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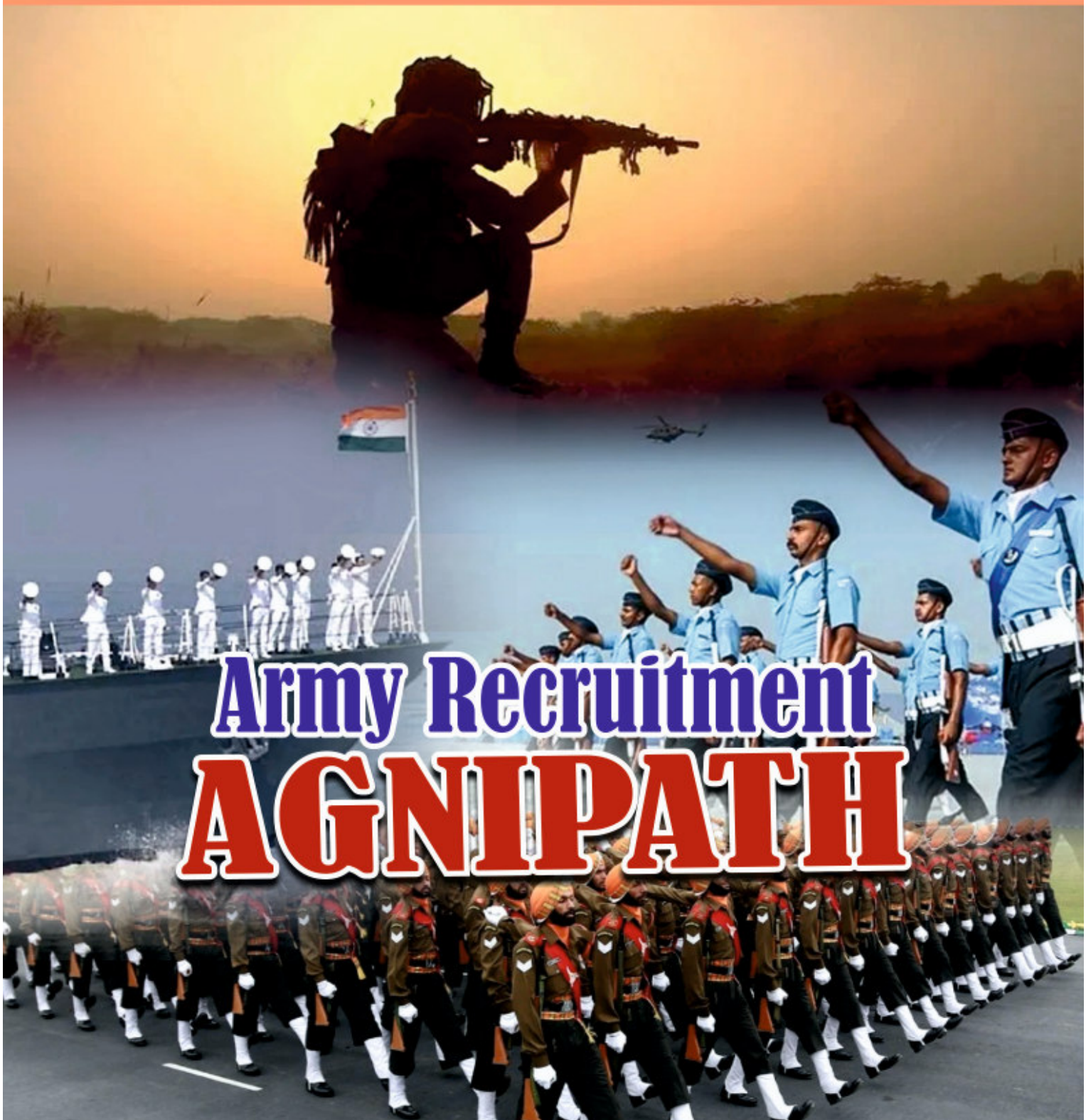
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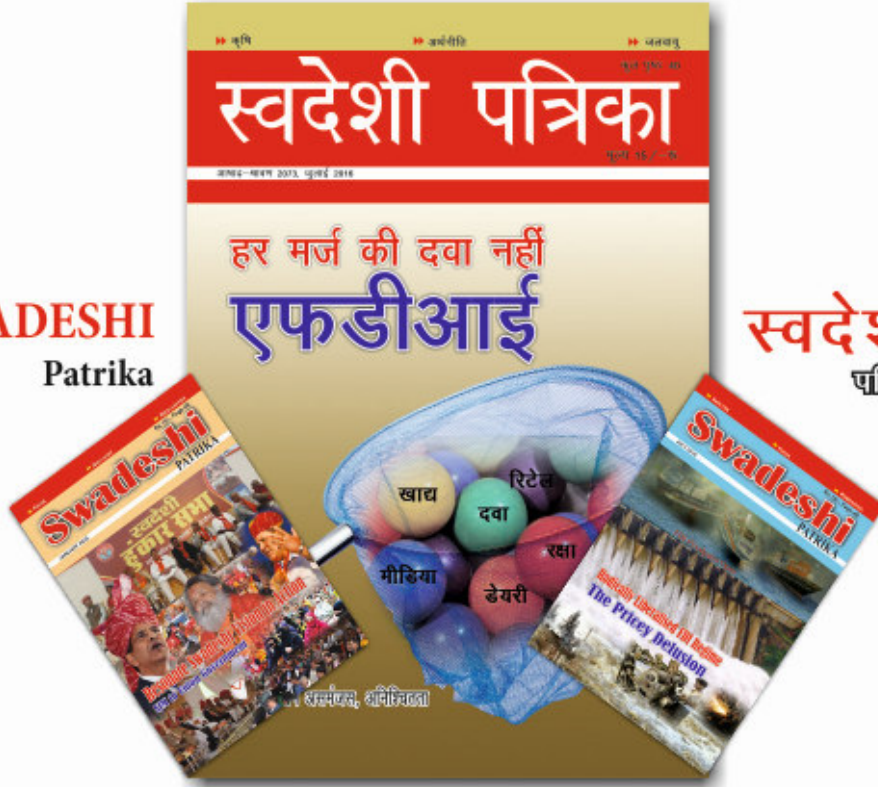
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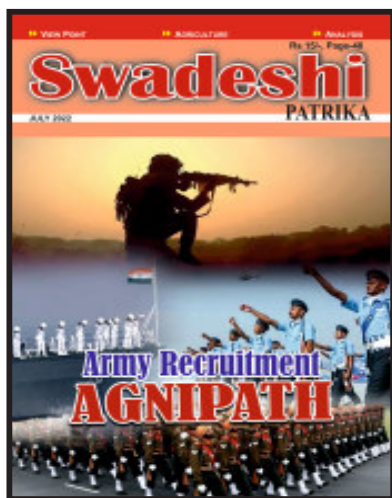
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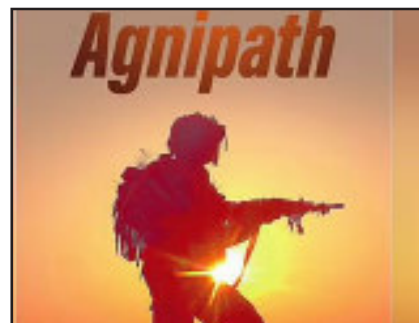


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Uniform Civil Code

The recent murders of Kanabiya Lal and Umesh Khole in the name of religion and raising of the slogan of "Sir Tan se Juda" highlighted the fact that some Muslim organizations like the Muslim Personal Law Board and other vested interests are attempting to impose rules and laws on society that are not even applicable in Iran, Pakistan, or Saudi Arabia. The rules of Shariat do not apply in any major democratic countries like Britain, America, France, Germany, Australia, and Canada, even if there is a sizeable population of the minority community in these countries. When Muslim women in the world are becoming doctors, engineers, and even pilots in modern time, the fanatics in India are trying to ban the education of girls in hijab-burqa. These fanatics are only cheating and misbehaving in the name of society and religion.

Not only countries like the USA and UK but also countries like radical Pakistan, Indonesia, Turkey, and Egypt have similar civil law systems throughout their countries. But even when we are celebrating Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav in the 75th year of Independence in India, there is only ongoing debate and discussion on the issue of the legalization of the Uniform Civil Code. It is high time to start the process of creating a uniform civil code for the whole country.

— Kumar Gaurav, Samastipur, Bihar

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Quote-Unquote



Amrit Mahotsav not only covers the victory saga of liberation from hundreds of years of slavery, but also the journey of 75 years after independence. We move forward, learning from every important stage of history.

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister, Bharat



We must take advantage of technology to celebrate and promote the vibrancy of all our Indian languages. Gol is endeavouring to come up with 200 new TV channels for educational purposes, including one channel for every class in every languages.

Dharmendra Pradhan

Union Minister of Education, Bharat



Corporations & chemicals do not feed the world. They cause hunger & disease, climate change & biodiversity loss. Small farmers, women, biodiversity, soil organisms, insects & pollinators grow healthy food that nourishes the web of life.

Piyush Goyal

Union Commerce and Industry Minister, Bharat

Sanctions biting the West

Today the whole world is suffering the consequences of the ongoing Russo-Ukraine war since February 2022. It is worth noting that Russia had invaded Ukraine, angered by Ukraine's increasing ties with 'NATO', which not only caused huge loss of life and property in Ukraine, but has pushed the world into serious problems. Nobody is spared from rising oil prices, supply chain disruptions, food shortages and due to this, slowing down of growth and rising prices, all over the world. Economic sanctions were imposed by US and its allied European countries with the aim of teaching Russia a lesson. The US believed that the Russian economy would collapse due to these sanctions. But the Russian economy did not collapse, though, the impact of these sanctions is definitely being seen on the countries of the West. It's important to understand that Russia is a major supplier of gas and crude oil to the world. Russia is the largest exporter of petroleum products and the second largest exporter of crude oil. USA and Europe banned Russia from their payment system 'SWIFT', aiming to stop Russia selling its oil to the rest of the world. They thought that this would break Russia's financial backbone. But Russia's strategy dashed their expectations and today USA, and more importantly its friendly European countries are going through a major economic crisis. Realizing that due to the rising oil prices in the world, all countries including Europe will take refuge in Russia in search of cheap oil, Russia started supplying its oil to India at cheap prices and in rupee terms on the one hand, with India increasing her oil imports from Russia by 50 times. On the other hand, it did not face any obstacle in oil payments from European countries, as European countries have increasingly become dependent on cheap oil from Russia, and they continued to buy oil from Russia, bypassing their own sanctions. In such a situation, the impact of these sanctions on the Russian economy was minimal. After that, perturbed with the continuation of economic sanctions by European countries, Russian President Putin decided to reduce the supply of oil to these countries. Germany, which was still unaffected by the economic crises of the European countries for the last few decades, is now in the grip of oil shortage due to Russia's strategy. This naturally had an impact on electricity generation in Germany. Not only has the cost of power generation increased there, the supply of electricity has also come under threat. The German government is saying that this is an economic attack by Russian President Putin on Europe and that Putin's strategy is to engineer inflation in Europe, create energy insecurity and create division amongst the countries of Europe.

Today, when the US and European countries are providing economic and security aid to Ukraine against Russia and jointly carrying out economic sanctions by them, Russia's action can be understood as a natural retaliation. Europe should not forget that they themselves have been isolating Russia from the global financial network, imposing heavy taxes on Russian products as well as imposing various sanctions on Russian goods, trying to destroy the chain of oil exports; attacking Russia's banks and financial institutions, businesses and government enterprises. So how can those countries expect any cooperation and assistance from the Russian President? All projections of America and Europe have failed and they are no longer able to bear the flames of Putin's vengeance. Perhaps America and Europe thought that the whole world would turn against Russia and they would succeed in their objective of teaching Putin a lesson. But all their guesses proved to be wrong and the effect of the actions of America and Europe was that today the whole world, including America and Europe, is plagued by inflation, food crisis, energy crisis and supply chain disruptions. It is true that the countries of the world including India believe that peace should soon be restored in the world, Russia should stop this war now. No doubt world's sympathies are with the people of Ukraine. But at the same time the countries of the world are also apprehensive of economic sanctions being imposed by the countries of America and Europe. Even before this, when India carried out a nuclear explosion in Pokhran in 1998, America had imposed economic sanctions on India. Even after that, America has been threatening to impose economic sanctions on India on any small issue.

Today, economic sanctions imposed on Russia have started affecting the whole world including America and Europe themselves; and these sanctions do not appear to have much effect on Russia. Russia is not only ridiculing these economic sanctions, the demand for their withdrawal by other countries of the world is also gaining momentum. Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro has said that economic sanctions against Russia are not working and Brazil has started buying fertilizers from Russia keeping in mind the interests of its country, further deepening its economic ties with Russia. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has also urged the US to withdraw their economic sanctions. US and European countries are not only tightening their sanctions but are also pressurizing other countries to become a part of them too. But India, Brazil and other countries are not only continuing their relations with Russia, but also deepening the same, ignoring US's advice. What is needed today is that US and European countries understand the reality and find a solution to this problem through diplomatic efforts other than economic sanctions. Deep understanding between India and Russia and their relations can also be used to end this war.

Army Recruitment 'AGNIPATH'

There has been so much of debate about Agnipath, a fixed term joining for young men and women in the armed forces, called Agniveers. The term has been fixed for 4 years in total, in which youth between 17.5 and 23 years of age would serve the armed forces, with monthly emoluments ranging between rupees 30,000 and 40,000, along with post service hand shake amount of rupees 11.5 lakh. These youths will be eligible for further employment in the army on permanent basis (25 percent of Agniveers), while they will get benefit of military canteen (where consumer items are available for purchase at discounted prices, free from taxes) and also medical services. While making it more attractive, government has amended its original scheme. So far the government has received more than 7.5 lakh application for the Air Force Agniveers, for which process of applications concluded on July 5th, 2022; and the ball has started rolling for making youth join army for a fixed term of four years.

Though, this scheme was announced as a big ticket path breaking scheme, a lot of heat was faced by the government with the agitation against the scheme going violent, where at least 12 trains were burnt by the 'agitated youth' and lot of other public assets were destroyed. Some political parties are also showing their opposition to the scheme by way of agitations and have even started passing resolutions in state assemblies in the states ruled by them. As the number of opposition ruled states is very small, such resolutions will not be very many. Further, ruling Biju Janata Dal of Orissa has chosen to remain silent on the issue.

It seems that by now the dust is settled, with the process of implementation of Agnipath scheme has already gone ahead. It's the time to take 360 degree view of the scheme, apart from the contents of the scheme, the needs of the national security, financial implications, employability of the youth, future job opportunities in the public and private sector etc.



Agnipath, seems to be an attempt, though not towards downsizing the size of our armed forces, but definitely an attempt to give our country an opportunity to optimise the size of the army.
Dr. Ashwani Mahajan



History of Army Employment

Indian army has a total strength of 14 lakh, with 1.25 lakh vacancies vacant for years. This could have been partially due to apathy of the governments of past and present to fill the existing vacancies, but another explanation given by people aware of the issue, that these vacancies couldn't be filled due to rigorous requirements for army personals. In the past, to fill the posts, many of the conditions for army officers, had been relaxed in the past, however, despite that still 9000 posts of commission officers are still vacant. Therefore, logically speaking present government can't be held responsible for the unfilled vacancies in the army. All establishments and eligibility criterions are responsible.

Today, India is spending rupees 5.25 lakh crores of GDP on defence. This expenditure includes salary and pensions, establishment and administration, purchase of defence equipments etc. Recently, with all good intentions, the government decided to raise pensions of retired army persons across the board, adding additional expenditure of nearly 47,000 crores in 5 years. If all the vacancies are filled (which is very unlikely), this will involve an additional expenditure, which is beyond the budgetary capacity of the government. We must see that in other departments as well, whereas vacancies at different levels (generally at class 3 and class 4 levels), work is being carried out by contractual employees. This has impacted the quality of work in government departments. The government has announced its intention for introducing the provision of fixed term employment in private sector, with somewhat



Today, India is spending rupees 5.25 lakh crores of GDP on defence. This expenditure includes salary and pensions, establishment and administration, purchase of defence equipments etc.

better working conditions than contractual employees. Similar, scheme could be brought for government sector as well, which is likely to make life better for those under contractual employment.

Since, in the army the requirements are rigorous, similar contractual employment have never been feasible. However, with this Agnipath scheme it may be possible to have optimal size of the army, with lesser implications on the exchequer. Gone are days, when war was primarily fought on the ground. These days, wars are fought in the computer rooms, technologically, using missiles, carpet bombing via air attacks etc. Therefore, from that angle, we need to work out optimal size of the army. If we see other countries in similar situation, they have also been downsizing their armies, yet making them more stronger militarily, by way of technological war-

fare, missiles, fighter aircrafts, and disguisedly biological warfare also.

Agnipath, seems to be an attempt, though not towards downsizing the size of our armed forces, but definitely an attempt to give our country an opportunity to optimise the size of the army.

Benefits for New Incumbents

At present due to lack of employment opportunities, our youth is either forced to remain without work, or is continuing in educational institutions, without a clear mindset, aims and targets. Remaining unemployed for long time, they continue to remain unemployable, which is neither good for them, nor for the society. In the past also many positions in army have service duration ranging between 10 years to 20 years and after that these 'retired' ex-servicemen not only remain employable, but are much in demand from corporate and others, due to training, discipline, work culture and hard-work they learn in the armed forces. Except, the fact that service period has been reduced to 4 years, all other benefits, which Agniveers will enjoy, remain the same. After completing their tenure, they will have edge over their other counterparts, who were unable to get into the army as Agniveers. Perhaps, that is the reason, that many youth have got attracted to the scheme and have applied in the scheme. □□

COVID, Climate, Chemicals and Debt: The Perfect Storm That Hit Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka, Serendip, the jewel in the Indian Ocean, is facing a severe political and economic crisis. The crisis has multiple roots but has intensified in the last two years with COVID-19, climate change, the debt crisis, the contribution of chemical fertilisers to debt, climate emissions and climate vulnerability.

The protests we are witnessing now are triggered by an economy of greed, creation of a debt trap and rent collection, rising costs of living and ordinary citizens facing an economic crisis of survival. Such protests were common sights across the world in 2019, before COVID-19 and the lockdown. Recall Beirut and Chile. When the cost of living becomes unbearable, people rise. And across the world countries are being trapped in debt to generate billions for the billionaires and banks.

Sri Lanka is facing a serious debt and foreign exchange crisis. This is a direct result of the neoliberal policies of corporate globalisation that make countries borrow more and more for the infrastructure of profits – ports, power plants, highways, resorts – to then end up in a debt trap. This in turn forces to pay more for essentials. Sri Lanka's foreign debt is at \$12.55 billion, with the Asian Development Bank, Japan and China among the major lenders. My mind goes to Susan George's book *A Fate Worse than Debt*.

Over the last decade China has lent Sri Lanka more than \$5 billion for the construction of highways, ports, an airport and a coal power plant. Forty-seven% of Sri Lanka's external debt stock is owed to international capital markets, 22% is held by multilateral development banks, followed by Japan having 10% of Sri Lankan external debt.

China accounted for 30% of all Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in big projects in Sri Lanka from 2012-16. According to the Gateway House, Chinese debt and equity are funding more than 50 projects worth more than \$11 billion. Most are roads and water treatment plants, but the largest projects are the Hambantota



The protests we are witnessing now are triggered by an economy of greed, creation of a debt trap and rent collection, rising costs of living and ordinary citizens facing an economic crisis of survival.

Dr. Vandana Shiva



Port, the Colombo Port City and the Lakavijaya Thermal Power Plant – all three funded by Chinese government-owned banks and being built by Chinese contractors.

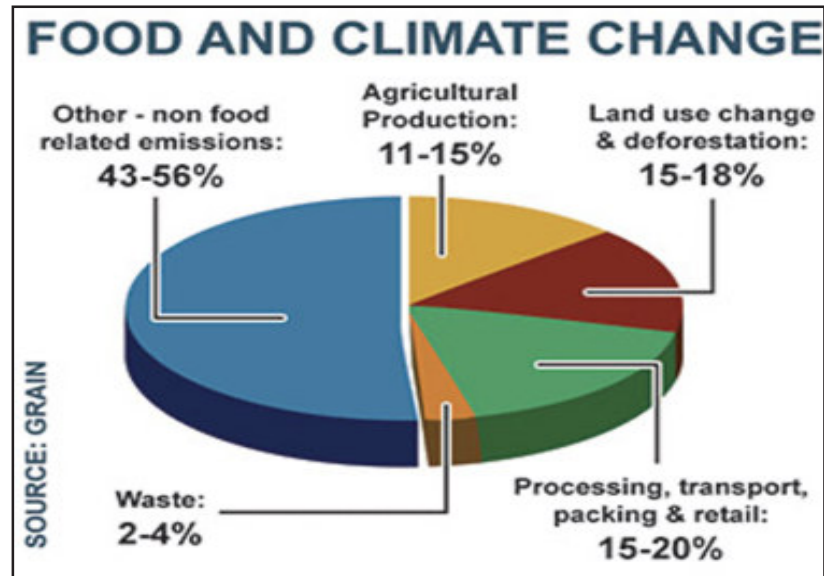
As Amit Bhandari and Chandni Jindal of Gateway House wrote: “During 2017, Sri Lanka’s government spent 83% of its revenues on debt repayment, a quarter of which was for foreign borrowings. The country’s external debt repayments are projected to double from \$2.1 billion in 2017 to \$3.3-\$4.2 billion annually from 2019-22. It is not surprising that Sri Lanka chose to convert some of this debt into equity and hand over Hambantota to China Port Holding in 2017.”

In February 2022, the country had only \$2.31 in foreign exchange reserves, too little to cover its import costs and debt repayment obligations of \$4 billion.

A foreign exchange crisis has led to the inability of the government to pay for imports of essential commodities, including fuel. The dependence on fossil fuel imports has led to an economic crisis, with power cuts of up to 13 hours and galloping inflation after the currency was devalued.

The 22 million citizens of Sri Lanka are facing a crisis of survival, and have risen in protest against the government. Ministers have resigned. Emergency rule had been declared. The country is surviving on credit.

Sri Lanka’s capacity to pay back its loans with interests was badly hit by COVID-19. Tourism and foreign workers’ remittances was one of Sri Lanka’s main foreign exchange earners. The pandemic dried up both. Foreign exchange reserves plummeted by almost 70% in two years.



In 2019, contribution of travel and tourism to GDP for Sri Lanka was 12.6%. It had increased from 6% in 2000 to 12.6% in 2019, growing at an average annual rate of 4.28%. The industry collapsed during the pandemic.

The Ukraine crisis has further amplified the issue, with oil and fertiliser prices rising. Sri Lanka has turned to the International Monetary Fund, India and China for credit. The devaluation of the Sri Lankan currency was part of the IMF restructuring demand.

In February, India sent diesel shipments under a \$500 million credit line. Sri Lanka and India have signed a \$2 billion credit line for importing essential items including food and medicine.

China provided the Central Bank of Sri Lanka with a \$1.5 billion swap and a \$1.3 billion syndicated loan to the government. China is considering to offer the island nation a \$1.5 billion credit facility and a separate loan of up to \$1 billion.

Climate havoc which affects South Asia most severely has also intensified Sri Lanka’s food crisis.

South Asia is economically and ecologically rich due to monsoons. Climate change is severely impacting the monsoons, and with it agricultural production. According to the latest IPCC report, for every 1% increase in temperature, intense and extreme events related to South Asian monsoon will increase by 7%.

We cannot address climate change, and its very real consequences, without recognising the central role of the industrial and globalised food system, which contributes more than 50% to greenhouse gas emissions through deforestation, animals in concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), plastics and aluminium packaging, long distance transport and food waste.

“Food and climate impacts go both ways. Climate change creates significant risks to the food system, with rising temperatures and changing weather patterns threatening enormous damage to crops, supply chains and livelihoods in the decades ahead,” a 2019 IPCC report noted.

Unstable weather has also con-

Discussion

tributed to the Sri Lankan crisis.

A study on "Climate change and food security in Sri Lanka: towards food sovereignty" published in Nature argues that promoting food sovereignty could be the key to alleviating impacts of climate change.

Synthetic chemical fertilisers emit nitrous oxide which is 300 times more damaging to the climate than CO₂. Imports of synthetic fertilisers were also a big drain on Sri Lanka's scarce foreign exchange reserves.

The Ukraine war is making matters worse. Fertiliser, fuel and food prices are rising everywhere. The 'Poison Cartel', which gains from selling costly fertilisers, is using the crises to undo all the steps countries have taken to create agriculture policies which are free of fossil fuels and fossil fuel-based chemicals, and are resilient to cli-

mate change.

The big chemical corporation are portraying the Sri Lankan crisis as related to recent stop in import of chemical fertilisers in April 2021. The ban was due to Sri Lanka's debt crisis. A ban on imports does not automatically translate into policies for food sovereignty, however. Food sovereignty requires a transition to ecological agriculture – in practice, in research and in policy. Cuba, for example, managed the fuel and fertiliser crisis triggered by the collapse of the Soviet Union through a transition to organic agriculture supported by policy and research.

COVID-19, climate change and chemicals have created a perfect storm in Sri Lanka. The storm could impact any country that is being recolonised by a debt trap. Reclaiming economic sovereignty, beginning with food sovereignty,

is the solution to climate resilience, freedom from debt, fossil fuels and chemicals.

The Sri Lankan crisis makes visible the high costs of dependence on foreign investments and borrowing to build costly infrastructure that benefits a few, while most citizens pay a very high price through the destruction of the infrastructure of life – both the ecological infrastructure of a stable climate, and the economic infrastructure of a guarantee of basic needs.

Localisation instead of corporate globalisation, ecological sustainability and sovereignty instead of fossil fuel intensive, capital intensive, debt intensive economies are the path to peace and freedom, resilience and self-reliance – for individuals, communities, countries and the planet. ☐☐

Vandana Shiva is the executive director of Navdanya, New Delhi.

<https://thewire.in/south-asia/covid-climate-chemicals-and-debt-the-perfect-storm-that-hit-sri-lanka>

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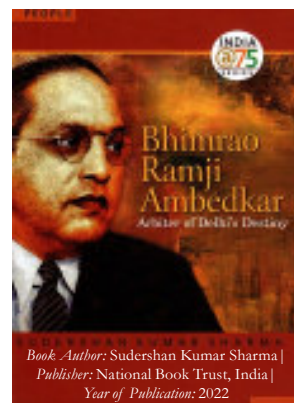
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Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar: Arbiter Of Delhi's Destiny



The posts of Delhi Chief Minister, Delhi Legislative Assembly and Delhi Government could possibly be void ab initio despite being created by Parliament through a constitutional amendment because the framers of the Constitution had decided that Delhi being the national capital shall be centrally-controlled and administered. Constitutional expert and former Secretary of Lok Sabha and Delhi Assembly, S. K. Sharma believes that the Indian Parliament erroneously overturned this wisdom because of lacuna in the constitutional record on account of serious differences in the Constituent Assembly over the future of Delhi.

In a fascinating account (Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar: Arbiter Of Delhi's Destiny), Sharma reveals that the Constituent Assembly discussed Delhi in two Committees. Following a Resolution moved by Deshbandhu Gupta, a specially constituted Committee was set up under Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya. It recommended provincial autonomy and self-government in Delhi. This was supported by veterans such as Mahavir Tyagi, R.K. Sidhwa, Deshbandhu Gupta, Pattabhi Sitaramayya, and others. Dr. Rajendra Prasad received this Report on October 21, 1947, but did not place it before the Constituent Assembly owing to fierce opposition from several members, including Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, and C. Rajagopalachari.

The second Committee was the Constitution Drafting Committee headed by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. It suggested that Delhi being the national capital could not be placed under a local administration and opposed autonomy or Statehood.

Nehru, Patel, Ambedkar and Rajaji were unwilling to yield control over Delhi as India's capital. Ambedkar got a study conducted about practices in other federations; it found that there is not a single federal country in the world that does not exercise exclusive Legislative authority over its Capital.

There were sharp differences over the administration and control of Delhi. Eventually, Ambedkar's team needed the Pattabhi Sitaramayya Committee Report to finalize Chapter 8 of the Constitution which contained clauses dealing with Centrally Administered Provinces. Rajendra Prasad asked Ambedkar to find a viable solution. The archival record in this respect is somewhat murky, but Sharma being a veteran of the constitutional process, has pieced together a credible account from deep scrutiny of the archives.

On July 24, 1949, Ambedkar summoned S.N. Mukherjee, Head of the Drafting Committee Secretariat, and directed him to fix an urgent meeting of the Drafting Committee to be held on July 25, 1949, at the official residence of Sardar Patel (1 Aurangzeb Road). Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Home Minister Vallabhbhai Patel were to be formally invited to this meeting as special invitees. The agenda was "to consider the constitutional provisions relating to the Chief Commissioner Provinces". Ambedkar advised discretion regarding the meeting and that verbatim minutes thereof should not be recorded/circulated.

Thereafter, the Drafting Committee met as usual on July 25, 1949, at 10 a.m., in the Constitution Hall of Parliament to consider amendments to the Draft Consti-



The posts of Delhi Chief Minister, Delhi Legislative Assembly and Delhi Government could possibly be void ab initio despite being created by Parliament through a constitutional amendment because the framers of the Constitution had decided that Delhi being the national capital shall be centrally-controlled and administered.

Sandhya Jain

tution in the light of previous discussions. Later, at 3 p.m. the same day, it met at Patel's residence to consider the provisions relating to the Centrally Administered Areas.

With two prominent non-members (Nehru and Patel) attending this confidential meeting of the Drafting Committee, it virtually became a joint meeting of the Constituent Assembly and the Government of India. This enabled Ambedkar to achieve the desired objectives. The Drafting Committee now unanimously rejected the proposition that Delhi be made a State and disagreed with the recommendations of the Pattabhi Sitaramayya Committee. It proposed that Delhi should be directly administered by the President through a Lt. Governor; and that the President of India should have the power to create by order a local legislature with such duties and functions as may be specified therein.

As this meeting was kept confidential and its minutes were not tabled or circulated, successive parliaments and central governments have remained ignorant of this decision and the reasons thereof. But the decisions taken in this meeting were implemented in independent India.

Further, Ambedkar did not immediately send the conclusions of this Drafting Committee meeting (July 25, 1949, at Patel's residence) to the President of the Constituent Assembly, but waited for an opportune moment. The opportunity came when the final draft of the Constitution was ready. In early Nov. 1949, Ambedkar sent the final draft of the Constitution "as settled by the Drafting Committee" to the President of the Constituent Assembly. He also annexed a copy of the Report which contained comments on various aspects of his

Draft Constitution, Chapter-wise, along with the recommendations of the Drafting Committee on Delhi. The latter was inserted under the chapter heading "Centrally Administered Areas". Hence it went unnoticed & failed to draw the instant attention of the Members.

Thus, a majority of the members of the Constituent Assembly remained ignorant of the recommendations of the Drafting Committee on Delhi's future setup. Ambedkar's Report contained the following relevant para regarding Delhi: "So far as Delhi is concerned, it seems to us that as the Capital of India it can hardly be placed under a local administration. In the United States, Congress exercises exclusive Legislative power in respect of the seat of Government; so too in Australia. No sufficient reasons for departing from these precedents appear in the (Pattabhi Sitaramayya) Committee's Report. We have, therefore, come to the conclusion that a somewhat different plan is desirable. Accordingly, we have proposed in the draft (Constitution) that these Central areas (including Delhi) may be administered by the Government of India either through a Chief Commissioner or a Lt. Governor...."

"What is to be done in the case of a particular area is left to the President to prescribe by order. He will of course in this as in other matters, act on the advice of responsible Ministers. He may, if he chooses, have an Lt. Governor in Delhi. He may also by order create a local Legislature and provide for its Constitution and its powers. This seems to us to be a flexible plan which can be adjusted to the diverse requirements of the areas concerned."

The draft Constitution as finally settled, embodied the spirit and substance of the aforesaid recom-

mendations. The Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution on November 26, 1949, and it came into effect on 26 January 1950. Delhi became a Territory of the Union. Sharma emphasises that Delhi was never intended to have institutions such as Legislative Assembly, Government and Chief Minister.

Later, during the debate on the Government of Part 'C' States Bill, 1951, Rajaji as Home Minister explained that the safeguards provided in the Bill regarding Delhi (i.e., keeping subjects such as Police, public order, municipal functions, etc. outside the preview of Delhi State Assembly), are not enough, "We want positive authority. The Constitution rightly lays it down that administrative discipline goes with Legislative authority ... and must be kept with the Central Government. ... If Parliament does not agree and if the administration is to be handed over to a local government, despite all the attractions of Delhi, I have no doubt in my mind at all that, after sometime, the central Government of India will have to migrate to some other place and not remain under this administration."

Sharma concludes that the Constitution (Sixty-Ninth Amendment) Act, 1991, which inserted a new Article 239 AA in the Constitution and created three new institutions in Delhi, namely, Legislative Assembly, CM post and Govt. of Delhi, is contrary to the considered opinion of the national leadership of the time. This change was made on the basis of a report by a committee headed by a retired bureaucrat, S. Balakrishnan (1987-89). Delhi Statehood is an aberration that has crept into the Constitution and needs to be reconsidered. □□

<https://chintan.indiafoundation.in/articles/book-review/book-review-bhmr-ramji-ambedkar-arbiter-of-delhi-destiny/>

Why moratorium on custom duty on e-transmissions must go

Moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions has got another lease of life at the World Trade Organisation's 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12), despite India making 'vocal efforts' since the beginning of MC12. Some say, this has happened due to pressure exerted by the United States, others think that India has bargained this for other 'gains'. It's notable that India had pronounced that it would oppose this moratorium on custom duties, as the same is causing huge loss of revenue, apart from hurting our digital development, as domestic players face intense competition from global big tech companies.

This was the time to make efforts to do away with the 'temporary provision' of tariff moratorium on electronic products, which has been going on since the inception of the WTO. Significantly, at the time of the start of the WTO, trade in electronic products was very limited. In such a situation, the tariff on the trade of electronic products was temporarily suspended and it was decided in the Second Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization in 1998, to study the issues related to the global electronic trade with reference to the development needs of the developing countries and was proposed that tariffs on electronic products be postponed till the next ministerial conference.

It is unfortunate that the developed countries, kept suspending the decision on imposing tariffs on the import of electronic products, on several pretexts. Today the situation is that more than US\$ 30 billion of electronic products are being imported into India alone. That is, even if 10 percent tariff is imposed, then the Government of India will get revenue of more than US\$ 3 billion. According to a recent study, developing countries could have generated \$56 billion from imports of just 49 digitalised products in the period 2017-2019. Least developed countries could have generated \$8 billion in this period, which is double the amount they need for giving double dose of COVID vaccine to their populations.

The issue here is not only about loss of revenue, it's a much larger issue for a country like India, where our start-ups and software companies are able to make a variety of electronic products, where we can make movies and other entertainment products in our own country, but when all such products are imported undeterred, without tariff, there is little incentive to produce them indigenously. This tariff moratorium on e products is actually killing our efforts of Atmanirbhar Bharat, benefitting US, European countries and China.

At the beginning of MC12, India started with a bold stance and the Commerce Minister said: "I think this moratorium, that has been continuing for 24 years, must be reviewed and re looked at. The work programme needs to be reinvigorated, and must provide regulatory space for developing countries to provide a level playing field to domestic SMEs in the digital sector while continuing to contribute to their economies."

We agree to maintain the current practice of not imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions until MC13, which should ordinarily be held by 31 December 2023.
Swadeshi Samvad

However, decision on moratorium in MC12, is read as follows:

"We reinvigorate the work under the Work Programme on electronic commerce based on the mandate as set out in WT/L/274 and particularly in line with its development dimension.

We shall intensify discussions on the moratorium and instruct the General Council to hold periodic reviews based on the reports that may be submitted by relevant WTO bodies, including on scope, definition, and impact of the moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions.

We agree to maintain the current practice of not imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions until MC13, which should ordinarily be held by 31 December 2023. Should MC13 be delayed beyond 31 March 2024, the moratorium will expire on the date unless Ministers or the General Council take a decision to extend."

In the earlier Ministerial Conferences of WTO, in the last 24 years, developed world has been easily getting the moratorium on electronic transmissions, conference after conference. MC12, was the first such conference where they faced some resistance from the developing countries. With this, a hope had arisen that moratorium would end ultimately. But, this battle was also lost, in MC12; and gain of policy space, which was looking nearer, again slipped out of the hands of developing countries, including India, South Africa and all others who could have gained from ending the moratorium.

Since 1998, digitisation has gone much ahead, and digital revolution has changed online trade, apart from emergence of big tech companies and their products,

which own a big chunk of the markets of social media, online trade, search engines and others.

There are digital products, which are fast replacing physical products. Many of the digital products in health, fintech, public services and many others, incorporating artificial intelligence, 3D printing, have been changing the demand patterns for these services. Failure to tax them in innovative ways is likely to impact the government finances adversely, apart from hurdles for manufacturing these digital products indigenously.

Digital revolution with revenue growth

In this digital era, India has made significant strides in the field of digitised commercial and public services, digital payments and government transfers among others. In software, India's strength cannot definitely be undermined. Recently, India has started making efforts in indigenous 5G. We have started developing our own digital products and Production Linked Incentives (PLIs) scheme has been designed to nurture our infant digital products industries. Imposition of custom duties can help providing level playing field for our digital industries, which are in infant stage right now. If we see, lot of video games, music, movies and other such items including OTT contents etc are being transmitted free from custom duties, due to moratorium. If moratorium ends, conspicuous consumption of such luxury items would be reduced. This will help saving valuable foreign exchange and government can benefit by way of revenue, which could be used for development and public welfare. This is no secret that government reve-

nue has been under severe stress in the post pandemic period, leading to huge fiscal deficit, which is causing inflation hitting our masses.

Game of the big tech

Since the time, it became known to big tech, that India and other developing countries are pushing for discontinuing moratorium, they started making efforts to foil these efforts, through their respective governments. On the fear that India may also face higher duties on its export of digitalised products, we should note that the developed countries have almost zero bound duties on these products. This also means that due to this moratorium the loss of developed world is minimal, as compared to developing countries.

Based on the responses from their big tech companies, developed countries made a strong push and as usual they used all diplomatic and arm-twisting tactics to renew the moratorium in MC12. It's notable that this makes international trade highly unequal, where big tech, especially the digital platforms, have enjoyed nearly 25 years of duty-free exports while small and medium firms exporting physical products face custom duties. This implies that, whereas, developing countries have been demanding 'Special and Differential Treatment' (S&DT), the fact is that developed countries have been enjoying reverse S&DT. This must end. Though, MC12 is over, the goal post has been shifted to MC13, India should leave no stone unturned, to achieve ending of this moratorium, with firm approach towards the same. Issues like definition of electronic transmission, its scope and impact must be studied thoroughly. □□

Complete Plastic Ban an Opportunity for Swadeshi

The vocal for local, self-reliance and Atmanirbhar Bharat are the three keywords that should be the basis for the government to be reflected in every policy decision, for the society to defend the original values, and for the individual to choose their lifestyle. The union government policy to ban the use of single-use plastic is an opportunity for the local business to discard the global business. A complete ban on all types of plastic will give an imaginable level of boost to local businesses.

The single-use plastic is one among the many culprits which have forced the population to compare the cheapest alternative. The reason for the people to look for the cheapest alternative is the strong necessity to save for them due to the lack of social security provided by the government. But things are changing. Today the government's Ayushman Bharat is taking care of health security and a lot of other education and business-related financial security is available.

If we look today at our neighborhood grocery shop then we can visualize what we will miss if the single-use plastic ban is implemented everywhere, irrespective of the thickness of the plastic, other than for medical facilities. In the grocery shop, for example, we have today iodized salts packed in plastic bags. This is a single-use plastic as the same packet of salt is not recycled to reach the salt packaging industry again.

If we look at numerous other items in grocery shops today and compare them with the same items in grocery shops when plastic was not used for packaging, then the difference between the manufacturer and producer today with that of older time is visible. The eating habit has been changed by these plastics as plastic is cheap and convenient to transport. Another example is from the personal care industry. Plastic is an important component that has made it possible for shampoo manufacturers to provide a one rupee shampoo in remote villages and the repercussion is that the shampoo industry is dominated by a few multinational companies; indigenous companies like Patanjali are a nascent arrival.



The vocal for local, self-reliance and Atmanirbhar Bharat are the three keywords that should be the basis for the government to be reflected in every policy decision, for the society to defend the original values, and for the individual to choose their lifestyle.
Alok Singh



If we ban plastic for the packaging of salts then the business of iodized salt promoters will be killed. The Supreme Court has banned the advertisement of iodized salt, facts say that less than two dozen districts out of 773 districts in our country have an iodine deficiency. But in the name of iodine fortification, the salt industry is ruled by few companies. If the plastic disappears from salt packaging then the logistics for these companies will be costly and there will be an opportunity for local salt manufacturers to restart the business. The salt consumption will give an opportunity for the wealth which is pocketed by a few to be shared by many stakeholders and in the process, lots of jobs will be revived. People consumed salts when it was not in plastic packets.

The government should come up with a policy that no food items whether in raw form or ready-to-eat form are packed in any variety of plastic irrespective of the thickness of plastic. If a particular geographical area needs a food-related item to be delivered from thousands of kilometers away from the point of consumption then the government should bear the transportation cost so that food inflation is controlled. These steps will revive the local food and local taste, which will ultimately create lots of jobs for local people and control the unplanned migration of people for survival. If we visit any tea shop or pan shop in any remote area then we find potato chips of five rupees hanging on their shelves, cold drinks of ten rupees in a plastic bottle, and the list goes on. These supplies are from big multinational companies. The substitute is the local chips and the lo-

If the plastic disappears from salt packaging then the logistics for these companies will be costly and there will be an opportunity for local salt manufacturers to restart the business.

cal cold drinks served in earthen utensils or reusable glass utensils or any other metal utensils. Plastic has provided an opportunity for the big multinational companies to save the cost of reverse logistics as it suits the economies of the scale model and this model in turn favors one deep pocket at the cost of growth of many others.

The argument is that the single company dominating the whole market spread across millions of square kilometers will be threatened if the plastic of any variant is completely banned in the food supply chain. It will immediately revive the local business for ready-to-eat snacks and cold drinks. The entry of junk foods in village markets will be checked. These junk foods are killing local taste, local jobs, and health and finally causing a lot of damage to the environment.

The target of net-zero carbon emissions can be attained at an accelerated pace if the food is freed from all types of plastics. Plastic starts from the seed sold by multinationals in a plastic bag to the ready-to-eat items that are sold in plastic wraps. The fight for preserving local seeds and the neces-

sity to preserve the local taste has arisen as plastics have empowered a few companies and they succeed to kill the local business.

Banning plastic from the food industry is the proxy to promote many things. This ban will support the cause of self-reliance on local taste, local food, AtmaNirbharta in organic farming, preserving traditional seeds, practicing traditional cooking ingredients, and many more including jobs and growth. The easy way is always dangerous, as there is no shortcut to success, then how can there be a shortcut to feed ourselves. We have to carry the cotton bag to the vegetable market, the vegetable seller has to carry a jute bag to bring the vegetable to the market, and the farmers have to practice growing organic food using traditional seeds and not sowing the genetically modified seeds sold in plastic packages, the farmers have to use the organic manures and not the chemical fertilizers supplied in plastic bags, the farmers have to seek help from laborers and not use the cancer-causing Glyphosate which comes in a plastic container to control the herbs and weeds.

The Covid-19 lockdown has taught us many lessons and at the same time provided many opportunities. We started living with face masks and so, we are in a practice to change habits and can accept a ban on plastics with more convenience. We aspire to provide a local job, earn local growth, and preserve local taste then a big NO to plastic in the food industry is the most effective tool. The government needs to act more on the plastic ban. □□

(Alok Singh is a Fellow of the Indian Institute of Management Indore, a freelancer academician, and associated with AGET Business School, Jhajjar.)

Food inflation all about exploitative profits

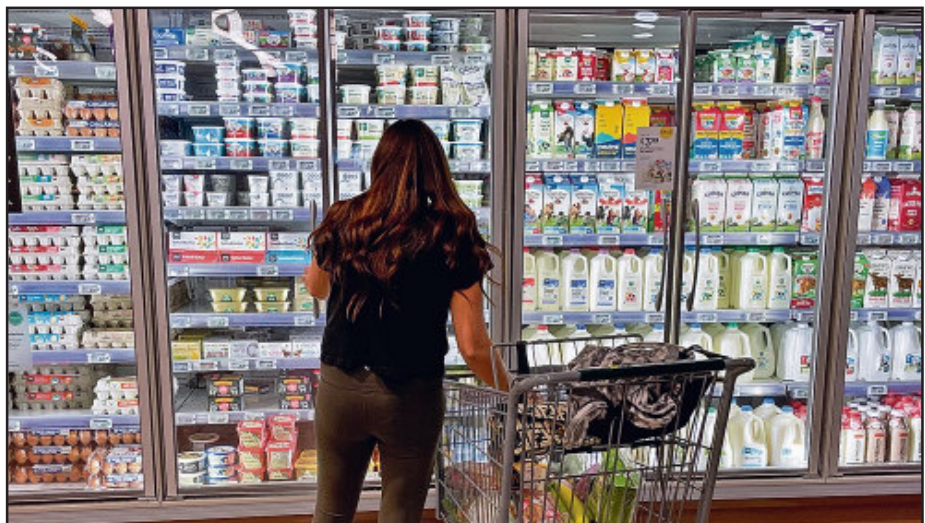
In an interview with a student publication of the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR), Mumbai, a question was asked about the steps that need to be taken to curb food inflation. Nothing unusual, this question is on everyone's mind. Right from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to any TV discussion or a newspaper report on inflation, it is invariably rising food inflation that appears to be the villain of the growth story.

We have been programmed to believe that food being necessary, the rise in its prices has to be contained within the macro-economic fix of 4 per cent, plus or minus 2 per cent. Therefore, whenever the new procurement prices are announced, twice in a year and separately for rabi and kharif crops, the media is agog with fears of rising food inflation. This year too, when paddy prices were announced, a question repeatedly asked on TV channels (and in newspaper editorials) was whether it would fan food inflation. Even though the price announced for 11 of the 14 kharif crops was less than the inflation rate, and also less than the compound rise in input prices, still there are fingers pointed at the nominal hike in procurement prices for inflationary pressure.

That food carries a weight equivalent to about 45 per cent in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is well-known. But sometimes I wonder why housing, whether rented or owned, and which has the largest share in monthly expenditure for any household, is never measured as an inflation matrix. Similarly, the expenses on travel, with fuel prices steadily rising and dynamic prices for air, train and taxi services often exceeding the average monthly kitchen budget, again don't get adequately reflected in the inflation index. Former J&K CM Omar Abdullah had recently termed the skyrocketing air ticket prices from Srinagar for a day when most flights were cancelled as an 'open loot'. Many have complained of paying



There aren't many instances when high prices to farmers have resulted in an abnormal hike in retail food prices, except in cases of short supply. It is simply the greed of the middlemen, including agri-business giants, which results in manipulation of the prices. It's time to replace food inflation with a more apt term — 'greedflation'.
Devinder Sharma



an abnormally high air fare of Rs 25,000 for a one-way ticket between Mumbai and Delhi. That is why the need to revisit what constitutes real inflation, and recalibrate weights ascribed to different components.

The point I am trying to make is that no eyebrows are raised when taxi aggregators go in for frequent surge pricing even at an unearthly hour of 6 in the morning. But if tomato's price jumps from Rs 20 to Rs 40 per kg, all hell breaks loose. The tomato price rise for a household may still be less than the surge price Ola/Uber had charged from consumers during a day's travel, but it is invariably the rise in tomato prices that ignites anger. This is how our minds are wired. We have been made to believe that a supply-demand mismatch leads to rising prices, but what we normally don't realise is that there is a third hidden factor — manipulation. There have been instances when the shortfall in onion production for instance was barely 4 per cent and the retail prices shot up by 600 per cent in several markets.

Listen to what MJ Prabu, an organic farmer in Tamil Nadu, has to say: "I sell coconut at my farm for Rs 8 per piece. The middleman sells it further at Rs 28 per piece, and the street hawker (as well as organised retail) sells it at a price varying between Rs 50 and Rs 55 per piece." What the farmer gets is only a fraction of the end consumer price. It is the greed of the supply chain that inflates prices seven times by the time a coconut reaches the consumer. Food inflation, therefore, has not much to do with farm prices, but is all about exploitative profits that supply



Food inflation, therefore, has not much to do with farm prices, but is all about exploitative profits that supply chains end up with.

chains end up with.

Visit a supermarket and scan the prices. A new emerging trend of an abnormal increase in the prices of large packs is visible. Normally, economics tells you that big packs of processed farm products should be relatively cheaper. An analysis howsoever shows that prices of 62 per cent of bigger packs have been raised in the past three months. No one knows why. For example, take Tata Gold tea. For a 100-gm tea pack, the price is Rs 40 and for a 500-gm pack, the retail price is Rs 310. Ideally, the price for a 500-gm pack should have been less than Rs 200. Most FMCG products, and that includes soaps and toiletries, fall in this category. Many others haven't raised the price for popular brands but reduced the pack size by 15 per cent. While consumers have paid 10 per cent more for FMCG products, reports say the FMCG companies are making huge profits, recording a jump of 40 per cent on a year-to-year basis.

This is a global phenomenon. In America, corporate profits are at a 70-year high and the annual inflation rate zoomed to 8.6 per cent in May, the highest in 41 years. While profits for 2,000 US publicly traded companies have soared

much beyond the pre-pandemic period, an Oxfam report has pointed to the increase in the number of 'food billionaires'. Strangely, while the farm incomes haven't risen anywhere, retail prices have already increased substantially. Even before the Russia-Ukraine war erupted, speculation had driven food prices globally to a record high, beating the time of the 2007-08 world food crisis.

To blame food inflation, therefore, is grossly unfair. There aren't many instances when high prices to farmers have resulted in an abnormal hike in retail food prices, except in cases of short supply. It is simply the greed of the middlemen, and that includes agribusiness giants, which results in manipulation of the prices at will. Recall the OECD-ICRIER study that said Indian farmers lost Rs 45-lakh crore in 16 years, between 2000 and 2016. Even during that period, when farmers earned 15 per cent less than the international prices, the food inflation rate was not in the negative but had remained quite persistent.

It is therefore time to replace food inflation with a more appropriate term — 'greedflation'. □□

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/food-inflation-all-about-exploitative-profits-406370>

USA: A Country of Guns

Though United State (US) House of Representatives has passed a bill restricting the sale of guns on June 8, 2022, it's very unlikely that this bill will become a law. This is so because republicans are determined to oppose the bill in the Senate. Nobody knows for how long ordinary Americans will have to live under the threat that somebody will come and start shooting without provocation. But no doubt in the forthcoming elections, this issue is going to gain prominence.

This bill came after a shocking incident where 5 people were killed by shooting of guns at Tulsa Medical building which was 233rd mass shooting of 2022. Before this a gunman shot and killed 19 young students and 2 teachers at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas. Just two weeks before this incident, 10 people were killed and three others were injured during a racist attack at a grocery store in Buffalo, New York. Important point here is that in most of these incidents, the killers were not the terrorists, but they were crazy young men. Some people have started saying that it is much riskier to stay in USA than going to war in Afghanistan.

It is for the first time that any President of USA has used strong words against the system and culture of owning guns. Biden has called on Congress to ban assault weapons or to raise the age to be able to buy one, from 18 to 21 years and other measures to curb gun violence in the United States in his address on June 02, 2022. He has also called for a ban on high-capacity magazines, background checks, red flag laws and a repeal of the immunity that protects gun manufacturers from legal liability if their weapons are used in violence.

A Country of Guns

In United States perhaps, its most easy to buy a gun. Guns are so easily available, and can be purchased almost like vegetables, in thousands of stores, without much background check. In addition, people often buy guns from relatives and friends. To buy a gun, unlike India, a person need not possess a licence in USA.

This is not first case of giving priority to corporate interests to the humanity; we are forced to think that for them profit is their sole objective, even if it is at the cost of lives of innocent people.

Swadeshi Samvad



The List of Swadeshi-Videshi Commodities

Product Name	Swadeshi Product - Use
Bath Soaps	Santoor, Nirma, Swastik, Mysoor Sandal, Wipro-Sikakai, Medimix, Ganga, Cinthol, Godrej No.1, Margo, Neem, Patanjalee & Home Products etc.
Detergent Soaps	Nirma, Acto, Vimal, Hepolin, Dait, Fena, Ujala, Shudh, EG, Ghadi, Gentle, Manjula, Patanjali, Pitambari, Maxo, Vimal, SASA and Home Products etc.
Beauty Products	Tips & Toes, Shringar, Cinthol, Santoor, Emami, Boroplus, Tulsi, Vicco, Termaric, Arnika, Hair and Caire, Hemani, Parashoot, Faim, Cadila, Cipla, Dabar, Franki, Khandelwal, Torant Pharma, Zandu Pharma, Himalya, Maharishi Ayurved, Balsara, J.K. Sandoo, Vaidhnath, Bhaskar, Borolin, Bajaj Sevashram, Kokoraj, Move, Creck Cream, Park Avenue, Unichem, IPCA, Patanjali and Home Products etc.
Toothpaste	Babool, Promise, Dabar, Meswak, Ajay, Harbodent, Ajenta, Garware, Brush, Clasical, Egle, Bandarchhap, Vaidhnath, Emami, Vicco, Anchor, Amar, IPCA, Dentobec, Patanjali and Home Products etc.
Shaving Cream/ Razer Blade	Godrej, Emami, Super, Super-Maix, Ashok, Vi-John, Topaz, Premium, Park Avenue, Lazer, Vidyut, J.K., Cosmoplus and other Home Products etc.
Biscuit, Chocolate Milk's Products	Nutrin, Shangrila, Champion, Ampro, Parle, Sathe, Bekman, Priya-Gold, Monaco, Krackjack, Gits, Shalimar, Parry, Rawalgaon, Clasic, Amul, Nutramul, Vijaya, Indana, Safal, Asian, Verka, Madhu, Mahan, Gopi, Himghi, Vita, Patanjali & other Home Products etc.
Tea, Coffee	Girnar, Tata-Tea, Asam-Tea, Society, Duncan, Brahmputra, Tej, Tata Cafey, Tata-Tetli, Amar, GS, Parivar, Sapat and other Home Products etc.
Cold Drink	Guruji, Oanjus, Jumpin, Nero, Pingo, Fruity, Sosyo, Aswad, Dabur, Mala, Besleri, Rasna, Humdard, Mapro, Rainbo, Calvart, Ruhafja, Jai Gajanan, Haldiram, Gokul, Bikaner, Wekfield, Noga, Priya, Ashok, Uma, H.P.M.C Product, Him, Switemblica & other Home Products etc.
Ice-Cream	Amul, Himalaya, Nirula, Vadilal, Mother Dairy, Vindi, Verka, Havemore, Gocool, Natural and other Home Products etc.
Food Oil, Food Products	Maruti, Postmen, Dhara, Rokat, Ginni, Swikar, Cornela, Rath, Mohan, Umang, Vijaya, Span, Parashut, Ashok, Saphola, Kohinoor, Madhur, Engine, Gagan, Amrit, Vanaspati, Ramdev, MDH, Evrest, Bedakar, Sahkar, Lijat, Ganesh, Shaktibhog Aata, Tata Salt, Gemini, Society Masale, Tata Masale, Ashirwad Atta, Patanjali Atta & Oil and other Home Products etc.
Electrical Product, Home Use Product/ Watch	Videocon, BPL, Onida, Slora, ET&T, T-Series, Nelco, Westen, Uptron, Keltron, Cosmic, TVS, IFB, Godrej, Crown, Bajaj, Usha, Polar, Surya, Orient, Cinny, Tullu, Crompton, Loyde, Blue Star, Voltas, Cool Home, Khaitan, RR, Eveready, Geep, Novino, Nirlep, Elight, Jaico, Titan, Ajanta, HMT, Maxima, Alwin Ghadi, Bengal, Mysore, Hawkins, Prestige, Pressure Cooker, Wipro, Trupti and other Home Products etc.
Writing Product	Geeflow, Wilson, Camlin, Revlon, Rotomac, Cello, Stic, Chandra, Montex, Camel, Bittu, Plato, Triveni, Flora, Apsra, Natraj, Hindustan, Lotus, and other Home Products etc.
Shoes, Chappal, Bootpolc	Lakhani, Liberty Standard, Action, Paragon, Flash, Carona, Welcome, Rexona, Lotus, Red-Tep, Phonix, Whyking, Billi, Carnoba, Kiwi Shoe Polish, Woodlands, Mochi, JJ Flex and other Home Products etc.
Readyment Cloths	Peter England, Van Husain, Lous Philip, Colourplus, Alen Soli, Mafatlal, Trends, Cambrige, Duple bull, Zodiac, Arvind Denim, Don, Prolin, TT, Lux, Amul, VIP, , Rupa, Raymond, Park, Avenue, Altimo, Newport, Killer, Flying Machine, Monte Carlo, Duke; Tiger, Kolkatta, Pantaloon, Patanjali products, Ludhiana and Tirupur Products.
Mobile Phone	Macromax, Karbon, Di and Locally assembled

The List of Swadeshi-Videshi Commodities

Product Name	Videshi Product - Not to be Used
Bath Soaps	Lux, Liril, Lifebuoy, Piers, Rexona, Humam, Jai, Moti, Cammy, Dove, Ponds, Pamolive, Johnson, Clearcil, Detol, Lesansi, Lakme, Amway, Savlon, Amazon, Wallmart
Detergent Soaps	Sunlight, Wheel, Ariel, Trilo, 501, OK, Key, Revail, Amway, Surf, Excel, Rin, Vimbar, Robin Blue and other products of Hindustan Liver Ltd.
Beauty Products	Johnson, Ponds, Clearcel, Brilcream, Fair & Lovely, Velvet, Medicare, Lavender, Nycil, Showar to Showar, Liril, Dainim, Organix, Panteen, Roots, Head & Sholder, Amway, Clinic, Nihar, Glaxo, Treseme, Lorial, Cuticura, Lakme, Nivia.
Toothpaste	Colgate, Cibaca, Closeup, Pepsodent, Signal, Maclins, Amway, Auqa Fresh, Oral-B, Forhuns. Sensodyne.
Shaving Cream/Razor Blade	Palmolive, Nivia, Ponds, Platinum, Gillate, Seven-O-Clock, Vilmen, Viltage, Erasmic, Lakme, Danim.
Biscuit, Chocolete Milk's Products	Nesle, Cadbury, Bornvita, Horlies, Boost, Milkmade, Kissan, Maggi, Farex, Anikspray, Complan, Kitkat, Charge, Eclair, Modern Bred, Maltova, Mylo.
Tea, Coffee	Brook Bond, Tajmahal, Red-Lable, Dymond, Lipton, Green Lable, Nescafe, Neslay, Delka, bru, Sunrise, three flowers, Tazza.
Cold Drink	Leher, Pepsi, 7-up, Mirinda, Team, Coca-Cola, McDonald, Magola, Goldspott, Limca, Citra, Thums-up, Sprite, Fanta, Crush, Appy, Cadbury.
Ice-Cream	Cadbury, Dolop, Nice, Product's Brook Brond, Kwality Wals, Baskin-Robins, Yanki-dudals, Carnetto.
Food Oil, Food Products	Dalda, Crystal, Lipton, Annapurna Salt, Aata and Chapati, Maggi, Kisan, Tarla, Knorr, Dalal, Brook-Brond, Pilsbari Aata, Capton Cook Salt and Aata, Modern Chapati, Kargil Aata.
Electrical Product, Home Use Product/ Watch	GEC, Philips, Sony, TDK, Nippo, National-Panosonic, Sharp, GE, Whirlpool, Samsung, Toshiba, LG, Hitachi, Thomson, Electrolux, Akai, Sansui, Kenwood, Aiwa, Carrier, Konica, tupperware, Japan Life, Omega, Timex, Rado.
Writting Product	Parker, Pilot, windser-nutton, faber-castle, Big, Mont blank, Koras, As, Rotring.
Shoes, Chappal, Bootpolish	Bata, Puma, Power, Cherry-blossom, Addidas, Rebok, Nike, Lee-cooper.
Readyment Cloths	All product of Lee, Berlington, Arrow, Lacoste, Levis, Paipe Jins, Wrangler, Benaton, Reed & Tayler, Byford, Crocodile.
Mobile Phone	All Chinese Products Like Mi, Appo, Vivo, LG, Samsung, Xiomi, I-phone, Apple

This List is published on demand from the Readers.

One has to only give some information about one self, by filling up a form. Within minutes of the filling up of the information, verification is done by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and gun reaches into the hands of the buyer.

According to the website of the FBI, in the last one decade, enquiry was sought in 10 crore cases and only 7 lakh people were found ineligible to purchase a gun, that is, less than one percent of the total. We can understand that, almost every citizen of USA is eligible to have a gun. With a spurt in murders in the last few years, it's being said that ease of having a gun is causing ease of murders and illegal activities.

Though, it is no good to comment on the cultural traits of citizens of other nations, however, the quantum in which murders are taking place, we are forced to think about insensitivity and intolerance in Americans. In such circumstances, ease in possessing a gun makes it easy to murder others. It is notable that, people of all age groups are engaged in this act of murders, including minors.

Gun Lobby

Though, there is an old history of murders using guns, in recent times, this tendency has accelerated. Demand for restricting guns, has been there for long time, and many political leaders have been trying to make gun laws stricter. However, they have been facing numerous problems in their endeavour to enact strict laws. And behind this, there is strong gun lobby.

Since 1871, there has been a strong organisation, called National Rifle Association (NRA) in USA; which has been directly engaged in political lobbying for weak gun

laws, since 1934. Though, there are nearly 50 lakh members of NRA, who contribute for the association, major chunk of financing of NRA comes from gun manufacturing companies. For obvious reasons, this organisation makes every possible effort to thwart any effort to make any strict law against possession of guns. We can gauge the influence of this gun lobby by the fact that NRA spent about \$250 million in 2020, far more than all the country's gun control advocacy groups put together. Banking on its strong financial muscles, this organisation funds Senate members, who make all possible efforts to defeat efforts to curb guns in USA.

Gun Bill

Though, Republicans themselves generally try to keep status quo on gun laws in 2016 under pressure from Orlando massacre, had brought a bill, according to which Department of Justice was supposed to take three days' time for enquiry. It is notable that though enquiry was made at least twice, about terrorist involved in Orlando violence, even then he was able to fetch gun. Therefore, supporters of the bill say that with this bill becoming a law, it would become difficult for people linked with terror to possess guns.

On the other hand, Democrats didn't favour this bill and they instead wanted that gun should be denied to people doubtful of terror links and psychological problems. Because of this lack of unanimity about the proposed changes in the gun law, gun law couldn't be enacted in June 2016 also. Debate is on about whether the government should have the right to deny guns to those with doubt of

having terror links or psychological problems or law department has 3 days' time to say yes or no to the permission and onus of denial be on the government.

NRA has also been opposing the sharing of data about people with psychological problems, citing this to be an attack on privacy.

President Obama also faced a lot of criticism from the gun lobby for issuing some administrative orders, imposing restrictions on purchase of guns. Therefore, whether it's an issue of making a stricter gun law or taking any administrative action to restrict guns, gun lobby always tries to create hurdles. Sometimes in the name of right to possess guns or on the pretext of privacy, this lobby tries to defeat efforts to curb guns, by soliciting support of senators; or even by legal fights. A senator Bill Nelson who has been vehemently favouring Gun Bill in the Senate, in June 2016, murmured after the bill was defeated, "What am I going to tell 49 grieving families? I am going to tell them that NRA won again."

Though, this is not first case of giving priority to corporate interests to the humanity; we are forced to think that for them profit is their sole objective, even if it is at the cost of lives of innocent people.

Now, when President Joe Biden has started making renewed attempts to restrict guns, and have also started preparing for a legislation against guns, he also doesn't seem to be in mood to issue executive order on the subject; and wants a stricter law to be enacted democratically. However, people familiar with the issue hardly have any hope that common people in US will get any reprieve from the problem. □□

How olive cultivation in Uri is transforming the lives of Kashmiri farmers

Can your next bottle of extra virgin olive oil come from Kashmir? Hidden in the mountainous region of Uri, Kashmir has a tree that can help end India's search for a healthier edible oil. This tree has whitish barks, small elongated leaves and gives green fruits each December. It is olive, which is called zaitoon in Urdu. And while Indians are spending top dollar (about \$29 million) on importing olive oil, there may be a way to develop Uri and adjacent areas as an olive oil belt.

So to get deeper into the oil business, I visited Salamabad towards Shadara near the LoC, to discover zaitoon. It's a sub-species that doesn't bear much fruit, and grows even in hardy, rough conditions. Could this wild zaitoon be used for grafting fruiting varieties in the future? The area was olive friendly, and perhaps that is why under the Indo-Italian project an olive nursery was developed about 40 years ago.

I reached Salamabad and found among the olive trees Tariq Ahmed, a middle-aged man with a passion for olives, said: "Olive is unique to Uri as it has a warmer climate, different from the rest of Kashmir. In 1987, we planted these olive orchards and 2005 we got a machine to extract olive oil from the fruits. We produce about 1,000 litres each year from the Uri area, each litre being sold at a subsidised rate of Rs 1,000 only."

As we were strolling past the orchard, Tariq explained the agronomics: "Olives have late flowering, usually in May. The harvest time is in November-December in Uri and Salamabad. Luckily our area has less snow and we can harvest it easily. Now there are seven varieties of olives including the Mona Lisa. And on an average you use 10 kg of fruit to take out 1 kg of oil."



In Kashmir, cultivation of olive is done in Uri owing to favourable weather conditions and soil quality there.

Indra Shekhar Singh



Tariq gave me a tour of the nursery, where I found 5,000 olive saplings ready to be planted. In our conversation it became clear that each year thousands of plants are being given to farmers. Due to less water and resilient nature, the olive survives and begins to give fruit in 5-6 years. If used well, this could provide a big boost to farmers' incomes in this area.

Pakistan's Imran Khan already is an early bird to catch the olive bloom, as he had announced a 10 billion olive tree project that would transform the Pakistani farmers' incomes and make that country one of the top producers in the world. It is about time India strikes while the iron is still hot.

After the tour, I headed back to Shadara region to meet Azad Khan, a progressive farmer who is growing olives in about 1.2 acres. Over time he has increased his income, and olive being a secondary crop is now his preferred option. "Potentially Uri can become a major hub for olive, as there is wild zaitoon variety found in the jungle. There are lakhs of trees, and the horticulture department has successfully grafted wild zaitoon with fruit bearing varieties in 2021. The olive acreage has also increased and we can easily produce 1-2 lakh litres of virgin olive with government support."

"But we need help with marketing and branding. If the government brings newer machinery and supports farmers here, many within Uri will do olive cultivation. We want the government to pay attention, as this will be the perfect model for doubling farmers' incomes," Azad said.

Thereafter I spoke with Zahoor Ahmad Bhat, chief horti-



The govt. should allow farmers and women to graft and harvest zaitoon in the forest or government land. A new policy needs to be enforced. Second, the govt. should provide income support and technical support for farmers in these areas.

culture officer in Baramulla. He has been involved in the olive project and has successfully grafted fruit olive varieties on native zaitoon. "We have one hectare of government orchards, plus there are lakhs of wild plants which can be grafted to increase their yields. Until now we have experimented on two hectares and the grafting was successful," said Zahoor.

"Usually, wild zaitoon grows on forest or government land, but also sporadically inside villages. If we can convert them all, we can easily produce a lot more olives. It

is low cost, and tension free. We soon may have 100 quintals of olive fruit coming from this region alone," Zahoor said.

On how the Central government can help make Uri an olive oil hub, Zahoor said, "The government should allow farmers and women to graft and harvest zaitoon in the forest or government land. A new policy needs to be enforced. Second, the government should provide income support and technical support for farmers in these areas. Farmers need experts who can teach farmers how to graft and help get labourers. With these small efforts, a major goal can be achieved," he explained.

"This area is not only good for olives but also lemons. Our lemons are better and juicier than Punjab lemons. Overall our micro-climate is good for Mediterranean crops like lemon and olives. If the government starts a Mission Uri Olives, farmers and consumers will greatly benefit. And we will also save our precious foreign exchange," Zahoor said. □□

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<https://www.firstpost.com/opinion/how-olive-cultivation-in-uri-is-transforming-the-lives-of-kashmiri-farmers-10838401.html>

International Year of Millets- 2023

The world has accepted, followed and adopted our Puranic wisdom of Yajurveda in respect of superfood “nutricereals” Millets grown for thousands of years and used as staple diet until advent of wheat and rice. One of the oldest cultivated grains in the world but largely confined to rural and tribal populations, the superfood millets are increasingly being brought to the mainstream by the Government as well as business enterprises. The history of millets dates back to more than 5,000 years where the ancient grain was produced and consumed by farmers living in nomadic communities. From its cultivation in the Korean peninsula dating to the Middle Jeulmun Pottery Period (around 3,500–2,000 BC), millet consumption in Bharat is clearly mentioned in the oldest Yajurveda texts.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution declaring 2023 as the International Year of Millets. This reveals the importance of millets and their global role in strengthening food security.

Agriculture with its allied sectors, is the largest source of livelihood in Bharat. About 70% of the country’s rural households still depend primarily on agriculture for their livelihood, with 82% of the farmers being small and marginal. The millets are a rich source of protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals. At the same time, they are hardy grains that require a third of the water required by rice. Therefore, in our context, prioritizing millets will immensely benefit our farmers and environment for various reasons. Even though millets can grow in drought-prone regions, especially Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Karnataka, 1 kg of millets requires over 200 litres of water as compared to 10 times for rice. The amount of rice produced through heavy subsidies on power for irrigation and low urea prices imply exporting at least 40-50 billion cubic metres of water. The quality that sets millets apart from other grains is their short growing season, and millets can develop from seeds to



To combat food insecurity and malnutrition, awareness needs to be created at both commercial and household levels regarding the impact of processing methods on the nutritional properties of millets and the health benefits of millets.

Vinod Johri



Nutritional profile of millets in comparison with cereals (per 100 g).									
Grains	Energy (kcal)	Protein (g)	Carbohydrate (g)	Starch (g)	Fat (g)	Dietary Fiber (g)	Minerals (g)	calcium (mg)	Phosphorus (mg)
Sorghum	334	10.4	67.6	59	1.9	10.2	1.6	27	222
Pearl millet	363	11.6	61.7	55	5	11.4	2.3	27	296
Finger millet	320	7.3	66.8	62	1.3	11.1	2.7	364	283
Proso millet	341	12.5	70.0	-	1.1	-	1.9	14	206
Foxtail millet	331	12.3	60.0	-	4.3	-	3.3	31	290
Kodo millet	353	8.3	66.1	64	1.4	6.3	2.6	15	188
Little millet	329	8.7	65.5	56	5.3	6.3	1.7	17	220
Barnyard millet	307	11.6	65.5	-	5.8	-	4.7	14	121
Maize	334	11.5	64.7	59	3.6	12.2	1.5	8.9	348
Wheat	321	11.8	64.7	56	1.5	11.2	1.5	39	306
Rice	353	6.8	74.8	71	0.5	4.4	0.6	10	160

ready-to-harvest crops in just about 65 days. If stored properly, millets can keep well for two years or beyond. Rice cultivation is fast depleting the water table and emitting methane and nitrous oxide. Farmers need to be sensitised and incentivised to switch to other crops and get better returns. We should create a carbon market and reward the farmers who are emitting less carbon dioxide into the environment. The majority of states sell rice and wheat as staples as they have more than 90% subsidy under the public distribution system (PDS). The economic cost of rice is around Rs 35 per kg and wheat is about Rs 25 per kg, while rice is being sold via the PDS at Rs 3 per kg and wheat at Rs 2 per kg. Therefore, there is no reason why will people go for millets.

The following types of millets are recognized in our country:

Major millets: 1. *Sorghum* (*Jowar*), 2. Pearl Millet (*Bajra*), 3. Finger Millet (*Ragi*)

Small millets: 1. *Barnyard Millet* (*Samva*), 2. Proso Millet (*Chena*), 3. Foxtail Millet (*Kakum*), 4. Kodo Millet (*Kodon*), 5. Little Millet (*Kutki*)

Pseudo millets: 1. *Amaranth* (*Rajgira*), 2. Buckwheat (*Kuttu*).

We fondly relish nutrient-rich bajra (pearl millet) khichdi served with red channa, vegetables, onion pickle, garlic chutney and papad, Makke di roti with sarson da saag and religiously adopt Kuttu poori or parantha during Navratras in our fasting days.

While the rural population in our country consumes millets, many urban consumers are largely unaware of its nutritive quality. We look for fibre-rich, probiotic, magnesium, phosphorus, calcium, protein, naturally gluten-free food but we also need to look into natural products like millets which are underrated but are a powerhouse of nutrients. They are gluten-free and notably rich in phenolic phytochemicals. The insoluble fibre works like a probiotic that supports the good bacteria, which helps in the digestion of food. Millets also provide essential amino acids to build protein and act as antioxidants to protect our body from the harmful oxidative stress. Research indicates that as a result of the high levels of flavonoid-type phenolics in millets, regular

consumption of millet foods could help prevent type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Other potential Trusted Source health benefits of millets include:

- Suppressing cancer cell growth
- Promoting wound healing
- Maintaining bone health
- Supporting antifungal and anti-microbial activity

Millets are usually processed before consumption to remove the inedible portions, extend the shelf life, and improve nutritional and sensory properties. Primary processing techniques such as dehulling, soaking, germination, roasting, drying, polishing and milling (size reduction) are followed to make millets fit for consumption. At the same time, modern or secondary processing methods such as fermenting, parboiling, cooking, puffing, popping, malting, baking, flaking, extrusion, etc., are used to develop millet-based value-added processed food products. Although these processing techniques aim to enhance the digestibility and nutrient bioavailability, a significant amount of nutrients are lost during subsequent processing.

The productivity (yield in kg/ha) of millets has gone up due to development and adoption of high yielding varieties and improved production technologies. Among the states, during 2017-18, maximum area under millets was in Rajasthan (4.2 million hectare; 56.6% of national area under pearl millet) followed by Maharashtra (2.2 m ha, 44.4% of national area under sorghum) and Karnataka (1.79 m ha, 21.6% of national area under sorghum, 65.2% national area under finger millet). In 2014-19, millets were annually cultivated in an area of 13.7 m ha producing 15.26 m ton of grains in the country. In 2019-20, the area under millet crops was about 12.68 m ha compared to 12.25 m ha during 2018-19.

As per the Union ministry of food processing industries, the production of millets increased from 14.52 million tonne in 2015-16 to 17.96 million tonne in 2020-21. The production of bajra (pearl millet) also increased from 8.07 million tonne to 10.86 million tonne during the same period. The production of bajra (pearl millet) also increased from 8.07 million tonne to 10.86 million tonne during the same period. Currently, India is the fifth largest exporter of millets in the world, according to 2020 data, with exports continuously increasing at around 3% compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) in the last five years ending with 2020. In 2020-21, India exported millets worth \$26.97 million against \$28.5 million in 2019-20.

The Indian Institute of Millet Research (IIMR) is disseminating technologies through signing MoUs and licensing to about 75 startups to train various entrepre-

The central govt. accepted the introduction of millets under the Public Distribution System (PDS) to improve nutrition security among the poor in 2018, although its implementation depends upon the states' decisions.

neurs belonging to 10 states for about eight to nine years continuously with the funding of the department of agriculture, cooperation and farmers' welfare (DAC&FW). In 2016, the IIMR launched 'Eatrite' in Hyderabad and Mumbai, a brand with processed and semi-processed food products exclusively made of sorghum under a price range of Rs 50-100. It was an instant success as the brand backed it with aggressive campaigning in food bazaar and heritage retail stores.

Although much needs to be done, some state governments have been actively promoting the production and consumption of millets. Karnataka has been distributing millets as part of PDS. Recently, it also piloted the introduction of millets in mid-day meals for school children. Odisha is also taking steps towards inclusion of millets in ICDS and PDS under its Odisha Millets Mission. Recently, in July 2020, Keonjhar district in Odisha launched ragi laddoos to be provided to children as morn-

ing snacks under ICDS.

Our government officials and sector experts at the Dubai Expo deliberated on opportunities for industry players to enhance the country's export potential. The start-ups and farmer producer organisations (FPOs) should not only help in upscaling millets' value chain, connecting to domestic and international markets but also create an inclusive framework where participation of producing communities is promoted.

Last year, Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the ICAR-Indian Institute of Millet Research (ICAR-IIMR) to increase exports through quality production and processing is anticipated to boost value addition and farmers' income.

The government is promoting the production of millets in a mission mode under the National Food Security Mission. The central government accepted the introduction of millets under the Public Distribution System (PDS) to improve nutrition security among the poor in 2018, although its implementation depends upon the states' decisions. The NITI Aayog has also been pushing for introduction of millets in the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme and mid-day meal scheme.

To combat food insecurity and malnutrition, awareness needs to be created at both commercial and household levels regarding the impact of processing methods on the nutritional properties of millets and the health benefits of millets. □□

Source: Financial Express, National Library of Medicine (National Centre for Biotechnology Information), Outlook Poshan 2.0, Medical News Today, New Phytologist Foundation
Vinod Johri: Retd Additional Commissioner of Income Tax, Delhi

India's interests at WTO meet



On the evening of June 16, at the atrium of the WTO's Geneva headquarters, Union commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal flashed his trademark broad smile. It was a moment of jubilation as Goyal claimed to have succeeded in putting forth India's agenda at the 12th ministerial conference of the world body without conceding much to the Western bloc.

Over four days (extended by a day) of intense negotiations at the conference, Goyal held the fort as developed countries pushed hard for emerging economies like India to eliminate subsidies in fisheries. India also blocked Western demands for hard deadlines to implement the previously agreed upon Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), got some TRIPS (Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) waivers for domestic vaccine-makers, and made progress with WTO reforms.

However, back home, leaders of RSS affiliate Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) are unhappy that Goyal had apparently missed the opportunity to get the existing moratorium on custom duties on electronic transmission lifted, which developing countries say favours the developed world. Even before the negotiations started, the SJM published a monograph describing the impact of the moratorium. However, there are issues related to definitions, scope and impact. India asked for intensifying discussions on these for taking a decision on the same.

Goyal's team, however, argues that overall, India had been perceived as a "deal-maker" at the WTO negotiations this time and not a "deal breaker", as in the past.

Over the past decade, WTO negotiations had not made much headway due to divergence of views among members on key issues and rising protectionist tendencies globally. Goyal said the achievement of various deals at the 12th ministerial conference reflects that multilaterals have a future. The 'Geneva package', as the deals are referred to, includes agreements on curbing harmful fishing subsidies and a temporary patent waiver for production of Covid-19 vaccines. Talks on bringing therapeutics and diagnostics under the patent waiver will begin after six months.

Under the vaccine patent waiver, a country will be able to issue a licence to its domestic pharma companies to produce the vaccine without approval from the patent holder. India and South Africa's original waiver proposal had called for full freedom to WTO members to remove intellectual property barriers on all Covid-19 response tools, and not just vaccines. Discussions on this specific proposal had reached a deadlock at the TRIPS Council last year. "We have sufficient types of vaccines... So, for the current strains of Covid-19, we do not need the TRIPS waiver. We have supported it more for other developing countries to be able to manufacture vaccines," Goyal said on his return to New Delhi.



Despite nixing several demands of the developed nations, India was perceived as a "deal-maker" at the WTO's 12th ministerial conference.

Anilesh S. Mahajan

The 'Geneva package' bars member countries from levying customs duties on digital streaming services, such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video, transmission for 3D printing, or services provided by other digital platforms. This puts India up against the US and EU along with China. On this, India got support from South Africa, Pakistan, Indonesia and other nations. By one estimate, 86 of the 95 developing countries are net importers of digital products and five global tech giants are controlling the market. Even before the ministerial conference, trade negotiators from the US and EU had shown urgency in having the moratorium extended. US trade representative Katherine Tai had told American journalists that the said extension of the moratorium was top priority.

Goyal, in his thematic session on e-commerce work programme, stressed that the financial consequences of such a moratorium have mostly been borne by the developing countries. "The moratorium is causing a huge revenue loss to the government apart from hurting our digital development, as domestic players face intense competition from global tech companies," argues Ashwani Mahajan, national co-convenor of SJM.

At the end of the moratorium negotiations, the US, EU and other countries, which had played their cards in a coordinated manner, may claim victory whereas the final text of the negotiation is seen as a pyrrhic victory for the developing countries bloc, led by India, Pakistan and South Africa, for getting the word "terminate" included for the first time. The embargo on taxation right will end by March 2024.

The moratorium had been placed in 1998 but has gained more traction over the past few years due to the emergence of new digital platforms. In the last two decades, WTO members have not been able to define electronic transmission or its coverage of products. This further complicates taxation of imports, especially in the digital world where the difference between product and services is often overlapping.

However, the bigger challenge for Goyal was to not concede much ground in the negotiations on fishing subsidies. He entered the negotiations determined not to bend to the Western bloc's demand for extensive exceptions on a 20-year negotiation to curb government fishery subsidies, and has achieved 15 years. "Who could have even thought about it even a month ago. And then, it happened. We played a critical role in it. Who could have imagined India as a deal-maker?" an official privy to New Delhi's negotiations told INDIA TODAY. The official explained that the agreement on scrapping of subsidies on illegal fishing would have no adverse bearing on India as such practices were absent in the country. "This may impact China and other countries, not us," said the official.

Domestic lobbies had been apprehensive about the opening up of fisheries for trade negotiations and the future of subsidies. The outcome papers of the negotiations indicate Goyal managed to stand his ground. The minister was also successful in protecting the interests of small and marginal fisherfolk, who operate within the exclusive economic zone (EEZ), by holding on to the policy space and

continuation of support extended by governments for them. New Delhi got scrapped an entire chapter from the proposal that could have threatened subsidies for small-scale and artisanal fishing. In the truncated agreement, ministers agreed on pared down disciplines for Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated (IUU) fishing and overfished stocks.

Ranja Sengupta, senior researcher at the Third World Network, says India has got a temporary reprieve from having to discipline its subsidies for fishing up to the EEZ. The comprehensive agreement needs to be achieved in the subsequent ministerial rounds. "But the final impact depends on how India is able to secure a strong, special and differential treatment in the comprehensive agreement," she added. That will also be a test of India's ability to make developed countries with industrial fishing fleets take responsibility for years of subsidising and distorting global marine fish production and trade.

Goyal maintained that the agreement on illegal fishing had been achieved without compromising on the interests of poor and marginal fishermen in India. Traditional fisheries in India are about fishing households using relatively small amount of capital and smaller fishing vessels, usually about 20 metres in overall length, to make short trips close to the shores. India's subsidies are one of the lowest in the world. Union commerce ministry data suggests the subsidy for every fishing family is barely \$15 a year whereas some countries extend subsidies to the tune of \$75,000 a year.

[Continued on page no. 38]

Modi@ 20: Decoding the Modi Phenomenon

There have been many writings, academic studies and books on the subject of governance and its different aspects. Most of them remain country specific studies while attributing the role of political system and socio-economic conditions while analyzing the role and level of governance in any system. Interestingly, this book evades from the dominant trend in a sense that it aims to evaluate the role and significance of Sh. Narendra Modi as a leader in the last twenty years of his governance, delivering on the promise of social change, welfare and development.

This recently released book offers a full account of the two decades of Prime Minister Narendra Modi being in power. If we see his journey in last eight years, since the Modi Government came to the power in Centre, or his track record as an 'able administrator and popular leader' in the capacity of Gujarat's Chief Minister, one can understand from the many learned arguments made in the book that government under his leadership both at state and centre level truly symbolises a unique 'governance model'. In this journey he clearly build's a 'model of governance' for united, prosperous and strong *Bharat*.

It is collection of well-researched articles written by people in the bureaucracy, academia and other expert minds who have worked closely with Prime Minister in the last two decades. To say, the list of contributors includes names of Amit Shah, Nripendra Mishra, Ajit Doval to other domain experts like Ashok Gulati, Shamika Ravi, S. Jaishankar, PV Sidhu, and Anupam Kher, and many others who have been part of this journey under his leadership.

The basic foundation of this model of governance was laid during the 13 years of his tenure as the Chief Minister of Gujarat. Under his leadership, Gujarat



The book sets out with the objective of understanding the 'Modi phenomenon' and its various attributes. The chapters provide deep insights into the various spheres of change and action under Modi rule.

Dr. Abhishek Pratap Singh



became the testing ground for the many new policies and programmes, which were carefully designed to empower people and deliver growth. He found opportunity with the business potential, cultural richness and strength of Gujarati diasporato develop an investor friendly and growth centric model of vibrant Gujarat. With effective execution of public policies and set of education reforms, human resource of the state was able to be stakeholder in the Gujrat's developmental story.

The chapters in the book are broadly categorised into five sections, focusing on different aspects of governance under Modi rule. The first section describes how the promise of people's empowerment at different levels has been ensured in the last eight years. This is in line with the 'people first' approach to governance under his leadership driven by the mantra of *SabkaSaath, Sabka Vikas, SabkaVishwas and SabkaPrayas*. With active involvement in policymaking, its execution and the feedback process, people are in the driving seat of this transformation. The use of new technological tools and communication channels made this process much easier and transparent.

The second section highlights the key policy interventions by the Modi government to strengthen unity and integrity of the country. The chapter in this section by Home Minister Sh. Amit Shah gives details about how Modi's vision for development stands for inclusive growth and holistic development. Many long-term objectives are keeping in mind country's interests and are not subject to any electoral loss or challenges. The Politics of Unity and Development is a re-

The interesting part of the writing is that it conceptualises how the govt. policy makers have evolved a new role and relevance for the 'youth and women' in our governance model.

markable feature of Modi's governance, keeping in mind political and social vision for New India.

In the third section, which is on economy, chapters discuss about various policies and programmes of the government towards financial inclusion and economic decentralisation. Much emphasis was given towards economic resurgence of the country focusing on skill training, technology promotion, expanding digitisation and improving infrastructure. Shamika Ravi's in her essay dwells on five key 'micro-revolutions' that improved the life of ordinary people.

The fourth section turns towards novel efforts and policies by the government to bring 'paradigm shift' in the governance model. Nandan Nilekani highlights the active role of technology to achieve policy goals under Modi rule. Nipendra Mishra, who has worked closely with the Prime Minister, point to his ability in transforming the 'vision into reality'. The section focuses on the challenging tasks before government during the Corona pandemic and its efforts to speed up the vaccination drive in a more smoother and easy manner for a country as big like India. More importantly, serving those at

the bottom of social pyramid and economic vulnerabilities.

The final section titled *Vasudhaiv Kutumbkam* features some insightful analyses on how India navigated the path of external relations and diplomacy, while protecting the national interests and pushing for world peace and security. Ajit Doval writes how national security has taken precedence during these years. The realistic approach to Chinese belligerence has well stood with our national goals and strengths. In the final article, S. Jaishankar gives an account of India's more active role and presence in the global politics, driven by the new areas of engagement and diplomatic endeavours under the leadership of PM Modi.

The interesting part of the writing is that it conceptualises how the government policy makers have evolved a new role and relevance for the 'youth and women' in our governance model. Not just for social empowerment but also in leadership and administration there is more avenues and scope for these sections.

The book sets out with the objective of understanding the 'Modi phenomenon' and its various attributes. The chapters provide deep insights into the various spheres of change and action under Modi rule. And the reasoned approach to governance not based on populism but sound and effective execution of policies to empower the real beneficiaries. Moreover, this governance model has built on a convergence of our cultural values and rich heritage, giving a new direction to our process of nation building. □□

Dr. Abhishek Pratap Singh: PhD from JNU and Assistant Professor, Deshbandhu College, University of Delhi, New Delhi.

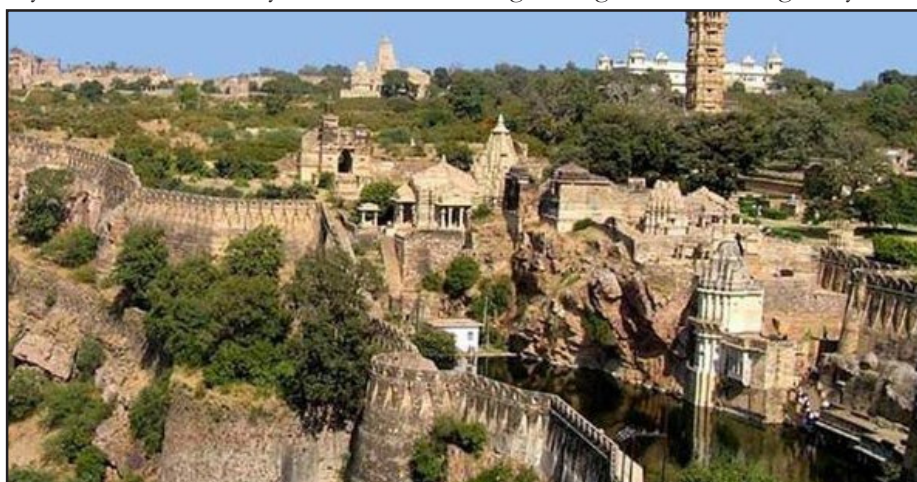
Mewar as the Locus of Guhila State (Part-II)



The Guhilas had territorially and politically integrated most parts of Mewar (Southern Rajasthan) into a state/political identity by the tenth century. The new heights in territorial, political and military accomplishments were matched with royal claim to a new prestigious caste-status, Brahmanical origin.
Prof. Nandini Kapur Sinha

The consolidation of Nagda-Ahada Guhila power is corroborated by the long genealogical lists occurring in their official records for the first time in the tenth century. The Atapura inscription of the Guhila, Saktikumâra contains an interesting genealogical information. ðaktikumâra is stated to have obtained the glory of Bhart[patta (II) and consolidated his kingdom. The reference to King Úaktikumâra as the prince who consolidated the kingdom also indicates the point of time (the second half of the tenth century) when the early Guhilas consolidated power in their central area and beyond. This may be taken as the second phase in the growth of the processes of state formation in Mewar. Aghata or Ahada was made the new capital by Saktikumara: he is stated to have established himself at Aghatapura. It is important to note that Sâranesvara Inscription of 953 does not eulogize the town of Ahada unlike the Atapur Inscription of 977.³⁰ This evidence indicates that Ahada had not acquired political importance or status of a capital till 977. Even Kailash Chand Jain comments that Allata, the son and successor of Bhart[patta II, probably transferred his capital from Nagda to Ahada. Transfer of capital from Nâgda to Ahada was apparently due to the latter's increasing economic significance in the tenth century and did not signify any territorial acquisition." Guhila King Bhart[pamma (II) bears the title of mahârâjâ-dhiraja in the Pratapgarh inscription of Pratihâra Mahendrapaladeva (II) of 945-6.³⁴ It is again Bhart[patta (II) who is eulogized in the Atapura inscription as the 'ornament of the three worlds'." Thus new political titles and a genealogical list are claimed in the tenth century by the Nagda-Ahada Guhilas.

The new heights of political power are expressed in ambitious claims about origins. The records now for the first time speak of the ancestor, Guhadatta as a brahmana belonging to a family of Anandapura (Anandapuravinirgatah Viprakulâh-nandano%-mahideva jayati Çeri Guhadatta% prabhava% Sri Guhilavamsasya). Anandapura is identified with present Vadnagar in Idar, north-east Gujarat. It is a very significant development when contrasted with the simple expression of Guhilân-vaya of seventh-century records. The same genealogical list and origin myth are



repeated in the eleventh century, as is evident from the Kadmal plates of 1083 of Guhila Vijayasimha.

The Pratihâra power in southern Rajasthan had by this time begun to decline. Pratihara hold over the strategic fortress of Chittaurgarh weakened by the second half of tenth century. The Rastrakûta invasions into northern India had undermined the Pratihara power militarily as it is evident by Karhad plates and Deoli Plates of KîcGa III. This was also the period when powerful rulers like Paramâra Siyaka II, Mûlarâja Caulukya, and Candella Dhanga were making intrusions into the Pratihâra dominion from central and western India. In the weakening of the Pratihara hold over the fortress of Chittaurgarh, the Guhilas of Nagda-Ahada are likely to have played a significant role as is evident from an unpublished inscription of the reign of Guhila King Allata (Alu Raval of tradition). King Allata is said to have been killed in the battle field, by a strong enemy named Devapâla” (identified with Pratihâra King Devapâla of Kanauj of the late tenth century). Thus, the extent to which the Nagdâ-Ahada Guhilas helped in weakening the Pratihara hold over Citrakuta remains a matter of conjecture. The fact that the Guhilas of Nagdâ-Ahada had become a power to be reckoned with is borne out by the Paramara invasion of Aghata, their capital. The Bijapur Inscription of Dhavala Râstrakûta of Hastikundi records that Prince Dhavala gave shelter to the armies of a king whose name is lost and the army of the Gurjaras when Paramâra Muñjarâja had destroyed Aghata, the pride of Medapâta and caused them to flee.” Thus they figure in

the official records of their contemporaries for the first time in the tenth century. Paramâra Muñja was the contemporary of Guhila King Saktikumâra. As is evident from the Hastikundi record, Guhila Saktikumâra was given political refuge by the Râstrakûta prince of Hastikundi at the time of the sack of Aghata (Ahada). It was on this occasion that the fortress of Chittaur passed into Paramâra hands. Muñja Vâkpati’s nephew Bhoja is known to have often resided at Chittaur. Construction of the temples of Tribhuvana-NârâyaGa” (now known as Mokalji’s temple) and Samâddhiûvara is attributed to Paramâra Bhoja. Next to the Paramâras, it was the Cahamânas who continued to keep up pressures on the Nagda Ahada Guhilas, Guhila Saktikumara’s son Ambâprasâda is known to have been killed by his contemporary Cahamana, Vâkpati II of Sâkambhari in an attack on the capital.”

However, these occasional inroads into Nagda-Ahada might be considered as minor setbacks in the political career of the Guhila dynasty without seriously jeopardising the processes of state formation at this point of time.”

Increasing political power had to be supplemented with higher social claims. There were matrimonial alliances with the contemporary Rajput families of different lineages in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Some of these families not only belonged to respectable lineages but were also important political powers. Allaa had a queen from a royal Hûna family of central India.” Hûna Princess Hariyadevi (the name seems to suggest that this Huna family had already been absorbed into the Rajput fold,

which facilitated a Guhila-Hûna marriage) is also called the founder or an associate of the town of Harcapura (Harshuada, district Hoshangabad). The Hûnas may have sought matrimonial alliance with Guhilas of Nagda-Ahada to thwart the rising Paramara power of Malwa. The alliance also secured for the Guhilas a political ally in the Hûnas of central India against the Paramara. Bhart[patta’s queen Mahalaksmi is stated to have been of Râcmrakûta ancestry (most probably from Rastrakutas of Hastikundi, Marwar),” Naravahana also had a Cahamana queen. Not only the ruling family but their important functionaries also began to seek matrimonial alliances with respectable Rajput families. Two epigraphical records of 1000 and 1008 refer to the two wives of Guhila mahâsâmantadhipati of Nâgad[aha (Nagdâ) as Mahârâjñi Sarvadevi, daughter of a mahasamantadhipati of the Surya vamsi family and Mahârâjñi Jâjukâ, daughter of a mahâsâmantâdhipati of another Suryavamsi family of Bharukaccha.

Territorial expansion of the Guhila state occurred in the late eleventh century to the north, beyond the traditional boundary of Mewar, into the Godwar region. Kadmal plates record the grant of the fifth part of the produce of the village Palli, embracing all its receipts, by Guhila King Vijayasimha to a brâhmaGa Unanalâcârya. The village of Palli has been identified with the modern town of Pali in the district of Pali (Godwar region). Godwar region was commercially strategic to Rajasthan as the trade route to the seacoast of Gujarat from northern India passed through it in this period.

[To be continued...]

SJM urges WTO to protect interests of developing nations



The draft proposal on COVID-19 tools to be taken up at the WTO ministerial conference is not close to the real TRIPS waiver. This could set a dangerous precedent for access to medicines, the experts have said.

Swadesh Jagran Manch (SJM), said that India and other developing countries should reject the draft as it does not address concerns. The TRIPS waiver exercise exposes the double speak of the developed countries he also said.

In a letter to the Director General of WTO, the Swadesh Jagran Manch said that, humanity has gone through a worst tragedy in the past two years, and people in different parts of the world are still struggling for equitable access to diagnostics, medicines, vaccine and other treatments. You will appreciate that main culprit for the same is TRIPS Agreement made in the beginning of WTO at Marrakesh. Exceptions permitted in the TRIPS Agreement on the issue of public health were ineffective as they were structured with lots of conditions which were either difficult to comply with or were impractical. Whatever small was achieved in Doha Declaration as TRIPS flexibilities has been made ineffective by developed countries, especially USA by forcing developing countries as well as the least developed countries to incorporate more restrictive conditions known as TRIPS Plus and Data Exclusivity in FTAs with them. India, Africa Group and other supporting countries proposed a TRIPS waiver for vaccine, medicines and consumables for treatment of COVID-19 which was initially opposed totally by the developed countries including USA, EU and Japan later on at least agreed to text based negotiations, the SJM also said. However, the text circulated is far from useful for the purpose enshrined in India-South Africa proposal of TRIPS waiver. It is unfortunate that the proposal on table is limited to TRIPS waiver for vaccine only and that too, limited

to import and exports of the vaccine and that also with technicalities purposely designed to deny the implementation of TRIPS waiver even for vaccines. We fail to understand why the text in circulation puts so many conditionalities.

Proposal to destroy the vaccines produced on expiry of term of waiver is a cruel joke on humanity. We call upon you to make use of your good offices to ensure TRIPS waiver extended to medicines, therapeutics, diagnostic, disposables and all types of equipments along with vaccines used in the treatment of COVID-19. In a blog post, Ashwani Mahajan writes, “in short the decision is not offering anything new but repackaging of Article 31 (bis) of the TRIPS Agreement, which has proven ineffective and unusable. India should call a spade and reject the adoption of the decision text. Adoption of this text undermines the need of the hour and conveys a message that legitimate needs of developing countries can be ignored for the profit of the transnational corporations. Negotiators from India and other developing countries should ask this question from themselves, do they gain anything from present proposed TRIPS waiver decision?”

<https://www.oncindia.com/india/swadesh-jagran-manch-urges-wto-to-protect-interests-of-developing-nations-3420265.html>

SJM Demands Tariff on E-transmission

As the World Trade Organization’s 12th ministerial conference began on Sunday in the Swiss town of Geneva, Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) has said India will be benefited from the tariff on e-transmission.

A delegation of Swadesh Jagran Manch is also participating in the WTO meeting in Geneva. SJM said, “Although there are many topics in this year’s WTO meeting, but imposing a tariff on e-transmission is in the great interest of our country. In e-transmission like downloading apps, movies, songs, or downloading OTT content. Earlier, e-transmission was very little but now it is very much. Today its turnover has crossed USD 30 billion. If the tariff is imposed on it in the WTO, then the country will benefit a lot.”

SJM further said, “We also got the support of the Government of India in this demand. Even if 10 per cent is levied on USD 30 billion, we will get USD 3 billion in tax revenue. Those e-products will start manufacturing in the country and due to the manufacture of those products, employment will be created.”

“We have prepared our documents in this regard

and have also submitted to the government how we can take forward the progress of the country by bringing tariff on e-transmission. We can move towards self-reliance in manufacturing of e-products,” SJM added.

SJM said that the revenue of the Government of India can be increased by collecting tax from all the tech companies whether it is Google or e-commerce companies but it is a big challenge.

Further replying to what if things become expensive if tariffs are increased, SJM said, “We think things will get expensive if tariffs are increased but we have to think for the long term. We have imposed a 100 per cent tariff on our cars. The cars of India are the cheapest in the world, the reason is that it does not come from other countries because if it is imported from other countries then tariff is imposed on it and it may become costly. There is a kind of protection on the automobile business in our country, due to cars are cheap and are sold at cheap rates.”

SJM said that India has to take care of its interests on other matters as well.

“The Government of India and South Africa together proposed in the WTO demanding patent rights on medicines, vaccines and other treatment equipment. According to that proposal, it was demanded to give patent rights to India on medicines, vaccines and other treatment equipment which are with foreign companies. To revoke those patent rights for some time so that the common people could get cheap medicines, after a long-running struggle, the US agreed to remove the patent on the vaccine,” SJM said.

SJM said that the countries like the US and the European Union have recognized that they will make the vaccine patent-free.

<https://www.latestly.com/agency-news/india-news/swadeshi-jagran-manch-demands-tariff-on-e-transmission-says-india-will-be-benefitted-3817420.html>

SJM targets Holcim-Adani deal; says sale must be taxed in India

Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) has suggested changes in the taxation laws on capital gains for taxing the gains on stock market transactions. Citing Holcim CEO Jan Jenisch’s recent statement that the sale of Holcim shares in Ambuja Cements and ACC to Adani group through Mauritius route will not attract any tax in India on the sale proceeds, SJM wanted tweaks in tax laws to ensure such gaps, if any, are plugged.

The suggestions are part of the resolution taken by SJM’s at its two-day national council meeting organised in Nagpur during June 4 and 5. The organi-



sation also expressed concerns over the increasing dominance of foreign capital and the declining domestic savings. “The increasing trade deficit and declining value of Indian Rupee due to sudden increase in imports and pull out of funds by FIIs from the stock market is an area of serious concern,” it says.

The meeting appreciated Modi government’s policies in handling the Covid-hit economy and its efforts to maintain inflation under check.

“It is expected that due to timely intervention of RBI and imposition of ban on export of wheat and other agricultural commodities, with changes made in import duties and export duties, both the demand and supply will be managed to contain the inflation to less than 6%. The government has been taking advantage of discounted crude oil imports from Russia. On the diplomatic front also the government has been able to maintain a balance with QUAD group and the BRICS group and its Bharat-centric policies are enabling us to keep our head high at global level,” SJM resolution says.

In order to address the unemployment problem, SJM says its mega scheme - Swawlambi Bharat Abhiyan – will see entrepreneurs’ development programmes in all the 739 districts of the country and carry out continuous efforts to promote Swadeshi and local products to make each village self-dependent.

The organisation also said the central government’s stand at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to oppose the moratorium on tariff on import of e-products, which has been continuing since 1998 needs to be welcomed. “The current moratorium on custom duty on electronic transfer is against the interest of developing countries in general and India in particular. This is not only impacting job creation in the electronic sector, but also the revenue generation. Imposition of tariff on electronic transmission will be the first condition for success in the fourth industrial revolution, namely, digital industrialization,” it says.

<https://www.fortuneindia.com/enterprise/sjm-targets-holcim-adani-deal-says-sale-must-be-taxed-in-india/108464>

Airbus close to winning \$5.5 billion order from Jet Airways



Airbus SE has emerged as the front-runner to win an order for as many as 50 aircraft worth up to \$5.5 billion from Jet Airways India Ltd., people familiar with the matter said, solidifying the European plane-maker's hold in the world's fastest-growing aviation market. The talks are for A320neo jets and A220 planes, the people said, asking not to be identified because the deliberations are private. Boeing Co. and Embraer SA are also in discussions and no final decision has been taken, the people said. Although at sticker prices any transaction would be north of \$5 billion, discounts are common in such large purchases. While delivery slots are scarce, airlines can lease jets from lessors who buy in bulk. Representatives for Boeing and Airbus didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

The potential order comes as Jet Airways, once India's top private airline, is preparing to return to the skies. Jet Airways got its flying license last month, marking the first time a carrier has been revived under the nation's new bankruptcy laws. The flying permit proved Jet Airways is ready to operate, signaling its transformation into a "new avatar with fresh funding, changed ownership, and new management," according to a statement.

The airline last week invited former cabin crew to join it. Jet is planning to come back with a hybrid of premium and low-cost services, Chief Executive Officer Sanjiv Kapoor said in April. It will have a two-class configuration where business class passengers will be offered services including free meals, while economy class flyers will pay for meals and other services, he said.

Jet's new owners — Dubai-based, Indian-origin businessman Murari Lal Jalan and Florian Fritsch, chairman of London-based financial advisory and alternative asset manager Kalrock Capital Management Ltd. — have pledged to make investments of as much as \$120 million, Kapoor said.

"We are in final negotiations with lessors and OEMs for aircraft, and we will announce our aircraft choice and fleet plan once we have made a decision," a representative for Jet Airways said Monday. "We are studying all possibilities to find the one that works best for us."

<https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/airbus-close-to-winning-5-5-billion-order-from-jet-airways-8745621.html>

Russia defaults on foreign debt for first time since 1918

Russia defaulted on its foreign-currency sovereign debt for the first time in a century, the culmination of ever-tougher Western sanctions that shut down payment routes to overseas creditors.

For months, the country found paths around the penalties imposed after the Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine. But at the end of the day on Sunday, the grace period on about \$100 million of snared interest payments due May 27 expired, a deadline considered an event of default if missed.

It's a grim marker in the country's rapid transformation into an economic, financial and political outcast. The nation's eurobonds have traded at distressed levels since the start of March, the central bank's foreign reserves remain frozen, and the biggest banks are severed from the global financial system. But given the damage already done to the economy and markets, the default is also mostly symbolic for now, and matters little to Russians dealing with double-digit inflation and the worst economic contraction in years.

Russia has pushed back against the default designation, saying it has the funds to cover any bills and has been forced into non-payment. As it tried to twist its way out, it announced last week that it would switch to servicing its \$40 billion of outstanding sovereign debt in rubles, criticizing a "force-majeure" situation it said was artificially manufactured by the West.

"It's a very, very rare thing, where a government that otherwise has the means is forced by an external government into default," said Hassan Malik, senior sovereign analyst at Loomis Sayles & Company LP. "It's going to be one of the big watershed defaults in history." A formal declaration would usually come from ratings firms, but European sanctions led to them withdrawing ratings on Russian entities. According to the documents for the notes whose grace period expired Sunday, holders can call one themselves if owners of 25% of the outstanding bonds agree that an "Event of Default" has occurred.



With the final deadline passed, focus shifts to what investors do next. They don't need to act immediately, and may choose to monitor the progress of the war in the hope that sanctions are eventually softened. Time may be on their side: the claims only become void three years on from the payment date, according to the bond documents.

"Most bondholders will keep the wait-and-see approach," Takahide Kiuchi, an economist at Nomura Research Institute in Tokyo.

Russia's Default Tussle With Bondholders Is Only Just Starting. During Russia's financial crisis and ruble collapse of 1998, President Boris Yeltsin's government defaulted on \$40 billion of its local debt. The last time Russia fell into default vis-a-vis its foreign creditors was more than a century ago, when the Bolsheviks under Vladimir Lenin repudiated the nation's staggering Czarist-era debt load in 1918. By some measures it approached a trillion dollars in today's money, according to Loomis Sayles' Malik, who is also author of 'Bankers and Bolsheviks: International Finance and the Russian Revolution.' By comparison, foreigners held the equivalent of almost \$20 billion of Russia's eurobonds as of the start of April. Russia Debt Held Abroad Below 50%, First Time Since 2018.

"Is it a justifiable excuse to say: 'Oh well, the sanctions prevented me from making the payments, so it's not my fault?'" Malik said.

"The broader issue is that the sanctions were themselves a response to an action on the part of the sovereign entity," he said, referring to the invasion of Ukraine. "And I think history will judge this in the latter light."

Finance Minister Anton Siluanov dismissed the situation as a "farce." With billions of dollars a week still pouring into state coffers from energy exports, despite the grinding conflict in east Ukraine, he reiterated that the country has the means, and the will, to pay.

"Anyone can declare whatever they like," Siluanov said. "But anyone who understands what's going on knows that this is in no way a default."

His comments were prompted by the grace period that ended on Sunday. The 30-day window was triggered when investors failed to receive coupon payments due on dollar- and euro-denominated bonds on May 27.

The cash got trapped after the US Treasury let a sanctions loophole expire, removing an exemption that had allowed US bondholders to receive payments from the Russian sovereign. A week later, Russia's paying agent, the National Settlement Depository, was also sanctioned by the European Union.

In response, Vladimir Putin introduced new regulations that say Russia's obligations on foreign-currency bonds are fulfilled once the appropriate amount in rubles has been transferred to the local paying agent.

<https://www.livemint.com/news/world/russia-defaults-on-foreign-debt-for-first-time-since-1918-11656292728984.html>

Kerala among 5 states with unsustainable debt stock

Referring to economic crisis in Sri Lanka, a Reserve Bank article on Thursday said states are showing warning signs of building stress, and the 5 most indebted ones — Punjab, Rajasthan, Bihar, Kerala and West Bengal — need to take corrective measures by cutting down expenditure on non-merit goods.

State finances are vulnerable to a variety of unexpected shocks that might alter their fiscal outcomes, causing slippages relative to their budgets and expectations, said the RBI article prepared by a team of economist under the guidance of deputy governor Michael Debabrata Patra.

"The recent economic crisis in neighbouring Sri Lanka is a reminder of the critical importance of public debt sustainability. The fiscal conditions among states in India are showing warning signs of building stress," it said. For some states, it added, shocks may increase their debt by a significant amount, posing fiscal sustainability challenges.

Observing that the slowdown in own tax revenue, a high share of committed expenditure and rising subsidy burdens have stretched state government finances already exacerbated by COVID-19, the article said. "New sources of risks have emerged in the form of rising expenditure on non-merit freebies, expanding contingent liabilities, and the ballooning overdue of discoms," it said.

For the five most indebted states of Bihar, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan and West Bengal, the debt stock is no longer sustainable, as the debt growth has out-



paced their Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) growth in the last five years, it warned. As per the article, new sources of risks have emerged from re-launch of the old pension scheme by some states; rising expenditure on non-merit freebies; expanding contingent liabilities; and the ballooning overdue of — warranting strategic corrective measures.

“Stress tests show that the fiscal conditions of the most indebted state governments are expected to deteriorate further, with their debt-GSDP ratio likely to remain above 35 per cent in 2026-27,” the authors said.

The central bank, however, said the views ex-

pressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Reserve Bank of India.

As a corrective measure, the article suggested that the state governments must restrict their revenue expenses by cutting down expenditure on non-merit goods in the near term.

In the medium term, it added the states need to put efforts towards stabilising debt levels.

It also recommended large scale reforms in power distribution sector would enable the discoms (power distribution companies) to reduce losses and make them financially sustainable and operationally efficient.

In the long term, increasing the share of capital outlays in the total expenditure will help create long-term assets, generate revenue and boost operational efficiency. Alongside, state governments need to conduct fiscal risk analyses and stress test their debt profiles regularly to be able to put in place provisioning and other specific risk mitigation strategies to manage fiscal risks efficiently.

<https://www.onmanorama.com/news/business/2022/06/17/kerala-debt-unsustainable-rbi-sri-lanka-crisis.html>

[Continued from page no. 27]

India's interests at WTO...

Heading for the WTO meet, the Indian team was well aware of the “not so great” negotiations in the past on AoA. The brief for Goyal and his team was to not repeat the same on the issue of fishing. “India took a stance against the WTO text, which had sought to institutionalise the existing disparity [in fisheries], and has fought to ensure that the mistakes made in the Uruguay round [for AoA] weren't repeated in the fisheries agreement,” said a top commerce ministry official.

Like agriculture, fisheries too is a politically sensitive subject in India. New Delhi says fishing for the domestic fisherfolk communities was not merely a means of livelihood but a way of living.

There are around 200,000 fishing craft in India, of which only 59,000 (less than 30 per cent) are mechanised. The estimated fisheries potential is about 4.4 million tonnes while the marine capture production in 2019 was 3.8 million tonnes.

Apart from protecting the interests of small and marginal fishermen, Goyal also had to seek an overhauling of the AoA. This time, New Delhi had formed a group of 100-odd countries to demand changes in the agreement, including giving an emphasis on domestic food security, running public stockholding without constraints, revisiting the External Reference Price (set at average of 1986-1988 prices) so that

the government has greater ability to provide higher support prices, retain the ability to export from public stocks in surplus times to aid members bilaterally and to alleviate food security concerns wherever they arise. These issues continue to find contrarian views in the Western bloc.

“Credit goes to the US at the 12th ministerial conference for allegedly undermining the agriculture negotiations. Washington may never allow a permanent solution; it did the same [at the 11th ministerial conference] in Buenos Aires in December 2017,” said a trade lobbyist from another developing country during the informal conversations at the atrium of the WTO headquarters. This is bound to make negotiations all the more complex for India and the developing bloc in the future. But for now, some big gains have been made by Goyal and his team. □□

<https://www.indiatoday.in/amp/india-today-insight/story/100-p59ash-goyal-team-stood-their-ground-to-protect-india-s-interests-at-ato-mmt-1965075-2022-06-21>

Swadeshi Activities

Swavlambi Bharat Abhiyan - Meetings

Pictorial Glimpses



Bengaluru, Karnataka



Guntur, Andhra Pradesh



East & West Uttar Pradesh



Nagpur, Maharashtra



Swadeshi Activities

Swavlambi Bharat Abhiyan ■ Meetings

Pictorial Glimpses



Nagpur, Maharashtra



Bokaro, Jharkhand



Bulendshehar, U.P.