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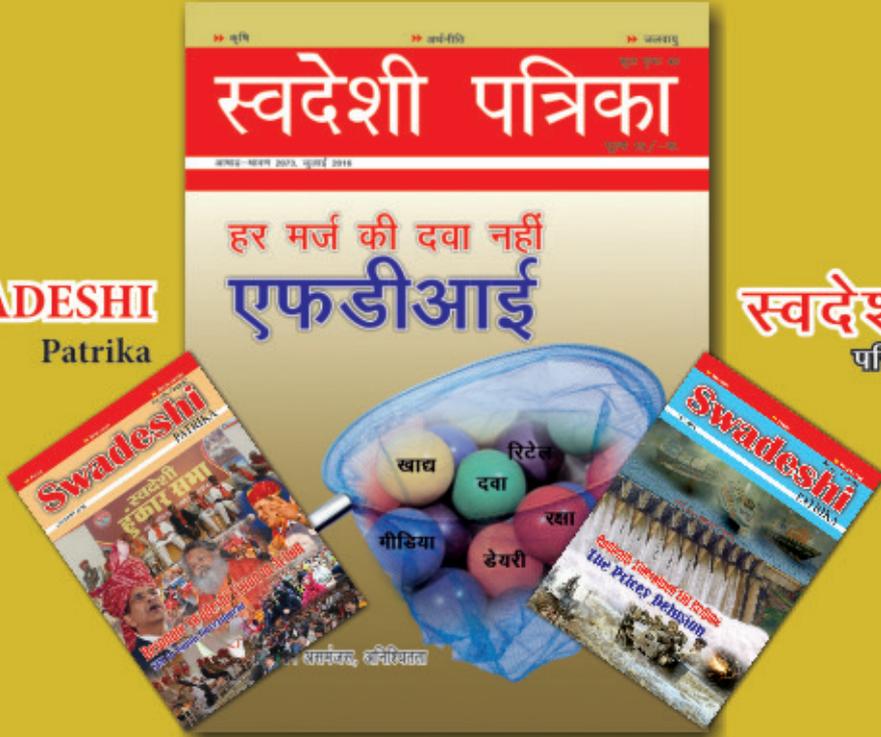


Making China Pay for its Deeds

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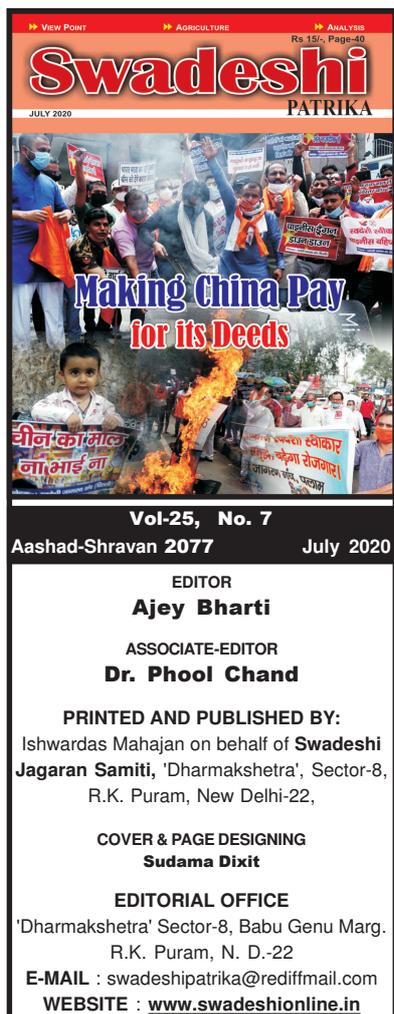
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Countering the Chinese: Military, Trade, and Digital

If the history has taught us one lesson right from the 1962 war till recent Galwan is to never trust the Chinese. The recent clash at Galwan valley is one such example. The Chinese troops tried to enter the Galwan valley and tried to claim the forward post of India as Chinese territory. The Indian soldiers met the Chinese soldiers gallantly and inflicted a heavy loss on them. The Chinese have been following the expansionist policies in the South Chinese seas, Taiwan, Vietnam, Hong Kong and most of its neighbours. The entire world has appreciated the stand taken by India in putting a check to Chinese aggression and expansionist policy.

While the soldiers have taken a stand at the forward posts, within the country there is huge apprising to ban everything that benefits China. The areas in which Chinese can be countered will be in trade, investments and digitally. In trade, India still has a trade deficit of \$48.6 billion. Though the deficit has been reducing lately due to tariff policies of the government, it is still not enough, the government should increase its tariff and import non-tariff measures on as an The Indian consumers and shopkeepers have been systematically trying to ban every Chinese good and looking for alternative. India has also launched a digital strike by banning 59 apps including the Tiktok and Help Swadeshi Jagaran Manch has been the foremost in raising the privacy concerns associated with these apps. Taking the cue from India more countries including USA may put a ban on Chinese apps.

The Chinese companies so far have strategically invested in Indian startups over the years. The cumulative investment of Chinese stand at a staggering \$6.2 billion. The ministry has already promised to re-look into the said investments. It is in India's best interest if the Indian venture capital firms can replace the existing Chinese investment with Indian funds. A consortium of funds together could replace the existing Chinese investment in the Indian startups. While the soldiers gallantly defend the borders of India, it is important for us to fight Chinese in all aspects related to investments, trade and also digital.

– Harsha Vardhan, Hyderabad, Telangana

EDITORIAL OFFICE

SWADESHI PATRIKA

'Dharmakshetra', Sector-8, Rama Krishna Puram, New Delhi-22

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Quote-Unquote



The age of expansionism is over, this is the era of development... whenever we have seen expansionist tendencies, these have spelt danger for world peace.

Narendra Modi,
Prime Minister, India



In the wake of the ban which we have imposed...I think it is a great opportunity. Can we come up with good apps made by Indians? Let the dependence on foreign apps, with their own agenda for a variety of reasons, stop.

Ravi Shankar Prasad
Electronics and Information Technology Minister, India



Self-reliance can be achieved by rejuvenating the country's indigenous industry, including small scale industries, small businesses, artisans, rural industries and other non-farm activities with an aim to generate inclusive growth with impetus on employment.

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan
Co-convenor, SJM

Swap Chinese Investment by Indian Investment

China has also been making huge profit through social media apps, e-commerce apps and other types of apps; apart from collecting valuable information from our people and sending the same to China, causing security threat. The Government of India has also toughened its stand against all these acts. Recently, the Government of India has banned 59 Chinese apps and has cancelled many of contracts to Chinese companies. Preparations are being made to increase import duty and adopt other non-tariff measures to curb Chinese imports.

In the past, Chinese companies and investors who cannot be separated from Chinese government have been investing heavily in Indian startups and other businesses. Although China's investment in India directly is hardly \$ 8 billion, actual investment is slated to be much more than that. Some people say that we should not stop Chinese investments, because it can hamper the growth of our startups and impact the businesses and employment in the country. Similar argument is also given about Chinese imports that cheap imports from China should be allowed as they help reduce the cost of production and that only can make us globally competitive. But we should not forget that our startups are the enterprises and businesses of future. If due to Chinese investments, their ownership and management goes into Chinese hands, nothing will remain Indian. Not only their business decisions, valuable market share and data will also go into Chinese hands. The example of Paytm is before us. Today, Paytm, with the largest market share in digital payments is in the hands of China's Alibaba. They are now venturing into banking as well. Recently Alibaba, which has a large stake in Paytm, has tried to enter the insurance business directly by purchasing a defunct insurance company Raheja QBE General Insurance Company through Paytm.

We can conclude that Chinese investments should not be seen as a merely money coming in, but should be seen as entrusting our businesses into Chinese hands. Secondly, due to the boycott of China, business of Indian enterprises, apps, payment companies, infrastructure companies are booming. In such a situation, if the Chinese investment in these companies is not stopped, then these companies too will sooner or later, go into Chinese hands and the country may be a moot spectator. Need of the hour is that Indian investors start investing in Indian start ups. It is important that even today Indian venture capitalists have been investing in Indian start-ups, though their contribution is quite low. This Venture Capital, is funded by the big industrial houses, big corporate and high net worth individuals. It is well known that a startup means an idea, through which our youth build their venture with their skills. These enterprises are mostly working in e-commerce, social media apps, consumer services, industrial production services, agriculture related businesses etc. Since these startups carry high risk, banks and other financial institutions are reluctant to lend money to them. But venture capitalists readily agree to provide equity capital to them, as the profits from successful entrepreneurs more than make up for their losses even if some startups fail.

Venture capitalists are Indian as well as foreigners. Foreigners include funds from China, America, Europe and other countries. It is seen that the investment in startups in e-commerce and digital payments in India has increased significantly. It is a matter of concern that through the ownership of these e-commerce, social media and payment companies, China has been transferring huge amount of valuable data from us to their country, which poses danger to not only our business but even internal and external security, apart from disturbing our social fabric. For this, it is necessary not only to prevent further Chinese investment, but also to find ways to swap Chinese investments by Indian capital.

It is well known that the cost of capital in India is high, so companies have been taking loans from other countries, including China, at low rate interest. Many a times, China has been giving loans at low interest to Indian companies, for the purpose of selling their equipment and machinery. Due to all these reasons, China's investment in the country has been increasing. Apart from this, the cost of finance for Indian venture capitalists is also very high. People who invest in most venture capitalist funds provide funds to invest in startups after paying full tax on their incomes. Though, the importance of Indian investors is no less than foreign investors, however, they have been at the receiving end in terms of tax treatment. If we see the Indian Angel Individual Investor would pay tax at 20 percent (indexed) and a non-resident individual angel investor would pay tax at 10 percent un-indexed. Since, after indexing also Indian individual investors would end up paying more tax than the foreign individual angel investors. There are other ambiguities also with regard to relative tax treatment of Indian versus foreign individual investors, which put Indian investors at disadvantageous position.

Perhaps foreign investors were given concessions over Indian investors in order to woo foreigners. But today in the changed circumstances where investment from China is unwelcome, we can encourage Indian investment by applying the principle of equity in tax liability. The country will get many benefits from stopping Chinese investment and swapping the earlier investment. It will help retaining startups in Indian hands; stop outward migration of ideas and intellectual property; stop outflow of data and dent China's supremacy.

Making China Pay for its Deeds



In the name of cheap, we cannot put our country to hardships. After Corona, a challenge has come, which we can convert into an opportunity. And this effort of converting crisis into an opportunity is Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self Reliant India).

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan

Today, almost all countries around the world are battling the virus from China, which has so far infected more than 9 million people and has also killed half a million people. There is a belief in the world that China was researching this virus, in its laboratory, for its biological warfare designs, which suddenly leaked and spread through the city of Wuhan, China. Even if it is not a conspiracy of China, it is well known that China hid its spirit from the world and continued its air travel and spread the virus around the world. Due to this irresponsible behaviour of China, not only people around the world are facing a health crisis but they are also facing a terrible economic crisis because over the last 3

months, economic activities have almost stalled and it seems that the situation will not be normal before December of this year. So even though people from all over the world have generally postponed all purchases other than their essential requirements, the world still appears to be dependent on China for the purchase of some essential commodities. The reason for this is that in the last nearly two decades, since China became member of the WTO, it has captured markets globally with its cheap goods. America, Europe, Africa, Latin American countries are all dependent on Chinese goods, as their industries have been generally destroyed due to not being able to compete with cheap goods from China.

In such a situation, China is emerging as a superpower of the world compared to America. With trillions of dollars of foreign exchange reserves, it has started a mega project, namely, Belt Road Initiative (BRI), involving 67 countries, so that it can control the infrastructure over a large part of the world and could trap most of the countries under its debt. With designs to enhance its strategic power in the world, it has already started snatching away strategically significant territories from member countries of BRI. The capturing of Sri Lanka's Hambantota port is an example of China's nefarious designs.

China, meanwhile, has expanded its strategic power with the help of its economic power. The history of China so far has been of an expansionist, capturing of thousands of kilometers of land is the example. Since 2001, it has started expanding its expansionist designs even more rapidly. All its neighboring countries always remain apprehensive of China that it can forcefully stake its claim on their land at any point of time.

USA has already waged a trade war against China's fraudulent trade policy and is also expelling Chinese companies like Huawei from its telecom sector. After the Corona crisis, almost every country is moving away from China. Many European countries have also clearly expressed their displeasure by returning shipments of cheap and fake test kits back to China. Whereas, America's trade war

against China continues unabated, the countries of the European Community have also decided to impose special import duties on goods coming from China. They are apprehensive of act of China in subsidising its exports, which is causing damage to their industries.

It seems that China's belt road project is also going to fall into disarray. Significantly, China has built road and other infrastructure in the name of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK), despite the opposition from India, due to which India boycotted and protested the expansionist BRI. But despite that 67 countries had joined BRI. However, many of them have already realised the expansionist intentions of China and have started distancing themselves from BRI. Significantly, Malaysia has already considerably trimmed its project. The Sri Lankan people and government are very annoyed with China after losing of Hambantota port to China. The people and governments of many other countries are no longer enthusiastic to take that project forward. Many countries including Maldives, Mongolia, Montego, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos etc, have already been caught in China's debt trap.

Even European countries like Italy, which, despite opposition from the US, had previously participated in the Belt Road Plan, after getting exposed to Corona virus from Chinese workers coming from Wuhan, are now reconsidering its ties with BRI of China. Other countries, who were engaged with China economically, namely African countries, Latin American countries and Australia,

all are now unhappy with China. Australia's growing engagement with India has been worrying China. It can be said that countries all over the world, including India, are boycotting Chinese goods. Governments there are breaking ties with Chinese companies and are creating tariffs and non-tariff barriers to curb Chinese goods, and see China as a strategic threat, given China's expansionist attitude. We can also call such a situation a 'global boycott' of China.

Why question the success of boycott?

China is in deep trouble due to public anger, boycott and increasing opposition from the governments all over the globe. Writings of Chinese government's mouthpiece Global Times are pointing to this more clearly. There are still many people in India who believe that the boycott of China will not fructify, because we have extreme dependence on China. Our country's dependence on China, including mobile phones, electronics, active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), healthcare equipments, chemicals, metals, toys, components and raw materials for industries; is so high that China boycott is not possible, and ban on imports from China could be harmful to India's economy. They also say that even if a complete boycott of Chinese goods is done, it will not cause any harm to China, because its exports to India are only \$ 68.2 billion as against its global exports of \$ 2498 billion, which is only 2.7% of its total exports.

We have to understand that China enjoys a total trade surplus of \$ 50 billion from our country which is 11.6% of its total trade

surplus (\$ 430 billion). Also, let's not forget that the US has a trade deficit of \$ 360 billion, which is more than 83% of China's trade surplus. If both India and America join hands to shun Chinese imports, then all the trade surplus of China will vanish. So far as India's dependence on China's imports is concerned, it is not right to underestimate India's capability. Until 15 years ago 90 percent of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), the raw materials for pharmaceuticals were manufactured in India, but due to dumping by China, our API industry was ruined. To rebuild the same, the government has already announced a package of Rs 3000 crore. Many products coming from China are of Zero Technology, which can easily be started getting manufactured in India immediately.

Recently in just 2 months India has become self sufficient in many requirements including PPE Kits, Testing Kits and so far more than 50,000 ventilators have also been manufactured in India. India's talent and capability should not be doubted. It will not be prudent to take our procurement decisions solely on the basis of the price of products coming from China. Imports of products dumped by China have led to the collapse of manufacturing in India. We must consider the cost of cheap Chinese imports in terms of rising poverty, unemployment and destitute of the people. In the name of cheap, we cannot put our country to hardships. After Corona, a challenge has come, which we can convert into an opportunity. And this effort of converting crisis into an opportunity is Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self Reliant India). □□

Junk Jugaad, Innovate India



The goal of Make in India or Atmanirbhar Bharat can be concretized only on the foundation of products of world quality manufactured in India. For this India needs an innovative culture, mind set, and eco-system. Alas, it is sorely lacking. What prevails is the acceptance of jugaad – patchwork – technology. Better late than never, however. India needs to identify limited key sunrise sectors – artificial intelligence, blockchain, electric mobility, high value pharma etc. – in which it should attempt to leapfrog at global level so as to become a hub of creative destruction (to borrow a phrase from Schumpeter) and catapult in the category of developed nations. We should be able to research, develop, prototype, manufacture, and deliver world class products to cater to entire globe including the vastly untapped domestic economy. The Indian entrepreneur must get size and scale for this.

Alas, Indian govt. remains under ambitions and feeble hearted. To take one instance, the govt. is trying to move rapidly on Artificial Intelligence (AI) front.

Both start ups and established corporate are seeking to develop AI solution, in areas spanning from agriculture to armaments. Old economy entities are deploying the technology to improve product and processes for better delivery and satisfaction to end users. Having said that, however, the focus is on AI applications of incremented value addition kind, not on fundamental research. Even in that, the work pertains to improving existing solutions, and innovations already available with tech giants. The race for leadership in the field is between the US, China and EU. All of them have systematically planned to dominate the global AI scene, spending huge dollars on one hand and setting up the appropriate eco system on other. Indian govt. needs to think big and take a long term view.

Models of successful innovators from China and West would be instructive here. Chinese companies first adopted Silicon Valleys' technologies for Chinese consumption initially and then attempted to improve upon it. The Chinese routinely monitor which apps world over are successful, then duplicate them, and finally improve upon them. Silicon Valley itself works like that. Zoom, for example is an evolution and work in progress from WebEx, Skype, and Blue Jean. Most technically advanced companies first try to copy (steal ...) an innovation and if that does not work, then they buy. However, real success lies in what Schumpeter calls creative destruction. Apple cannibalises its own technology by repeatedly coming out with better version. An iPad replaces its own laptop. Be warned, however. We are not suggesting intellectual property theft itself which would lead to retaliation and legal action. Chinese companies are adept at it. Huawei is being accused of stealing from Cisco, Nokia That is why they are facing backlash worldwide.

Then Chinese blocked Google, Twitter, Netflix and many more, while-putting obstacles in the path of companies like uber so as to grow its own tech giants. Alibaba, Baidu, DJI, WeChat, and more raced ahead. Huawei is a real giant



An innovative economy is the key to unlocking growth potential and ride on an upward trajectory. Prerequisite for this in turn are first class human capital build up and supporting eco-system.

K.K. Srivastava

in 5G. Protectionism created a fertile ground for local start-ups to avoid foreign might, while the state provided them all enablers. Silicon Valley moghuls themselves are monopolies which gain an unfair competitive advantage by throwing money around. Copy or buy, is the mantra. India has been negligent both in providing support for meaningful innovation and establishing effective data protection policies. Taking advantage of it, the Western and Chinese innovators have explanted the Indian market to the hilt.

The Indian govt. has to minimize obsessive restrictions and provide enabling conducive environment to Indian companies; these should be encouraged and supported to become behemoths like Reliance Jio, Hero Motors and Bajaj have been able to hold on in an intensely competitive sector because they have significantly invested in R&D. When you don't invest, say, as in case of domestic cell phone market, the foreign marauders attack and take over. In 2015, Indian companies had 30 percent market share of domestic smart phone market; in 2019, less than 10 percent. Meanwhile the Chinese companies dominated the entire value chain, from basic technology to market channels.

In India a vicious circle exists. Higher R&D needs higher sales, but higher sales would require enhanced R&D. We must break it by establishing collaboration between industry and academia, as in the West and even China. Indian companies that cannot invest enough in R&D can internalize – recognize, assimilate, activate and marketize – the technology developed by academic and research scientists in

various institutions. Of course internal R&D would still remain relevant. Collaborative research projects can be set up both for nascent and well understood technologies for possibility of coming out with incremental and disruptive outcomes. What is needed is building up of seamless lab to market capability. A government can perform four roles, planning, producing, facilitating and controlling. In order that we are able to substitute imports and become globally competitive we need to understand certain ground realities. First, companies produce, the govt. should ideally only provide enabling environment and let companies attain size and scale. Second, don't scorn at monopolies – only they have the resources and muscle – like Reliance Jio, since they are the norms (Google, Amazon, Apple). A company initially attains monopoly domestically and then it takes size advantage globally. Chinese govt's support for Huawei, Alibaba and many more is illustrative. Third, the govt. should facilitate global entry of large domestic players by providing all kind of support - incentives, lobbying – abroad. That is how rest of the world has been doing business. And, finally, realize, that the Indian companies can become part of global supply chain only on the basis of needs of the buyer, and not on government prompting. In brief, govt. including at India, is not a creator but it can be a facilitator.

A strong edifice needs a solid foundation. This is where the most trouble lies. While Indian higher education has been constantly registering improvement in QS global rankings, two questions still hound us. First, while India initiat-

ed steps in technical education at same time as did Japan and China, the latter have paced much ahead. Quality of investment, administration, and the intellectual climate – all have to share the blame. The pursuit of pseudo-scientific theories about Indian knowledge (even in nuclear physics, and plastic surgery) can hardly provide stimulus to real innovations. Second, 7 Chinese universities figure among the top 50. India's IIT, Bombay stands at 172th position! Why? Partly this is because of lack of free flow of information. There exists a constrained universe of quality academic research on one hand and large incentive for brain drain on the other. India has a score of 0.32 (out of a maximum of 1) on Index of Academic Freedom. If India wishes to meet military might of China or beat China in global vending, then first it needs to rival it is R&D where it lags China by miles. India comes nowhere near Beijing in supply of globally competitive talent in areas of future import like AI, Internet of things, etc. To move ahead, India needs stepping up investment in education. But the telling fact is that whereas the tertiary gross enrolment ratio (GER) is over 50 percent for China, for India it is merely 28 percent; a decade back it was 20+ for both. Not only GER, the learning levels need to improve significantly. Sobering facts that these are dismally poor; nearly half the students in class V can read only class II text (in 2011); while only a third enrolled in class III could read a word in 2010, which fell to one in five in 2018.

Rhetorical shibboleths about innovative India have only created a chimera! Time to get real. □□

China's BRI trap

The unbearable tragedy at the Galwan Valley has little to do with territorial claims and is instead a distraction “with Chinese characteristics” to cover the fact that Chinese President Xi Jinping’s flagship project, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is floundering. At the National People’s Congress in May this year, Beijing announced a military budget of \$178.6 billion for 2020 and said it would grow by 6.6 per cent year-on-year, while foreign affairs spending was cut by 11.8 per cent. The military budget stood at \$175 billion in 2018 and \$177.5 billion in 2019. Helena Legarda, analyst at the Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS) mused, “Beijing clearly does not feel safe enough domestically or internationally to slow down its military buildup and modernisation, even at a time when the economy is suffering.”

China’s outstanding debt claims are estimated at \$5.5 trillion, that’s 40 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), according to the Institute of International Finance. The institute estimates that China’s debt-to-GDP ratio rose by 11 percentage points in 2019 and is now pegged at 317 per cent. It could be higher as the calculations do not include all categories of debt. Moreover, China’s reported GDP seems too high and the excess of liabilities over assets of China’s financial institutions has not been factored in.

Data for the first quarter of 2020 showed a hike in bad loans, defaults and delayed repayments as the Coronavirus hit the economy and first-quarter GDP shrank for the first time in China’s recorded history. The rise in defaults was despite lenders agreeing to delay \$124 billion in repayments from smaller companies. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicts the Chinese economy would grow only 1.2 per cent in 2020-21 as against 6.1 per cent in 2019-20. However, at the National People’s Congress in May 2020, Premier Li Keqiang said China



As its domestic strain increases, Beijing may turn more aggressive abroad to show that it is unperturbed by the pandemic or slowdown. That its chutzpah is unparalleled.
Sandhya Jain



would not set a target for GDP growth for 2020-21. He announced a stimulus of \$672.4 billion, which many considered inadequate but China cannot afford more debt.

China's economic slowdown began before the Coronavirus pandemic derailed the world economy. After the second Belt and Road Forum meeting in Beijing in April 2019, several Western think-tanks scrutinised BRI finances from public records and found an opaque web of reckless lending, restructured loans, renegotiated loans, debt forgiveness, refinancing and deferrals. Now, Zou Jiayi, Vice Minister at the Finance Ministry, who repeatedly warned about the debt risks from the project, has been asked to make the BRI "more manageable and financially practical." Observers expect it to be sharply downsized, with viable projects getting priority and the rest ignored. The objective is to somehow avoid a massive default.

The BRI has become fiscally unsustainable because China's policy banks gave huge loans to fragile States and then extended and even expanded credit lines. The Washington-based consultancy, RWR Advisory, notes that around \$461 billion has been given for transport and energy projects from the Horn of Africa to Central Asia from 2013 under the BRI umbrella.

China's total lending to African Governments, firms and State agencies is around seven per cent of its external debt, valued at \$2.06 trillion at the end of 2019 by China's State Administration of Foreign Exchange. Ernst & Young estimates that Chinese firms invested \$72.2 billion in Africa between 2014 and 2018. Herbert Poenisch,

former senior economist, Bank for International Settlements, put the total outstanding lending by Eximbank in all countries at \$285 billion. Hong Kong-based bankers believe that possibly the Government "does not know how much it is owed or by whom."

Lending slowed down even before the COVID-19 shock. Logan Wright, director of China markets research at Rhodium Group, reported that net outbound lending has been negative since 2019; lending by mainland policy banks to Africa dropped after peaking at \$29 billion in 2016. Commerce Ministry data showed that the number of overseas contracts signed by Chinese construction firms for BRI-related lending fell sharply in 2018, reflecting the growing unease in Beijing that the BRI was "way out of control." A Hong Kong banker said that by 2019, China had exhausted its ability to maintain the momentum. Beijing's solution to fund BRI by lending in renminbi did not work as most borrowers only wanted dollars.

This compelled China to increase its dollar-denominated external debt. The COVID pandemic put Beijing in the unenviable position of being asked to forgive some, or even all, of its loans. At the G20 in April 2020, China offered to freeze all debt repayments for the world's poorest countries until end-2020, the first time Beijing joined a global debt relief initiative. But it refused to include distressed loans disbursed by Eximbank or China Development Bank in the G20 programme. Analysts expect massive downscaling of the project. A few new and viable projects will be launched; the rest sidelined. Lending to Africa will be

tightly controlled, but gaps could be met by "new actors" such as technology firm Huawei.

The Coronavirus has made it impossible to ignore the warnings. The Bank for International Settlements warned in 2016 that excessive credit growth in China posed the risk of a banking crisis within three years. In December 2017, the IMF warned that China's growing debt-dependency could trigger a new global financial crisis as credit growth had outpaced GDP growth, corporate debt was 165 per cent of GDP and household debt had risen by 15 percentage points of GDP over the past five years.

Columnist Gordon G Chang believes that China's foreign exchange reserves could be less than claimed as there have been derivative transactions to hide the quantum of dollar selling to support the renminbi and stuffing of non-liquid investments into its reserves. The increased budget of the People's Liberation Army (officially by 6.6 per cent) is an extra burden though deft management has marginally increased foreign exchange reserves to \$3.09 trillion in April 2020 from \$3.06 trillion in March 2020.

As its domestic strain increases, Beijing may turn more aggressive abroad — Ladakh (India), South China Sea, near Taiwan — to show that it is unperturbed by the pandemic or slowdown. Itschutzpah is unparalleled. In June 2020, Naypitaw discovered to its chagrin that China is covertly building a Hong Kong-size city in Shwe Kokko fishing village in Kayin State, on the banks of Moei river, its border with Thailand. Possibly it would be used to leverage Myanmar debt at a future date. □□

(The author is a senior journalist. Views are personal)

G-12 must include respect for human rights, adherence to international law, multilateralism in trade and security

The loud thinking by United States President Donald Trump on the need to enlarge the membership of the Group of Seven (G-7), the club of “free market democracies”, is only the most recent of many such initiatives aimed at making an anachronism relevant to a changing world. Formed in 1976, the G-7 no longer dominate the global economy as they did at their founding. It was the French who first flew the kite of membership expansion when they invited heads of government of several “emerging economies” for a meeting of the group at Évian-les-Bains, France, in June 2003. The G-7 became the G-8 in 1997 when Russia was invited to join. In 2014, Russia was debarred after it took over Crimea.

After 2003, G-8 host countries began organising a meeting on the sidelines of their summits with a select group of five or six developing countries. India and China were invited to all those summits. President Trump has, however, gone a step further. Rather than invite “guests” to a G-7 summit, he has suggested expanding the G-7 to a G-10 or G-11. Trump has come up with an interesting list of new members – Australia, India, South Korea and, possibly, Russia. Trump’s pragmatism in including Russia should be welcomed. The advantage of getting Russia in is that the group would not be viewed merely as an anti-China gang-up but, in fact, as a club of “free market democracies”. The group could easily be made the G-12 with the inclusion of Indonesia – one of the few democratic nations in the Islamic world.

Trump’s motivation in expanding the G-7 to include India and Russia while keeping China out is transparent. If keeping China out was not the intention, the G-7 could easily have dissolved themselves and revitalised the presently inert G-



President Trump is not doing India a favour by wanting to invite it into the new group. As the world’s largest free market democracy India deserves to be a member of not just a G-12 but of even a new G-7.

Sanjaya Baru



20. There are, of course, good reasons why Xi Jinping's China requires to be put on notice for its various acts of omission and commission and disrespect for international law. However, disciplining China is one thing, isolating it quite another. If the new group is viewed as yet another arrow in the China containment quiver it would place India and most other members of the group in a spot. Everyone wants China disciplined, few would like to be seen seeking its isolation. Asia needs a law-abiding China, not a sullen China.

Even Japan and Australia, which have serious concerns about China's behaviour, may not like the new group to be viewed purely as an anti-China gang-up. That may well be the case with South Korea too. Indeed, even India should tread cautiously. It has more issues with China than most others in the group, spanning across economic and national security issues and yet it should seek a disciplined China, not an isolated one.

What this means is that the proposed new group should define its agenda in terms that would encourage China to return to the pre-Xi era of global good behaviour. The G-7 came into being in the mid-1970s against the background of shocks to the global financial and energy markets. The G-12 would come into being against the background of a global economic crisis and the disruption to global trade caused both by protectionism and a pandemic. The two items on the next summit agenda would have to be the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the rising tide of protectionism and mercantilism and the global economic slowdown.

To be able to alter China's behaviour without isolating it, the G-12 will have to widen their agenda, go beyond the purely economic issues that the G-7 originally focused on, and include climate change, health care and human rights.

The summit will have to come forward with some international dos and don'ts to deal with the challenge posed by these disruptions.

These new rules of international conduct would have to apply to both China and the US. The G-12 — and I do think it would make sense to include Indonesia — have a shared interest in ensuring that both China and the US respect international law and desist from unilateralism in dealing with neighbours and global challenges. To be able to alter China's behaviour without isolating it, the G-12 will have to widen their agenda, go beyond the purely economic issues that the G-7 originally focused on, and include climate change, health care and human rights.

In identifying themselves as "free market democracies" the G-12 must issue a new charter of respect for human rights, adherence to international law and multilateralism in trade and security. This is easier said than done. President Trump will have to re-assure the group's members that he has their combined interests at heart in proposing a new

group and has an imagination beyond just an "America First" policy. Even as the world is increasingly wary of an assertive China and of Xi Jinping's China Dream and his version of a "China First" policy, it is also wary of Trump's unilateralism on many fronts.

While many countries share Trump's displeasure with China for its manipulation of the World Health Organisation, many of them are equally unhappy with the manner in which the Trump administration has treated the World Trade Organisation. A G-12 cannot ignore such partisan behaviour by either the US or China. If Trump does issue an invitation to the three or four new members to join the new group, they should seek clarity on the terms of membership. Russia's experience, of being invited and then disinvited and now being considered for being re-invited should be a salutary message to all others invitees.

President Trump is not doing India a favour by wanting to invite it into the new group. As the world's largest free market democracy India deserves to be a member of not just a G-12 but of even a new G-7. India's political and economic credentials are certainly stronger than those of Canada, Britain and Italy. Indeed, Russia, Australia, South Korea and even Indonesia may regard themselves as natural choices for membership of an expanded G-7. In other words, Trump is not doing the new members a favour. He is, like the French before him, only coming to terms with the reality of a new world order. □□

This article first appeared in the print edition on June 5 under the title "An agenda for a G-12".

The writer is a policy analyst and former media advisor to Prime Minister of India.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/an-agenda-for-a-g-12-donald-trump-china-6443045/>

'Business and war cannot go side by side'

The Swadeshi Jaagran Manch has been relentlessly fighting a battle against Chinese products flooding the Indian market.

The SJM has now asked all Indians to boycott Chinese products as a tribute to the 20 Indian Army soldiers who were murdered by China's People's Liberation Army on Monday night.

"Just because we are a democracy it does not mean that we can't hit them back when they hit us," Professor Ashwani Mahajan, the SJM's co-convenor, tells Rediff.com's Shobha Warrior. The first of a two-part interview:

You have asked people to boycott Chinese products as a tribute to the slain soldiers. Should you be mixing business with what is happening at the border?

Business and war cannot go side by side. That is a simple principle.

We have been asking for a boycott of Chinese goods because you have to do it when a country is aggressive on your borders, when a country is aligning with your enemies by helping international terrorists and building infrastructure on your land against your wishes. I mean the China Pakistan Economic Corridor in PoK. There is one more reason now, and that is economics.

In 2001, when China became a member of the WTO (World Trade Organisation), exports to China was \$1 billion and the trade deficit with China was \$0.2 billion. Because of the obsession of past governments and because of China's status as the most favoured nation after joining WTO, Chinese products kept getting dumped in India.

Our governments did not heed the rising unemployment because of that. They kept saying we want to increase manufacturing from 17% to 18% to 25% of GDP, and only such a change can create jobs.

The rhetoric continued, but they did not pay any attention to the real problem which was, China was dumping goods.

By 2017-2018, the trade deficit with China rose to \$53 billion. Now, it is \$48.6 billion and for that you can pat my back!

We at the SJM have been doing awareness programmes all over India and even sensitising the government. The government has now imposed anti-dumping duties on 140 items. This shows our call worked. This also shows we have the capacity to produce goods for our market. When imports came down, our production increased.

You have asked people to boycott Chinese products. What about those Chinese companies that have manufacturing units in India, especially mobile phones, where the employees are Indians?

The quantum of employment they generate is much less than the quantum of unemployment they generate by dumping goods in the Indian market. Because of the dumping of cheap Chinese goods, Indian manufacturing has suffered, and many Indians lost their jobs.

Moreover, those who have come here are doing so to save tax and are not doing any value addition here; just 5%. They were importing 95% of the components to India and only 5% is made here. That is why we say: 'Don't come and Make in India; let us make in India.' Our slogan is Made by India and not Make in India.

You have urged the government not to allow Chinese firms to participate in tenders. When it is an open tender, how can you ban some companies from participating in it?

When they can continue with their autocracy, why not? Do you know Indian firms are not allowed in the telecom or infrastructure sector in China?

But India is a democracy.

Just because we are a democracy it does not mean that we can't hit them back when they hit us.

There is always a reciprocity clause and we have been invoking the clause in telecom and some other areas, but minimally.

Now it is time to completely boycott the Chinese because of the way they treat us.

Why are you saying we should treat them nicely? It is true we have been treating them nicely, welcoming their investments, welcoming their leaders, wel-

coming their goods. Yes, we have been welcoming everything. See, what they are doing on the border.

Are you trying to strike an emotional chord with people when you ask them to boycott Chinese products as a tribute to the soldiers who lost their lives?

Had it been an emotional appeal, it would have started only yesterday. Our efforts started several years ago. We have just added one more reason to the list of reasons we have been giving. This will give a greater appeal to people at a time like this. When we first started opposing China, around 30% to 40% of people were with us. They accepted our appeal and were sensitised about everything that China was doing and how they were impacting our economy. After the coronavirus pandemic, 90% of the people were with us.

Now, with this action of China on our border, 100% of the people are with us. Have you met anyone who said 'I will not boycott Chinese products'?

People of India have become more swadeshi than the Swadeshi Jaagran Manch! Now, people are telling us, 'Do this, do that, don't allow this, don't allow that...'

What has happened on our borders is very unfortunate. But that is a tactic of China to deflect the real issues.

There is anti-China sentiment all over the world. India is trying to use the situation by inviting businesses based in China to set up their business in India.

Do you think China is peeved with this and business is the real reason behind what is happening on the border?

China is in the habit of doing it.

This time, I think China has gone crazy about what is happening on the economic front.

They thought they were a manufacturing hub and wanted to be an infrastructure giant by capturing the land of different countries.

They are creating infrastructure in many African countries, in Sri Lanka, in Pakistan, in Malaysia and putting them in their clutches.

They were conquering country after country this way, and suddenly they find country after country opposing them and criticising them.

They are facing the backlash of not only people all around the world, but governments too.

Many governments were asking their companies to relocate from China. Many companies have written to India that they want to shift their base to India.

<https://www.rediff.com/business/interview/why-indians-must-boycott-chinese-products/20200620.htm>

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Jaivik Bharat

Referring to the food problem India faced as a result of the extractive “Lagaan” based agriculture of British Colonialism which killed 2 million during the Great Bengal Famine of 1942, and had killed 60 million during a few centuries of British Rule, on 10th June 1947 at a prayer meeting Gandhi had said - *“The first lesson we must learn is of self-help and self reliance. If we assimilated this lesson we shall at once free ourselves from disastrous dependence on foreign countries and ultimate bankruptcy. This is not said in arrogance but as a matter of fact. We are not a small place, dependent for this food supply upon outside help. We are a subcontinent, a nation of nearly 400 million (now 1.3 billion). We are a country of mighty rivers and a rich variety of agricultural land, with inexhaustible cattle wealth ...”*

After Independence we became food self reliant through shifting from extractive agriculture that created famines and poverty to a regenerative agriculture that repaired the broken nutrient and water cycles and guaranteed fair incomes to farmers and fair food to all, focusing on “food first” policies instead of the colonial policies of priority for cash crops and raw material for industry.

At a program on Regeneration of Indian Agriculture on 27th Sept 1951 KM Munshi, told the state Directors of Agriculture that the diversity of India’s soils, crops and climates had to be taken into account in making plans. The need to plan from the bottom, to consider every village and sometimes every individual field was considered essential for the regeneration of Indian Agriculture KM Munshi said – *“Study the Life’s Cycle in the village under your charge in both its aspects-hydrological and nutritional. Find out where the cycle has been disturbed and estimate the steps necessary for restoring it ... Nothing is too mean and nothing too difficult for the person who believes that the restoration of life’s cycle is not only essential for freedom and happiness of India but is essential for her very existence”*



*Towards a Self
Reliant
(Atmanirbhar),
Seed Sovereign,
Food Sovereign
India Through
Regenerative
Agriculture (Jaivik
Kheti) and local,
circular, solidarity,
economies.*

Dr. Vandana Shiva



This process of regenerating nature's cycles and our food and agriculture self reliance was eroded by the chemical driven Green Revolution and the corporate driven Globalisation and so called "free trade". We are being recolonized again.

Background: *How the Green Revolution and Industrialisation and Globalisation of Food and Agriculture has contributed to the crisis of livelihoods, hunger and disease.*

The Green Revolution model of energy intensive, water intensive and chemical intensive agriculture undid the gains of the post independence policies of regeneration, and has degraded the soil and the land, destroyed biodiversity, created a water crisis and contributed to climate change and chronic diseases.

Chemical agriculture combined with globalization of food and agriculture since 1991 has led to a shift from staple foods to commodity crops and raw material for the industrial food processing industry, which are perishable. Farmers dependence on costly corporate seed and agrichemical inputs has increased, and falling prices of commodities has trapped farmers in debt, eroded their seed sovereignty and food sovereignty. It has contributed to the agrarian crisis.

Pseudo-productivity: *A recipe for displacement of farmers, destruction of livelihoods and creation of hunger and malnutrition.*

Farmers were turned into refugees on their land by industrialised farming propelled by neo liberal globalisation that incentivised agriculture led by agribusiness corporations. "Productivity" was manipulated to drive farmers off the land and also create the illusion that



80% urban workers lost jobs and started an exodus back to the villages.

we were producing more food and reducing hunger. When Productivity takes chemical capital, chemical and energy inputs into account, industrial agriculture is in fact a negative economy because it uses 10 units of energy to produce one unit of energy as food. In the pseudo productivity calculus, instead of taking into account the high costs of chemical, energy and water inputs, productivity is measured falsely by treating human beings as "inputs" instead of recognising that human beings are cocreators who take care of the land and the well being of society is the outcome of any economic activity. Displacement of farmers is tautologically built into this definition of pseudo productivity of industrial agriculture.

When productivity takes chemical capital, chemical and energy inputs into account, industrial agriculture is in fact a negative economy because it uses 10 units of energy to produce one unit of energy as food.

Pseudo productivity is creating an ecological crises, an unemployment crisis, and a hunger and malnutrition crisis.

The farmers who had been displaced from farming and gone to cities as agrarian refugees, are

now returning to their villages as a result of the corona lock down. It is inappropriate to call them "migrant labour" because they are Indian citizens, and have the freedom to move to any part of the country. They are displaced workers .

According to 2011 Census of India, there were as many as 48.2 crore workers in India. Of these, only 3.3 crore are in the formal sector. Of the rest who are in the unorganised/informal sectors, constituting 93% of the total workforce, 11.9 crores are farmers, 14.4 crores landless agricultural workers, and 21.9 crore non-agricultural workers.

80% urban workers lost jobs and started an exodus back to the villages. The working people who are the foundation of our economy were treated as throw away people, even criminalised and made victims of police brutality.

(<https://www.thehindu.com/data/data-80-of-urban-workers-lost-jobs-during-coronavirus-lockdown-survey/article31569572.ece>)

The hunger crisis has grown as millions have lost livelihoods and work.

Hunger and malnutrition is also structurally designed into the industrialised, globalised food system which is destroying the small farms which produce 70% of the food globally while using only 25%

India will be Atma Nirbhar when our farmers are Atma Nirbhar, the land sovereignty, seed sovereignty, knowledge sovereignty and economic sovereignty of farmers is protected, and no one goes hungry.

of the land. In India our entire food system is based on small farms. Small farms are more productive because they are based on care for the biodiversity and for the land, they are based on deep knowledge and multiple intelligences of farmers. Pseudo productivity also becomes an illegitimate instrument of land grab. Since 1991 Structural adjustment, an attempt has been made to grab the land of small farmers through contract farming or changing the land acquisition act. Seed Sovereignty and Land Sovereignty is the foundation for Food Sovereignty. India will be *Atma Nirbhar* when our farmers are *Atma Nirbhar*, the land sovereignty, seed sovereignty, knowledge sovereignty and economic sovereignty of farmers is protected, and no one goes hungry.

The agrarian crisis in India is deep, as is the malnutrition crisis. We have lost 400,000 farmers to suicide. India has the largest number of hungry people in the world. In the 2019 **Global Hunger Index**, India ranks 102nd out of 117 qualifying countries. Millions of children die every year due to malnutrition. Of the 1.04 million under-five deaths in India in 2017, over 7 lakh (706,000) can be attributed to malnutrition, reveals findings of India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative's report.

Corporations and billionaires are now talking of Digital Agri-

culture and "farming without farmers" as the next step of increasing productivity and efficiency. This will increase the degradation of the land, the crisis of hunger, the crisis of work, the crisis of knowledge, and deepen dependence on external inputs, with data as the new oil added to the dependence on costly seeds, chemicals and machines. The industrial agriculture system cleverly and deliberately hides its intensive use of fossil fuel and toxic chemicals which are contributing to 50% of the Green house gas emissions leading to climate change, and also driving the crisis of extinction.

Agribusiness controlled Industrial food systems & the health emergency

A resource wasteful, inefficient and greed driven food and agriculture model is constantly occupying new lands, specially forests, while local, productive farms are laid waste by the unfair rules of free trade.

Science tells us that 70 % of the new epidemics, including Corona, HIV, Ebola, influenza, MERS, SARS, have jumped from animals to humans. This is an outcome of resource intensive land hungry industrial agriculture built on destruction of ecosystems. Constant expansion without limits is built into an agribusiness model which grows commodities like

GMO soya in the Amazon and palmoil in the Indonesian rainforests. 90% of the GMO soya is used for bio-fuel and animal feed. This commodity producing system is not a food and agriculture system. Agriculture is care for the land. And food is supposed to nourish us. Industrial farms based on monocultures of plants and animals, facilitate the spread of diseases, and emergence of new disease epidemics. Besides, industrialised food is closely associated with the spread of non-communicable chronic diseases.

The destruction of local, bio-diverse food systems and artisanal processing, increasing dependence on imports of industrial food, and increase in industrially processed food in the diet has contributed to both the crisis of unemployment and the chronic disease crisis. The Health Minister acknowledged that 73% of the deaths due to Covid was due to comorbidity, in other words, pre existing chronic diseases, most of which are related to toxics in the environment and unhealthy industrial food.

With the disruption of agriculture, distribution systems, retail systems, livelihood systems, if no radical steps are taken, we are starting at future famines. The Health emergency could become a Food Emergency.

Post Covid Recovery for a Living Future: Return to the land, Return to our home, to the earth, to "oikos"

Ecology and economy both have their roots in the word "oikos" which means home. Knowledge of the home is ecology. Taking care of the home on the basis of knowledge of ecology is economy.



We now have to reimagine our local economies and rural economies that put the regeneration of the earth, of livelihoods, of health at the heart of a Post Covid economy.

The dominant model of the economy no longer has its roots in ecology, but exists outside and above ecology, disrupting the ecological systems and processes that support life in the natural and social world. The unchecked conquest of resources is pushing species to extinction and has led ecosystems to collapse, while causing irreversible climate disasters.

Similarly, economy, which is part of society, has been placed outside and above society, beyond democratic control. Ethical values, cultural values, spiritual values, values of care and co-operation have all been sidelined by the extractive logic of the global market that seeks only profit. Competition leaves no room for cooperation. More and more people are excluded from the economy, both in terms of livelihoods and in terms of basic needs.

A post Corona recovery needs a shift to healthy food and agricultural systems that respect nature and biodiversity, so we will avoid future pandemics, that maximise health and nutrition per acre, that maximise the return to farmers through circular economies of real, healthy, fresh food and do not focus on commodity production

and cash crops as raw material for industrial processing. Circular economies intensify livelihoods in rural areas, thus regenerating local economies.

A Post Covid just and sustainable recovery programme needs to regenerate soil, water, biodiversity, protect people's livelihoods, and create new livelihood opportunities while addressing the prevailing extensive health, hunger and malnutrition crisis. We cannot return to the "normal" like before the Corona pandemic, for those political and economic systems do not work for and with the earth, and are based on weakening the status of farmers, and destroying livelihoods and creating hunger. If there is any time to make the shift, it is now. We need to now shift to an earth friendly, farmer friendly, people friendly, food and agriculture system if we want to prevent the deepening of the current agrarian and hunger crisis, the health crisis and the livelihood crisis.

We now have to reimagine our local economies and rural economies that put the regeneration of the earth, of livelihoods, of health at the heart of a Post Covid economy.

Let us shift from linear extrac-

tive economies which exploit the earth and people, to local circular, solidarity economies which regenerate nature and society and create wealth and well being for all, meeting everyone's basic needs by rejuvenation of the Earth. Let us shift from the false definition of productivity which does not assess the resource and energy intensive inputs in industrial systems, and treats only labour as an input, contributing to ecological destruction and unemployment, towards true cost ecological accounting that takes the full ecological footprint into account, and creates meaningful work for all. This involves a shift from fossil fuel intensive, energy intensive models of production, to labour intensive economies of care, so no hands are wasted, and the rich human energy India is endowed with can renew society and regenerate the earth, her biodiversity, her productive capacity to support the needs of all. Let us take a pledge to regenerate local economies and local production and consumption through organic farming and artisanal, hand crafted products that are fossil fuel free, poison free and create opportunities for work for those rendered unemployed.

Let us boycott the MNC seed companies, chemical companies, junk food industry and the e-commerce giants like Amazon. Let us sow the seeds of a new India which is free of hunger, disease, unemployment and modern day colonialism. The path to a Self Reliant, Atma Nirbhar Bharat is paved with self reliant local living economies and self reliant communities, Swaraj.

[to be continued ...]

Why India Needs a Stronger Essential Commodities Act

As agribusinesses celebrate the removal of pulses, oilseeds, cereals, etc from the purview of the Essential Commodities Act (ECA), Indian farmers and consumers may not be so jubilant. The government's advisors, in an attempt to bring more "agri-dollars" to India, may have misled it and opened the doors for cartelisation of these commodities, while dismantling consumers' and farmers' only defence against unfair monopolies.

For evidence, we need to look no further than 2015, when Modi Government 1.0 was completing one year in office and the prices of pulses had skyrocketed. Retail prices of Tur/Arhar had climbed to hit over Rs. 200 a kilo in October 2015. After the Income Tax Department investigated the matter, the Rs. 2.5 lakh crore dal scam was unearthed.

A 2,000-page investigation by the Income Tax department, known as the "Appraisal Report in the Case of Pulse Importers and Traders Group" said, "The abnormal price situation in India was created by a coordinated collusive activity orchestrated by few trading and financial entities." The report found that "physical stocks of pulses [were] cornered in domestic and international markets. Significant long positions on the future were taken on exchanges to create an artificial scarcity at the whole sale and retail levels."

International agribusiness and grain traders had shrewdly circumvented the Essential Commodities Act, leveraging their overseas presence and created a monopoly by "procuring and hoarding stocks of pulses in national as well as overseas markets". They manipulated domestic prices to plummet so that they gain the maximum possible from their dal stocks bought at low prices. The



Government must keep all seeds for sowing under ECA purview and strengthen this law.

Indra Shekhar Singh



super profit earned in this manner was not offered to tax and siphoned off either abroad or converted into unaccounted cash through entry operators. Finally, the treacherous agri-commodity giants got a taste of Indian dals.

It was then that the government, using the ECA, raided and seized over 70,000 metric tonnes (MT) of pulses from hoarders and traders and broke the cartel. The entire supply chain was complicit and in fact the Income Tax department investigated the NCDEX too, for their role in aiding this crisis.

The feat was managed by the involvement of international agri-business, local suppliers and traders, and agri-commodity brokers at the NCDEX. But the government's advisors are perhaps once bitten yet still not twice shy, and hence they have removed all the barriers to stocking limits etc. So the dal scam can now legally repeat itself, or rather operate, and even past crimes can be absolved.

The curious case of cotton seed

Cotton is not only a fibrous cash crop but also now an oilseed. Many have raised bio-safety concerns on GMO Bt Cotton seed being blended freely into our edible oils, nevertheless the demand for cotton seed oil is ever-growing. Much like pulses, oilseeds were removed from ECA too. It is almost expected that the government will deregulate cotton seed as well, as it is also an oilseed.

Interestingly enough, the Modi government has had a tryst with Bt cotton monopoly too, where it used the same Essential Commodities Act to prevent unfair business practices and to control the prices

The abnormal price situation in India was created by a coordinated collusive activity orchestrated by few trading and financial entities.

of cotton seed. This happened in 2015 and it was done because illegal "trait value" was being charged. The farmers quoting the PPVFRA (or Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority) demanded that the government step in to stop this. As a result, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) had even started an anti-trust investigation into it. The cotton seed sector was valued at Rs. 24.86 billion in India in 2016.

The ECA had repeatedly come to the aid of the Indian government, legal traders, farmers and consumers. Of late, it helped break the cotton seed and dal cartels. However, the safeguard measures of emergency control laid out by the government in the ordinance for protecting different stakeholders is not strong enough.

What the government should do is, first, keep all seeds for sowing under the purview of the ECA and second add clauses to strengthen this law. India's cotton farmers are already highly indebted and 84% of farmers' suicides are reported from the cotton-farming belts. No illegal trait fees, royalties, and so on, should be charged and cotton seed should remain under the ECA.

Next, the government needs to study the dal scam and IT department's findings in the Appraisal

Report. We need to bring pulses and oilseeds back under the ECA. By deregulation, we are blindly copying the United States' post World War-II agricultural policy, which has failed for American farmers and led to the creation of agri-commodity giants. The liberalisation of farm-gate has destroyed farmers not just in the United States, but in Mexico, Brazil, and in each country that has walked the United States line. Indian farmers will be the biggest losers.

And the consumers won't be far behind either. Once farmers are under control, as we have seen in the United States, consumers gradually feel the burn of such deregulation too. American consumers have experienced the sharpest food inflation as a result of the consolidation by agri-business and trade. India will be no different.

The Modi government must tread carefully and learn from its own experience with the dal and cotton seed scams. And before dismantling the ECA the government must revisit the history of the East India Company, which was the world's first agri-business trans-national corporation. For what lies ahead is best described by its own Income Tax department's report: "...a sad commentary on tax compliance behaviour of a global giant who fleeced poor Indian consumers through monopolistic trades and robbed off the exchequer of its legitimate dues. Indulging in unethical, illegal and money laundering activities, [the] Glencore-led cartel seriously threatened the economic security of the country." □□

The author is director, policy and outreach, National Seed Association of India. The views are personal.
<https://www.newslife.in/Essential-Commodities-Act-Modi-Govt-Dal-Scam-Agriculture>

Enable migrant workers to return

The main reason for outward migration is the mismatch between geography and population. For example, the construction of the Bhakra Dam led to an increase in the area under irrigation in Punjab and to a higher demand for labour. Thus, large numbers of agricultural workers are migrating from Bihar, Jharkhand and UP to Punjab; and industrial workers are migrating to Surat. Same situation is leading to migration of agricultural labour from Tamil Nadu to Kerala. The same reason holds true internationally, for example, in the migration of nurses from Kerala to Italy. The second cause of migration is the poor state of governance in the home states. Today, an industrialist from Bihar establishes a power loom unit in Surat and employs workers from Bihar. The same industrialist and workers are unable to work together in Bihar. The cost of raw materials and electricity and price of finished cloth is almost same in the two areas. The cost of labour is also less in Bihar. Yet industrialists are fleeing from Bihar. The reason is that the politics of Bihar sees them as “exploiters.” The politicians extract “blood money” and bureaucracy wants grease money at every step. Perhaps Bihar can improve its governance yet the mismatch between geography and population will remain and migration will continue.

The consequence of outward preventing migration, that is, preventing the return of migrant workers to their host states, will be that the host states will make increasing use of automatic machines such as harvesters in agriculture and robots in industries. This will lead to less demand for labour in the economy both in Punjab and Gujarat and nationally. The reduction in demand for labour in Surat will stabilize the wage rates in Surat and this stability will overflow into Bihar and prevent increase in wages in Bihar as well. Another consequence will be that the cost of labour in Kerala, Punjab and Surat will increase due to less in-migration. The cost of production of pepper in Kerala and cloth in Surat will increase and we will price ourselves out of the global market. That will harm our econo-



Advantage of the return migrant workers to host states would keep the wages states and cost of production of pepper in Kerala and cloth in Surat under central enabling us to compete in global market.

Dr. Bharat Jhunjunwala



my. Therefore, we should consciously encourage migration.

The Mumbai-based International Institute of Population Studies has, however, recommended to the Government that efforts must be made to readjust and reintegrate the returning migrant workers in their home states. They should be provided with food under the Public Distribution Program (PDS), employment under MNREGA and health and education facilities at par with the host states, it has said. I think this would be counterproductive because such a policy would lead to increase in use of robots and increase in the cost of production in the host states and harm the welfare of all our citizens. Further, there will be a huge mismatch in the skills of the returning workers and demand in the home states. Say, a worker has the skill of repairing power looms. Not only he would not like to carry mud under MNREGA in Darbhanga, such an employment will be downgrading his productivity and such reintegration will be regressive. There are limits to employment of these workers in agriculture as well. It is seen at a global level that the share of income and employment in agriculture declines along with economic growth. Less than one percent of workers are employed in agriculture in the industrial countries today. About 80 percent of our citizens were dependent on agriculture at the time of Independence. This is down to 20 percent today. Therefore, it will not be possible to absorb the large numbers of returning workers in agriculture. A caveat is that we could yet absorb them in agriculture if we are able to develop niche agricultural prod-

The economies of the host states will face a permanent setback if industries close due to unavailability of workers; and the job opportunities for our workers will decline if they start using robots.

ucts like tulips of Netherlands, olives of Italy, wine of France, oranges of Florida, walnuts of Washington, pepper of Kerala and coffee of Karnataka for the home states of Bihar, Jharkhand and UP. However, this will require deep efforts at research the results of which are uncertain and will take time to arise, if at all. Another negative impact of retaining migrant workers will be that the governments of the home states will be burdened by additional expenditures on PDS, MNREGA, health and education. That will lead to a reduction in the capital expenditures such as on the construction of village roads and further push down their already struggling rates of growth. For these reasons we must make urgent efforts to send back the returning workers to their host states. The economies of the host states will face a permanent setback if industries close due to unavailability of workers; and the job opportunities for our workers will decline if they start using robots. Time is short to repair the imminent permanent damage just as a damaged limb has to be imputed fast to prevent gangrene from spreading through the body.

The Government must take

three steps immediately. One, a new law should be enacted and the migrant workers should be assured that in case of any lockdown being imposed in future, the Union Government will pay them day-to-day sustenance money. They may be required to register for this purpose. This should not be left to the whims and fancies of the employers or the state governments. Two, the governments of the home states should introspect as to why their industrialists and workers—both migrate to Surat and work together there instead of working together in their home states? These states have to honour the businesspersons instead of exploiting them. My ancestors were living at Luharu in Rajasthan. The Princely Ruler of Malsisar visited and implored them to settle in his village and undertake trade. My family sold seeds and bought the produce from the farmers and helped develop that village. Such honour and respect must be given by these home states to the businesspersons. These states must work closely with the State Chambers of Commerce and identify the corrupt politicians and bureaucrats and take punitive action against them. This will entail confronting their own party men which will require taking the people into confidence and building a public pressure against such crooks. Three, the Union Government must establish a mission to identify and develop hi-value crops suitable for each district or, at least, division of these states along the lines of tulips of Netherlands. This will generate some incomes for the workers in their home states without harming the national economy. □□

Formerly Professor of Economics at IIM Bengaluru

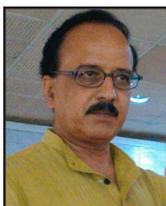
A case to make MSP legal right of farmers

It was in 2003 that the heads of state of four west and central African countries — Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali — wrote a joint proposal to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) asking for scrapping the massive cotton subsidy support being given in the US/EU, which depresses global prices. At the same time, in a signed letter published in the New York Times, these leaders had said: “Your subsidies kill our farmers.” An international uproar erupted, and it virtually led to the collapse of the Cancun WTO Ministerial Conference.

This particular incident, in many ways historic, is an important lesson to learn from in the context of the ongoing debate on whether the Minimum Support Price (MSP) being paid to farmers is much higher compared to the international prices. Also, it allows us to understand that there is nothing sacrosanct about the international prices.

As the West African challenge to the rich developed countries on the contentious issue of cotton subsidies clearly demonstrated how easily market prices were manipulated, hitting the livelihoods of farmers in another part of the world.

Several studies, among them from Oxfam International, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the Catholic social justice organisation, CIDSE, had analysed the issue in depth. Accordingly, the US had spent \$14.8 billion in just four years, between 1998 and 2002, to subsidise a cotton crop valued at \$21.6 billion. Some other news reports showed how, in addition, the US provided a subsidy of \$1.7 billion every year to the textile industry to buy the subsidised cotton.



If the US, EU, Canada and other big players can subsidise exports of agricultural commodities or export at prices which are actually below the cost of production, why should Indian farmers be penalised for it? International prices should, therefore, not be treated as a benchmark for fixing MSP for domestic farmers.
Devinder Sharma



This brought down the global prices, pushing cotton farmers in west Africa to suffer economic losses.

If these cotton subsidies were to be removed, studies showed that nearly 25,000 cotton growers in the US (at that time) would have incurred an average loss of \$871 per acre. On the other hand, imagine the economic loss for the four west African countries (better known as Cotton 4) which had only four per cent of the global cotton area but relied heavily on exports.

Lower international prices meant lower price realisation for the African cotton growers. What impact the artificially low international prices had on cotton growers from the developing and least developing countries is provided by another World Bank study which worked out that a 40 per cent drop in cotton prices leads to a 21 per cent reduction in farm income. Drop in farm income, in turn, results in a 20 per cent rise in poverty.

Subsequently, in a case filed by Brazil against the US cotton subsidies, the WTO Dispute Panel in 2005 did acknowledge that some of the cotton subsidies indeed reduced global prices.

In another interesting study, Sophia Murphy and Karen Hansen-Kuhn of the non-profit Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) had worked out the cost of 'dumping' agricultural commodities on the global markets for five major crops America exported — wheat, corn, soybean, rice and cotton. This interesting research project, initiated by Mark Ritchie, IATP's founder, has certainly made a significant contribution in understanding how 'dumping' influences global trade.

Accordingly, in 2017, the US was dumping wheat at an export price that was 38 per cent less than its cost of production. Similarly, cotton was exported at a price that was 12 per cent less (despite the west African challenge), corn at nine per cent, and soybean at four per cent less. The authors also observed a consistent pattern that America followed in dumping these commodities for over two and a half decades, barring a few years in between.

Whatever be the 'dumping' size, what emerges clear is the role that these subsidies, often hidden, have on lowering international prices. In 2018, the OECD countries, comprising the richest trading block, provided agricultural subsidies to the tune of \$246 billion. Along with unfair trade practices, these subsidies have always played a significant role in protecting developed country farmers against price volatilities, cotton being a classic case.

More recently, another IATP study entitled *Milking the Planet* explains how in a bid to remain competitive, European dairy corporations are dumping cheap dairy products and, in turn, pushing small dairy farms out of business in developing countries. Along with EU, the US too has been heavily subsidising milk and milk products. In a joint representation before the WTO in 2017, India and China have said that dairy (and also sugar) continues to be in receipt of a high product-specific support in America for over a decade.

Similarly, the EU provides a product-specific subsidy support of 71 per cent of the value for its production for butter and 67 per cent for skimmed milk powder

(SMP), thereby pulling down global prices.

How the FOB (free on board) prices actually hide the massive subsidies is better illustrated by a careful look at the wheat subsidies being provided in America. As per the non-profit, Environmental Working Group (EWG), the US has given a subsidy of \$47.8 billion to wheat growers between 1995 and 2019 (there are 29 heads under which these subsidies on wheat were given, a few of these may have discontinued now). These subsidies actually encourage overproduction, thereby reducing market prices.

The big trading agencies gain in the process. Also, what needs to be understood is that if markets were offering a higher price to wheat growers in America, I see no reason why the US should have provided such a huge subsidy support to wheat growers over the years.

If the US/EU/Canada and other big players can subsidise exports of agricultural commodities or export at prices which are actually below the cost of production, why should Indian farmers be penalised for it? International prices should, therefore, not be treated as a benchmark for fixing MSP for domestic farmers.

India must ensure that regardless of the global prices, domestic farm incomes grow in the same proportion as other sections of the society. To begin with, make MSP a legal right for farmers, as the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACPC) had earlier recommended. Follow this up with direct income support to fill the income shortfalls so as to realise the dream of Atmanirbhar Bharat. □□

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/a-case-to-make-msp-legal-right-of-farmers-102423/>

Reforms in agriculture marketing

For a very long time, reforms in agriculture marketing have been debated, but no decisive action had been taken. It required leadership and political will to unshackle the farmers from the vice like grip of intermediaries who take away a large slice of farmer's income by resorting to cartelization and unfair arbitrage. Two landmark Ordinances were recently promulgated by the President of India, which have the potential to fundamentally transform the agriculture sector and facilitate more holistic development of agriculture markets, from farm to fork, furthering the Government's vision of doubling farmer income by 2022. Aim is to help farmer become an entrepreneur rather than being subservient to unholy nexus of regulated markets and intermediaries.

The first of these Ordinances, The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion & Facilitation) Ordinance 2020, provides freedom to farmers to sell when they want, where they want and in whichever market they want, which was restricted by stringent (and variable) APMC regulations. There were previously four key restrictions for farmers – location of market (restricted to the nearest geographic market), number of buyers (limited to licensed traders leading to cartelization, restricting competition and reducing farmer price realization), infrastructure availability (due to lack of private investment outside the mandi) and price transparency (limited visibility of inter-state prices, potential for intermediaries to gain through arbitrage at the cost of farmers). In addition to these restriction, farmers face multiple operational challenges including prohibitive transportation costs to the nearest market, long queues at market and delays in auction, local mafia raj, etc. Further, the choice of APMC mandi and procurement at MSP, will continue uninterrupted. Finally, in order to protect the interest of farm-



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Kailash Choudhary



ers, the government has mandated an expedient and simple dispute resolution process.

With the new Ordinance in place, a vibrant ecosystem will be created for farmers and traders creating an unrestricted market with 3 key benefits –

First, choice of market, allowing a farmer to sell in any state or national market that offers the best prices. This will limit the high dependence on local traders and enable farmers to realize the best prices for their produce, without having to pay commissions and fees to middlemen. A competitive marketplace will be created with large number of buyers leading to higher price realization for farmers.

Second, choice of place, allowing farmer to sell from any location – including farmgate, storage points like warehouses or silos, private mandis or the APMC markets. With the option to sell at farmgate or warehouse, farmers can reduce transportation overheads and improve net realization in addition to sidestepping the challenges faced in current markets.

Third, choice of timing, allowing farmer to store produce and sell post price discovery. Previously, farmers would have to transport their produce to the mandi, incurring significant transportation costs. This would result in a need to sell irrespective of prices, in order to avoid incurring a reverse transportation cost. Under the new Ordinance, a farmer can store and sell, due to choice to market and place.

While historically there has been limited investment in infrastructure along the value chain, in order to support smooth implementation of the Ordinance the

Government of India has announced an Agri Infra Fund of Rs. 1 lac crore. The fund will catalyze otherwise stagnant investment from cooperatives, FPOs and private sector to facilitate creation of physical infrastructure like assaying and grading facilities, cold chain etc., allowing farmers to store and sell, and reduce wastage or distress sales.

While the first Ordinance facilitates better price realization post-harvest, the second Ordinance, The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance 2020, enables

The lack of a legal framework for contracting between farmer and buyer in India has historically led to limited private sector participation in production.

market linkages at the sowing stage, thereby limiting both production risk and price risk.

The lack of a legal framework for contracting between farmer and buyer in India has historically led to limited private sector participation in production. This Ordinance provides a uniform framework for private investment in markets, without challenging a farmer's ownership rights or right to cultivation – which will provide farmers three benefits.

First, risk mitigation and greater predictability of income. Farmers will have the option to enter into agreements with buyers before sowing, securing the price

for their sale. Further, they may be able to enter into agreements that protect them from harvest losses as well, thereby insuring against output risk. This provides greater certainty for farmers in scenarios where either the crop output or market prices are highly variable, but enables them to grow risky crops and benefit from the upside.

Second, access to market intelligence and hence higher value per acreage. With limited forward linkages, farmers don't have access to consumer demand trends and hence, are not able to optimize crop and varietal mix. This Ordinance will enable stronger linkage with both domestic and export markets.

Third, access to better technology and knowhow for farm management and hence, higher yield. As private sector will now have framework to better integrate with farming practices, they can channel expertise to farmers as well as make direct technology investments (e.g. geo monitoring setups, IoT, etc.) driving higher yield and promoting sustainable agriculture over long term.

Beyond the benefits, this Ordinance also safeguards farmers by providing clear guidance and support to enter into fair trade practices, a stringent dispute resolution mechanism, penalties for misconduct by buyers, etc.

Collectively, these reforms will herald a new dawn for agriculture in India, transforming farmers into vibrant producers, integrated with the national and global economy, who have freedom, choice, higher price realization for their produce and security of livelihood. □□

(The author is Minister of State for Agriculture & Farmer's Welfare)
<https://www.dailyexcelsior.com/reforms-in-agriculture-marketing/>

PM Modi Helped Lockdown Become A People's Movement

In 1918, India was beset by an influenza pandemic which lasted till 1920. The disease affected individuals between the age of 20 and 40 in particular - the Ganga, it was stated, was swollen with dead bodies (Suryakant Tripathi, the famed poet). In its aftermath, the pandemic killed over 14-17 million (~5% of the population), the highest in the world. India's population actually fell in the decade between 1911 and 1921.

In March 2020, India was faced with grave predictions about the COVID-19 outbreak - It was even predicted that India would see ~60% of its population (700-800 million people) getting infected in the near term in the worst-case scenario. While ICMR officials were more circumspect, the centre took necessary action by pushing for a "hard" lockdown (notably the most stringent in the world) of the entire country in March 2020. For any country, pursuing such stringency was a hard ask - India clearly attempted this to provide a window to build up healthcare capacity (across beds, PPEs, testing kits). The lockdown was fairly successful in creating space for policy measures to build up state capacity to deal with a long struggle with the disease - even now, we are at ~1 million confirmed cases (with ~342,000 active cases, of which ~1.94% are in ICU; Ministry of Health, July 2020) basis existing testing capacity.

It is important to note that the outbreak has seen significant recoveries too in India - the number of recovered COVID-19 patients exceeded the number of active cases by ~3lakh on July 19, 2020, reaching a total of ~6.77 lakh patients



The Modi government has shown leadership in handling an unprecedented crisis, with India doing better so far than certain other countries, despite the challenges of our large population, high density and poverty. Under this leadership, India will overcome this virus and rise again.
Feroze Varun Gandhi



recovering (a recovery rate of ~62.86 by that date). This, in the Ministry of Health's words, has been due to "effective clinical management of the moderate and severe cases through a well-executed standard of care protocol has ensured high rate of recovery among the COVID patients". Meanwhile, testing infrastructure has also been ramped up significantly - ~3,58,127 samples were tested on July 18, 2020, with a cumulative total of 1,37,91,869 samples tested so far (effectively a rate of 9994.1 tests per million). The diagnostic lab network has also been significantly expanded, reaching 1,262 labs, of which 889 are in the government sector.

We must also note the response by the Centre and various states in terms of implementing the lockdown. India notably issued ~4,000+ notifications over the ~60 day period of the lockdown. Under the Prime Minister's direction, much of this was to enable the creation, from scratch, of a system to keep citizens indoors while keeping them well-supplied for essential goods. This was an activity without precedent - nothing in independent India's history showcases a government response to enable the country to survive, amidst a pandemic, and then move back towards economic vitality. However, under Prime Minister Modi's direction, both the centre and the states showed alacrity in responding to a rapidly-changing situation. After an initial focus on understanding the scale of the pandemic, the Centre quickly changed tack to emphasise greater production of PPEs. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister's exhortations also made this into a people's move-



The US and UK faced challenges from recalcitrant citizens, India showcased unity for this purpose across its urban and rural landscape.

ment - without buy-in from a willing and motivated public, no nation could have stayed at home for ~2 months. While the US and UK faced challenges from recalcitrant citizens, India showcased unity for this purpose across its urban and rural landscape. Motivated by the Prime Minister's regular speeches, this nation stood as one during the initial grim days.

Consider PPEs. In January 2020, when the COVID-19 outbreak occurred in India, there was very limited capacity for producing PPEs (including N95 masks) in India, with most products actually imported (Ghosh, Kamalika, Mon-

ey Control, Jul 2020). The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) constituted an empowered group of officials on January 30 to enable the availability of such medical equipment. Since then, India's domestic production of PPEs has ramped up significantly - by May 2020, for an order of ~22 million PPEs from the Government of India, domestic producers were able to fulfil 14.2 million PPEs from ~111 manufacturers. The industry has scaled up significantly, with an estimated turnover of ~7000 Cr. While in March 2020, India was producing ~3,000 PPEs daily, by June 2020, India was producing 700,000 - 800,000 PPEs on a daily basis. Now, India is even exporting PPEs in various categories.

Even on the vaccine front, India shows potential. Zydus Cadila is currently planning to complete late-stage trials for its COVID-19 vaccine candidate by March 2021, with a push to producing 100 million doses annually, if successful. Bharat Biotech, in collaboration with the National Institute of Virology and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), has a vaccine candidate, Covaxin, which has now been approved for Phase

I and II human clinical trials - trials have already begun in Hyderabad. The government is making all efforts to fast-track these vaccines (in line with clinical trial procedures) with fast regulatory clearances. Meanwhile, Indian firms have been encouraged to tie-up with key research institutes conducting clinical trials with a push for sharing our vaccine-manufacturing capacity to produce vaccines for the world. The Serum Institute of India (SII) has tied up with Oxford University and AstraZeneca for a licensing arrangement to manufacture an

pending), and perhaps reduce the fatality of the disease in India. This public-private partnership is the key to ensuring access to a vaccine for most Indians within the next year.

The danger is not yet past - it will continue. Localised outbreaks will continue, even more so, at a state level. With health a state subject in the constitution of India, the post-lockdown containment initiatives by various state governments have shown varied effectiveness. Consider the case of Delhi - its Deputy Chief Minister highlighted in late June that Delhi could

the model that the world at large is increasingly adopting. The UK has announced measures to open up its public areas and loosen restrictions, while pursuing a strategy that seeks to contain localised outbreaks - the UK's health secretary, Matt Hancock, stated "Each week, there are more than 100 local actions taken across the country - some of these will make the news but many more are swiftly and silently dealt with". The COVID-19 outbreak will not be resolved by a silver bullet solution (for e.g. a simple drug or a vac-



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experimental COVID-19 vaccine which is in Phase II trials - the firm already has manufacturing capacity to produce 500 million doses of vaccines in a year. India's regulatory authorities have partnered with the firm in expanding its manufacturing capacity, which will help to smoothen out procedural road-blocks.

Meanwhile, with backing from the Department of Biotechnology, SII has pushed for developing recombinant Tuberculosis Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine shots; this could potentially improve the innate ability of Indians to fight the disease (trials

reach 550,000 cases by July 31. Fortunately, the Centre stepped in at a timely point to assist the state government - the state's containment zone strategy was revamped, with contact-tracing activities strengthened. Meanwhile, support was provided in expanding the state's bed capacity with the launch of the largest COVID-19 care centre. Credit should be given where it is due - the Home Minister Shri Amit Shah's timely intervention may have saved the day for the capital.

While India's current strategy may sound opportunistic in nature, a whack-a-mole tactic, this is in fact

cine) - we are now in the new normal, where countries usurp the entire supply of relevant drugs (e.g. Remdesivir and the United States). This will be a prolonged struggle where the internal resilience of a country and its government will matter. The Modi government has shown leadership in handling an unprecedented crisis, with India doing better so far than certain other countries, despite the challenges of our large population, high density and poverty. Under this leadership, India will overcome this virus and rise again. □□

(Feroze Varun Gandhi is a member of the BJP and a three-time member of parliament.)
<https://www.ndtv.com/opinion/pm-modi-helped-lockdown-become-a-peoples-movement-2266187>

Historical background to the Bishnoi Movement

Environment and ecology played a crucial role in delaying the territorial and political integration of western Rajasthan in the medieval times. Desert and aridity limited economic viability to sustain large regional states. While the Bhati state of Jaisalmer did not emerge before the thirteenth century,” the Rathaur states of Jodhpur and Bikaner emerged only in the fifteenth century. Prior to political and territorial unification accomplished by the Rathours (in which horses played an important role, western Rajasthan was being ruled by chiefs of different Rajput clans controlling very small areas in the desert. An examination of the inscriptions of the Bhatias of Jaisalmer, and Rathores of Jodhpur and Bikaner clearly indicates that agriculture was a scarce economic activity (mostly seasonal) and the socio economic bases were trade (mainly long-distance interregional trade) and pastoral activities. The important trade routes between northern India (Gangetic plains and Delhi-Agra grid) and Lahore, Multan and Sindh passed through northern and western Rajasthan.” These were supplemented by artisanal activities.

However, the pastoralists led a semi-nomadic life owing to scarcity of fodder and water in the desert. They had to seasonally migrate to the fertile plains of Sindh with their flock (trans humane). The semi-nomadic nature of the pastoral economy imposed severe restrictions on the resource base of the emerging regional states in the fifteenth century: A study of Nainsi-RiKhyât reveals that raids, particularly cattle raids, formed an important part of the economic base of the small chieftainship, in western Rajasthan in the pre-Rathaur period (Mohil Chauhans of Mohilvati, SankhlaParmar, Bhatias of Pugal). The emergence of Rathaur states created pressure on the pastoralists to contribute to the revenue-base of the government. The Bishnoi religion and their philosophy of conservation of natural resources of the desert-vegetation (particularly khejri trees, the life line of desert), cattle-wealth and water, and thus helping in economic resources and sedentarizing the semi-nomadic pastoralists-facilitated the processes of regional state formation in medieval western Rajasthan. Bishnoi encouragement towards conservation and agricultural activities within the climatic and spatial limits of desert-villages brought royal patronage to the Bishnoi saints and their ideology.

Bishnoi philosophy of conservation of vegetation and movement for environmental protection

The Bishnoi movement had a wide following in the desert community of western Rajasthan in the medieval period. Its philosophical and socio-economic content enjoyed popularity among the local population of Rajputs, Jats and Rabaris or Raikas (the caste of camel breeders) because it made a significant difference to their life. The Bishnoi concern for environmental protection ensured improvement in the living conditions of the desert community. This concern assumed significant proportion against the background of the famine of AD 1450-1485 and 1490 in western Rajasthan followed by those of 1742-1747, 1792, 1796, 1804, 1812-16, 1837-8, 1866-9, 1890-2, 1898-1900, 1901-2 and 1938-9. Bikaner



*Bishnoi
Philosophy of
Western Rajasthan
offered a
sustainable
economy to
the society of Thar
Desert through
conservation of
vegetation, cattle
and water
resources in
historic times.*
**Prof. Nandini
Sinha Kapur**



region witnessed a series of famines in 1834, 1849, 1860, 1868-9, 1889-92 and 1899. The fact that the Bishnois of Rajasthan and Haryana are a living culture today, despite the recurrent famines indicates the continuing relevance and contemporaneity of the philosophy and teachings of the medieval saints.

- Following Jambhoji's preaching, Vilhoji widened the scope for conservation of nature by highlighting the environmental and economic importance of vegetation, particularly the khejri tree.

The Bishnois were not only inspired to sacrifice their lives for the protection of cattle but also for the preservation of trees. Vilhoji warned his disciples that they would go to hell if they did not demonstrate kindness towards trees." He instructed his disciples to plant the right kinds of trees which would bear nectar-like and not poison-like fruits. He compared truth and falsity with two types of trees: sweet and salty. Vilhoji narrated the story of Jambhoji disciple Karamni who sacrificed her life in 1604 for the protection of khejri trees-the lifeline of the desert as the trees can survive severe drought conditions. Shivani and Netu are two other heroes who laid down their lives for saving trees.

Their accounts assert that if trees are not protected then gurudharma (teachings of Jambhoji)

would be disrespected.

Bhati Rajput are condemned for felling trees and another Jambhoji follower Mote gave up his life fighting against these Bhatias. Glorification of these martyrs is sought as hero Netu attains heaven and immortality. Jambhoji seat Sambharthal is hailed because it abounds in forests and is inhabited by devout pastoralists. Jambhoji wandered in these forests but never cut any for wood." He only picked up broken twigs to light fires. Jambhoji encouraged his followers to grow mangoes out of thorny desert oaks. Among his miracles, the story of conversion of lime trees into coconut trees continues to be popular among his disciples. When human beings and animals seek shelter in the shadows of trees, they get respite from heat.

Interestingly, Vilhoji laments that trees shed their leaves as soon as they are surrounded by human beings and animals." This is a clear indication of the Bishnoi preference for conservation of vegetation.

Water resources & agriculture

Vilhoji popularized conservation of the other scarce item of the desert: water. Conservation of water was not only to meet the daily needs of a desert society but also for agricultural activities.

According to Vilhoji, when rain comes, cows get green grass to

eat and water to drink. Hence, water is the foundation for good quality of milk and not any hymn or mantra. It was imperative to conserve rainwater at the local level both for drinking purposes and pastoral activities. Vilhoji prayed to Devji (Jambhoji) to bestow kindness on earth by sending rain-bearing clouds.

It is significant that the need for water and water-conservation were sanctified though such comparisons as 'Water can exist without fish but fish cannot survive without water, just like guru Jambhoji does not need his disciples as much as his disciples need him. When it rains, cattle grow up healthy and give plenty of milk.'" Milch cows graze on green grass that only grows after 5.36 rains." Good quality fodder like bagru and chandler grass (also used in kitchens) too grow only if it rains. To sanctify the most scarce resource of the desert, water is claimed to be the sacred Bangan-ga of the Puranic traditions.

The need for generation and conservation of water perhaps was the most important factor in the cultivation of grains for the sustenance of the local population. The Bishnoi concern for agricultural activities to meet the local requirements are evident in Vilhoji's narrative of the famine of 1542 in Katha Guggalki. The famine was so terrible that the starved population began to migrate elsewhere in search of livelihood. When Jambhoji attempted to stop the people from migrating, they petitioned that if their daily requirement of 1.25 maunds of grain were arranged for, they would not migrate in search of livelihood." Jambhoji promised them daily their food through divine intervention. □□

Report on Swadeshi Warriors: Meetings and Trends



The Swadeshi Warriors is a group of people on social media platform having a strong belief in the philosophy of Swadeshi. The objective of the warriors is to support and expand the reach of the ideas of Swadeshi Jagran Manch using twitter platform. The aim is to prioritize and to bring to the notice of the policymakers and the general public about the issues of concern of SJM. Till 13 July 2020, the group has promoted 7 trends. Two meetings of the warriors have been arranged with the central leadership of the SJM.

The first meeting of Swadeshi Warriors happened on 21 June 2020 from 6 PM onwards. The meeting was coordinated by Pooja Madan and Govind Tripathi and was moderated by Phool Chand. It was addressed by Kashmiri Lal and Dr. Ashwani Mahajan. Kashmiri Lal welcomed the new members and thanked them for their active participation and updated them with the role of Swadeshi Jagran Manch in nation-building. Ashwani Mahajan talked in detail about the issues which the nation and the world are facing and the necessity to follow the Swadeshi economic policies in all the domains of life. All the participants were very enthusiastic about the meeting. The attendance of the meeting was about 28.

The second meeting of Swadeshi Warriors happened on 5 July 2020 from 4 PM to 6: 45 PM and it was coordinated by Pooja Madan and Govind Tripathi. The meeting was chaired and moderated by Phool Chand. In this meeting, all the participants received sufficient time to speak and talk among themselves.

The focus of the meeting was to understand SJM and its role in nation-building. The audience were updated with the thoughts of Dattopant Thengadi Jee and suggested to read the book titled Third Way. The participants discussed in detail about strategies to be followed and developed for twitter trends. Participants were encouraged to choose their area of interest and highlight the issues if it goes against the concerns of Swadeshi philosophy. All participants of the meeting agreed that all the warriors should live Swadeshi and promote Swadeshi wherever they are, and whenever the occasion arises. The attendance of the meeting was about 20.

The latest trend happened on 12 July 2020 from 6 PM onwards. The topic was: "Ban Cancer Causing Glyphosate". The best rank attained by this trend was 29 in twitter trends across India. The #चाइना मुक्त स्वदेशी भारत trend happened on 28 June 2020 from 5 PM onwards. This trend had more than 15500 tweets and the best rank attained was 30 in twitter trends across India. The #Swadeshi_digital_signature trend happened on 10 June 2020 from 5 PM onwards. Despite having little more than 7000 tweets, this trend managed to attain the best rank of 25 in twitter trends across India. The #VocalForLocal_Swadeshi was performed on 17 May 2020 from 5 PM onwards and with more than 12000 tweets its best rank attained in twitter trends was 15. The trend on #पोखरण स्वावलंबन का संकल्प was done on 11 May 2020 from 3:45 PM onwards which had more than 15000 tweets and attained the best rank of 22 at the national level among twitter trends. The #Swadeshi_Self_Reliance was performed on 9 May 2020 from 5 PM onwards and with more than 7000 tweets it attained the best rank of 16 at the national level among the twitter trends. The first trend happened on 25 April 2020 from 6 PM onwards on topic #स्वदेशी संकल्प दिवस and it also managed to trend successfully.

The Warriors are committed to increase their strength and add new people to the fraternity. □□

SJM says attempts to cut imports from China are visible



Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM), the organisation that is at the forefront of the call to end India's dependence on Chinese imports by strengthening local manufacturing, says India has already demonstrated that it is capable of cutting down imports from China.

"It is true that today there is too much dependence on Chinese imports. But this is equally true that in the last couple of years, there has been some reduction in imports from China," Ashwani Mahajan, National Co-Convener of SJM points out.

Mahajan's logic is that there has been \$8 billion fall in the import of electrical and electronic items from China in 2018-19. It declined further by another \$1.5 in 2019-20, he notes. Interestingly, the import of iron and steel from China also declined by 12.3 per cent in 2018-19 and further by 22 per cent in 2019-20. The import from China of organic chemicals declined by 7.3 per cent and fertilisers by 11.4 percent in 2019-20. Overall, in last two years, imports from China came down from \$76.4 billion in 2017-18 to \$65.3 billion in 2019-20.

"Imports from China, which were rising in leaps and bounds earlier have shown a significant downward trend due to anti-dumping duties on Chinese products, hikes in tariff rates on goods where our dependence on China is more, and imposition of non-tariff barriers by way of standards. Due to this, production of all these items has also increased in the country," Mahajan argues.

The flipside is that India still imported \$65.3 billion worth of goods from China in 2019-20. Electronics, telecom equipment, chemicals, steel and other metals, machinery and parts etc continue to come from China. Further, a reduction in imports from

China in itself will remain less meaningful unless alternate routes of Chinese products, Hong Kong for instance, are plugged. A general decline in demand could have also contributed to the reduction in imports, though to a lesser extent.

As part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Atma Nirbhar call, India is now attempting to encourage production of electronic items and basic chemicals that go as ingredients into the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals. The success of these initiatives will have a long-term impact on Indian imports from China.

<https://www.businesstoday.in/current/economy-politics/rss-affiliate-says-attempts-to-cut-imports-from-china-are-visible/story/410001.html>

SJM welcome banning of 59 Chinese apps

After the Indian government's decision to ban 59 Chinese apps for 'engaging in activities which are prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of state and public order', the traders' body Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) and Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) have welcomed the move.



SJM said "We would like to thank government as they realised the sentiment of people of the country and banned Chinese apps. Swadeshi Jagran Manch has been demanding for a long time that a strong step should be taken against China. We would like to say that our country will give a befitting reply to China. We all shall continue our pledge to boycott Chinese goods."

CAIT said, "We thank PM Modi on the decision to ban 59 Chinese apps. We have been campaigning against Chinese goods and this has come up as a big boost for that campaign. We also request that the central government should terminate all the contracts

with Chinese companies.”

SJM and CAIT have been staging a protest for banning of Chinese products in India after 20 Indian soldiers got martyred in clashes at Galwan Valley. A protest has been going on throughout the country echoing the chorus for a ban on Chinese Goods in India. CAIT, on June 29 wrote a letter to Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and demanded that all products which are sold in India through e-commerce or offline shops should mandatorily have the country of origin and content of value addition in the said item.

<https://www.timesnownews.com/india/article/traders-body-cait-swadeshi-jagran-manch-welcome-banning-of-59-chinese-apps/614069>

SJM activists burn Chinese products in Delhi



Swadeshi Jagran Manch burnt Chinese products in East Delhi’s Laxmi Nagar in a protest against killing of Indian soldiers in a violent face-off with troops of the neighbouring country in Galwan Valley last week.

“This protest is a symbolic homage to the martyrs and we appeal the people to boycott Made in China items, we want to hit China economically to make it realise that it will not be spared by Indians for killing our soldiers while earning money through its goods,” SJM said.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/swadeshi-jagran-manch-activists-burn-chinese-products-in-east-delhi-120062800021_1.html

SJM gets support from over 13 lakh people for its boycott Chinese goods campaign

Swadeshi Jagran Manch’s (SJM) digital signature campaign aimed at supporting Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’ vision and boycotting of Chinese goods has received over 13 lakh signatures so far. The campaign, which is a part of the SJM’s Swadeshi Swavlamban Abhiyan (Swadeshi Self-

Reliance Campaign), was launched on 25 May. People can join the campaign by clicking on this link.

“Swadeshi Swavlamban Abhiyan was started on 20 May 2020. Under this, we started an exercise for digital signatures, with people taking the pledge to boycott Chinese goods. Until now, more than 13 lakh signatures have been received and the number is fast rising,” said SJM.

“On an average in the past few days, we have been getting one lakh signatures every day,” he added.

The tagline of the campaign is ‘Swadeshi Sweekar, Chinese Bahishkar, Swavalambi Bharat, Bhavishya Ka Aadhar’.

“This would be a true tribute to those who died while working tirelessly for the country. Boycott Chinese goods completely. This is what a true patriot will do – become part of the campaign,” according to a campaign leaflet. Talking about the campaign, Mahajan said the objective is to arouse awakening and commitment for swadeshi and self-reliance.

“Self-reliance would be achieved by rejuvenating indigenous industry, including small scale industries, small businesses, artisans, rural industries including food processing industry and other non-farm activities with an aim to generate inclusive growth with impetus on employment,” SJM said.

The government has already imposed restrictions on Chinese investments by making it mandatory to seek approval first.

“After that, several restrictions have been imposed on imports from China, tenders by Chinese companies are being cancelled in big numbers and a few days ago, 59 Chinese apps were banned with immediate effect,” SJM added.

Last week, senior RSS leader Suresh Bhaiyyaji Joshi had said boycotting Chinese products is a natural reaction as swadeshi feeling is developing fast. He also pointed out this is a good opportunity for India



to fulfil Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' vision.

Last month, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) had condemned the Chinese "military aggression" along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh and decided to step up its nationwide campaign to boycott Chinese goods.

Following the violent face-off with Chinese soldiers in Eastern Ladakh that resulted in the death of 20 Indian soldiers in Galwan, the CAIT gave a call to boycott 450 broad categories of commodities, which have over 3,000 Chinese products.

<https://theprint.in/india/rss-affiliate-gets-support-from-over-13-lakh-people-for-its-boycott-chinese-goods-campaign/455612/>

Atmanirbhar Bharat's development will be women-centric

Senior BJP leader and Member of Parliament from Sirsa in Haryana, Sunita Duggal, said that women-centric development will guide the Atmanirbhar Bharat and added that the MSME sector will race ahead through schemes announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Duggal was speaking at the webinar "Atmanirbhar Bharat, and People's participation", jointly organised by Swadeshi Jagaran Manch, Kerala, and the Centre for Policy and Development Studies. "Through women-centric and agriculture-based programmes, the Indian economy will grow. People should be more self-reliant and lead the country to become self-reliant. Solar energy offers huge potential, one example of which is Abu Dhabi in the UAE," said Duggal.



Former Union Minister P.C. Thomas opined that only through people's participation will the Prime Minister's dream for Atmanirbhar Bharat become a reality.

"Indian entrepreneurs are capable of bringing out excellent apps to replace Chinese ones banned by

the government of India. The MSME sector will gain heavily owing to the Modi government's policy of providing collateral security to the loans taken by the entrepreneurs. All expect that there will be a major surge in the agriculture sector owing to the government policies," said the former minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government.

Swadeshi Jagaran Manch national convener Ramamritham Sundaram said that the PM's call for "Vocal for Local" was the idea relentlessly campaigned by the SJM and pointed out that they had conducted a year-long campaign across the country against import and use of Chinese products as well as Chinese incursions in the economic sector.

<https://www.outlookindia.com/newscrawl/atmanirbhar-bharats-development-will-be-women-centric-bjp-mp/1886465>

Let our venture capitalists swap investment made by China in Indian startups: SJM

Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM) urged the Indian venture capitalists and industrialists to come forward and swap the Chinese investment in companies like Paytm.

According to SJM national co-convenor Ashwani Mahajan, this is the only logical way to show Chinese investment in Indian startup an exit door.

The investment that has been made by China in India is only 6 billion dollars in comparison to our foreign exchange reserves which stands at 500 billion dollars, he explained.

"We should not worry at all. I want to request venture capitalists to kick out Chinese firms, swap the investment and take over their companies. It's a golden opportunity for India's venture capitalists and industrialists to establish our hegemony and kick out China," SJM suggested. Responding to questions being asked by the Opposition on limiting actions against China to banning apps, Mahajan said, "We are cancelling Chinese orders and tenders. I would request venture capitalists to come forward and swap the Chinese investment from these countries. I am getting feelers that they are ready to do that."

Speaking to ANI, he said that the Opposition attempts at belittling the government's move to ban 59 Chinese apps is unfortunate. The Opposition criticism of banning the Chinese apps by calling it "symbolic" is no less feat, said Mahajan. He asked the opposition why it did not talk about not allowing Huawei in 5G trials or Chinese companies participating in



tenders and flooding its apps posing a national threat.

“There is great consensus between the Congress, the Communist Party of China and the Communist Party of India. These political parties should rise to the occasion. I want to ask why did you not oppose TikTok or Chinese investment. Why are you creating an environment that China is a superpower and that we should not upset it? We need to protect our industries first,” he said.

The national co-convenor of the SJM also urged the Central government to stop Huawei from participating in 5G trials. Huawei has been designated as a national threat by the Federation Communications Commission of the United States.

“The UK is withdrawing its approval from Huawei. The UK and the US don’t share borders with China, we do. Despite this, they are cautious and kicking them out. It is unfortunate that Huawei is getting a chance, but it is not too late,” Mahajan added.

<https://www.newkerala.com/news/2020/117406.htm>

For long-term gains one should be prepared for momentary discomfort: SJM

Amid reports of customs authorities at Indian ports conducting extra scrutiny and holding consignments from China much to the worry of Indian traders, Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) has said “for long-term gains, one needs to be prepared for some momentary discomfort”.

Talking to The Tribune, SJM, said, “The pain will be momentary but will lead to long-term favourable situation and gains for the country.”

“Besides, the government has not said it will not allow any Chinese imports. It only wants to help Indian manufacturers to produce more,” SJM said.

There was a bit of a controversy when follow-

ing a representation that imported agriculture equipment consignments were delayed at ports Minister for Road Transports and Highways, Shipping and MSMEs Nitin Gadkari wrote to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Commerce and Industries Minister Piyush Goyal, seeking early clearance of consignments.

Later Gadkari said there was “no arbitrary stopping of goods” at Indian ports and the government was initiating path-breaking reforms to help MSMEs and businesses and make the country self-reliant.

SJM added that his concerns over stopping of goods at Indian ports were “purely context specific” and that he was among the strongest proponents of ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’.

According to SJM, the Narendra Modi government is moving in the right direction through the self-reliant India plan and the decision to hold on shipments was also correct.

“There has to be 100 per cent check on all aspects if India has to reduce dependence on Chinese goods, which are not just ruining the Indian industry



but are also cheating consumers by way of their inferior quality,” SJM said

“One part is increased dependence on Chinese goods, the second is complaints against the Chinese that they evade taxes through under-invoicing and misrepresentation,” SJM said.

“Many times the marking/details on the cover of the shipment is different from what it actually contains. All this requires thorough investigation. Many things cannot be investigated if it is life as usual,” SJM added.

“It is not impossible to displace Chinese goods. The government has also not said it will not allow Chinese goods. It only wants to help Indian manufacturers produce more and make India self-reliant. There will be a proper policy on imports. For now, holding

shipments is essential otherwise no one will know what has been happening till now,” SJM pointed.

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/for-long-term-gains-one-should-be-prepared-for-momentary-discomfort-swadeshi-jagran-manch-107163>

‘Cheeni Kum’: Womennovator

Amid the current anti-Chinese sentiment triggered by the Sino-India border tension and talks of an import substitution policy and when the world is suffering from a deadly pandemic, India plans to convert this crisis into an opportunity and strengthen its fight-back by becoming Aatmanirbhar.

In order to follow the vision of self reliant India, Womennovator (Gvriksh) organized an interactive webinar on ‘Why Say No to China, Cheeni Kum: Chinese Free India Movement’ on 12th July at 7 PM.

The event was honoured by Sh. Satish Kumar, Rashtriya Vichar Vibhag Pramukh, Swadesh Jagran Manch (SJM).



Founder of Womennovator, on banning of Chinese Products, said “Whenever there is a talk on giving up Chinese Products, it should be given adequate thoughts.”

As proud Indians, one often wonders how he/she can be a part of this movement and contribute to the efforts of our soldiers on Border. As per Mrs. Somani, “For starters, one must be aware of all the items around and checking everything starting from one’s daily consumables to household items is a time-consuming process. Add to that, checking whether the product is Chinese or not while procuring them, add to the woes.”

Requesting the Government, Mrs. Somani said, “It will be a great aid to the common man, if a list with the names of all imported items can be made public, especially the ones imported from China, which in her opinion won’t be difficult, as the database is

already prepared on all the ports for everything that comes and leaves the country.”

Guest of Honor, Shri Satish Kumar, mentioned that the Swadeshi Jagran Manch launched Swadeshi Rashtriya Suraksha Abhiyan in 2017 which focusing on India-China trade deficit, before Doklam issue. The consequence is lack of employment. Presently, there is anti China sentiment all across the world. The killing of our 20 army men in Galwan adds to the problem. This gives us all the more reason to stop trade with China.

“We should not only Cheeni Kum, but do Cheeni bandh,” he said.

Major (Gen) G. D. Bakshi, a speaker at the event, said, “We cannot trust the dragon especially after regular intrusion of Chinese Army in the Indian Territory through Arunachal, Leh and Sikkim, Latest being Galwan valley in Ladakh. In the present scenario, Indian troops hold an advantage over their counterparts. But with that, the economic pushback is also required. Galwan should not be the only reason to stop trade with China, we shall do it irrespective of it. They earn profits from us, taking away our jobs, Chinese goods have led to shutting down of many small-scale industries in India and such retaliation is necessary. And with the Government showing the intent, we as citizens of India shall extend our support in cutting off Chinese Goods.”

Srikanth Kondapalli, Professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University spoke about China’s trade, investment and market interactions with India have come under sharp focus recently.

“Due to the 1988 policy, we will develop bilateral relations in fields other than resolving territorial dispute led to burgeoning trade but in favour of China. Every year, china had over \$50 to 60 billion in surplus trade over India. Secondly, China restricted trade imports from India by non-tariff barriers. In terms of Power Sector, we have requirements, if we want to grow around (7 - 8) percent of GDP growth rate, we need to have installed capacity of 1,30,000 Mega Watts. China has been supplying 40,000 megawatts. BHEL and Other companies are not able to meet the demands that we have right now. If we go to Mitsubishi and Siemens, the cost will go slightly higher. Secondly, We have also high dependence of nearly 85% on APIs (Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients) for our Pharmaceutical companies,” Kondapalli said. □□

<https://www.pnewsire.com/in/news-releases/womenovator-organises-cheeni-kum-conference-senior-central-rss-leader-motivates-entrepreneurs-to-convert-crisis-to-opportunity-807782048.html>

Swadeshi Activities

Protest against China & Chinese goods

Pictorial Glimpses



Yamuna Vihar Vibhag, Delhi



Palamu, Jharkhand



Kota, Rajasthan



Rohini, Delhi



Batala, Punjab



Fridabad, Haryana



Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh



Sehore, Madhya Pradesh

Swadeshi Activities

Protest against China & Chinese goods

Pictorial Glimpses



Brahmapur Odisha



R.K. Puram, Delhi



Yamuna Vihar, Delhi



Hoshiarpur, Punjab



Jodhpur, Rajasthan



Dwarka, Delhi



Pramanu, Himachal Pradesh



Delhi