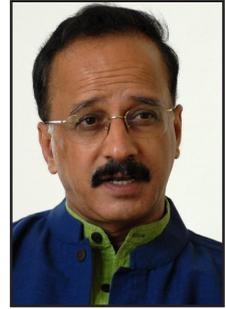
Gujarat were the primary entry points for illegal Chinese crackers entering into India which affected the livelihood of over 500,000 households in Sivakasi and 4,00,000 small factories in West Bengal. There are many instances when China dumped Vinayaka Idols in a large scale at cheap prices to close down the Indian idol manufacturing units and artisan activities.

China has \$52.7 billion trade surplus with India, causing the close down of Indian small scale manufacturing Industry and threatening large scale employment sector. China is supporting Pakistan with CPEC project and investing about \$438 million in Pakistan out of the trade surplus with India.

China is not only looting Indian economy and also supporting Pakistan's terror activities against India and it has been exposed several times in international forums.

Therefore, we need to promote Indian manufacturing sector at a large scale and it is hightime to consume Indian products to counter China. As our Hon'ble Prime Minister appealed to the people of India, we must promote Indian manufacturing products during festive seasons and should celebrate Swadeshi Festival with Swadeshi Products. As our beloved PM said, “Let us pledge that by 2022, when we mark 75 years of Independence, we would takt the nation to greater heights of progress. Let us commit ourselves as an individual, as a citizen, as a society and organization that we would contribute for betterment of the country” through encouraging swadeshi philosophy and economy. □□

“Farmers are dying not because crop productivity is low”



*If the government is willing to change the credit culture in our country and give a leg-up to farmers, it will help transform millions of lives and fuel economic growth, award-winning agricultural expert **DEVINDER SHARMA** tells **RASHME SEHGAL***

Tamil Nadu farmers had been protesting for 41 days in the capital and demanding a Rs 40,000-crore drought relief package and farm loan waiver as also the setting up of the Cauvery Management Board. The government has so far not come forward to okay this financial package. Is this because of paucity of funds?

Tamil Nadu farmers have brought the plight of the farmers onto the national scene. Agriculture throughout the country has been faced with grave difficulties for the past few decades and successive governments have failed to do much, simply trying to push the crisis under the carpet. Over the past 21 years, as per the National Crime Record Bureau, more than 3.18 lakh farmers have committed suicide. The serial death dance on the farm has continued unabated, a stark reminder to the dark underbelly in a country which claims to be on a growth trajectory. The demand of the Tamil Nadu farmers to waive Rs 40,000 crore is clearly indicative of how deeply indebted farming has become over the years. People living in cities can't even imagine the extreme distress that prevails in several parts of India reeling under continuous drought for several years now. Parts of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Jharkhand, and Bihar have somehow been surviving with droughts continuing for as many as six to seven years at a stretch. What shocks me is that even in Bangalore, people have no idea of the extent of drought prevailing just 50 km away from the mega-city. That's the kind of disconnect that exists between India and Bharat.

The economic crisis farmers are facing is compounded by the denial of a rightful income to farmers for their produce. To keep food inflation under control it is the farmers who have paid the price. What we don't realize is that it is the farmers who have been subsidising the nation all these years.

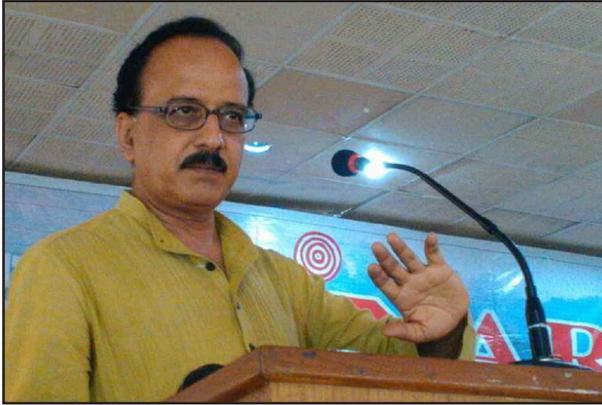
Farmers are in distress throughout the coun-

try, be it in Karnataka, Punjab, Maharashtra or UP. Why has the situation reached these extreme levels and what can be done to reverse this trend?

The Economic Survey 2016 had clearly pointed to the severity of the prevailing agrarian crisis. Accordingly, the average annual income of a farm family in 17 states of India is a paltry Rs 20,000. This means, the average monthly income for a farm household in these 17 states is less than Rs 1,700. I shudder to think how farmers survive with such meagre income. Most of us who live in cities have a monthly mobile bill exceeding this. I thought this revelation alone should have shocked the country and forced policy planners to undertake immediate steps to address the grave tragedy. But unfortunately, nothing of that sort happened.

Except for routine lip-service, I don't see any concrete measures being spelled out. In fact, what is being proposed by Niti Aayog as solution to this vexed crisis clearly shows how misplaced the emphasis is. The solutions that Niti Aayog suggests shows our planners can't even think beyond what is prescribed in textbooks. Increasing crop productivity, expanding irrigation and reducing the cost of production as the way forward actually show that our economists haven't learnt any lesson from the farm debacle.

Let me make it clear. Farmers are dying not because crop productivity is low. They are dying even in those areas where productivity is the highest in the world. Take the case of Punjab, where 98 per cent of the cultivable land is under assured irrigation. The productivity of wheat is 45 quintals per hectare, the highest in the world; and for paddy at 60 quintals/hectare, it is close to the 67 quintals/hectare of paddy productivity in China. With such high yields, amongst the highest in the world, and with 98 percent assured irrigation, Punjab farmers should have done remarkably well. But unfortunately what is not known is that



there is hardly a day when two or three or four farmers don't commit suicide. Punjab has now turned into a suicide hotspot. The problem, therefore, is not one of low productivity but that of lack of remunerative and assured farm incomes. But if you look at the policy direction, all thrust is on production alone.

In Punjab, 98 percent of rural households are in debt, and in 94 per cent cases the expenditure is more than the income they get. It clearly shows that the economic prescription being doled out to pull the farmers out of the crisis is simply flawed. In any case, the people who have been at the helm of affairs when the agrarian crisis was building up cannot be expected to provide the right solutions.

Yogi Adityanath waived the farmers loans in UP. This led the Reserve Bank governor and others to complain that writing off loans on this scale would hurt the credit culture of the country. But the distress of the farmers can be seen from the fact that the Tamil Nadu farmers had brought the skulls of dead farmers along with them to protest government apathy and were willing to drink their own urine and eat faeces to highlight the enormity of their problems.

I was very disappointed to read RBI governor Urjit Patel's statement when he said that farm loan waivers disrupt an honest credit culture. I have never understood why only farm loan waivers hurt the credit culture. Why is it that the corporate loan waiver is seen as a step towards economic growth whereas cancelling the outstanding loans of poor farmers is considered wrong? Chief economic advisor Arvind Subramanian has gone on record saying that corporate loans have to be written off, adding that this is how capitalism works.

These are double standards. We cannot have a dual approach when it comes to corporate loans ver-

sus farm loans. In the three-year period, between 2013 and 2016, more than Rs 17-lakh crore worth of tax concessions have been given to the corporate sector. Despite these massive tax concessions, and numerous other instances of economic largesse under the ease of doing business including land acquisitions at a heavily subsidized price, a newspaper reported that as much as Rs 7-lakh crore has either been written off or re-structured in the past few years. Is that honest credit culture? The Public Accounts Committee of Parliament estimates Rs 6.8-lakh crore to be the accumulated bank default of which 70 per cent belongs to corporate and only 1 per cent caters to farmers. India Ratings tells us that more than Rs 4 lakh crore of NPAs is expected to be waived in the near future.

Yogi Adityanath has taken a remarkable step by writing off Rs 36,359-crore of outstanding loans, which will benefit over 92-lakh small and marginal farmers. This is not only good politics but also good economics. Andhra Pradesh/Telangana has already written off Rs 50,000-crore farmer loans. Maharashtra is toying with the idea of waiving Rs 30,500-crore farm loans, and Punjab is under pressure to waive Rs 36,000-crore farm loans. Add all these figures, and they still equal Rs 1.5 lakh crore, the total value of NPAs that the steel industry alone is seeking to be cancelled.

Should the credit culture of industry and corporate houses be compared to agriculture? It seems to me that both sectors are in distress. The fact is that the impact of a distressed agricultural sector is also felt by the manufacturing sector.

Yes, there is no economic rationale in looking at farm loans and corporate loans separately. Both the corporate sector and farmers take loans from the banks. We cannot make exemptions for the rich and penalize the poor. This is bad economics. But the credit culture is so disguised that people fail to see how cleverly it is designed to help the corporates. When it comes to farm loans, the finance ministry wants the state governments to underwrite the write-off. The argument is that since agriculture is a state subject, states have to take responsibility. But when it comes to the corporates, the banks do not need the state's nod to strike down the bad debt. Why these exemptions for the corporate loan waiver? After all, industry, too, is a state subject and going by the norm the states should be asked to underwrite the waiver.

Let me illustrate. Maharashtra has outstanding

Interview

farm loans of Rs 30,500 crore that it is struggling to waive. The bad debt of Essar Steel, according to media reports, exceeds Rs 33,000 crore. The corporate office of Essar Steel is in Mumbai, and I don't find the RBI asking Maharashtra to stand guarantee for the steel giant's bad debt waiver. This is grossly unfair. The state should therefore refuse to underwrite farm loans. Just like the corporate loans, banks should be directed to write off farm loans without disrupting the state's finances.

Part of the problem in agriculture is fragmented land holdings, dependence on an erratic monsoon, high cost of/ seeds and fertilizers and, of course, the impact of climate change. How do farmers deal with a slew of these problems? Are we reaching a stage where agriculture will have to be subsidised in the way it is being subsidised / in the West?

There is no denying that agriculture faces a number of problems. Fragmented land holdings are certainly a major cause for worry. But still I don't see any reason why farmers should be pushed out of agriculture. It was in 1996 that World Bank directed India to move 400 million people out of agriculture into the urban sectors. This was to be accomplished in the next 20 years, by 2015. Successive governments have only been following the economic prescription blindly. The argument has been that no other developed country has been able to grow with such a large population engaged in farming.

Former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan had said that the best reform would be when we are able to move out the bulk of the farming population into the cities. In other words, agriculture is being sacrificed to keep economic reforms going. No wonder, the public sector investments in agriculture have been deliberately pruned. In the 11th Plan period, a total of Rs 1 lakh crore was invested in agriculture in the five years. In the 12th Plan period, it was raised to Rs 1.5 lakh crore. The tragedy is that MNREGA's budget is more than the total investment in agriculture, which employs 60 crore people.

The point I am trying to make is that agriculture has been deliberately kept impoverished all these years.

In the long run, can we go on writing off agricultural loans indefinitely?

Loan waiver is only a temporary relief. The bigger challenge is to ensure that farmers don't relapse into debt again. This can only be made possible if the

focus of economic reforms shifts to agriculture. I am of the firm opinion that at a time when the world is witnessing a jobless growth, and when all developed countries are faced with an economic slowdown from which there seems to be no way out, only agriculture can reboot the economy. Only agriculture can provide an ever-lasting solution to the demographic disaster that awaits the major economies. Imagine if the 60 crore people engaged in farming, directly and indirectly, were to get more income in their hands. It would send the economy galloping. More income will create more demand, which means the wheels of industrial growth will kickstart. A profitable agriculture will reduce the pressure on cities, and will bring back some sanity to enable planners to restore global warming to manageable levels. This, I think, should be the



foundation of Sabka Saath Sabka Vikaas.

Linked to this is the/ key question that India is fast losing its water resources largely through mismanagement. The result is that the southern states are facing the worst drought in the last 100 years and more.

The environmental disaster that the world is witnessing—and India is no exception—is also the outcome of the policies underlying economic growth. The commodification of natural resources, including water, has taken its toll. Global warming is already drawing a collective stand among nations. But unfortunately, while international agreements on restricting soaring temperature, which also has its impact on water mining, are keeping the international community actively involved, I don't see much hope unless the G-20 group of countries makes a sincere effort to make urgent corrections to the economic policies that pushes for higher growth.

As an agricultural expert, what are the im-

mediate steps you believe the government must take to help the agricultural sector?

We tend to forget that the farmer is also an entrepreneur. The only limitation has been that unlike the huge support provided for urban entrepreneurs like Start-Up India, farmers have remained largely neglected. Since the underlying effort has been to encourage migration from rural areas, rural youth has not received an equal amount of support. I, therefore, suggest a three-pronged approach to tackle the continuing agrarian crisis:

1. Write off the bad debt in agriculture. This will enable the farmer to emerge out of the burden of indebtedness that he has been pushed deeper and deeper into. Unless he emerges free, there is no way farming can be turned into a profitable venture. The parliament has estimated that Rs 12.50 lakh crore is the level of farm indebtedness that prevails.
2. Provide farmers with a profitable price. The Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) fixes minimum support price (MSP) for 23 crops, but procures only two crops—wheat and rice. The government must announce procurement for all the 23 crops for which MSP is announced. It must also re-designate the CACP as the Commission

for Farmers Income and Welfare, with the mandate to provide an assured monthly package to farmers. I see no reason why farmers' monthly income should be around Rs 1,700 per month whereas the chaprasi gets a basic salary of Rs 18,000 per month.

3. At present, only six percent farmers get the benefit of MSP. Ninety four percent of farmers are dependent on the markets. If these markets were efficient, there is no reason why farming should have been in a terrible crisis. The focus, therefore, should be to expand the network of APMC mandis, to set up a regulated mandi in 5-km radius. This would require investments to expand the existing network of 7,000 APMC mandis to 42,000 mandis. This expansion must also include setting up warehouses and godowns in at least 50 prominent locations spread throughout the country. The country has failed to manage surplus, often forcing farmers to dump tomato/potato crops onto the streets, and it is here that infrastructure development is desperately required. This has to be followed up by various initiatives to provide cheaper credit, land and other measures to prop up agriculture. □□

(Courtesy: <http://www.apnlive.com/india-news/farmers-dying-not-crop-productivity-low-15343>)

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Monsanto sway in Agriculture Ministry



In a shocking development, officials of the Union Ministry of Agriculture deliberately failed to submit the Government of India's views on the Indian Patent Act and Protection of Plant Varieties & Farmers' Rights Act, 2001 (PPV&FR) before the Delhi High Court closed for vacations on June 5, in a case in which the judgement could impact multiple litigations in which the Centre is involved, regarding seed patents and transgenic traits. Any ruling delivered without knowledge of the Centre's views on points of law and interpretation in this matter could adversely affect the Indian farmer and consumer.

The case in question is a dispute between Monsanto Technology & others vs. Nuziveedu Seeds Ltd. & others, and the Delhi High Court has completed hearings in the matter. Hence it was imperative that the Union Government's views be submitted to the Court in writing, before it closed for vacation on June 5, 2017.

The lapse is inexcusable because the Proposed Affidavit and Written Submission were prepared well in advance by Additional Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, and discussed and finalised with joint secretary R.K. Singh and deputy commissioner D.S. Misra of the Ministry. An Application was sent for affirmation by Shri Sunil Mathews, Advocate. Despite this, the concerned officials made no move to submit the prepared Written Submission, Affidavit, and Application, which action lay within the sole purview of the Ministry as the Government of India cannot be party to a dispute between two private parties.

RSS think tank Swadeshi Jagran Manch called the development a major blow to India's fight against seed monopolies. In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on July 21, co-convenor Ashwani Mahajan urged that despite this setback, the Government of India should file the written submissions on questions of law, even if the Division Bench has begun to write the judgment during vacations in the absence of the government's legal stand, because the judgement has not been delivered so far.

Essentially, the case involves a dispute over royalties of Bt Cotton seeds, between Monsanto Technology & others vs. Nuziveedu Seeds Ltd. & others.

BT Cotton Seed prices have been a contentious issue in India for over a decade and some State Governments and farmers associations had complained to the then existing MRTP Commission. Some State Governments enacted their own laws to regulate cotton seed prices and the 'trait value' to be levied. This led to a situation in which every State fixed the cotton seed prices for its own State while Monsanto Technology fixed different 'trait values' for different States even as it challenged the said enactments by claiming patent rights.

Given the adverse effects on Indian farmers, the Government of India in-



This failure to file submissions on the issue of 3(i) is probably the first major act of subversion of governmental objectives by officers of a Union Ministry, asserts Sandhya Jain

tervened in their interest and promulgated the Cotton Seeds Price (Control) Order, 2015 [CSPCO] under the Essential Commodities Act, to fix the price of cotton seeds including 'trait value', which would be uniformly applicable across the country, and would also regulate the one sided monopolistic licenses agreements signed with Indian seeds companies, which were hurting Indian farmers economically.

The Union Ministry of Agriculture also filed a reference before the Competition Commission of India [CCI] against Monsanto and its subsidiaries for anti-competitive business practices. The CCI found a strong prima facie case of violation of Section 3 and 4 of the Competition Act and directed an investigation vide order dated 10 February 2016 against Monsanto and its subsidiary companies and the persons involved.

Simultaneously, Monsanto launched a spate of litigations by itself or through subsidiary companies before various forums, challenging the constitutional validity of Cotton Seeds Prices [Control] Order, 2015 in Writ Petition No.12069 of 2015 before the High Court of Delhi. Tushar Mehta and Sunil Mathews, advocate, appeared and filed a detailed reply on behalf of the Government of India.

As the Delhi High Court did not give Monsanto any interim relief in the writ petition filed by its subsidiary company, a petition (Writ Petition No.15173) was filed before the High Court of Karnataka at Bangalore by an Association sponsored by Monsanto. Initially, the company secured an ex parte stay, which was later vacated by the High Court of Karnataka. The

Any view that the Court might take on the question of law on exclusions from Section 3(j) of Indian Patents Act will have nationwide ramifications on agriculture

Government of India intervened and even the appeal filed by the said Association (Writ Appeal No.1125 and 1126 of 2016) was dismissed.

Monsanto and its subsidiary companies have also filed writ petitions against the investigation ordered by the CCI, which are pending before the Delhi High Court.

Sources said that when the Addl. Solicitor General learnt of the appeal before FAO(OS) (COMM.) No. 86 of 2017 filed by Nuziveedu Seeds & others, he studied the matter to ascertain whether any interpretation of law given by Delhi High Court in these proceedings could impact the legal stand of the Union of India in other pending litigations.

Mehta came to the conclusion that while the Government of India does not have any locus standi in disputes between two private parties, there are several legal questions raised by both parties which rest on interpretation of the Indian Patent Act and Protection of Plant Varieties & Farmers' Rights Act, 2001. Hence, any decision arrived at by the High Court on the interpretation of law and especially regarding interpretation of Section 3(j) of the Indian Patent Act (which says seeds and life forms cannot be patented) and the applicability of PPV&FR Act for trans-

genic plants, will directly impact pending matters in which the Union Government has taken or will have to take a specific stand on legal interpretation of various provisions being considered in FAO(OS) (COMM) No.86 of 2017.

Accordingly, the Written Submission prepared for the Agriculture Ministry clearly stated that the law laid down in FAO(OS) (COMM) No. 86 of 2017 can be extended to other crops like rice, wheat, soyabean, groundnut etc. and even animals like chicken, pig, sheep, goat etc., wherever a transgenic trait is introduced. Indeed, that is why it was so important that the Delhi High Court be informed of the Centre's interpretation of law.

Any view that the Court might take on the question of law on exclusions from Section 3(j) of Indian Patents Act will have nationwide ramifications on agriculture, farmers and the entire population as their food security would be impacted by monopolies on seeds and plants. As India has nearly 600 million farmers and agriculture accounts for over 26 per cent of the nation's capital GDP, the legal issue before the Court cannot and should not be decided without the stand of the Government of India being put on record regarding questions of law (and avoiding the dispute between private parties).

This failure to file submissions is probably the first major act of subversion of governmental objectives by officers of a Union Ministry. It remains to be seen what action the Centre takes against officials who have humiliated it before the High Court and risked the future of lakhs of Indian farmers and consumers. Their moral laxity & culpable negligence is self-evident. □□

Monsanto Gives up Fight for GM Plants in Europe



The world's largest producer of seeds, Monsanto, has apparently given up on attempts to spread its genetically modified plant varieties in Europe. A German media report said the firm would end all lobbying for approval. The world's largest producer of seeds, Monsanto, has apparently given up on attempts to spread its genetically modified plant varieties in Europe. A German media report said the firm would end all lobbying for approval.

The German newspaper "taz" reported Friday that US agriculture behemoth Monsanto had dropped any plans to have farmers grow its genetically modified (GM) plant varieties in Europe.

Monsanto Europe spokesman Brandon Mitchener was quoted as saying the company would no longer engage in any lobbying for such plants on the continent, adding that at the moment the firm was unwilling to apply for approval of any GM plants.

Monsanto said its decision was partly based on low demand from European farmers. "We've understood that such plants don't have any broad acceptance in European societies," Monsanto Germany spokeswoman Ursula Lüttmer-Ouazane commented. "We haven't been able to make any progress over the years, and it's counter-productive to tilt against windmills," she added. (<http://www.dn.com/>)

India's economy to grow faster than China: IMF

India will stay ahead of China in growth sweepstakes in 2017 as well as 2018, said the International Monetary Fund (IMF) while retaining the country's GDP forecast at 7.2 per cent for the current fiscal. According to IMF's World Economic Out-

look Update, India's growth is projected to accelerate to 7.7 per cent in 2018-19, from 7.2 per cent forecast for 2017-18. While the IMF has retained India's growth estimate as provided in the World Economic Outlook (WEO) in April, in the case of China, the forecast has been marginally raised to 6.7 per cent in 2017 and 6.4 per cent in 2018 from earlier projections.

India, however will continue to grow faster than China in 2017 as well as 2018. Growth in India, the multilateral agency said, is forecast "to pick up further in 2017 and 2018, in line with the April 2017 forecast. It added: "While activity slowed following the currency exchange initiative, growth for 2016 — at 7.1 per cent — was higher than anticipated due to strong government spending and data revisions that show stronger momentum in the first part of the year." (<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>)

Trade deficit with China a matter of concern: Govt

Amid call for boycott of Chinese goods in India from certain quarters including RSS and its associated outfit Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM), the government on Monday said the trade deficit with China was a matter of concern and the issue had been raised with Chinese authorities at the highest level.

"Trade deficit with China is a matter of concern. We are discussing the issue with China for greater access for Indian products and services in the Chinese market," commerce minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in response in Lok Sabha. China tops the list of 25 countries with which India had trade deficit in the last three years. The other countries include Switzerland, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and South Korea.

Sitharaman said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had raised the issue with Chinese authorities and the government was working to reduce the trade deficit with China. The minister's remarks came at the time when the SJM has started a campaign against Chinese goods and launched a signature campaign to support its demand. The Manch claimed that it had received support from people across the country in good numbers. The SJM's campaign will conclude on October 29 with a rally in Ramlila Ground here.

RSS mouthpiece Organiser also spoke about the Sangh's move to launch a nation-wide mass awareness drive against China-made products between August 1 and 15. Speaking about overall trade, Sith-

araman said India exported merchandise and services worth \$230.36 billion between December 2016 and May 2017 to various countries. Of the total exports, in May, India exported merchandise and services valued at \$37.44 billion, which was 4.40% more than the previous month (April), she said. She said the government had taken a number of steps to overcome the trade deficit. (<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/>)

Beware of GM Mustard, and glufosinate tolerant GM crops



Glufosinate is as dangerous as glyphosate for our biology – not just because of its toxicity, or because of whatever else they put into the herbicide package, but also because glufosinate, like glyphosate, is an analog of (mimic of) one of the canonical twenty amino acids that are the basic building blocks of all life, from bacteria onwards to humans. Glufosinate is an analog of glutamic acid, while glyphosate is analog of glycine. Both Glycine and glutamic acids are two out of twenty amino acids that all life is made of.

And, our immune system is unable to distinguish between glufosinate and glutamic acid. Therefore, if it (glufosinate) is in our food, which it will be if the herbicide is used in agriculture, then it gets into our blood, and apart from whatever else trouble it, and its associate chemicals packaged into the herbicide brand, can cause through direct toxicity, glufosinate will also cross our blood-brain barrier, like a Trojan horse, or a spy, simply because it mimics glutamic acid which we are programmed to use and allow in. Then it proceeds to contaminate a whole swatch of our biology because it is picked up, in place of glutamic acid, to create many byproducts into our biology including thousands of kinds of proteins that were originally supposed to have glutamic acid. These proteins with glufosinate, instead of glutamic acid or its

byproduct glutamine, will mis-fold, mis behave or render the protein dysfunctional – a trigger to all kinds of health hazards and illness.

Scientist Anthony Samsel of Deerfield, New Hampshire, USA, who has been studying glyphosate and its ability to penetrate our inner biology by mimicking glycine, speaks here with me, about the similar danger glufosinate poses to all living creatures, and how countries like India should be careful not to allow registration of GM crops that are designed as tolerant to glufosinate. (<http://www.tonn.org/>)

Fake Chinese spares for indigenised Bofors guns: CBI FIR

China-made parts camouflaged as ‘Made in Germany’ found their way to the production line of indigenised Bofors guns used by the army, prompting the CBI to file a case against a Delhi-based company. Besides Sidh Sales Syndicate, the CBI also registered a case against unidentified officials of the Guns Carriage Factory (GCF), Jabalpur, under criminal conspiracy, cheating and forgery for supplying fake and cheap China-made spares passing off as Made in Germany for Dhanush guns, the FIR alleged. Dhanush is the indigenised version of the Bofors artillery guns which performed exceedingly well during the Kargil conflict in 1999. The CBI alleged that the supplier entered into criminal conspiracy with the unidentified GCF officials to supply duplicate spare parts (bearings) used in the manufacture of Dhanush guns.

“In furtherance of the said criminal conspiracy, unknown officials of GCF accepted the Chinese manufactured ‘Wire Race Roller Bearings’ supplied by Sidh Sales Syndicate which were embossed as ‘CRB-Made in Germany’,” the CBI said in the FIR.

The agency said production and performance of the Dhanush gun is extremely crucial for India’s defence preparedness and “wire race roller bearing” is its vital component. A tender was floated for the procurement of four such bearings according to the Rothe Erde drawing for 155 mm gun in which four firms had participated. The order was given to Sidh Sales Syndicate at the value of Rs 35.38 lakh in 2013, the FIR stated. The order was further increased to six bearings at the cost of Rs 53.07 lakh on August 27, 2014. The company supplied two bearings each on three occasions between April 7, 2014 and August 12, 2014.

The company submitted ‘certificates in origin’

showing the bearings were procured from CRB Antriebstechnik, Germany. They were also embossed with the label, CRB-Made in Germany. GCF tests showed that the bearings were unacceptable due to deviations in dimensions. (<http://www.newindianexpress.com/>)

India increases Amazon's international losses five fold to \$724 million in Q2



Amazon founder Jeff Bezos may have lost the tag of the 'world's richest man' he held briefly for a few hours on Thursday, following the company's second quarter results, in which net income plummeted to \$197 million from \$857 million in second quarter 2016. But Indian users had reason to cheer as the company again indicated that India will be its biggest focus outside North America and also talked of investments in Echo devices and the Alexa platform for India. International losses, fuelled by Amazon's aggressive India growth, grew to \$724 million from \$481 million in Q1 and \$135 million in the second quarter of 2016. One of the large spends in India came from video content, with Prime Video also launching its first Indian Amazon Original, Inside Edge, the first of 18 Indian Original Series. The web series was mentioned by Bezos in the financial results.

"We continue to invest in India. We're very hopeful with the progress we've made with sellers and customers alike in India and we see great momentum and success there, so we continue to invest and we have some of our best people in that business," Chief Financial Officer Brian Olsavsky said when asked about rank order in terms of geographies and category expansion with respect to international margins. Overall for the first six months of the year, the losses from the international business were \$1.206 billion as compared to \$255 million in 2016 during the same period. (<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/>)

SJM urges PM to save farmers from Monsanto's onslaught

Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make necessary interventions to save farmers from the onslaught of Monsanto. In a letter to Modi, SJM national co-convenor Dr Ashwani Mahajan has expressed apprehensions over the wide ramification of Union Agriculture Ministry's failure in placing the Central government's views on the Indian Patent Act and Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001, before Delhi High Court in case between Monsanto Technology and others versus Nuziveedu Seeds Ltd and others'

Dr Mahajan says that 'the intervention by the Union of India was important to place on record the legislative intent in the provision under Section 3(j) of the Indian Patent Act and Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001, and any decision by the High Court will necessarily impact all litigations in which the Centre is a party nullifying its actions taken against Monsanto in the interest of the farmers. This is unfortunate because, to the best of our knowledge and understanding, the proposed affidavit and written submission had been prepared well in advance by Additional Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, and discussed with joint secretary R K Singh and Deputy Commissioner D S Misra of the Ministry, before he went on a brief vacation.'

"We understand that the Department was aware that the hearing of the said appeal had been concluded by the Division Bench and that written submissions were required to be filed before June 5, 2017. Further, an application was sent for affirmation by Sunil Mathews, Advocate. Despite this, no action was taken by the Ministry. This development is a major blow to India's fight against seed monopolies. However, we feel that despite this setback, the Government of India should file written submissions regarding questions of law related to patenting of seeds while avoiding the internal dispute between the two companies. We are conscious of the fact that the Division Bench could have begun to write the judgment in appeal during vacations in the absence of the legal stand of the Government of India, but nevertheless, an attempt should be made to place Government's stand on record," adds Dr Mahajan in the letter.

It is worth mentioning that B'T cotton seed prices have been a contentious issue in the country for

over a decade and some state governments and farmers associations had approached the then existing MRTP Commission. Some state governments enacted their own laws to regulate cotton seed prices and the 'trait value' to be levied. This created a chaotic situation in which every state fixed the cotton seed prices for its own state while Monsanto technology fixed different 'trait values' for different states even as it challenged the said state enactments by claiming its patent rights.

Dr Mahan states in the letter that "the Union Ministry of Agriculture has filed a reference before the Competition Commission of India (CCI) against Monsanto and its subsidiaries for their anti-competitive business practices. CCI found a strong prima facie case of violation of Section 3 and 4 of the Competition Act and directed an investigation vide order dated 10 February 2016 against Monsanto and its subsidiary companies and the persons involved. Simultaneously, Monsanto launched a spate of litigations by itself or through subsidiary companies before various forums, challenging the Constitutional validity of Cotton Seeds Prices (Control) Order, 2015 in writ petition No.12069 of 2015 before the High Court of Delhi."

"While the Government of India does not have any locus standi in contractual disputes between the two private parties, there are several legal questions raised by both parties which are based upon the interpretation of the Indian Patent Act and Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001. Thus, any decision that the High Court arrives at on the interpretation of law and especially regarding interpretation of Section 3(j) of the Indian Patent Act (according to which seeds and life forms cannot be patented) and the applicability of PPV&FR Act for transgenic plants, will directly impact the decisions taken by the Govt. for the welfare of the farmers," says the letter. (<http://shoonya.in/>)

Ignoring OBOR, India and Japan forge ahead with joint connectivity project

China may not have forgiven India for snubbing its mega trans-continent corridor initiative, but in what may rankle more is that New Delhi and Tokyo, Beijing's arch rival, are pushing ahead with a development corridor between Asia and Africa.

The announcement of the Asia Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC), made by Prime Minister Naren-



dra Modi during the African Development Bank (AfDB) meet in Gandhinagar in May, came days after China hosted with great pomp the first One Belt One Road (OBOR) summit in Beijing. The venture is expected to get further impetus in September during the visit of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

India has been involved in Africa for many years, in trade as well as capacity-building activities. Japan, which has been working on infrastructure projects in Africa, can help with its advanced technology as well as funds for the AAGC. Japan is reportedly planning to commit \$200 billion for the proposed growth corridor. So, is the AAGC meant as a counter to OBOR?

"The two are completely separate. OBOR is different. Long before OBOR, India and Japan were individually working in Africa, and were talking to each other about Africa," Rajiv Bhatia, a former Indian ambassador, told IANS.

"India and Japan feel that by intensifying cooperation with Africa, they can help each other and Africa. We are working on the AAGC in our own way and at our own pace," said the former High Commissioner to South Africa and Kenya. He said that China's engagement in Africa is extensive, while the India-Japan collaboration is beginning to take shape. The AAGC shows that India and Japan desire to take their cooperation beyond the bilateral sphere, he added. China's OBOR, proposed by President Xi Jinping in 2013, is an estimated \$5 trillion connectivity corridor spanning over 60 countries across Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Africa. It is meant to be a revival of the ancient Silk Road trading route and is expected to comprise building of roads, bridges, gas pipelines, ports, railways and power plants, besides SEZs.

India and Japan had begun a dialogue on Africa in 2010, a continent in which both have much stake. The main objective of the AAGC is to enhance growth and connectivity between Asia and Africa. According to the vision document, the corridor will focus on

four areas: Development Cooperation Projects, Quality Infrastructure & Institutional Connectivity, Enhancing Skills, and People-to-People Partnership.

(<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/>)

Punjab has excess arsenic content in water in 214 habitations

As per a report of the National Health Profile (NHP) 2017 released by the Central Bureau of Health-Intelligence, there are 214 habitations across Punjab with excess presence of arsenic in groundwater. Amritsar tops the list with 132 habitations with high arsenic content in water.

The report says that there are 11 districts in Punjab where the presence of arsenic was found in ground water above permissible levels. After Amritsar, Gurdaspur comes second with 42 affected habitations followed by Tarn Taran (23), Ropar (6), Ferozepur (5), Patiala (2), Fazilka, Hoshiarpur, Kapurthala, Ludhiana and Bathinda (1 habitation each). The reports also reveals that Punjab has as many as 286 rural habitations with excess fluoride quantity in water. These habitations are yet to be provided safe drinking water by the state government. Patiala district is at the top with a total of 174 such habitations getting water with excessive fluoride content followed by Sangrur with 27 such habitations, Fatehgarh Sahib (23), Fazilka (10), Mohali (9), Ferozepur and Mansa (8 each), Tarn Taran and Ludhiana (5 each), Barnala, Gurdaspur and Hoshiarpur (3 each), Amritsar, Pathankot and Bathinda (2 each) Moga and Kapurthala (1 each).

As per the World Health Organisation (WHO), “Long-term exposure to arsenic from drinking water and food can cause cancer and skin lesions. It has also been associated with developmental effects, cardiovascular disease, neurotoxicity and diabetes.” At the same time, according to WHO, “Ingested fluoride reacts with gastric acid to produce hydrofluoric acid in the stomach. Thus, acute exposure to high concentrations of fluoride results in immediate effects—abdominal pain, excessive saliva, nausea and vomiting. Seizures and muscle spasms may also occur. Death due to respiratory paralysis is a possibility.”

Meanwhile Haryana has as many as 161 habitations affected by high quantity of fluoride in water. Rewari district has 39 such habitations followed by Jind (38), Palwal (37), Gurugram (31), Mahendergarh (26), Sirsa (15), Kaithal (8), Panipat (3), Mewat (2) and Sonapat (1). (<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>)

SJM steps up drive to target Chinese goods

The Sangh Parivar’s workforce has been slowly but aggressively working to create a “people’s movement” as part of a campaign against Chinese goods in India. The Sangh cadre has been busy reaching out to people with a message to “reject Chinese products” as part of a nationwide campaign launched by RSS affiliate Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM). The culmination of this campaign will be a massive gathering at New Delhi’s Ramlila Maidan on October 29, where the Sangh Parivar’s top brass, representatives from civil society, and outfits involved in promoting domestic goods across the nation will participate.

The RSS-led Sangh Parivar has also backed the Narendra Modi government’s tough stand in the ongoing standoff between India and China in the Sikkim sector. The SJM is observing 2017 as “anti-China year”. As part of this campaign, the SJM has so far got over 75 lakh pledges by people to reject “sub-standard” Chinese products. Door-to-door campaigns, programmes, yatras and intellectuals’ meetings are being organised to push “swadeshi” products. The Sangh cadre will reach out to two crore households with the “swadeshi” message.

“The promotion of swadeshi products should not be seen as a protectionist policy. It is safeguarding the interests of the nation and creating job opportunities, promoting a market for indigenous products. Why do we need to depend on China or any other country for something that we can create or produce indigenously,” said SJM’s national co-convenor Ashwini Mahajan. The SJM has welcomed some of the recent decisions including revised GFR and pushing for mandatory standards to stop the influx of imported “substandard products”. Programmes and yatras are being held to “sensitise” people on how much India and its domestic market is losing to China by allowing its products in India. One such yatra was flagged off from Varanasi recently and will cover almost each district. Similarly, in Punjab, the Parivar’s affiliates have set a target of reaching out to two lakh households with a “buy swadeshi” message.

“In the national interest, the SJM and the government are on the same page. The government is sensitised about the issue, and imposing standards on imported products is just an example of it,” said Dr Mahajan. (<http://www.asianage.com/>) □□