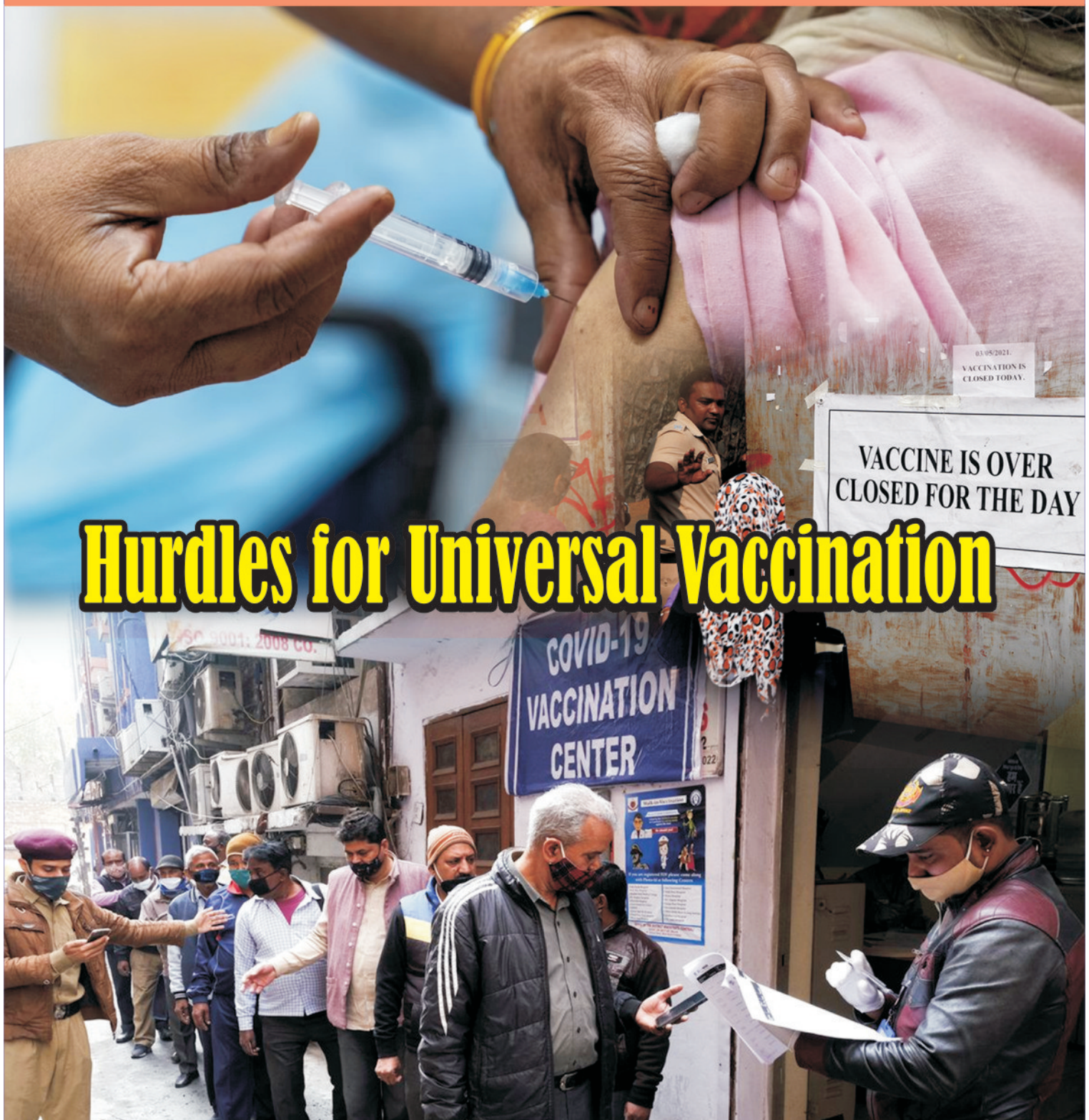


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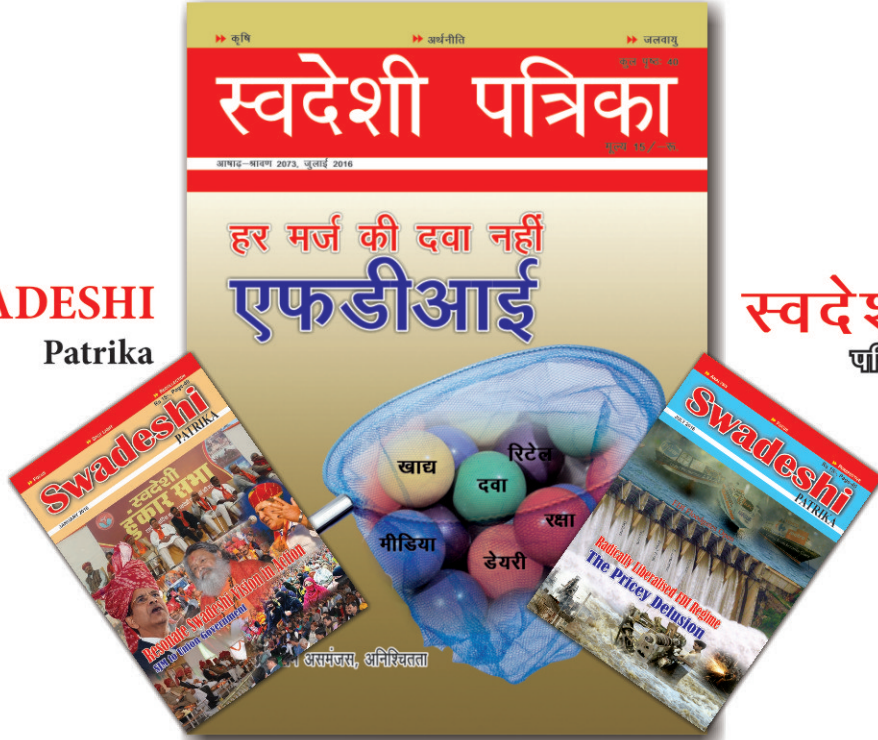
JUNE 2021



Hurdles for Universal Vaccination

VOICE OF SELF RELIANT INDIA

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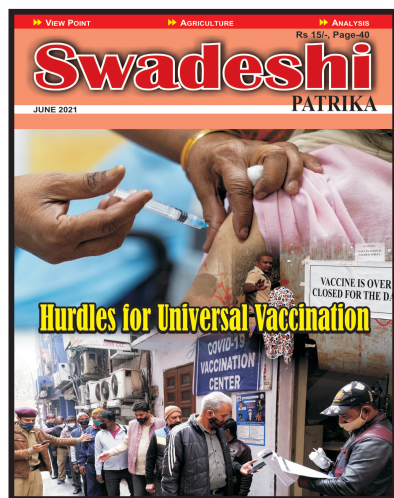
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Social Media and Law

Social media today plays an important role in communication and access to information. But Facebook can also go ahead and ban the ability of any entity, political party or company, to run ads or marketing campaigns across all its platforms, citing arbitrary reasons. Twitter is already censoring tweets and could do the same for live streams and media. Google could restrict visibility to articles that advocate the cause of one political ideology while amplifying the other.

In the view of the above-mentioned context came the importance of new intermediary guidelines or the Information Technology Rules, 2021. Non-compliance with the rules will result in revoking of safe harbour protections mentioned in Section 79 of India's Information Technology (IT) Act for these social media intermediaries and internet firms. This is the part that protects these companies from being sued for posts, comments and text messages that users send over their platforms. A key provision empowers the government to ask companies to track down the originator of posts, tweets, and texts within the country. The rules state that if an offensive post is found, the government can lawfully ask these companies to identify the first person who shared it in India. The rules also require intermediaries to appoint Indian citizens in compliance roles, create automated processes for taking down pornography, set up mechanisms to respond to complaints, and remove offending content within 36 hours of receiving a legal order.

In reply to the plea by WhatsApp to challenge the traceability clause as mentioned under Rule 4(2) of the IT Rules, the MEITY has further clarified that the Government respects the right to privacy and has no intention to violate it when requiring WhatsApp to disclose the origin of a message. Such Requirements are only in case when the message is required for Prevention, Investigation or Punishment of Very Serious Offences related to the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign states, or public order, or of incitement to an offence relating to the above or in relation with rape, sexually explicit material or child sexual abuse material. This law is need of the hour.

— Kumar Gaurav, Samastipur, Bihar

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Quote-Unquote



For thousands of years, our sages have given to the world in the form of yoga, the boon of healthy and happy life to millions of people and the means of union of body and mind. This is a unique gift of India to humanity. Yoga can also be helpful in the context of COVID-19.

Ramnath Kovind
President, Bharat



The central, state governments and local administration are all working together to face this disaster. I extend my condolences to all those who have lost their close ones. We all stand firmly with those who have suffered the loss of this calamity in this difficult time.

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister, India



Patent laws need to be relaxed, even if it is for a limited period, to increase the production of vaccines and medicines to save the world's 7.87-billion population from the clutches of corona. We at SJM believe that this is the right of every human being on this earth to get vaccines and medicines at affordable prices

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan
National Co-convenor, SJM

G-7 Intimidating China

Recently, the G-7 Summit was held in the city of Cornwall, UK. The G-7 countries include USA, UK, Canada, Germany, Italy, France and Japan. In addition, its conferences are attended by the President of the European Commission and the President of the European Council as representatives of the European Union being permanent invitees. This year's host UK's Prime Minister Boris Johnson also invited four countries - India, Australia, South Korea and South Africa to the summit. In all representatives of 11 countries and the European Union attended the G-7 Summit this year. It is notable that China was never included in G-7 as member, nor was it ever invited.

People say that the Three Cs dominated this conference, namely, Corona, Climate and China. Although many topics were discussed in this conference, but most of the discussion can be said to have anti-China tone. Many examples of anti-China voices could be found in this conference. Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized the role of 'democratic and transparent nations' in dealing with the corona pandemic, which simply means that we do not expect anything from China regarding the solution to Corona, because China is neither democratic nor transparent. Not only this, emphasis was also laid on intensifying efforts to investigate the origin of corona pandemic in the conference.

Not only this, a top official of the US's Biden administration stressed the need to respond to China's lack of transparency, poor environmental and labour standards and coercive approach, due to which other countries are suffering and have incurred huge losses. Not only this, issues of Hong Kong's autonomy, human rights in China's Xinjiang region and peace and stability around the 'Taiwan Strait' were also discussed. The leaders said they will promote their values by calling on China to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms in Xinjiang, where Beijing is said to have been committing serious human rights abuses against the Uyghur minority.

That is, it can be said that this time China must have felt isolated for its absence in the G-7 summit, because in this conference, many issues pricking China were discussed by the leaders of the 11 major countries of the world and the European Union, with a declaration on record. This is an important event, for which this convention can be considered historic. Since people all over the world are acknowledging China as the cause of this pandemic, the atmosphere against China has been going on around the world for the last almost 16 months. But for the first time in this conference, it has been realized that the powerful countries of the world are vigorously uniting against China, and those issues are being brought to the centre which the communist rulers of China would never like.

It is also important that for some time 'Quad', a group of four powerful countries including America, India, Japan and Australia is conducting military exercises with an ultimate aim to neutralise China in Arabian Sea and Pacific Ocean. This has curbed China's growing maritime power. This is not only a powerful response to the challenge India faces from China in the sea, but also a vital condition for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. The clear statement of the G-7 Summit on the security of Taiwan Strait for peace and stability in the region is in a way a direct challenge to China. The fact that all the four member countries of 'Quad' attended G-7 Summit, makes it a special event, which can extend contours of 'Quad'.

Against Belt Road Initiative (BRI) promoted by China, G-7 Summit announced the 'B3W' (Build Back Better World) initiative against the BRI. Significantly, this infrastructure plan is being pushed by US President Joe Biden. Although both the US and India have been hostile towards the BRI project since its inception, it seemed almost impossible until two years ago to stop it. But the attempt to take 'B3W' proposal forward in the G-7 Summit is being seen as a big initiative against the 'BRI'.

It is important to point out that if China's ambitious plan BRI is curbed and US-backed 'B3W' is promoted, then India is expected to be a big gainer, not just strategically but also economically. The BRI project is dominated mainly by only Chinese banks and institutions and Chinese infrastructure companies (mostly from public sector). Due to the opaque and discriminatory approach, not only was the burden of debt increasing on the countries involved, but the political interference of Chinese establishment had also been growing in those countries. In such a situation, more transparent 'B3W' will not only be beneficial for member countries, India's infrastructure companies will also get big business opportunities and economic development in the world will get accelerated, while China's dominance will also be curbed.

For a long time, China had been capturing the world's markets through its ever-expanding industrial production, and has increased its economic clout. On the strength of its increasing economic and military power, has been intimidating its neighbouring countries; and was trying to grab their land. All such neighbouring countries of China, will now get renewed self confidence in view of the challenge posed to China by the powerful countries of the world. For the last almost 5 years, America, India and many countries of the world are becoming more sensitive and protective towards their industries and economy. The efforts of 'Make in India' previously and 'Self-Reliant India' India for the last one year, are intended to reduce dependence on China. In such a situation, it will not be easy for China to maintain its growth pace now. Although China is apparently posing a brave face in view of the emerging scenario, the challenge being faced by China from all sides -trade, infrastructure and military power, is naturally a matter of concern for Chinese rulers.

Hurdles for universal vaccination

Today, the pandemic, which the whole world is constantly battling, has shaken the entire humanity. Even the mighty nations, despite their immense economic power and advanced health facilities, appear awfully helpless. India, too, faced such a situation in the months of April and May, when we had to deal with an acute shortage of oxygen, hospital beds and even medicines.

Vaccination is being considered across the world as a panacea for Covid-19. Significantly, six countries, including the US and Israel, have freed their people from the compulsion of wearing masks while vaccinating the majority of their adult population. Therefore, it is believed that if we vaccinate our entire population, we will also be able to minimize the health and economic damage from this pandemic.

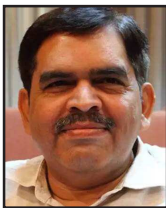
Unequal distribution of vaccines

If we look at the availability of vaccines in the world, we find the distribution to be highly skewed. If our aim is to eliminate this pandemic from the world, it is necessary to vaccinate the whole world. It has to be understood that all the countries of the world are connected with others, in some way or the other. If any country is completely or partially left, this pandemic can raise its head again.

Significantly, after the outbreak of this pandemic, vaccination was found to be the only trustworthy solution. Work for vaccine development then started in India with both indigenous and foreign efforts. Two indigenous efforts have been fruitful in India. One of these is for the manufacture of Covaxin by Bharat Biotech Company, which has set the target of manufacturing 550 million vaccines between August and December. The second one is the vaccine of a company named Biological E of Hyderabad, which has booked an order for 300 million doses from the Government of India to be delivered between August and December this year. Apart from these, a major effort was made for vaccine development in India by the Serum Institute of India in collaboration with the Oxford University. According to the estimates of the Government of India, between August and December, the Serum Institute will manufacture and make available 750 million vaccine doses. The Government of India has announced that the entire population will be vaccinated by the end of the current year. On June 7, 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also announced free vaccines for all from June 21.

World is worried

Due to the huge potential of vaccine manufacturing in India and the efforts made, since the beginning, by the government, the speed of vaccination in India has been higher than that in other countries, but due to the large population of the country, the target to vaccinate the entire population is a bit distant. It may be true that by the end of the year we should be able to complete our target of vaccinating the entire population. But if we talk about the rest of the world, we find that, except for a few countries of the world, including India, most of the countries do not have the capacity to manufacture vaccines. India has been a major source of vaccines for the world. These countries would be dependent on select companies of the world to buy vaccines.



Will patent-free vaccines and medicines really become a reality? Or will poor countries have to buy expensive medicines from the companies, thereby forcing people to die without medicines and vaccines if they are unable to buy them?

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan

Due to the ongoing patent system and other types of intellectual property rights (IPRs) in the world, most of the global companies are selling vaccines at very expensive prices. It is worth mentioning that whereas, in the initial phase in India, vaccination was mostly done free of cost by the government after procuring vaccines at a price of nearly Rs 150 per dose and the private sector was administering the vaccine at Rs 250 per dose, global companies like Pfizer and Moderna are selling the vaccine at US\$ 20 to 50 (1500 to 3750 rupees) per dose. Governments or people of poor countries cannot afford such an expensive vaccine. Price is the biggest barrier to universal access to vaccines. One can understand that patents and IPRs are the biggest reasons behind the high price of vaccines.

TRIPS waiver

To overcome this obstacle, India and South Africa have urged the World Trade Organization to grant Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waiver for a limited period. In October 2020, the two countries jointly proposed in the World Trade Organization (WTO) that in view of the corona pandemic, vaccine and essential medicines should be exempted from the provisions of TRIPS for a certain time period (to be determined) to ensure adequate production and availability of vaccine and medicines at reasonable prices. This effort has already got the support of more than 120 member countries. At the end of May, a meeting of the proposer countries was held for this, in which these countries finalized a proposal that demands



exemption from the provisions of TRIPS for Covid vaccine and medicines for at least 3 years. This proposal also demands ensuring of essential raw materials for the production of vaccines and medicines, technology transfer and freedom from trade secrets.

It has to be understood that while the TRIPS Agreement provides for the protection of IPRs, it provides for numerous flexibilities as well, whereby, in the event of a health emergency, pandemic etc., the provisions of TRIPS can be relaxed to work for humanity. In addition, more clarifications were given on this subject in the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health at the Ministerial Conference of WTO held in Doha in 2001. It has been clarified in the Doha Declaration that in the event of a public health crisis, pandemics, serious diseases like HIV-AIDS and others, the member countries will have the right to make medicines available in sufficient quantities and also export them at affordable prices by issuing compulsory licences for medicines.

It is observed that due to subjects like patents and other IPRs, monopoly on technology and raw materials, trade secrets etc., there are obstacles in the access to vaccines and medicines to poor coun-

tries. Unfortunately, European countries and some other developed countries are creating obstacles in the way of these efforts of India and South Africa for TRIPS waiver for humanity. But it is a matter of satisfaction that the US administration has changed its earlier stand and now they have supported the proposal of TRIPS waiver of India and South Africa for the vaccine (not so far for medicines). On June 8, there was a pleasant development that member countries resolved to go for a text-based discussion on the issue despite some reservations shown by the European Union and a few other countries.

It will become clear in the months to come whether humanity will win in the face of corporate profits. Will patent-free vaccines and medicines really become a reality? Or will poor countries have to buy expensive medicines from the companies, thereby forcing people to die without medicines and vaccines if they are unable to buy them? The need of the hour is that the humane forces of the society ensure the victory of the human race by creating public pressure to ensure patent-free vaccines and medicines.

□□

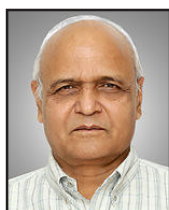
(Dr Ashwani Mahajan is a Professor at PGDAV College, University of Delhi and National Co-Convenor of Swadeshi Jagaran Manch)

Technology Transfer for Covid Vaccines: Need of Hour

Covid-19 vaccines are the only effective remedy to relieve global mankind from the strife of Corona. But, these vaccines are in extreme short supply. Almost 80% of the vaccines produced so far have been used by the industrialised countries. In India as well only 21.83 crore vaccinations have been done so far. We need 200 crore plus shots. So, vaccine production need to be augmented. First step in this direction is freeing of these vaccines from patents and that needs to be followed by transfer of their technology to all capable manufacturers worldwide.

Patents free Vaccines with Technology Transfer: Need of Hour

Transfer of technology to enable greater number of manufacturers is need of the hour to augment the supply of vaccines. According to a report of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) with respect to the components and inputs required for the manufacture of Covid-19 vaccines, “an average antibody-producing plant will use in the area of 9,000 distinct materials from exactly 300 providers across roughly 30 unique nations”. For instance, a Mumbai based ‘VAV Lifesciences’ is the supplier of phospholipids, a crucial ingredient in the mRNA – based Covid-19 vaccines. So, it is well apparent that besides freeing of vaccines and medicines from patents freeing of all the downstream value-chain of ingredients is equally important. Moreover, mere freeing of all the vaccines and the ingredients from patents would not be enough, **unless the transfer of technology to manufacture these vaccines**, including their components ingredients and their raw materials and skills is made mandatory. **Transfer of technology is the integral object of the agreement on TRIPS of the WTO-vide its clause 7, 8 and 66.2.**



The patent-holding companies must transfer their technology without any delay, and governments of industrialised countries must legislate necessary laws to ensure their technology transfer and supply of ingredients.
Prof. Bhagwati Prakash Sharma

Compulsory License Van be of No Avail:

Certain sections, with an intent to blame the government baselessly may continue to demand the the issue of compulsory license for Covid drugs and vac-



cines. But, such a demand of issuing of compulsory license can be of no avail, as there is no single applicant desirous to seek compulsory license. Under section 84, compulsory license can be issued to a manufacturer, who applies and has the ability to manufacture it. It cannot be issued hypothetically to a fictitious entity. Besides, a compulsory license can be issued for patents granted in India.

The Pfizer, Moderna and the Johnson & Johnson have yet not applied far for a patent in India for their vaccines, as they have applied for a patent only under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT). They may apply in any PCT signatory country in 30 months. Therefore it is altogether irrelevant to talk for the issue of compulsory license for those vaccines, which do not have a patent registered in India. Moreover, the promulgation of any orders under sections 92 and 100 for drugs, are also of no avail, as no pharma company has applied for a compulsory license to manufacture the medicines except the Natco Pharma which has already got a voluntary license to manufacture the same from Eli Lilly of US, which had the patent for Baricitinib. When there is no application pending for compulsory license. It cannot be issued hypothetically to fictitious entity.

The author too had earlier asserted for the grant of compulsory license, prior to May, 2021, until the grant of voluntary licenses for the manufacture of Remdesivir, Baricitinib etc. in India. Now when, voluntary license to more than 7 companies for Remdesivir and 2 companies, including the Natco Pharma for Baricitinib have been

granted, there is of no pending application for compulsory license. The voluntary license holders from India have even been exporting Remdesivir to 127 countries. The issue of compulsory license for drugs has therefore no relevance as on date, as no application for compulsory license is lying to be disposed off. For the vaccines, the Bharat Bio-tech is open to the grant of voluntary licenses and has already granted 3 voluntary licenses. Rather, 11 more are in pipeline. The Oxford- Astrazeneca too has granted voluntary license for covishield long back.

Technology Transfer Needed Urgently

As there are not applicants desirous to avail compulsory license facility, it cannot be granted in air to a mere fictitious entity, by the government. No doubt, as a political agenda against the government, it may suit to certain quarters and they may continue to raise their demand for issue of compulsory license. But, compulsory license cannot be granted to a fictitious person or company, unless there is an applicant. **To the contrary, a demand needs to be raised before the WTO to invoke the clauses 7, 8 and 66 for mandating technology transfer and the industrialised Country governments should be asked to enact laws to make it necessary for every one of the 300 plus entities possessing technology for Covid-19 Vaccines, drugs and their ingredients to transfer the know-how to every capable and desirous manufacturer, within and outside their respective countries.** In this regard the provisions of technology

transfer of the the agreement on "Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)" of the WTO are worth mention here.

Technology Transfer Related Provisions of Agreement on TRIPS

Article 7 of the TRIPS Agreement of WTO states:"the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights should contribute to the promotion of technological innovation and **to the transfer and dissemination of technology to the mutual advantage of producers and users of technological knowledge and in a manner conducive to social and economic welfare, and to a balance of rights and obligations.**"

Article 8.2 states: "Appropriate measures, provided they are consistent with the provisions of the Agreement, may be needed to prevent the abuse of intellectual property rights by right holders or the resort to practices which unreasonably restrain trade or adversely affect the international transfer of technology."

Likewise, the provisions for technology transfer are more explicit and assertive under the Article 66.2. The obligation for developed countries to provide incentives for technology transfer in Article 66.2 are also mandatory.

Urgency of Universal Access Vaccines and Drugs via Patent Waiver and Technology Transfer:

More than 17.5 crore persons worldwide and more than 2.85 crore in India have experienced unprecedented strife and trauma after having got infected from Corona in last one year. More than 37 lac persons across the world

and 3.4 lacs in India have succumbed to untimely death from Covid-19. More than ten times of this number are suffering from post corona complications. Rest of the population is also scared of the fear of being infected from Covid-19. Therefore, to treat the infected patients and to prevent infection from Covid-19, universal access to vaccines and medicines is most essential. Today in Israel, US, UK, Bhutan and Norway etc. the new infections and death rate from Corona is under control, where majority of the adult population has been vaccinated.

Treatment of Covid infected patients and the protection of entire population at home and worldwide is possible by easy and affordable access to the vaccines and medicines for all in the world. In the wake of inhumane patents regime where the supply of these vaccines and medicines is very meagre and prices are exorbitant due to monopoly of few companies, based on their patents. For relieving the 786 crore people from the fear of corona infection, freeing of the vaccines, medicines, along with the ingredients used in their manufacture from patents. Transfer of their production technology to all capable and desirous manufacturers and adequate supply of ingredients for the manufacture of these is essential.

Commendable Feat of the Government of India in WTO

The Government of India in its pursuit to get these Covid-19 Vaccines and medicines free from patents has moved as early as in October 2020 in the world Trade Organisations India has secured an unprecedented victory in the Gen-

eral Council of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on May 5, 2021, when the US, European nations and Japan agreed to fall in line and seconded India's proposal to waive patents from over the Covid-19 vaccines, after fiercely resisting in 10 consecutive meetings held in last six months. It is a victory for global mankind to pave way for augmenting supply of covid vaccines.

The US, EU, Japan, Switzerland and Norway after much reluctance had ultimately agreed to support the joint proposal of India and South Africa which was duly supported by 120 other WTO members. Moreover, 110 senators of the President Joe Biden's Democratic Party 60 former Heads of States and 100 Nobel Laurettes from across the world have put pressure upon Biden-Harris administration. An online petition has also been duly signed by 2 Million signatories.

With the support of global community India has secured an unprecedented victory in the General Council of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on May 5, 2021, when the US, some European nations and Japan agreed to fall in line with India and seconded India's proposal to waive patents from over the Covid-19 vaccines, after fiercely resisting in vain in 10 consecutive meetings of WTO, held in last six months. It is a victory for global mankind to pave way for augmenting supply of covid vaccines. The US, EU, Japan, Switzerland and Norway after much reluctance had ultimately agreed to support the joint proposal of India and South Africa which was duly supported by 120 other WTO members. Moreover,

110 senators of the President Joe Biden's Democratic Party, 60 former Heads of States and 100 Nobel Laurettes from across the world have put pressure upon Biden – Harris administration. An online petition duly signed by 2 million signatories from across the world was also moved.

UAVM: A Potent Tool

The Swadeshi Jagaran Manch has also launched a worldwide campaign from India, entitled "Universal Access to Vaccines and Medicines", the UAVM for making these vaccines and medicines accessible and affordable for everyone. Under this campaign securing of online signatures, national and international conferences, demonstrations, other programs of mass awakening, press conferences and distribution of literature and similar other programs are being conducted.

The exemption of patents from these vaccines, medicines and their ingredients is essentially the first step. But, besides making them patent free, transfer of technology also needs to be made mandatory for the patent holders under TRIPS followed by enactment of laws. The patent-holding companies must also ensure uninhibited supply of these vaccines and drugs along with the materials used in them, with absolute neutrality of benefits and must transfer the technology without royalty to all the capable and desirous manufacturers. The patent-holding companies must transfer their technology without any delay, and governments of industrialised countries must legislate necessary laws to ensure their technology transfer and supply of ingredients. □□

Covid-19: The villain, bats or bat lady

Even now, what the world knows about the mysterious virus 18 months after it broke out in Wuhan city in China, is that it is mysterious. Though officially called Covid-19 after its name was changed many times within three months of its detection, its name is more deceptive than indicative. Turning into a pandemic, its destructive mission continues even after almost a year-and-a-half with no end to the misery in sight. Whether the evil virus was caused by natural evolution or human effort in Wuhan was the dispute from day one of its outbreak. Finding the cause of a virus is not just curiosity. It is a must to find a cure for it and to prevent its recurrence. A WHO commission, tasked to find out its cause and source last year, ended its mission saying it could find neither. And yet the WHO gave a benign name and narrative to it, implying it was a natural evolution, which made any search for its cause irrelevant. Even now the world has not woken up to the fact that the name Covid-19 is itself deceptive. What is in a name? That is where the huge public mischief originated.

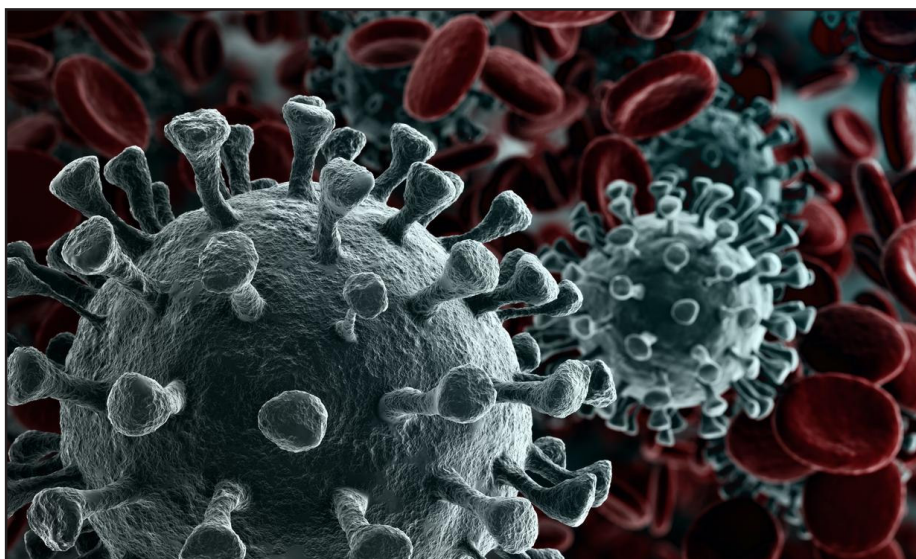
Covid-19 — a deceptive name

Chinese authorities first linked the Wuhan virus to the wet market — a place selling living wild animals for meat — in Wuhan where like vegetables in India, live animals are sold. This instantly recalled the SARS [Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome] epidemic of 2002 caused by bats infecting civets sold in the wet market and from them to humans. In the case of SARS 2002, the animal link was established by decoding the virus genome from bats to humans. But for the new virus, there is no such proof available even after a year-and-a-half. And yet the Chinese and WHO linked the new virus to the old SARS.

Initially the new virus was variously called Wuhan pneumonia and Wuhan virus. WHO quickly intervened, renamed it thrice in two months, January and



Even now, what the world knows about the mysterious virus 18 months after it broke out in Wuhan city in China, is that it is mysterious.
S. Gurumurthy



February, each time linking it to SARS 2002 and the wet market with no proof, calling the new virus as SARS-2 — a new avatar of SARS-1. Later, adding the word ‘coronavirus’ that implied its animal nexus, WHO improved its name as “novel coronavirus” — 2019-nCoV. Next, as “severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2” — SARS-CoV-2 to relate it firmly again to animals. And, as Covid-19 that is CO for ‘corona’, VI for ‘virus’ and D for ‘disease’ and 19 for the year it appeared, once and for all to fix the blame on poor animals. Shockingly within months, unable to prove it, the Chinese themselves disowned the wet market link to the Wuhan virus. A year later, in March this year the WHO fact-finding commission itself admitted that “the role of animal markets is still not clear”. Yet, even now animals bear the cross for the deadly pandemic!

Why does a virus, the cause of which is not known still, have a name that blames animals? Here is the answer. The WHO has a noble policy of not naming the geographic origin of a natural virus as that may blame the race of the humans living there. So let animals bear the blame. The noble WHO rule is for a naturally evolved virus. In the case of the Wuhan virus, there is dispute about whether it was natural evolution or man-made. The deceptive narrative of the pandemic, which implies it was natural evolution itself misdirected the search for the cause and the source of the virus away from truth. With the stunning and suppressed facts about the virus obfuscated by geopolitics involving China and the US slowly emerging, the truth seems to be overcoming US-China politics.

Bats did not fly 1,500 kms to Wuhan

The devastated world longing to know the truth about the cause of the virus for over a year should thank Nicholas Wade, for uncovering the truth with amazing and indisputable logic. Wade is no ordinary journalist. He is a science writer, editor, and author who has worked on the staff of Nature, Science, and, for many years, the New York Times. In a devastating, yet balanced, article [titled The origin of COVID: Did people or nature open Pandora’s box at Wuhan? on May 5, 2021 in Bulletin of Atomic Scientists founded by the Manhattan project scientists led by Albert Einstein] what Wade has written shatters to smithereens all fake narratives to blame the Chinese bats for causing the virus.

Wade asks a simple question: “How could the bats which live 1,500 kms away in Yunnan transmit the virus to humans in Wuhan?” Particularly when they can’t fly for more than 50 kms. Also how did the Yunnan bats manage to infect only the animals sold in Wuhan wet market, overlooking the entire 1,500 km terrain in between? Within four months of SARS 2002, the link between bats and the wet market animals infected by it was found out by scientists. But now after a year-and-a-half, no such connection has been seen, says Wade. Even the Chinese have given up the wet market claim, points out Wade. Poor Yunnan bats did not infect the people in Wuhan but they are blamed. How did the bat virus get to Wuhan then? This is at the heart of the gripping story of the virus that was scripted when the Americans were madly in love with the Chinese who pretended to reciprocate.

‘Bat Lady’ brings 100 bat viruses to Wuhan

Wade’s narration of the story of the new virus is chilling. The villain — or the heroine — in the Wuhan virus story is Shi Zhengli, China’s leading expert on bat viruses, better known as the ‘Bat Lady’. Leading the researchers at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), Wade says, Shi mounted frequent expeditions to the bat-infested caves of Yunnan in southern China and collected a hundred-plus different bat coronaviruses in November 2015. Shi teamed up with Ralph S Baric, an eminent coronavirus researcher at the university of North Carolina. They focused on enhancing the ability of the bat viruses to attack humans. In November 2015 they created a novel coronavirus. How? It is a little technical. They did it by taking the backbone of SARS-1 virus and replacing its spike protein with one from bat virus, which was able to infect the human cell airway.

Wade quotes a virology expert who says “if that man-made virus escaped, nobody could predict the trajectory” — meaning their huge potential for infection. Why would virologists create such Frankenstein? The justification has the noble aim of preparing for mitigating the risks of future outbreaks — in the present case for preventing the re-emergence of SARS-1. This is called Gain of Function (GOF) research in virology. The norm for GOF research is that the potential to mitigate future outbreaks must be weighed against the risk of creating more dangerous viruses. Baric and Shi admitted the risks in their work but justified it on the GOF.

Baric, says Wade, had taught Shi a general method for engineering bat coronaviruses to attack other species like humanised mice — “a cheap and ethical stand-in for human subjects”. Shi returned to her lab at the WIV and resumed the work she had started on genetically engineering coronaviruses to attack human cells. How could one be sure that she did? Wade cites the public records of American connection to WIV which proves it.

Bat Lady's virus, not bats

Wade cites two irrefutable pieces of evidence which clearly point to what the Bat Lady did or was well on the way to accomplish her mission. One, the grant proposal to fund Shi's work from the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), a public record. [According to Fox News (12.5.2021), the Obama-led US, one-sided in its love of China, started funding WIV from 2005 that went on till 2019.] This proposal said exactly what she wanted to do with the money.

The NIH assigned the grants to Peter Daszak, a big name in the guild of virologists, as the contractor, and he subcontracted them to Shi. Explaining the content of the proposals, Wade says, “What that means in non-technical language is that Shi had set out to create coronaviruses with the highest possible infectivity for human cells.” It cannot be said she did or did not generate SARS-2 in her labs because, Wade says, Chinese have sealed her labs. But, Wade cites an interview given by Daszak on December 9, 2019 just before the Wuhan outbreak, which proved Shi had accomplished her mission. Daszak talked

The deceptive narrative of the pandemic, which implies it was natural evolution itself misdirected the search for the cause and the source of the virus away from truth.



in glowing terms about the researchers at the WIV and said we — meaning Daszak and Shi — have now found after 6 or 7 years, over 100 new SARS-related coronaviruses, very close to SARS.”

Daszak, points out Wade, says around minute 28 of the interview, “Some of them get into human cells in the lab, some of them can cause SARS disease in humanised mice models and are untreatable with therapeutic monoclonals and you can't vaccinate against them with a vaccine. So, these are a clear and present danger...” Note the words uttered with inhuman pride, “untreatable” and “can't vaccinate against”. Have any doubt now that the devastation that is happening to millions and millions of humans was the work of WIV — orches-

trated by the Bat Lady and Daszak? What is the conclusion? Poor bats did not infect any animals with the virus, which in turn transmitted it to people in Wuhan. Bats were brought to WIV to create a new coronavirus — now devastating the world.

But, who subcontracted the coronavirus grant to Shi Zhengli? Peter Daszak. Who praised her for developing more than 100 bat viruses that could not be vaccinated against? Peter Daszak. When the

virus broke out, who got the scientists to sign letters saying that it could not be a lab leak? Peter Daszak. Who was a member of the WHO commission to find out whether it was a lab escape? Peter Daszak. If Shi is the villain who created the evil, Daszak turns out to be the villain who suppressed its creation.

Well, it is just half the story. There is more. The WIV at Wuhan was not just a civilian science academy. It partners, the People's Liberation Army, which had plans from 2015 to prepare bio-weapons for the next world war. The issue is not just people's health but global security. □□

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<https://www.newindianexpress.com/opinions/columnists/s-gurumurthy/2021/may/27/covid-19-the-villain-bats-or-bat-lady-2308093.html>

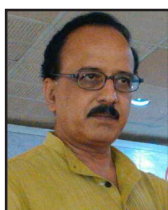
Growth should take the poor into account

Ever since the first wave of Covid-19 pushed countries into a lockdown, the central banks, mainly in the rich countries, printed \$9 trillion of surplus money. Well, the underlying objective was to infuse this surplus money into the pandemic-hit economies, which had been left gasping for breath.

According to economist Ruchir Sharma, Chief Global Strategist at the Morgan Stanley Investment Management, this pandemic stimulus in turn made the rich add on to their wealth. “Much of that stimulus had gone into financial markets and from there into the net worth of ultra-rich,” he wrote (Financial Times, May 16). The total wealth of the super rich has increased in the same period to somewhere between \$ 5 trillion to \$ 13 trillion. No wonder, markets are awash with money, while countries are struggling to pull the economy out of slump.

The sad irony is that what appears to be an ingenious way to indirectly transfer wealth from public coffers into the pockets of the ultra-rich happened at a time when Brookings estimated that an additional 144 million people globally, in 2020, slipped below the stringently kept poverty line. Using the World Bank and IMF poverty estimates, the calculations show that India has surpassed Nigeria when it comes to having the largest population of people living in extreme poverty. India added another 85 million poor to its existing huge numbers that have somehow been surviving below the poverty line. The devastating second wave of Covid-19 may leave a still bigger dent in poverty estimates.

But perhaps what we do not realise is that all it requires to eradicate extreme poverty from the globe is \$100 billion, a tiny fraction of the pandemic stimulus that was pumped in to revive the global economy and instead ended up rewarding the billionaires by helping them to amass more wealth. This is not the first time that such astonishing amounts of surplus money have been pumped indi-



Since some of the rich and western countries printed the surplus money to help declining economies hit by pandemic, it has added to the net worth of ultra-rich.

Devinder Sharma



rectly into the hands of the super rich. For quite a number of years, central banks in rich countries have been printing surplus money. However, what remains unexplained is how come there is all the money for the rich, but the world is still unable to find enough money to fight poverty.

If only a fraction of the pandemic stimulus had gone to where it was needed — to remove poverty, the world would have been a much better place to live in.

Meanwhile, the pandemic has further widened income inequality, taking it to obnoxious levels. In America, the Institute for Policy Study says the combined wealth of its billionaires increased by 44.6 per cent during the pandemic. During the same period, an estimated 80 million people lost their jobs. In any case, the top 50 super rich in America hold as much wealth as the bottom 165 million. In India, the income inequality is no less glaring. Just to give you an idea, the average farm income as worked out by the 2013 National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) report, for roughly 50 per cent of the population dependent largely on farming, stands at a paltry Rs 6,426 per month (roughly half of it coming from non-farm activities). That is why protesting farmers have been demanding an assured income by way of an assured price for their produce.

Compare this with what an Oxfam's 'Inequality Virus Report' brings out. The combined wealth of India's billionaires has risen by 35 per cent during the pandemic, and to explain how the increase would translate in simple terms, the report states that the rise in wealth of just top 11 billionaires alone is



Meanwhile, the pandemic has further widened income inequality, taking it to obnoxious levels. It is glaring both in US and India.

enough to pay for MNREGA work for ten years. In any case, the top 1 per cent holds four times the wealth that the bottom 953 million has.

To understand how an increase in income works wonders for the poor, look at the outcome of this experiment on the feasibility of universal basic income. Two years before the pandemic struck, in early 2018, Foundation for Social Change, a charitable organisation, along with the University of British Columbia in Canada, gave \$7,500 Canadian dollars (or US \$6,206) to 50 homeless families in the Vancouver region. A year later, during which time the charity kept a tab on how the money was being utilised, the results that emerged were not only astounding, but equally encouraging. More or less, the same results have been achieved in almost similar kind of studies conducted elsewhere.

Contrary to the public perception wherein it is generally believed that the poor don't know how to handle money, the results clearly brought out how wisely they made use of the limited financial support, spending it on necessities like food, clothes, housing and other utilities. According to news reports, while the consumption of basic food needs went up by 37

per cent, the poor had actually cut down on drug and alcohol by 39 per cent. By moving fast into housing, these homeless actually worked to ensure a roof over their head. What the study, therefore, conclusively established is the significance of roti, kapda and makaan for the poor households everywhere in the world, and their strenuous efforts to work towards attaining it. In other words, such petty cash transfers have the potential to uplift the poor from the clutches of poverty.

Instead, we see more money being routed to the rich by way of tax concessions, economic stimulus packages, bank write-offs, bailouts and massive subsidies in the name of incentives for growth to bolster corporation profits with the faulty assumption that some of it will trickle down to the poor and needy. When it comes to giving poor their share, the argument is that by giving surplus money directly into the hands of the poor, everyone will have more to spend, and that will lead to higher inflation.

The economic growth model, therefore, has been very cleverly designed to help widen income inequality, and make the fat cows still fatter. The poor are expected to fend for themselves. □□

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<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/growth-should-take-the-poor-into-account-256674>

Why Improvement of Bio Safety Should Not Be Delayed Any Longer

While the ongoing pandemic has brought so much distress there is just one positive possibility also that this may lead to long-delayed bio-safety reform as the neglected but extremely significant issue of bio-lab safety has started receiving more attention now, both at the level of experts as well as common, safety conscious citizens.

We should clinch this opportunity to introduce badly needed, already delayed corrections in bio-lab safety which is in a terrible shape just now. The previous opportunity that appeared in 2014 was missed as only some temporary reforms were made. We should not miss the ongoing period of opportunity to set bio-safety in order.

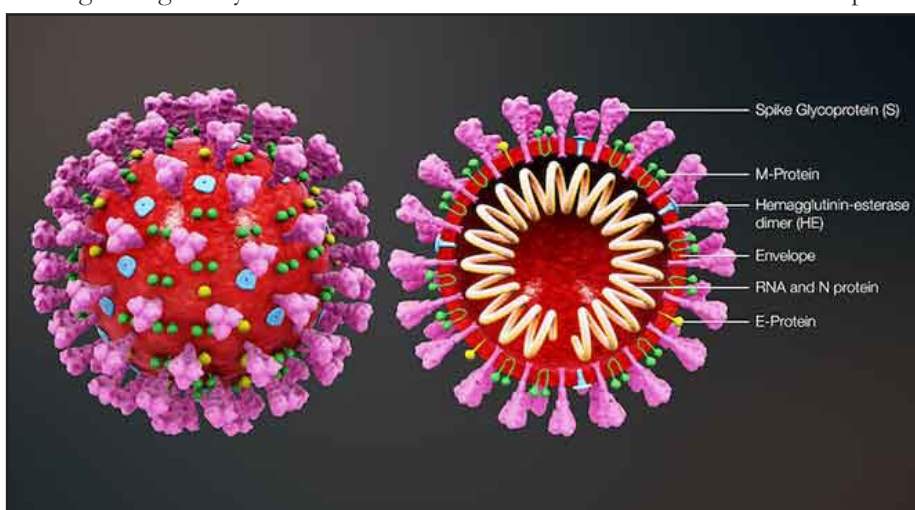
Now people all over the world have become very aware that there are hundreds of bio-labs in the world where very dangerous viruses or other disease causing organisms are kept for scientific research use and even a one-time accident or leak of high toxicity from one of these bio-labs has the capacity, depending on several circumstances, to cause very widespread damage. More and more people are now also becoming aware that several of these labs routinely create viruses, generally by using genetic engineering, that are much more dangerous than those that exist in nature.

This increasing consciousness should be used to push for much greater strictness of safety regulations backed by transparency so that greater safety in this critical area should be ensured to protect millions of people all over the world. In addition the critical issue of banning some kinds of most risky research, which has already been debated in more limited scientific circles for years, should get more emphasis in public debates and campaigns.

Several scientists working in this specialized area are increasingly concerned about growing safety concerns and one main reason for this is the recent prolif-



Bio-lab safety has attracted more attention now is view of the ongoing pandemic and distress
Bharat Dogra



eration of highest safety category bio-labs in some countries, particularly the USA and China. In China mainland area, for example, not only a highest bio-containment level (BSL-4) lab already exists in Wuhan but in addition there are plans to build between five to seven BSL-4 level labs across the Chinese mainland by year 2025. Some scientists in western countries ask questions about why China is going on such a spree of creating these BSL-4 labs with all the attendant risks. Will these work in transparent ways, they ask. (BSL-4 is the highest level of bio-containment).

The response of some Chinese scientists is to point out that in the USA there are over 15 such labs and there are several in Europe as well, so why should not the Chinese scientists aspire for equal levels of scientific advances?

There was a big proliferation in such highest safety category labs in the USA after 9/11 terrorist attack plus an anthrax scare and the number, placed at 5 in 2001, tripled to about 15 or more in 2008. This was justified by need for bio-defense research and over the period 2001-06 36 billion dollars were spent on bio-defense and related research work.

Keith Rhodes, Chief Technologist at the Government Accountability Office (GAO) of the USA wrote in his report, "a major proliferation of high containment BSL-3 and BSL-4 labs has taken place in the USA." Further he stated that no single federal agency knows how many such labs there are in the USA and no one is responsible for determining the aggregate risk associated with the expansion of these high containment labs.

If we are not looking at just

BSL-4 labs but all high-containment labs which may be handling dangerous biological materials then the number of such labs may be quite high. A 2017 report of the GAO mentions about 276 high containment select agent labs in the USA, and this is likely to be an underestimate (as reported by Elisabeth Eaves in a report written for the New Yorker and the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists).

In a 2015 report titled Bio-labs in Your Backyard USA Today documented hundreds of safety violations and accidents at high containment labs.

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In 2014 in the UK the Guardian found that British high-security labs had experienced more than a hundred near misses and accidents over a period of five years.

In the Soviet Union such incidents were less openly documented but the accidents at a lab in Sverdlovsk, which involved the release of a puff anthrax spores, reportedly had the potential to result in mass deaths but higher damage beyond 64 deaths was averted by direction of wind.

Another aspect of high risks relates to transport of disease causing organisms. In 2015 Defense Department of the USA revealed

that the Armed Dugway Proving Ground at Utah had sent as many as 575 shipments of live anthrax bacteria to 194 labs in the USA and 7 other countries (As reported in the report by Elisabeth Eaves)!

For many people the most immediate reason for getting involved with this issue relates to the several reports which link the dangerous corona virus research in the Wuhan Virology Institute to a possible accidental leak from there and the subsequent spread of COVID-19. These people were also very disturbed by the widely discussed expose in the Mail on Sunday which revealed that the US National Institute of Health, a government Agency, had itself given a \$3.7 million research grant to the Wuhan Institute of Virology. This fact was of course already known much before to most senior virologists but they had chosen to remain rather quiet about this as many of them are themselves involved in similar type of research relating to potential pandemic pathogens (PPP research), also referred to at a broader level as gains-of-function research. It is in the context of such research and bio-defense research that the proliferation of high security labs is often seen.

Such high levels of bio-containment generally indicate that some very dangerous pathogens are being handled in these labs and there are possibilities of leak that can have very adverse and dangerous impacts. In some labs the supposedly civilian or medical research may be a cover for bio-defense research or even biological warfare research. The dividing line can often be very thin, and there is a lot of secrecy in defense matters.

There are other, more routine

areas of concern too. The use of monkeys in such labs, more likely in China as there are more regulations over this in the west, is also an area of concern. As a senior scientist recently said while expressing concern about the presence of monkeys in such labs—monkeys run, they scratch, they bite.

Most cases of actual leaks or their possibility have been reported by US official systems from time to time because of the greater transparency & counter-checks within the systems. Less transparent, more opaque systems like the Chinese can be more dangerous unless special steps are taken in the near future to increase transparency.

An NBC news report dated July 17 2014 titled 'CDC (Centre of Disease Control and Prevention) cracks down on labs after anthrax, bird flu scares' stated that government health officials (in the USA) were cracking down on safety at the nation's highest level bio-security labs after a disturbing series of lapses, including an anthrax scare, discovery of lost vials containing live smallpox and a new report of the accidental shipment of highly pathogenic bird flu. This report added that Dr. Tom Frieden, Director of the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, had announced an immediate moratorium on all shipments of biological materials from CDC bio-security 3 and 4 level labs until problems are addressed.

Frieden said publicly that what had been discovered was totally unacceptable behavior and these events should never have happened. In the resulting uproar, concerned scientists recalled some previous lapses. One of these related to the accidental release of live

anthrax at the Bioterrorism Rapid Response and Advanced Technology (BRAAT0 lab) in 2006. Another accident the same year related to the release of live botulinum toxins from another CDC lab.

Tim Murphy, Chairman of the House Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee said, "We have learnt that the dangerous transfer of possible live anthrax bacteria by the CDC Atlanta lab was not an isolated incident by a rogue scientist, but rather one of multiple mishaps over the last several years that were violations, or apparent violations, of federal regulations for handling deadly biological material."

In another example when the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention found that research labs handling the most dangerous microbes or viruses at the US Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense (USAMRICD) did not meet bio-safety standards, orders were issued for the research work in these labs to be stopped till some remedial action was taken, regardless of the adverse military implications as pleaded by the affected organization.

While all these accidents or leaks were obviously very dangerous, these were exposed by a transparent system which then also took at least some actions to reduce these risks. Will the much less transparent and much more secretive system of China have room for such self-exposure and remedial action based on this?

Whether in China or the USA or in Europe or anywhere else proliferation of labs handling very dangerous biological materials is not good news for safety of people. Most countries have signed

agreements for eliminating biological weapons, but these agreements leave open possibilities of research for defense against biological weapons. Often the same research done for defense also feeds into bio-weapon development. Also, civilian research results are useful for defense results. So one does not where to draw the line. All the available evidence draws to the conclusion that a lot of what is happening in high-level bio labs is of great concern to safety of people all over the world. Hence there is much greater need for transparency in all issues relating to the handling of dangerous infectious disease causing organisms with the attendant possibility of their accidental release, the aim of this transparency being to protect public safety at all levels generally and to more specifically ensure immediate remedial action at a very early stage of any accident or accidental leak.

In particular there is need to take very effective action to curb and control PPP research. If safety concerns demand, then the possibility of completely banning such research should be seriously considered as several aspects of its non-desirability, high risks and suspect benefits have been already highlighted. An opportunity for this had appeared after some serious bio-leaks and a moratorium on many such projects was announced in the USA but this moratorium was lifted after just 2 to 3 years. Now in new conditions a wider and longer-lasting moratorium should certainly be considered, along with other important measures to improve bio-safety in significant and durable ways. □□

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Probe Coronavirus origins



China refuses to admit that the virus behind the COVID-19 pandemic escaped from its labs.

However, scientists believe that the virus was man-made and possibly leaked from a laboratory in Wuhan.

Surprisingly, the World Health Organisation is giving China benefit of doubt by stating that the evidence was not extensive enough.

Sandhya Jain

More than a year after strenuously resisting the notion that the virus (Sars-CoV-2) behind the COVID-19 pandemic was man-made and leaked from a laboratory in China, Dr Anthony Fauci, adviser to the Biden administration on the disease, finally conceded the need for an investigation into its origins (May 24, 2021). Speaking to *Fox News*, he said, “I think we should investigate what went on in China...”.

Since news of the pandemic was announced on December 31, 2019, scientists have believed that the virus was engineered and possibly leaked from a laboratory in Wuhan, China. Then US President Donald Trump was convinced of this hypothesis and publicly dubbed it the “China virus”, while World Health Organization Director-General Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus insisted as recently as May 2021 that the evidence was not “extensive enough”.

Fauci spoke a day after the *Wall Street Journal* reported that three researchers from the Wuhan Institute of Virology had fallen sick and were hospitalized in November 2019, citing a hitherto secret U.S. intelligence report. (*Intelligence on sick staff at Wuhan lab fuels debate on COVID-19 origin*, May 23, 2021) Beijing has admitted that the first confirmed case was a man who fell ill on Dec. 8, 2019.

However, China is adamant that the virus did not escape from its labs, and countered that the virus may have originated from a lab at Fort Detrick military base in Maryland, US. Shi Zheng-li, Wuhan Institute of Virology’s top bat-coronavirus expert, insists the virus didn’t leak from her laboratories. She told the WHO-led team that visited Wuhan that all her staff had tested negative for Covid-19 antibodies and there had been no change of staff on the coronavirus team.

British journalist Nicholas Wade laments the political agendas of governments and scientists have “generated thick clouds of obfuscation.” (*The origin of*



COVID: Did people or nature open Pandora's box at Wuhan?, Science.thewire.in, May 5, 2021) There are two theories about the origins of SARS-CoV-2 or SARS2: One that it jumped naturally from wildlife to people, the other that it escaped from a lab.

The Wuhan Institute of Virology was a prime suspect. Initially, some scientists supported the theory of natural emergence in the letter to the *Lancet* (February 19, 2020). The *Lancet* letter was organized by Peter Daszak, president of the EcoHealth Alliance of New York, which had funded coronavirus research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology. This conflict of interest was concealed from *Lancet* readers. Daszak was also a member of the WHO team investigating the origins of the COVID-19 coronavirus.

When the WHO commission visited China in February 2021, Beijing was unable to offer evidence that the virus had emerged naturally. It is pertinent that SARS1 and MERS viruses left huge footprints in the environment; the intermediary host species (bat to civet to human) of SARS1 was identified within four months and of MERS (bat to camel to human) within nine months. But even 15 months after the SARS2 pandemic began, Chinese researchers could not trace either the original bat population or intermediate species to which SARS2 might have jumped, or any serological evidence that any Chinese population, including that of Wuhan, had ever been exposed to the virus prior to December 2019.

So did SARS2 escape from a lab? The spike proteins in coronavirus jut out of its spherical surface and

determine which species of animal it will target. Virologists began studying bat coronaviruses after these proved to be the source of the SARS1 and MERS epidemics, in order to understand what changes in a bat virus's spike proteins would cause it to infect people.

Shi Zheng-li and her team visited the bat-infested caves of Yunnan in southern China to collect a hundred different bat coronaviruses. They teamed up with Ralph S. Baric of the University of North Carolina and focused on enhancing the ability of bat viruses to attack humans to "examine the emergence potential (to infect humans)." In November 2015, they created a novel virus by taking the backbone of SARS1 virus and replacing its spike protein with one from a bat virus (SHC014-CoV). This manufactured virus could infect the cells of the human airway in a lab culture of such cells.

The SHC014-CoV/SARS1 virus is called a chimera because its genome contains genetic material from two strains of virus. If SARS2 virus was created in Shi's lab, its direct prototype would have been the SHC014-CoV/SARS1 chimera. Baric and Shi defended their risky research for its potential benefit of foreshadowing future spillovers. However, Nicholas Wade argues, the value of gain-of-function studies (to increase lethality) in preventing SARS2 epidemic was zero and the risk catastrophic if SARS2 virus was generated in a gain-of-function experiment.

Wade says that Baric perfected and taught Shi a method for engineering bat coronaviruses to attack other species (human cells grown in cultures and humanized mice). These lab mice were genet-

ically engineered to carry the human version of a protein called ACE2 that studs the surface of cells that line the airways. Returning to the Wuhan Institute of Virology, Shi continued genetically engineering coronaviruses to attack human cells.

This is undeniable because her work was funded by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) of the US National Institutes of Health (NIH). The grant proposals are public record and specify exactly what she planned to do with the money.

The grants were made to Daszak of the EcoHealth Alliance, who subcontracted them to Shi in 2018 and 2019. Shi was tasked to create novel coronaviruses with the highest possible infectivity for human cells. She would take genes coded for spike proteins possessing a variety of measured affinities for human cells, from high to low, insert these spike genes one by one into the backbone of a number of viral genomes ("reverse genetics" and "infectious clone technology"), and create a series of chimeric viruses. These would be tested for their ability to attack human cell cultures ("in vitro") and humanized mice ("in vivo"). This information would help predict the likelihood of "spillover" or jump of a coronavirus from bats to people.

This approach could have generated SARS2-like viruses and may have created the SARS2 virus itself with the right combination of virus backbone and spike protein. But this cannot be stated conclusively as Shi's lab records have been sealed. Certainly she was on the right track to have done so, and her project was funded by the NIAID.

On December 19, 2019, before the pandemic became public, Daszak in an interview lauded researchers at the Wuhan Institute of Virology for reprogramming the spike protein and generating chimeric coronaviruses capable of infecting humanized mice: "Some of them get into human cells in the lab, some of them can cause SARS disease in humanized mice models and are untreatable with therapeutic monoclonals and you can't vaccinate against them with a vaccine". He added, so "if you are going to develop a vaccine for SARS, people are going to use pandemic SARS, but let's insert some of these other things and get a better vaccine."

Insertion of other things meant an element called furin cleavage site, which increases viral infectivity for human cells. Daszak meant that once you have generated a novel coronavirus that can attack human cells, you can take the spike protein and make it the basis for a vaccine.

News of the pandemic broke a few days later. Daszak knew of Wuhan Institute's work in making bat coronaviruses infectious to humans and its inability to protect its researchers from infection because it had not been able to develop a vaccine. Instead of informing the public health authorities, he began a campaign against the lab leak theory.

The Wuhan Institute of Virology had a BSL4 lab, but State Department inspectors who visited it from the Beijing embassy in 2018 were not satisfied with its security standards. BSL4 labs are uncomfortable to work in for various reasons, and much of Shi's work on gain-of-function in coronaviruses was performed at BSL2 safety level, as stated in her publications and



The Wuhan Institute of Virology had a BSL4 lab, but State Department inspectors who visited it from the Beijing embassy in 2018 were not satisfied with its security standards.

other documents. This posed a high risk of infection to laboratory staff. Richard H. Ebright, molecular biologist at Rutgers University and expert on biosafety, insisted that "this work never should have been funded and never should have been performed."

What is remarkable about the SARS2 virus is that from its very first appearance, it was well adapted to human cells, unlike SARS1 which went through many hosts before it could attack human cells. Further, its genomes are remarkably uniform (the hallmark of lab cultures). Then, the furin cleavage site is a tiny part of virus anatomy that determines its infectivity.

The spike protein has two sub-units, S1 and S2. S1 recognizes the virus's target, a protein called angiotensin converting enzyme-2 (ACE2) on the surface of cells lining the human airways. S2 helps the virus, once anchored to the cell, to fuse with the cell's membrane. Thereafter, the viral genome is injected into the cell, hijacks its protein-making machinery and forces it to generate new viruses. This invasion cannot begin until the S1 and S2 subunits have been cut apart. The furin cleavage at the S1/S2 junction ensures the spike protein will be cleaved in exactly the right place. Of all the known

SARS-related beta-coronaviruses, only SARS2 has a furin cleavage site, and this seems to be the result of a gain-of-function (to increase infectivity) experiment.

Wade concludes that though Chinese authorities did not sponsor SARS2, they zealously concealed the nature of the tragedy and China's role in it. They sealed the records at the Wuhan Institute of Virology and closed down its virus databases. The US funded Daszak's EcoHealth Alliance to do gain-of-function research with coronaviruses at the Wuhan Institute of Virology. If the SARS2 virus did escape from the Wuhan Institute, the NIH will have funded a deadly experiment that took over three million lives worldwide, overriding a moratorium on funding gain-of-function research. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, or Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health, or both, created a loophole to fund Shi's research.

The cumulative evidence thus suggests that the SARS2 virus could have been created in a lab, from which it escaped, due to poor safety standards. In the absence of definitive proof, readers will have to draw their own conclusions. □□

<https://www.organiser.org/Encyc/2021/5/31/Probe-Coronavirus-Originis.html>

Solar with Standalone Pump Storage is the Way Forward

The entire world is facing increasing onslaught of hurricanes, floods, droughts and diseases like Covid-19. These appear to be a result of man's increasing intrusion upon the environment. One major source of this intrusion is the production of electricity. Large areas of forests are being cut for extracting coal; and flows of the rivers is being obstructed for the generation of hydropower. At the same time we need to generate electricity. Electricity consumption is often considered to be a measure of our standard of living. Therefore, we need to adopt an environment-friendly method of electricity generation.

The main sources of electricity generation in India are thermal power made from coal, hydro power made from the rivers and solar power mainly made in desert-like areas of Rajasthan and the Deccan. The difficulty with thermal is that we have limited sources of coal. Some estimates suggest it is sufficient only for 150 years. And the quality continued to deteriorate as more coal is extracted. We are having to import coal in large quantities. In doing so we are transferring the negative impact of deforestation from India to Australia but that is coming back to haunt us in the form of global warming. Further, about 900 grams of carbon is emitted in the production of one unit of electricity which adds hugely to global warming.

The second source of electricity is hydropower. It is generally considered to be clean because there is virtually nil carbon emission during production. However, the carbon emitted in the production of cement and steel used in the construction of hydropower projects is about 300 grams. Thus, the net saving of carbon emission is about 600 grams per unit which is substantial. However, hydropower leads to other environmental impacts such as drying of water sources and increased incidences of landslides due to the explosives used in making of tunnels; the harm to aquatic biodiversity because fishes are not able to migrate upstream



Solar power is the only environment-friendly method to generate electricity that can save both forest and river resources.

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because of the barrages; the erosion of our coasts because large dams arrest the sediments being carried by our rivers and deprive our coastal areas of the sediments that hold the land mass against the sea; and the deterioration of water quality of the rivers because it hits the blades of the turbines and the beneficent life forms in the water are damaged. Thus both thermal and hydro have problems and cannot provide a sustainable source of electricity to us.

A possible path forward is to promote solar power. The Government has taken steps to increase the production of solar electricity and the same is increasing rapidly. More importantly, the cost of solar electricity today is about Rs 3 per unit against Rs 6 per unit for thermal and Rs 8 per unit for hydropower. The environmental impacts of solar power are also less. However, solar electricity is made only during the day. It is also unstable due to the movement of clouds that affects the generation. Therefore, we are unable to meet our requirements of electricity during the morning, evening and night from solar power.

A way out is to make “standalone” Pump Storage Electricity Plants. Two reservoirs are made at a higher- and lower elevation in these. The water is pumped from the lower- to the higher reservoir during the daytime when solar power is available. The water is released from the higher- to the lower reservoir through the turbines in the night when we the electricity is needed. In this way, daytime electricity is converted into nighttime electricity.

The existing hydroelectric projects can be converted into

The Government has taken steps to increase the production of solar electricity which is cheaper than hydro power and which is environment friendly.

pump storage schemes. For example, Koteswar hydroelectric project below Tehri Dam has been made to work as a pump storage. Water is pumped from the river to the Tehri Reservoir during the day and the same quantity of water is additionally released from the Tehri reservoir during the night. The cost of converting daytime electricity to nighttime electricity from such hydropower-cum-Pump Storage projects is merely 40 paise per unit according to S D Dubey of Central Electricity Authority. Thus daytime solar power can be converted to nighttime solar power and made available at a cost of about Rs 3.50 per unit which is much cheaper than thermal and hydro. However, we do not escape the environmental effects of hydropower in this arrangement. The project continues to obstruct the path of the river leading to the effects mentioned above.

The environmentally benign alternative is to make standalone pump storage project. In such projects two reservoirs are made at a location where they do not obstruct the path of the river. Separate turbines are established. The infrastructure of the existing hydropower project is not used. As a result the cost of conversion of

daytime electricity into nighttime electricity will be about Rs 3 per unit in my estimate. A combination of solar and standalone pump storage can then provide us daytime electricity at Rs 3 from solar plants directly and nighttime electricity at Rs 6 after conversion leading to an average cost of solar electricity of about Rs 4.50 per unit. That is till significantly lower than the thermal electricity at Rs 6 per unit and hydropower at Rs 8 per unit. We will also be saved from the carbon emissions from thermal and environmental impacts of hydropower.

This arrangement can also help us manage the fluctuations in the demand of electricity. The great advantage of hydropower is that it can be switched on and off at the press of a button. Thus, grid managers ask hydropower projects to shut down when there is a sudden reduction in demand; and to start production when there is sudden increase in the demand. Last year Prime Minister Modi had asked the countrymen to switch off the lights for 10 minutes. That led to a sudden drop in the demand for electricity. The grid cannot handle this. It leads to collapse if electricity continues to be produced but is not evacuated from the grid. In such situations the hydropower projects are asked to switch off. The solar-sum-standalone pumps storage combination can provide such grid stability also. We cannot escape the wrath of nature if we continue to promote thermal and hydropower. The need of the hour is to freeze the construction of all new thermal and hydropower projects and move to solar-cum-standalone pump storage projects. □□

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Exploring Right to Repair – Electronics Based Products



The arrival of big seed sellers and pesticide sellers has made agricultural practices the least profitable business, and the situation can be imagined if the farmers are dependent on the original manufacturers or the agencies authorized by them for the repair of farm equipment or tractors.
Alok Singh

It is just a device- it can fail or it can work. That's a common perception. But what will happen if the device has been originally designed to fail in two or three years. If it has been designed in such a way then it means more business to the manufacturers. The concept of reliability in statistics figures out the probability of the working duration before a machine fails. All these probability theories need to capture a new parameter that is designed to fail. Circular economy, green supply chain, reverse supply chain, green economics, and many more environment-related concepts are being tossed by laws like patents, trade secrets, intellectual property rights, and so on.

The modern world is in a chapter where the products become outdated fast. There is a continuous race among the peers to offer the latest product to the consumers. In the life cycle of a product namely- introduction, growth, maturity, and decline- the maturity phase has shrunk to its extreme, and the decline phase is much faster than the growth phase. The maturity phase of a product is so small that a consumer is easily persuaded by the sellers to go for the latest product instead of getting their existing product upgraded or repaired. The significant difference between a laptop price of the same configuration in the current year and last year is a proxy to confirm it. Keep repair costly to generate profit, that's the business model.

Moreover, the products are designed in such a way that when the product needs repair it's difficult for anyone outside the manufacturing company or their authorized agencies to repair it with confidence and offer the customer some warranty on the repaired part. This further forces the consumer to buy a new product instead of retaining the older one. The economics of the modern product does not support repair. It impacts the electronics product the most. This is killing the repair market. It means that it is killing standalone mechanics or repair



persons. The generic drugs are to be legally prescribed by the medical practitioners, can someone come up with the concept of generic spare parts or generic electronics parts.

A repairman learns by investing time and learnings based on their own experience which consumes a lengthier duration of time. By the time a standalone repairman becomes expert for a product the product itself becomes outdated and the repairmen who are working like an entrepreneur, who is self-reliant, and optimize their learning curve through their own effort are in unsafe job zone. Such independent workmen are struggling to continue their livelihood.

The right to repair is a campaign that is being run in developed countries. Rich nations like the United States of America and European Union countries are seeking legislation from their policymakers to legalize the repair i.e. they demand the right to repair. Right to Repair is a new story that started in the United States in the automobile sector. The Massachusetts State passed legislation that assured the consumers that they will be provided with a manual book or an instruction book which can give directions regarding repair by anyone instead of the usual practices that only the agencies authorized by the manufacturers can do the repair. Such a demand from a developed country like the United States is a signal to us that we should think about the policies related to the right to repair. We can see how the automobile sector is coming up with newer and newer features that make the life of traditional mechanics difficult to execute their work for livelihood.

Rich nations like the United States of America and European Union countries are seeking legislation from their policymakers to legalize the repair i.e. they demand the right to repair.

The automobile has mechanical parts and electronics parts. The trend is such that automobile is becoming more electronics driven rather than mechanical driven. The electronics-dependent products have more serious repair issues. The mobile phone repair is costly enough for a consumer and it leads to purchase of a new phone instead of getting it repaired. The exchange offer which is good and available to the consumers is also a factor that is discouraging repair by the original owner. The value offered in exchange offers are a separate issue. Despite protection plans like an extended warranty, mobile phone repair is a discouraging experience.

The right to repair which originally started in the automobile industry is being replicated in the electronics-based product industry. The electronics company owners argue that they have to save their trade secret and the safety valve of a patent gives them enough arms to oppose any such rights in the electronics device market. The policymakers can engage environment protection related laws to do trade-off and even counter-arguments which are based on intellectual pro-

tection rights. The electronics and the internet of things supported by artificial intelligence are affecting every sector and every society. If the farmers of the United States are victims of the policies of the farm equipment manufacturers, who design the equipment in such a way that it's not possible for the farmers to repair on their own, then the life of our farmers can be more miserable. The arrival of big seed sellers and pesticide sellers has made agricultural practices the least profitable business, and the situation can be imagined if the farmers are dependent on the original manufacturers or the agencies authorized by them for the repair of farm equipment or tractors.

India is a fast developing country where individual household incomes are on a rising path. The consumption of electronics-based appliances is rising. In fact, electronics are replacing mechanical appliances very fast. It's the upcoming challenge for consumers and the job seekers to ask the policymakers to visualize the future and draft a policy that products be designed in such a way that the maturity phase sees significant improvement and the consumers get affordable repair options so that they can increase the life of their product or devices. We should also discourage any moves to replace the mechanical farm equipment with electronics-dependent farm equipment. The immediate threat to our farmers from the electronics farm devices is not visible as its application is not high. But we have to be ahead. The policymakers have to be ahead of the upcoming technology. □□

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Much Needs to Change Before We Celebrate Environment Days



A blanket of thorny green Babool trees drapes the stony red Aravalli landscape. A lone tarmac guarded by ageing hills runs into a pink evening sun. The old Ford open jeep touches 70 kmph, turns into a shaded bend, and then we saw murder: JCBs and heavy stone-cutters mining away at the Pushkar Aravallis in Rajasthan. The hills were dying.

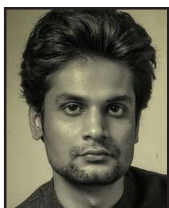
Illegal mining eats into rivers, mountains, and the livelihoods of thousands of people every year. But mining enriches the mafia. Local communities and their right to clean water, air and life are collateral damage in the quest for profit.

Pushkar is now extremely vulnerable to desertification due to illegal mining. Yet nothing seems to change.

Last year, the Supreme Court ordered Haryana, Rajasthan's neighbour, to halt the construction of roads in the Aravalli zone. This was after reports revealed that a hill had been entirely flattened in the eco-sensitive zone. At least on paper, mining has been banned along the 700-odd kilometre stretch of the Aravallis for nearly two decades. Around 35-40% of the drinking water supply for Gurgaon comes from the underground aquifers that the Aravalli hills protect and nurture. Yet, few seem to care about the June 2017 warning from the Central Ground Water Board that this underground water had been "overexploited" in Gurgaon, not to mention polluted.

Not just Rajasthan. Be it Goa, Karnataka, Himachal or the banks of the river Belan south of Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh, the illegal mining mafia is making its fortunes across the country. Unenforced legislations, corruption, and callousness towards the environment allow the mafia to flourish at the cost of people and the survival of future generations. An umbrella of political neglect and protection envelopes their activities.

Recently, 41 coal blocks were given the go-ahead in ecologically sensitive forested no-go zones. Former Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh, who, too, had been criticised for environmentally unsound decisions during his tenure, opposed the decision. If previous governments were strong on framing legislations, they were weak on implementation/intent. However, the present government essentially wants to dispense with the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) procedures altogether. These rules help determine the environmental impact of proposed projects, including their impact on people. If the EIA procedures are



Up against the greed-based paradigm is World Environment Day 2021, ironically devoted to "Ecosystem Restoration".
Inder Shekhar Singh

relaxed and amended as per the wishes of the government, these coal blocks would get to operate with fewer checks and virtually no environmental oversight.

The Draft Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) prepared in 2020 is a unique violator/polluter-friendly document that undermines communities, the environment and kills the possibility of judicial review of dangerous projects. It aims to provide warp-speed approvals to corporations to mine and fell freely in the pristine forests. The problem with the draft is that it severs all connections between the rural economy and its ecology.

It even grants exemption from public consultations for projects. Public hearings are only to be required for Category A, Category B1 and expansion projects, with the capacity to increase by more than 50%. Prior notice for public hearings has been reduced to 20 days. Further, the EIA 2020 allows for regularisation of violations of this legal notification. The Assam oil fiasco at Baghjan is only a trailer of what could well come next.

All such practices—illegal mining and corporate-driven mines, relaxation of protective laws, ignoring green court verdicts—reflect how low our nation's environmental consciousness has fallen. For many, the planet and its environment are nothing but sources of new raw material and resources, merely a collection of coal blocks, space for garbage dumps and timber mines. The western industrial vision seeks to command and commodify nature, not restore it. In the United States, Joe Biden's policies, far from "restoration of ecosystems", are poised to embo-

lden Wall Street's plans for environmental dacoity. Instead of increasing environmental protections, there appear to be commitments to the sale of ecosystems for top dollar.

Up against this greed-based paradigm is World Environment Day 2021, ironically devoted to "Ecosystem Restoration" this year. Whether East or West, governments are choosing money over the eco-system each time. For Twitter likes, they may talk sententiously about rivers and butterflies, but in reality, governments are careless. Take the Namami Ganga project. It has cost the public thousands of crores already, but what benefits have people seen since its launch seven years ago? All we have is more sewage and now even the bodies of COVID-19 victims.

Some say the lockdown imposed last year to control the spread of the Novel Coronavirus (which causes the COVID-19 disease) cleaned up our rivers. However, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) made it clear last autumn that it could observe "no significant improvement" in water quality in five of the 19 rivers it studied before and after the lockdown. This is because there were fewer upstream freshwater inflows and more discharge of wastewater in these major rivers. In another seven rivers, the quality of water did improve because of lesser effluent discharge into them, but not permanently. All we can say is that even this little improvement was more than the Namami Ganga project ever could achieve.

The world over, corporate giants are competing to wrest control over the environment and its resources, and not to restore it. Governments, too, are fighting

over shrinking water resources, forgetting that this shortfall is a direct result of their flawed extraction-oriented policies. Even the United Nations seems maimed under pressure and has remained a fence-sitter while Arctic drilling began or when a dozen or more oil spills washed up with their effluents on pristine shores, polluting marine habitats along the way.

Today, countries constantly announce drives to plant trees and restore biodiversity. However, we should not be too optimistic, as most of these project is not to restore but re-engineer the environment and spread monocultures of non-native trees. Their intent is not to restore the environment to its former state, but to create a new environment with an anthropocentric goal. We need a new paradigm of accountability and awareness to counter this depressing scenario.

In India, every year, sapling-planting competitions between various political parties are held, only to fail. These enterprises have only one winner—the sapling supplier. Most of these saplings never make it past a year due to neglect. In the meantime, we fail to conserve our living forests. A report recently highlighted that India lost 14% of its tree cover during the pandemic year, and rainforest destruction increased by 12% in 2020.

Much needs to change before we celebrate an environment day. We need a new ethic, one that makes the environment "the measure of things". We need progress and success to be linked to nature and not carbon credits or money. Without this reorientation, humanity's journey will be a short one. □□

The author writes on agriculture and the environment and is the former director of Policy and Outreach, National Seed Association of India. The views are personal.
<https://www.newslink.in/much-needs-change-before-celebrate-environment-days>

Situating Themselves in History and Reconstructing Identity: A Note on the Meenas of Jaipur–VI

It is significant that when the Meenas were being ignored, ascendancy of groups such as the Jats was being noted in the royal records. The making of an official map of the land of the Jats and its siege by the Kachwaha state speak for the gradual emergence of the Jats. It is important to note that while the Jats and Sikhs were assigned seats in the darbar (royal court), no Meena chief was granted a similar status.

However, the Meenas of Jaipur did not perceive themselves through the eyes of the contemporary Rajput society. They perceived themselves as per their actual status. For instance, in chithis (applications) to the Amil Pargana (Pargana officer) of Sawai Jaipur, dated AD 1731, complaining about the dispute over ownership of patti land and agricultural land between Har Ram Meena, patel of Nagrivias village, and one Hathila Meena, Har Ram Meena wrote his official designation, that of patel.

Har Ram Meena ultimately had to approach state officials to implement the decision of the Panchayat.” Disputes over mortgage of land in village Vilana in Pargana Liasot, between a brahman and a Meena resident is also reported in the eighteenth century records of Jaipur state. These records amply prove that some of Meenas were important functionaries in the local administration, Elsewhere in eastern Rajasthan (Bhura), arzdashts (documents written and maintained by officials frequenting villages) mention Meenazamindars along with the Gujars in the late seventeenth century. It was precisely at this juncture, around the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, that the Meenas of Jaipur laid claim to an elaborate ‘history of their own. Nainsi records the traditions of the seventeenth century Meenas of Bundi. We have already noted that the Meena chiefs of Bundi had started composing an elaborate history for themselves in



Meenas seem to have reconstructed their identity when a leadership had emerged and their due position and contributions to the Jaipur state were ignored and denigrated.

**Prof. Nandini
Sinha Kapur**



which they claimed territorial proprietorship prior to the coming of the Hada-Chauhan power in Bundi. Claim by the Meena chiefs to matrimonial ties with the Brahmanas in the past indicates the need for social respectability. Evidence from the NainstriKhyār points towards emergence of such traditions, at least amongst the elite Meenas of south-eastern Rajasthan, by the seventeenth century. The “history that came to be narrated in the early nineteenth century was a further step in the same direction. Incentive for making a “history” at this point also came from the declining political importance of the state of Jaipur as well as the intruding colonial apparatus. Recurring Maratha depredation in the eighteenth century, increasing pressures to pay a huge tribute to the East India Company and revolts by the Shekhavati contingents undoubtedly dented the prestige of the Kachwaha royal family”.

As a concluding note to the above study, few other important points can be mentioned. Two such areas would be caste area formations and claims about origin made by Meenas in the subsequent period, highlighting the process of Rajputization. First, the entire community claimed descent from the matsya (fish) incarnation of Vishnu.” This claim continued to be upheld in the post-Independence era with the organization of some of the principalities of eastern Rajasthan-Alwar, Bharatpur-Dholpur, Karauli and the chiefship of Neemrana-into Matsya Union on 18 March 1984.² The famous social reformer Muni Magan Sagar is known to have compiled Meen-Purna (meen is synonym of matsya), in 1937,” lending further cred-

It was precisely at this juncture, around the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, that the Meenas of Jaipur laid claim to an elaborate ‘history of their own.

ibility to the Meena claim to be descendants of ancient Matsyas. The claim has an interesting dimension—its recent origin can be seen from the fact that the Meenas do not take fish but fail to explain its ritual importance.⁴ Their claim reminds us of their attempt at comparing their origin myth with that of the local royal dynasty the Kachwaha, claim origin from the kkrmaa-vatr (tortoise incarnation) of Vishnu. Another version of Meena history dating back to 500 BC suggests that the Meenas were the subjects of Maurya king, Mauryadh-waj of Dausa, with his capital at Moreda. This version too is a legend that supports their claim to antiquity and a ‘civilized past’. The process of Rajputization seems to have been more significant amongst the Meenas than the Bhils, for claims to Rajput castes is more widespread amongst the Meenas. Origin stories of most of these castes are undoubtedly concocted.

1. Mer Panwars—Like the Chauhans, some Panwar (Paramar) Rajputs settled in the Olina villages and the children of such marriages between Paramar Rajputs and Meenas came to be known as Mer Panwars.

2. Mer Gehlots (with sub-castes Godhat, Bhondak, Bhilat, Bhailot)—Descended from Gehlot Rajputs and Mer-Meena woman in ancient times.
3. Joharwarls—Descendants of Nahrawat Rajput men and Meena Women.
4. Bodwals—Descended from one Sopal Rajput and a woman named Rama Dai, daughter of Bhodia Meena of Narwal caste.
5. Gehrawats—Descended from marriage between Rajput ruler Neemrana’s son Gehrawat and daughter of Tula Ram Meena of Mehad sub-caste.”
6. Bargujar Meenas—Descendants of Ikshvaku prince Rama chandra’s son Lav Kumar came to be known as Bargujars.
7. Kachwaha Meenas—Kush’s (Rama’s son) descendants are known as Kachwahas (sub-castes Mandal, Singhal and Gobinga Meena). It is significant that they appropriate the origin claims of the Kachwaha dynasty of Amber.
8. Sangats—Descendants born of marriage between Nihar Rawat and Meena woman. Eva, Balji, Goya, Bishna Meena Devatwala, Baljiwat, Soosia and Banswat-Meenas belong to this group.
9. Parihars (Pratihars)—Their origin is traced from a Rajput ruler of Mundore (Jodhpur) and they spread throughout Jalore, Jodhpur, Bundi, north-east of Mewar; sub-castes: Raj, Motus, Murgal and Marwat in Jaipur district.¹⁰¹ The skill with which their bards jaegaldholildhom (genealogists)¹⁰² have compiled the genealogies in nineteenth-twentieth centuries also points towards the influence of the caste society. □□



National Council Meeting (Online) of SJM June 5-6, 2021

Two days meeting of Rashtriya Parishad of Swadeshi Jagran Manch concluded on 5- 6 June 2021 through online mode. The inaugural session of the meeting, divided in four sessions started at 5:30 evening. Besides National Convener, Shri R. Sundram and central officials, the meeting was attended by regional conveners, organizers and newly nominated members to the Parishad totaling 264. It was attended by Karyakartas from allied organizations as well.

First Session: 5 June Evening, 5:30- 7:00

While coordinating the session, National Co-convenor Shri Ajay Pataki ji presented the introduction and discussed the activities of the Manch in last few months. Half minute of silence was observed as a mark of respect to all Karyakarta brothers and sisters departed during the pandemic.

In this session, an account of major activities being carried out during this period in the states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra and Telangana were presented. Region Convener Shri Manjunath ji informed, how while serving the patients, our Karyakartas are engaged in the ongoing signature campaign day and night. Similar account of the activities

carried out in the states of west, central, Rajasthan and north region were presented and was very inspiring. Every one specifically mentioned about the progress made towards the UAVM campaign – universal access to vaccines and medicines.

Akhil Bhartiya Prachar Pramukh, Shri Deepak Sharma, 'Pradeep'ji shared information about how under the Bhumi-Suposhan campaign Swadeshi Karyakartas worked hard and got positive response from the society.

Karnataka's organiser Shri Jagdish ji shared how using Ayurvedic and local medicinal practices, Dr. Giridhar Kaje from Bangluru provided Ayurvedic medicines to 7 lakhs infected patients. Dr. Baldev ji, the Vice Chancellor of Kurukshetra's Ayush University also provided useful assistance in the matter. In this session, Dr. Raj Kumar Chaturvedi shared his innovative experiments being carried out during the digital signature campaign at Bhilwara. Prof. Vijay Kaul from Delhi University and Incharge Swadeshi Shodh Sansthan presented the resolution on making India, to lead the world in medical infrastructure. How India can be a centre for export of medicines by producing quality drugs at low cost, was also discussed.

Current Economic Scenario and Way Forward

The life of billions of people all over the world has been badly affected, since the outbreak of Covid-19, that is, Chinese virus. This has proved to be a big disaster both in terms of the health and economy. In Bharat, so far, with 28.2 million people infected, 3.40 lakh fatalities have been reported due to this Chinese virus, which first surfaced in Wuhan, China in November 2019. The fierce race for the discovery of the vaccines to arrest the spread of the virus is on with major breakthroughs in terms of vaccines and medicines. Countries around the world are inoculating their citizens through massive vaccination programs coupled with preventive measures such as lockdowns to break the spread of the virus.

Stringent lockdown measures have seriously impacted the world economy as well as Bharatiya economy, causing a major disruption in the fields such as aviation, tourism, retail, education, automotive, restaurant, and oil and gas sector resulting in severe employee layoffs. According to ILO, in 2020, 8.8 percent of global working hours were lost relative to the fourth quarter of 2019, which is equivalent to 255 million full-time jobs lost. Shockingly, this amounts to a job loss approximately four times greater than that caused by the global financial crisis of 2008.

World Bank report estimates 4.3 percent contraction in global economy in 2020 because of COVID19 pandemic, and estimates 3.6 % contraction in U.S. GDP, 7.4% GDP contraction in European Union, 5.3 % GDP contraction in Japan and 2.6% reduction in aggregate GDP of emerging and developing economies in 2020. Bharat, the world's sixth-largest economy has also been hit hard by the pandemic last year as its GDP contracted by 7.9%. Country braced the first wave of pandemic outbreak and made some impressive recovery but onset of more severe second wave in April 2021 has wiped out the previous economic gains and dented the economic recovery. Union Government has given more freedom to State Governments to take appropriate decisions based on local situations like imposing lockdown, etc. unlike Centralized decision which happened last year. This has allowed agriculture, small-scale and heavy industry manufacturing sector to keep operating. Nevertheless, 100 million jobs were lost during the nationwide April-May 2020 lockdown, and during the month of May 2021, 15.3 million jobs were lost which hits 18% jobless rate in urban areas of Bharat.

Unemployment has been more pronounced among young workers (15-24 Years age group) who failed to regain employment. Azim Premji University report observes rapid increase in informal employment sector during the pandemic as salaried worker shifted towards self-employment and daily wage activities. It is a foregone conclusion that increasing health expenses and reduced employment opportunities have further worsened the economic situation of poorer households, increased poverty level and contributed to wealth disparities.

On the other hand, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd., found that Bharat's household savings dipped to 22.1% of GDP from 28.1% during April-June 2020 which is an alarming issue. The depleting household savings and falling incomes will have an adverse effect on domestic consumption and health care of the family, which accounts for about 60% of GDP, apart from impacting capital formation.

Government relief measures like free rations, cash transfers, MGNREGA, PM-KISAN SAMMAN NIDHI payments, pension payments Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) and the Atmanirbhar Bharat packages have provided the soothing effect to most vulnerable population from pandemic in 2020. Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) appreciates Central Government's fiscal and stimulus policy response both Atmanirbhar Bharat Package as well as freely available liquidity of Rs. 15,000 Crores loan to the service sector announced on 4th June 2021 to tackle the present health and economic crisis caused by COVID19. However, SJM firmly believes that the mayhem caused by the Pandemic can be overcome only by the concerted efforts of every section of the society. In this unprecedented difficult situation of the country, the SJM suggests;

1. To consider and extend fiscal support to the vulnerable sections of the society in addition to free food grains.
2. Substantially increase the fund allocation for MNREGA to support rural employment.
3. The Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme should be extended for a few more months and its scope can be further expanded to other pandemic hit sectors.
4. Specific stimulus to sectors most affected by Corona virus induced lockdowns i.e., construction, fishing, horticulture, etc. - in terms of soft loans.
5. To announce a package for employment linked incentives (ELI) to strengthen MSME sector.
6. The Reserve Bank of India should clearly announce need based moratoriums to suit every sector of the economy and direct the banks for liberal monetary support.
7. Corporate and business houses should fully support to manage the difficult situation by liberal contribution for Covid relief, payment of salaries to employees without retrenchment and timely payment of dues to MSMEs,
8. The private health care providers should realise that this is not the time for making profits and ensure treatment with minimum cost.

The pandemic has removed the illusion that urbanisation is a measure of development. It has been conclusively proved that with the aid of technology, substantial economic activity can be carried from remote or rural areas also thereby providing opportunity for a more dispersed and decentralised growth model with substantial employment contribution.

The SJM firmly believes in the inherent strength of Bharat and is resilient enough to tide over the situation. Let us all work together with mutual trust and help to put the country back to glory at the earliest. □

The Vice Chancellor of Gautam Buddha University and Central Authority in SJM, presented the resolution for making the vaccines & medicines patent free and easily accessibly for all. During the discussion, he emphasized on the need for planning for innovations, increase in production capacity and consideration of the requirement of the world. He said, safety of people, which is their fundamental right, is more important than the profits of patented companies.

Second Session: 5 June, 7:00 Evening

The session was conducted by National Co-convenor, Dr. Dhanpat Ram Agarwal ji. The account of activities carried out in four regions of Western Uttar Pradesh, East Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Eastern region was presented and covered activities such as swadeshi fairs, webinars, bhumi suposhan and programmes covering women carried out in last few days. Akhil Bhartiya Sangharsh Vahini Pramukh, Shri Annada Shankar Pannigrahi ji shared the progress of swadeshi work in the eastern region.

During the session, Shri Ajay Upadhyay ji, Kshetra Sanghatk of East Uttar Pradesh, informed how Pt. Deen Dyal Research & Medical Centre, by providing machines and training for making donna – pattal is experimenting with self employment programs.

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan ji explained the worries and ongoing discussion on the origin of Corona virus and pointed out that Chinese suspicious role, now is being discussed from India to America. He stressed that now enough evidences are available on how the virus originated and leaked from China.

Third Session: 6 June, 9:30 Morning

This session was conducted by Shri Manjunath ji, convener of South Central Region. The Vice Chancellor of Kurukshetra University and Co-convenor, North region, Prof. Somnath Sachdeva ji, informed about the organization of international webinar and signature of 2120 intellectuals from the institutions of higher learning. The webinar organized by Howard University, USA, Gautam Buddha University, and Haryana State Higher Education Council was widely praised. It was attended by the US senator, Howard

University Prof.& Dean Dr. Narendra Rustagi. Information about the big webinar organized in India in which Swami Gyananand ji Maharaj, Nitin Gadkari and Central Minister of State Mansukh Mandaviya addressed the participants was also shared. So far, petition for patent free vaccines has been signed by 7.5 lakh people. During the session C.A. Balram Nandwani ji provided information about the progress of Swadeshi Shodh Sansthan and the funds collected so far. The Bhumi-Pujan of the Bhawan was completed in the presence of Manniya Shri Dattatreya Hosabaleji, Sar. Karyavaha, RSS. He expressed the hope that funds collection obstructed due to corona shall be resumed shortly. National Convener, Shri R. Sundram ji, expressed his views on Economic Restructuring Post Covid and emphasized on the need to adopt liberal attitude towards business along with government efforts to generate to new avenues of employment and production. Similarly, Dr. S. Lingamurthy speaking on the topic - Economy and Employment post Corona presented data from the international organizations and emphasized on need for rural industrialization and employment generation by strengthening education and Religious Tourism. National Co-convenor Sh. Arun Ojha ji expressed his views on the role of Dunkel proposals, Uruguay round and three major economic institutions of the world. Dr. Ashwani Mahajan introduced Chief Executive Officer of NATCO company Shri Rajiv Nannapaneni to the delegates. Natco was the first company to get compulsory license to manufacture medicine for the treatment of liver cancer at 10% of the world's price and made it available in India and the world. He was Chief-Guest of the session. He criticized the multi-national pharma companies who are demanding the extension of patent period from the present 20 years to 30-40 years. He stressed that if we have to provide cheap and easily accessible medical facilities in the world then patent time has to be reduced. After this Shri Ajay Pataki ji informed about the book titled Vaishvik Mahamaari Corona: Opportunities and Solutions written jointly by Prof. Bhagawati Prakash Sharma ji and Shri Satish ji and said that soon the book

Need fast track enquiry into origin of virus

Everyone has the right to know the origin of the virus which has caused havoc to the world and humanity in the last 15 months. Issue, that the corona virus which caused the pandemic, was produced in a laboratory in Wuhan (China), had come out of the laboratory by design or accidentally, has been in discussion almost since the beginning. The then US President Donald Trump was also repeatedly calling it a 'Chinese virus'.

Recently, many new research findings have revealed that the virus had actually originated from the laboratory of Wuhan Institute of Virology. It is to be understood that the World Health Organization has been studying the origin of corona virus, but only symbolically. Without knowing the source of the origin of the corona virus, we can't solve this problem. World Health Organization has not accepted that the virus was released from the laboratory and in its report published in March 2021 stated that it was a virus emanating from China's animal market. The report said that the virus had emerged from bats and entered humans through another animal. However, the report also did not rule out its origin from Wuhan's laboratory.

Since the World Health Organization is under immense pressure from China, it has not been able to clearly link the virus's origin to the Wuhan laboratory. But this apprehension cannot be completely ruled out. Therefore, the organization tried to satisfy the US by calling the report 'inconclusive'. Also, it has been said on every related issue included in the report that more studies are needed for the same. But a large group of experts have not accepted this report and they are constantly looking into it further. In recent months, many studies and research papers are being published, which clearly indicate the intentional or accidental leaking of the virus from the Wuhan laboratory. Most experts around the world have rejected the World Health Organization's report outrightly. They maintain that the World Health Organization did not investigate the issues which it was supposed to do.

Unholy relationship between WHO and China

The World Health Organization and its chief Mr Tedros Adhanam have been under suspicion since the beginning of this pandemic. Human Rights Watch's Director Mr Ken Roth has said that the World Health Organization is guilty of 'institutional complicity'. He said this in reference to the World Health Organization statement emanating from blind acceptance of Chinese falsehood, when it ruled out human to human transmission of this virus in January 2020. Therefore, WHO has actually lost its credibility.

It is no secret that 86 million of the World Health Organization's funding comes from China, 532 million from the Gates Foundation and 371 million from the Gates Foundation's own creation, GAVI Alliance. This is the reason why this organization is under the tremendous influence of China and the Gates Foundation. It is worth noting that ignoring these voices coming from various parts of the world that the virus originated from China, the World Health Organization did not question the role of China. Bill Gates also tried to defend China and said that in fact China has done a very good work since the outbreak of the pandemic and the World Health Organization is a 'phenomenal' organisation. That is, connecting the threads, we clearly see the unholy relationship between China, World Health Organization and Gates Foundation. And it's also no secret that China had played a major role in the appointment of Mr Tedros Adhanom as Director General of World Health Organization. How this despicable relationship is causing havoc in the world is also clearly getting exposed.

This virus, call it corona virus, the Wuhan virus or the Chinese virus, leaked (accidentally or by design) out of the Wuhan Institute of Virology of China and China came to know about it in November 2019, but information in this regard was given to the world only by the end of January. Conspiracy is getting reflected also in this delay. Significantly, on 14 January 2020, the World Health Organization tweeted, ruling out the human-to-human infection of the virus. WHO's tweet stated, "Preliminary investigations conducted by the Chinese authorities have found no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission of the novel #coronavirus (2019-nCoV) identified in #Wuhan #China". Due to this attitude of the World Health Organization, despite such a terrible virus, no effort could be made to prevent human-to-human infection. Flights from China to countries around the world continued unabated and the virus spread from China to the whole world. The responsibility of this blunder was also not accepted by the World Health Organization. However, the then US President Donald Trump announced his break-up with the World Health Organization and its funding was also stopped. Although no other country has taken such a drastic step, but the image of the World Health Organization received a big blow.

Latest information

Articles in the Washington Post and many other research studies have now revealed involvement of America's institutions and individuals with China in this game.

According to the facts coming out, the researchers of Wuhan Institute of Virology were working on 'gain of function' research project, which was aimed at developing chimeric versions of coronavirus possessing high infectiousness, that is, the experiment which possibly developed the virus Covid-19. This fact has been brought to light by several scientific publications

and eminent science writers such as Nicholas Wade. There is plenty of published data to establish that the genetic composition of the Covid-19 has the telltale signatures of a chimeric virus engineered in the laboratory.

The role of Peter Daszak is even more dubious. This gentleman has been an important member of the Commission sent by the World Health Organization to Wuhan. This is the same person who published a paper in the prestigious research journal named Lancet, saying that the laboratory has no role in the spread of the virus.

But the letter did not reveal that Peter Daszak has been arranging funding for the Wuhan Institute of Virology through the New York-based Eco Health Alliance. That is, the conflict of interest was not disclosed. Since the World Health Organization is dominated by China, the investigation by the commission, which went to investigate the emergence of the virus in Wuhan also comes under suspicion.

Apart from these people, names of some very top placed people is also coming to light, who have been instrumental in funding 'Gain of functions' research at Wuhan Institute of Virology, which would require further investigations to reach at conclusive evidence about the origin of virus and fix the responsibility for the worst pandemic of the history causing havoc for the mankind.

Swadeshi Jagran Manch calls upon the scientific community in India and the world and global leaders to make concerted efforts to reach at the root of the issue of origin of the virus and fix the responsibility of people or countries involved in creation and spread of virus and pave way for compensation of losses and ensure such a situation never arise again. □

shall be translated in other languages and made available to all. At the conclusion of the session Shri Satish ji explained the Patent-free vaccine campaign and the existing world scenario on the issue. He said more than 20 lakhs people and 200 noble laureates and former heads of the states in the world have demanded for the patent free vaccines from WHO head to 120 heads of states have come forward in support of the demand. The movement is getting the support of European Union China and Japan. This is a movement based on truth and shall succeed.

Fourth Session: 6 June, 11:30 – 1:00

This session was coordinated by Akhil Bhartiya Vichar Vibhag Pramukh Prof. Raj Kumar Mittal (Vice-Chancellor). During the session, Padamshree Dr. Rajni Kant shared information about the geographical indication tag. He himself is instrumental in getting GI tag to 53 products. In 9 divisions of Kashi, the business of 20 lakhs weavers has increased to the extent of 32%. He informed that in India only 370 GI tags have been registered, while in China the number is 9000 and USA it is 4000. Therefore, India has to make big efforts to increase the number. After that, Akhil Bhartiya Mahila Pramukh Smt. Amita Pataki ji explained the role being played by the women in signature campaign by citing the reference of Tilakji.

Rashtriya Sangathak Shri Kashmiri Lal ji, presented the framework before the delegates for the forthcoming events, which include:

1. On 12th June evening to 13th June evening everyone should start special signature campaign by taking together all karyakartas and family members.
2. On 14th June International press conferences hall

be organized on UN.

3. On 20th June World Awakening Day shall be celebrated in all 379 districts and countries so as to give wider support to Patent free vaccine.
4. Collection of money for Swadeshi Shodh Sansthan shall be restarted after lockdown period is over.
5. State wise Vichar Varg shall be organized in the month of July and August.

To conclude the Rashtriya Parishad meeting, Shri V. Bhagaiya ji, member of Executive Council of RSS in his address appealed to all Karyakartas to engage themselves in signature campaign with full force. He said that Swadeshi Jagaran Manch has not only performed the social services but by taking together associated organisations, intellectuals and social organisations has started this campaign. He also supported the manufacturing of Ayurvedic medicines and treatment system. To develop the karyakartas, he stressed that karyakartas must work to acquire the qualities like - sweet talker (sugar in mouth), have wheel on feet (pairmeinchakar) and fire in heart. He said that we are working for the benefits of the entire humanity and shall get the cooperation of all organizations.

In the end, National convener Shri R. Sundaram ji provided information about the newly constituted Rashtriya Parishad and made new announcements. He expressed his confidence that not only we will come out of the Corona pandemic, but also take care of our economy and employment very well. He expressed his views on shifting from less China to China-less economy in next 6 year. Prof. Raj Kumar Mittal ji thanked all and the meeting ended with the recitation of national song Vande Mataram. □□

[Other 2 Resolutions will be published in next issue.]

SJM declares June 20 as 'Jagriti Divas'

SJM has declared June 20 as 'Jagriti Divas' (Awareness Day) for 'Patent Free Vaccine and Medicines'. On this occasion more than 2000 programmes will be organized in every nook and corner of the country and in rest of the world. SJM has call upon the enlightened citizens to come forward and lend their support for the cause by participating in this programme. Placards will be put on SJM website and people from all over the world can download the same and participate in 'Jagriti Divas' programmes, which will be organized in both offline and online modes.

http://epaper.lokmat.com/articlepage.php?articleid=LOKTIME_CPLS_20210616_3_7

SJM lauds global community for supporting India's demand for TRIPS waiver to Covax

Swadeshi Jagran Manch has hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for giving a new mantra called 'One World, One Health' for the collective global response to fight Covid-19 while participating in the G-7 nations summit that concluded recently, said co-convenor of SJM Dr. Ashwani Mahajan and national executive committee member Dhananjay Bhide here.

Countries must come forward, pool all their resources, support TRIPS waiver and ensure that vaccine and medicines are made patent free, they said.

SJM also appreciated government of India for its recently announced vaccine policy to procure 75 per cent vaccine by the Central government and making it available to the state government for vaccinating free of cost to a large part of population. The stance of G-7 nations, in particular France which has unambiguously supported efforts of India and South Africa for TRIPS waiver in WTO is also appreciated by SJM, along with technology transfer and smooth supply of raw materials, both Ashwani Mahajan and Dhananjay Bhide said.

The changed approach of USA in ensuring support for TRIPS waiver for vaccines and also lifting of embargoes on the supply of raw materials to the rest of the world is also laudable, they said.

"We also put on record our deep appreciation for parliamentarians, scientists and noble laureates from all parts of globe including European Union and USA for their whole hearted support for India's TRIPS waiver proposal and exerting pressure on their

respective governments to stand with the cause of humanity, they said.

http://epaper.lokmat.com/articlepage.php?articleid=LOKTIME_CPLS_20210616_3_7

India's proposal for patent waiver on Covid vaccines gets widespread support at G7: MEA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said India is a natural ally for the G-7 countries in defending the shared values from a host of threats stemming from authoritarianism, terrorism and violent extremism, disinformation and economic coercion.

In a virtual address at a session on 'open societies and open economies' at the G-7 summit, the prime minister highlighted India's civilisational commitment to democracy, freedom of thought and liberty.

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) additional secretary P Harish said there was widespread support at the G7 deliberations for text-based negotiations on a proposal by India and South Africa for patent waiver on Covid vaccines.

Harish said the prime minister spoke on the need for open and democratic societies to work together and strengthen each others' hands to defend the value that they hold dear and to respond to the increasing challenges. Harish said UK conveyed to us that while PM Boris Johnson was disappointed at not being able to welcome PM Modi in person at the summit. He was understanding and supportive of his decision.

The additional secretary said, however, the issue of china was not raised at the meeting as there are other several forums where such issues can be discussed.

The MEA official said Modi also highlighted the revolutionary impact of digital technologies on social inclusion and empowerment in India through application such as Aadhaar, Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) and JAM (Jan Dhan-Aadhaar- Mobile) trinity.

In his remarks, the prime minister underscored the vulnerabilities inherent in open societies and called on tech companies and social media platforms to ensure a safe cyber environment for their users, additional secretary (economic relations) in the MEA P Harish said at a press conference.

"The prime minister's views were appreciated by other leaders in the gathering," he said.

Harish said the G7 leaders underlined their commitment to a free, open and a rules-based Indo-Pacific and resolved to collaborate with partners in the region.

India's participation at the G7 sessions reflected

understanding within the bloc that resolution to "the biggest global crisis of our time" is not possible without India's involvement and support, he said, in a reference to the coronavirus pandemic. He said India will remain deeply engaged with the G7 and guest partners on all major issues, including health governance, access to vaccines and climate action.

Harish said the prime minister's participation in the summit was based on three broad tracks-global health vaccines and recovery from COVID-19; environment and climate change, open societies, and open economies.

The Group of Seven (G7) comprises the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States. As chair of G7, the UK invited India, Australia, South Korea, South Africa to the summit as guest countries.

The leaders of the world's advanced economies held a summit in Cornwall in the UK from June 11-13. It is for the first time the leaders of the grouping met in person since the coronavirus pandemic began.

<https://www.livehindustan.com/news/india/indias-proposal-for-patent-waiver-on-covid-vaccines-gets-widespread-support-at-g7-mea-11623593820345.html>

SJM continues campaign to make corona vaccine, medicines patent-free



Most of the world's population today is plagued by the fear of corona infection. Due to the patents of big companies on medicines and vaccines for the treatment and prevention of this infection, they are not accessible to everyone. Human's right to life is a universal and fundamental right. By giving unlimited rights to some companies to make profits from patents, the right to life of crores of people is under threat and this cannot be allowed to happen.

For the protection of humanity, Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) is running a campaign to make available patents on Covid-19 vaccine and medicines to

the whole world easily and easily.

Also, a proposal to exempt the universal vaccine and medicines campaign from the TRIPS agreement was also presented in the World Trade Organisation.

According to SJM Malwa province co-convenor Dilip Singh Chauhan, more than 5 lakh people (upto 2 June 21) have from across the country in the Jan Jagran have given their assent to the online signature campaign which is underway since May 11. More than 15 thousand signatures have been received from Malwa province. Citizens including ex-Indian football team captain Baichung Bhutia, Malwa province acting head Shambhu Prasad Giri and minister of state for school education Inder Singh Parmar are participating in the campaign.

To make these vaccines and medicines cheap and accessible to all, an intensive campaign is being run by the people of India to make these vaccines and medicines patent free and transfer their technology. Although many drugs related to the treatment of Covid-19 are being produced locally, the amount available is insufficient to meet the growing demand due to the severity of the problem, Chauhan said.

SJM workers including province women chief Preeti Goyal, Ujjain district convener Harish Sharma, Kamlesh Khatri, Vidya Pathak, Nalini Sharma, Mangla Pandya, Lalit Soni, Deepak Kumawat, Ankit Sharma, Shailendra Parmar, Sandeep Parmar and Pushpendra Singh have appealed to make this campaign successful.

<https://www.freepressjournal.in/indore/ujjain-five-lakh-sign-on-online-petition-sjm-continues-campaign-to-make-corona-vaccine-medicines-patent-free>

SJM Co-convenor shares video questioning social media's power to regulate speech

Swadeshi Jagran Manch Co-convenor Dr. Ashwani Mahajan endorsed a video purportedly showing French President Emmanuel Macron questioning how social media platforms can decide who can speak and who cannot in a democracy.

Mahajan's apparent endorsement came in the form of his sharing the video amid an escalating war of words between the Centre and the social media giant, Twitter.

In the video, Macron is purportedly heard slamming social media platforms for banning former US President Donald Trump after the US Capitol siege protest on January 6.

"Food for thought @narendramodi @Amit-

Shah,” Mahajan tweeted, sharing the French president’s purported video.

In this video, Macron is heard telling the host that he does not want to live in a democracy “where the key decisions and the decision about the point of time to cut your mic to be sure that Ben is not in the situation to speak anymore because of the speech is decided by a private player, a private social network”. “I want it to be decided by a law voted by your representative or by regulation, a governance democratically discussed and approved by democratic leaders,” Macron adds.

Commenting on Macron’s purported video, Mahajan said on the micro blogging site, “This video is an important lesson for heads of the governments all over the world, what social media giants can do with the freedom of expression!”

<https://in.news.yahoo.com/sjm-convenor-shares-video-questioning-193819901.html>

World leaders must fight pandemic jointly

“We have moved a bill in the US House of Representatives to extend 20 billion dollars aid to Covid-hit countries. Under the Nullifying Opportunities for Variants to Infect and Decimate (NOVID) Act, the Biden administration will provide 80 million extra doses of vaccines to developing and low-income countries. US plans to vaccinate 60 per cent of world population to create the desired herd immunity.” Indian-American Congressman, Raja Krishnamoorthi said this while speaking in an international webinar.

The webinar on ‘Strategies for Dealing with Pandemic for Equitable Access to Vaccines’, was organised jointly by Gautam Buddha University, Howard University, Association of Indian Universities, Haryana Higher Education Council, Kurukshetra University and Swadeshi Swawlamban Trust.

Ron Somers, former chairman, US-India Business Council, said: “India and the US have partnered in producing vaccines for HIV, Hepatitis B and C and the first phase of Covid in the form of Remdesivir by using compulsory licencing. Contrary to some misbeliefs, compulsory licencing will provide access to vaccines, will not undermine IPR and enable further innovation. India has seven vaccine-manufacturers who can mass-produce vaccines once technology is transferred to them.”

Prof Pradeep Kapur, former ambassador and Amazon bestselling author said, “No government in

the world, however powerful, can go alone by itself to deal with the Corona Pandemic. Leaders of the world who can communicate with civil society will be better able to manage the corona crisis.”

Prof Marilyn Sepocle, chairperson of Women Ambassadors Foundation, observed that like Merrie Curie and Charles R. Drew, who respectively gave X-Ray and Plasma therapy to the world as gifts, the Vaccine making pharma companies should use their innovation as a gift to the world.

Dr Pradeep Reddy, MD and a Pediatrics Specialist in Marion, Illinois and member of the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin said that regulatory hurdles in supply of International aid for Covid medicines and equipment must be addressed urgently.

Dr Pankaj Mittal, secretary general, Association of Indian Universities said that vaccine is the only hope to save humanity from this Pandemic. All of us should unite to make an opinion in the world community about free access to vaccines to all.

Dr Johnrose Austin Jayalal, national president of the Indian Medical Association said that countries with 13 per cent of world population have ordered 50 per cent vaccines. At this rate 9 per cent of the population of lower income countries will be without vaccination till the end of 2021 or longer. However, India has walked the talk and Bharat Biotech has given vaccine manufacturing licence to three companies and is ready to give voluntary licence to any manufacturer in the world.

R Sundram, all-India convenor of Swadeshi Jagran Manch said that this pandemic should unite the world in its fight against an invisible enemy. Swadeshi Jagran Manch is playing a major role in bringing world leaders to a consensus for patent-free vaccines.

Satish Kumar, all-India co-organiser of Swadeshi Jagran Manch and a leading economic thinker and social worker, observed that 3 lakh people (upto 29 May 21) have already signed the petition moved by our trust for making corona vaccine free from patent regime. 1,500 vice-chancellors, intellectuals, scientists, and economists have also signed another similar petition.

Prof Narendra Rustagi, director CGBS, Howard University, highlighted the fact that we need to lift patent conditions for a limited period so that humanity can be saved. Reasonable profits can be shared with innovators to meet the cost of innovation.

Saji Narayanan, former All India President of

Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh observed that new terms, like vaccine racism and vaccine apartheid are in currency these days, which is indeed a cause of concern. We must decide what is more important, profit or humans. Greed based capitalism should give way to humanitarianism.

Prof Bhagwati Prasad, VC Gautam Buddha University, stressed that global humanity must unite to save humans from Covid. World cannot wait for the WTO to take a decision on relaxing laws for producing vaccines.

Dr Yogender Malik, all-India general secretary, National Medicos Organization, said that there are seven vaccine manufacturers in India with the capability to make Covid vaccine. India has walked the talk. Bharat Biotech has given voluntary licence to Indian manufacturer and further willing to give licence to any manufacturer in the world.

Prof Somnath Sachdeva, vice-chancellor, Kurukshetra University, coordinated with the foreign and Indian speakers in the smooth organization of the webinar. He said that this seminar, with a major support of Kurukshetra University, has been successful in building a world-wide opinion about Patent free vaccines and medicines to a 70 % world population to fight the pandemic.

Prof BK Kuthiala, chairman, Haryana Higher Education Council, observed in his vote of thanks that through such webinars a discourse of consensus is emerging through the efforts of intellectuals, social organizations, policy makers, education administrators, scientists to provide free access to vaccines, medicines and medical equipment in this unprecedented situation of pandemic.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/indian-american-congressman-brings-legislation-to-expand-us-aid-to-covid-hit-countries/articleshow/83067524.cms>

SJM seeks EU's support for waiver of TRIPS

The Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) has urged the European Union to unconditionally support the proposal for Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waiver at the WTO and constructively engage in the text-based negotiation at the earliest without compromising the purposes and objectives behind the proposal.

"After the May 5 announcement by the USTR to support text-based negotiations on the waiver proposal, many countries came forward to support the

negotiation. However, the announcement of the EU is not clear in its support to text-based negotiations. Further, the EU attempted to limit the scope of the TRIPS Waiver to vaccine patents only," pointed out, SJM, in a letter to the EU Ambassador to India, UgoAstuto, on May 20.

The letter noted that the proposal mooted by India and South Africa, asking the WTO to grant a waiver for a limited number of years (to be negotiated by the TRIPS Council) from the implementation, application and enforcement of specific provisions of the TRIPS agreement, was aimed at the prevention, containment and treatment of Covid-19, which was the worst pandemic faced by humanity.

The proposal has so far been co-sponsored by 62 WTO member countries and has the support of over 100 members. Several developed members, such as Japan and the EU, have been against such a waiver.

Attempts to block text-based negotiations goes against the concept of solidarity and even violates the right to health guaranteed under Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, SJM stated.

"We would like to state that the best option before us is to scale up the production of various Covid-19 medical products by removing legal barriers against freedom of operation," the letter said.

The approach of charity, that includes donating vaccines and other medical products, is not sustainable and has so far failed to effectively address the problem. "Such an approach is likely to lead to the continuation of a monopoly by a few companies over Covid-19 medical products, and will accentuate the miseries of the people, as the same is likely to cause shortages and unaffordable treatment, which India and the world has gone through in recent months," SJM argued in the letter.

It is also important to note that patents are not the only barrier, since access to trade secrets is also critical to scale up the production of vaccines and diagnostics, the letter added. "Therefore, the EU proposed Covid-19 Vaccine Patent Pool is a diversionary tactic and does not address the real issue. On this unprecedented international health crisis, it is important to keep peoples' health above profit," the SJM said, adding that the EU should engage in text-based negotiations for a waiver, so that it can be concluded at the earliest.

□□

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/policy/covid-19-swadeshi-jagran-manch-seeks-eu-support-for-waiver-of-trips/article34604299.ee>



Universal Access to Vaccine and Medicines campaign (UAVM)

World Awakening Day

Programme for
Pledge for Patent Free Vaccine



20 JUNE 2021



11AM

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Organised by :- TEAM UAVM

Swadeshi Activities National Council Meeting (Online)

Pictorial Glimpses

