

Swadeshi Activities

Swavlambi Bharat Abhiyan

Meetings

Pictorial Glimpses



Prayagraj, UP



Sitapur, Avadh

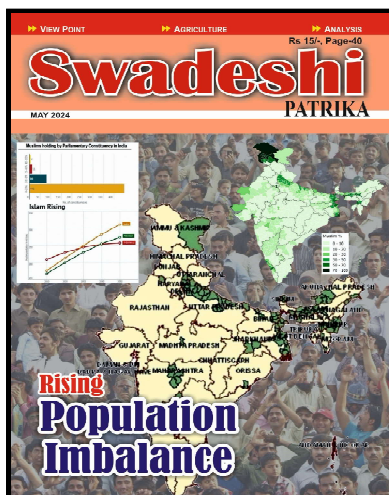


Raipur, Chhattisgarh



Rohtak, Haryana





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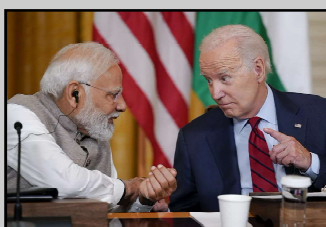
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Aim of Swavlambi Bharat Abhiyan

The purpose for which Swavlambi Bharat Abhiyan was started and its effect is being seen in the country. While praising the development of Bharat, the CEO of JP Morgan said that Bharat has brought 40 crore people out of the poverty line. This figure is a matter of pride for Bharat because a person needs good employment to live a happy life so that he can arrange for pure and nutritious food and ample spaced house, descent clothes, etc. to live. Swavlambi Bharat Abhiyan conducts many types of programs to eliminate poverty and entrepreneurship in the country, in which it inspires the youth on the topics of employment, entrepreneurship, self-employment, etc. Till now, more than 10 lakh youth across the country have been inspired by visiting colleges and schools. Apart from this, Swavalamban Kendra has also been established to help the youth in 460 districts of the country. In which various workshops are organized from time to time to start new ventures and by giving information on topics like beekeeping, garbage bags, bakery, etc., the youth are helped to open their own employment avenues as per skills and interest. So that he can become his own boss instead of working for someone else and can earn more profit according to his hard work.

With the aim of making Bharat fully employed and poverty-free, Swavlambi Bharat Abhiyan will continue to work and it is hoped that with the efforts of the government and public campaigns, this will be accomplished soon. And once again Bharat will be called the golden bird.

— Nishant Chaturvedi, Delhi

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Quote-Unquote



Indian doctors have made their mark globally. Due to affordable medicare, India has become a major center of medical tourism.

Droupadi Murmu, President, Bharat



In a world where everything is being weaponised, India too has to ensure that its basic needs and critical infrastructure are nationally developed. That is why 'Make in India' is so vitals.

S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister, Bharat



We hope to inspire other nations and learn from everybody and define our own digital priorities. We believe we all have a collective responsibility to create a more inclusive and prosperous planet.

Ashwani Vaishnav, IT Minister, Bharat



Finance is highly mobile in nature. In anticipation of inheritance tax if people transfer their wealth abroad to avoid high taxes on their offspring on inheritance after their death, then we shall be losing national wealth to foreign countries. That will be the worst scenario.

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan, National Co-convenor, SJM

With investments pouring in, Chinese imports are destined to go down

It is no secret that India's dependence on Chinese imports has been increasing and this has led to near deindustrialisation of Indian economy. Our industries suffered major losses and many of them had to be closed down. It's significant that imports from China were hardly \$4.05 billion in 2003-04; which increased to \$51.1 billion by 2013-14, showing a growth of nearly 29 percent annually. With realization of this problem, the new government under Narendra Modi came up with an idea of 'Make in India' first and then a full-fledged 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' since May 2020, during COVID-19 pandemic. It is notable that the import of Chinese merchandise, which was doubling every two-and-a-half years, during UPA's decade, went down to 5.4 percent in first six years of the Modi government, but increased after May 2020, though for other reasons.

Since May 2020, with the Modi government's launch of Aatmanirbhar Bharat policy, it gave hope that we might be able to reduce our dependence on Chinese imports and bring the manufacturing sector back on track and avoid security, health and economic risks arising from dependence on Chinese products. But, the recent reports about continued and increasing dependence on Chinese imports, have raised an alarm not only about the efficacy of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat policy, but also about security and economic risks attached to Chinese imports. The Global Trade Research Initiative's (GTRI's) report has recently revealed that China and Hong Kong account for 56 percent of India's total imports of electronics, telecom and other electrical products. Also, China has become India's largest trade partner, where total bilateral trade with China has reached \$118.4 billion in 2023-24, against \$118.3 billion with USA. In this bilateral trade, share of Chinese imports is \$101 billion, whereas exports are merely \$16-17 billion. Though this figure of imports looks staggering, we see that during NDA regime the rate of growth of Chinese imports has been only 7.0 percent per annum, against growth of 29 percent during UPA regime. Noting our dependence on Chinese products, special efforts are being made to become self-reliant. Though, there is always a lag between the announcement of policy and its outcome, but we see green shoots of manufacturing, which give us hope of reducing dependence on China in the forthcoming years. For instance, in the pharma and Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients' (APIs) we see significant capacity creation. Among the 12 categories of goods identified for PLIs, APIs was included. As many as 41 products were included in PLI scheme for the API sector with special emphasis on medicines for diabetes, tuberculosis, steroids and antibiotics. It is notable that by September 2023, under the PLI scheme, pharma companies had been given investment permission for nearly Rs 4,000 crore in APIs and Rs 2,000 crore for medical equipment. Apart from this, the Centre has developed three bulk drug parks at a cost of Rs 3,000 crore. Besides reduction in imports there has been a significant increase in export of bulk drugs and drugs intermediates. Against total import of Rs 25,552 crore in 2022-23, India exported bulk drugs and drugs intermediates worth Rs 37853 crore in 2022-23, which is Rs 12,302 crore more. In chemicals also India is more or less self-reliant and exports are also booming.

India used to import nearly 70 percent of her defense equipment, but now most of the required equipment is produced domestically. Additionally, India's exports of defense goods have been increasing in leaps and bounds. India has been exporting the most advance defense equipment including big and small guns, rifles, missiles and many others. Whereas between 2004-05 and 2013-14 India's defense export were hardly Rs 4312 crores; between 2014-15 and 2023-24, India's defense export has been recorded at Rs 88319 crores (growth by 21 times). In single year 2023-24 defense exports have touched a record level of Rs 21083 crores (approximately \$ 2.63 billion). Thanks to the efforts of the government to revive manufacturing in the country, General Index of Industrial Production (IIP) has recorded a growth of 3.8 percent during this period. Given the dependence on Chinese intermediate and components for domestic industry, growth in Chinese imports was an obvious outcome of this growth. Automobile and ancillary industry made an announcement of nearly Rs. 1.28 lakh crores of rupees of investment in the last three years which is nearly 6 times more than the announcement three years prior. Similarly, electronics industry shows a total announcement of Rs. 4 lakh crores investment in the last three years between 2021-22 and 2023-24, which is 102 times more than the previous announcements.

In the drug and pharma sector, there has been an announcement of Rs. 18,112 crores, which is 15.5 times higher than three years ago; similarly, in the food industry announcement of Rs. 23,484 crores were made with regard to investments, which is again 8 times higher than the three years prior to that.

In conclusion, India still imports significant amount of Chinese goods, which generally consists of intermediates and components, helping India to export the products manufactured with their help, the government of the day is treading the path of Aatmanirbhar Bharat and adopting several measures to reduce the dependence on Chinese and imported products. As a result of these efforts, investment is gearing up in an unprecedented way. We can say that green shoots are seen very visibly. At the same time rising exports of defence products, toys, chemicals and pharmaceutical product are witness to this change, which is destined to reduce the dependence on Chinese imports.

Population Imbalance



To achieve the population balance and upgrade future population from the point of view of economic, education and social standards, population policy can play a significant role. Some legal provisions to limit the family size can also provide a solution to the same.

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan

According to a recent report released by the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC), the share of the majority Hindu population in the total population has decreased by 7.82 percent, whereas the share of Muslim population has increased by 43.15 percent, since 1950 till the year 2015. The report further says that in host of other countries also, where majority population was Non-Muslim, their share has declined and the share of minority population which is Muslim has increased. This trend was seen in Myanmar and Nepal. In Pakistan and Bangladesh where majority itself is Muslim, its share has increased. That is, the question is not of increasing population of minorities, but of increasing Muslim population in the world, the effect of which is being seen in most of the countries of the world including Europe.

If we talk of India only, where the share of Hindu population was 84.68 percent in 1950, it decreased to only 78.06 percent by 2015, while during the same period the share of Muslim population increased from 9.84 percent in 1950 to 14.09 percent in 2015.

It may be recalled that overall population of India has increased from 36.1 crores in 1951 to 132.29 crores in 2015, and likewise population of all communities including Hindu, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians has also increased. However, rate of growth of Muslim population has exceeded that of all other ethnic groups. Whereas, Hindu population increased from 30.57 crores in 1951 to 82.75 crores in 2001 (annual growth rate of 2.0 percent); Muslim population increased from 3.55 crores to 13.8 crores (showing a huge annual growth rate of 2.75 percent); population of Sikhs increased from 0.69 crores to 1.94 crores and Christians from 0.83 crores to 2.41 crores, showing annual growth rates of 2.09 percent and 2.15 percent respectively in these 50 years. Some people argue that the pace of Muslim population growth has slowed down in the last two decades. Though, it's true that population growth rates for different ethnic groups between 2001 and 2015, has declined; but Muslim population growth continues to be way ahead of other religious groups. We see rate of population growth of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians to be 1.61, 2.17, 1.68 and 1.82 respectively.

Most important take away from this report is that whereas, not only in India but in the whole world, a narrative was being spread, that minorities, especially Muslims, are suppressed and persecuted in India. But data totally refutes such narrative.

General Changes in India's Demography

It is worth mentioning that the total fertility rate in India was 5.9 in 1951, which decreased to 4.80 in 1981 and to 2.56 in 2011. According to the recent data, the total fertility rate in India has reached 2.12 in 2024. It is worth mentioning that

according to demographic theory, when the total fertility rate of a country falls below 2.1, the population of that country starts declining after some time. Therefore, the fertility rate reaching 2.12 is an alarm bell for India's population.

Due to the continuous decline in the total fertility rate in India for some time now, it is now becoming clear that we have reached a situation from where the actual population will start decreasing after some time. It is worth noting that such a situation has already reached in China. Many countries of Europe too are going through the same situation. After Africa, India was also among those few countries where the population has been increasing, but now fear of decline in population, is being expressed in India as well.

But in such a situation, the publication of PMEAC report also indicates that even though the total population will keep declining in the coming time, but in that too, the population of Hindus, which is already declining proportionately, may start declining in absolute numbers, while Muslim population may continue to increase. We can say that loss of Hindu population would mostly be the gain of Muslim population.

Population of Educated Class Destined to Go Down

From census and other reports it's clear that the total fertility rate among illiterate and less educated women is still 3.17 in 2011. But the fertility rate among women, who are graduate or above was 1.62 in 1991, declined to 1.40 in 2011 and there is every possibility of further fall in the same after 2011 also. Likewise, even other educated women less than graduates, also tend to have

Due to the continuous decline in the total fertility rate in India for some time now, it is now becoming clear that we have reached a situation from where the actual population will start decreasing after some time.

lower fertility rates.

If we compare different religious groups in terms of education, it is evident that the Muslim community is still far more backward than Hindus and hence the possibility is that while Muslim population may continue to increase, while Hindu population may start declining. It is worth mentioning that according to the 2001 census, while the literacy rate among Hindus was 65.8 percent, among Muslims its only 59.1 percent. If we talk about higher education, we see that in the age group of 18 to 25 years, the number of graduates and more educated people in the Muslim community was only 6.7 percent, while among Hindus it was 12.5 percent in 2001. Given the relationship between education and TFR, we can intuitively say that less educated Muslim women give birth to more children, while the fertility rate is lower in more educated women. That is, the increase in Muslim population and decrease in Hindu population can also be explained by the difference in level of education between Hindus and Muslims.

How to bring Balance

There is a general belief that

Muslims tend to have larger families because of their traditions, philosophy and religious beliefs. In the past even poor Hindus used to have the belief that children are gift of God, however Muslims due to their economic and educational backwardness, continue to believe the same (that is, children are gift of God).

We have seen that with economic prosperity, educational development and advances in annual medical science and expansion of health services, birth rate, death rate and natural rate of growth of population all have been declining. Difference in educational and economic standards in different ethnic groups also explain difference in fertility rate and population growth in different ethnic groups.

Population imbalance, needs to be corrected. Following are a few suggestions:

First, there is an urgent need to upgrade our population, especially Muslim population, educationally. This can help in reducing TFR and therefore rate of growth of population.

Secondly, there can still be a possibility that, till we reach high education standards, or even after that population may continue to increase due to religious beliefs and psychology; to deal with the same we may use fiscal incentives and disincentives to achieve demographic goals and uplift public health.

Thirdly, for sometime a debate on Population Policy has been going on. To achieve the population balance and upgrade future population from the point of view of economic, education and social standards, population policy can play a significant role. Some legal provisions to limit the family size can also provide a solution to the same. □□

Shaping Our Global Impact: The Significance of the 2024 Elections

The 2024 parliamentary elections, a pivotal event in India's democratic journey, will commence in a multi-phased celebration of civic engagement starting April 19. This article presents a comprehensive analysis, structured in three sections, to examine the intricate tapestry of issues influencing voters' choices. From international dynamics to national priorities and regional perspectives of Tamil Nadu, each facet will be explored to underscore the profound impact these elections hold on the global stage. The expansive scale of this electoral exercise surpasses previous precedents, highlighting its significance in shaping the future not just within national borders, but also in the broader international context.

The transformation from pariah to paragon

The 2024 Indian parliamentary elections are not merely a local affair but a global event, reflecting India's burgeoning clout on the world stage. The catalyst for this ascendancy? Prime Minister Narendra Modi's unparalleled influence, eclipsing even the President of the United States. The American think tank Morning Consult has placed Modi at the pinnacle of global leadership popularity for five consecutive years. Leaders worldwide extol his virtues: the Australian Prime Minister dubs him "Modi the Boss," the Italian Prime Minister lauds him as the world's most cherished leader, and the US President admits to Modi's compelling power, jokingly lamenting the overwhelming demand for his presence. Even the Russian President acknowledges him as "the fearless, the wise one," while the British Prime Minister recognizes him as a peer in global leadership. The President of Papua New Guinea's gesture of prostration is a testament to Modi's stature.

The Western nations that once ostracized Modi now sing his praises, a testament to his transformative leadership. President Biden's remarks encapsulate this



The choice of leadership is not only about domestic governance but also about India's role in the world. The outcome will be closely watched, as it could signify a reaffirmation of India's path and its civilizational values on the global stage.
S. Gurumurthy



shift: “You’re a real problem for me. When you visit, everyone clamors for your attention. There’s not a single pass left for your dinner. From celebrities to my own kin, everyone’s vying for a moment with you. You’ve become a phenomenon, reshaping democratic nations.” Modi’s leadership of the G20 in 2022 marked a turning point, steering the group towards unprecedented success.

The thaw in relations with America and Europe post-2014 is a direct result of Modi’s indefatigable efforts. His global tours, initially mocked by domestic political parties and media, fostered strong international bonds. His historic visits to Australia, a rarity for an Indian PM, have cemented Australia as one of India’s staunchest allies. Modi’s accolades are not personal triumphs but national pride, akin to the reverence for figures like Abraham Lincoln or John F. Kennedy in America. Modi’s statesmanship is rooted in the growth and development of India, captivating the world under his leadership.

Economic Resurgence: From Vulnerability to Vigor

The decade preceding 2014 was marked by economic turbulence in India, with growth rates faltering and inflation rates climbing amidst a series of high-profile scams and questionable economic policies. The era saw Indian enterprises amassing unsustainable debts, which morphed into non-performing assets, edging state-owned banks toward insolvency. Internationally, India’s reliance on costly foreign loans for its foreign exchange needs earned it a spot among the “Fragile Five” econo-

mies identified by global financial analysts.

Fast forward to the present, and India’s narrative has undergone a dramatic reversal. Now heralded as the world’s fifth most robust economy, this transformation is no serendipitous event but the fruit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s stringent economic strategies, ambitious national projects, and an unwavering commitment to governance that has set a benchmark for ministerial and bureaucratic performance.

Under Modi’s stewardship, high-level corruption has seen a significant downturn, and a decisive battle against financial malfeasance has been waged. Business magnates, once celebrated, found themselves compelled to seek refuge overseas as the government clamped down on willful loan defaulters, leveraging legal avenues to repossess companies and recoup funds. Public sector enterprises, previously beleaguered by losses and teetering on the edge of collapse, are now posting record profits. A renaissance is evident in foundational sectors such as transportation infrastructure, with highways, airports, and ports experiencing an unprecedented surge in development. The stock market, often regarded as a nation’s economic pulse by global financial institutions, has witnessed a meteoric rise from 20,000 points in 2014 to over 73,000 points today. This remarkable turnaround has not only reshaped India’s economic landscape but has also garnered newfound respect and trust from the international community.

Monumental Milestones

PM Narendra Modi’s tenure has been marked by a series of

transformative initiatives that have commanded global attention. Here’s an exploration of six significant achievements that have reshaped India’s narrative:

1. Vaccine Development:

Amidst the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, Modi championed the vision of a self-reliant India, pledging to produce indigenous vaccines. Defying global skepticism, his administration not only achieved this ambitious goal within eight months but also launched two homegrown vaccines. This feat was further amplified as India successfully administered double doses to over 1.02 billion citizens, a triumph that resonated worldwide.

2. Financial Inclusion:

Modi’s government undertook a massive financial inclusion drive, opening bank accounts for 520 million previously unbanked individuals, issuing Aadhaar identification to all, and directly transferring ¹ 5.53 trillion in subsidies, curtail- ing a potential ¹ 3.48 trillion in leak- ages. Today, these accounts hold savings amounting to ¹ 2.30 trillion, empowering the economically dis- advantaged.

3. Healthcare Accessibili-

ty: By providing health insurance to 340 million citizens, Modi’s policies facilitated medical treatments valued at ¹ 660 billion for 58 mil- lion people, eradicating the inter- national perception of India’s ne- glect towards public healthcare.

4. Sanitation Revolution:

The construction of 115 million toilets across 530,000 villages has eradicated the practice of open defecation, a subject of past inter- national ridicule.

5. Clean Cooking Initia-

tive: The provision of cooking gas connections to 100 million house-

holds has been lauded globally for its positive impact on women's health and environmental conservation.

6. Housing for All: The ambitious project of granting free houses to 26 million rural families has astonished the international community, showcasing India's commitment to improving living standards.

These milestones are not merely domestic achievements but have significantly enhanced India's stature on the world stage, reflecting Modi's influential leadership and India's progressive trajectory.

"India's Ascendant Path"

The transformative initiatives of recent years have not only reshaped India's domestic landscape but have also garnered global acclaim. The multidimensional economic strides have drawn praise from international leaders, with French President Macron acknowledging, "India is changing the world." This sentiment is echoed in a recent Ipsos opinion poll conducted across 29 major democracies. The survey revealed that 77% of respondents view India as progressing in the right direction, a stark contrast to the perception of other nations like the US (65%), Germany (72%), Canada (70%), England (79%), and France (82%), which are seen as veering off course. Furthermore, these nations regard India's economy as the most luminous, a testament to the country's burgeoning influence and promising future.

Navigating Geopolitical Tides

The global community recognizes PM Narendra Modi as the linchpin of India's dynamic growth and resurgence. Esteemed figures

like Henry Kissinger and George Soros observe the waning of Western hegemony, a trend accelerated by the Covid pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine. Modi's assertive diplomacy during the Ukraine crisis has shifted the balance of power, bolstering the influence of neutral countries and signaling a significant realignment in international relations.

India's firm stance against Chinese aggression, from Doklam to Ladakh, has commanded the West's attention, underscoring the strategic imperative of partnering with India. Beyond its traditional alliances, India has forged new bonds with nations across Asia, Europe, and the Global South, positioning itself as a pivotal mediator on the world stage. In moments of heightened tension, such as the threat of nuclear escalation in Ukraine, the world has looked to India for mediation, reflecting Modi's engagement with both Russian and Ukrainian leadership.

Amidst this geopolitical flux, the established Western liberal order perceives a challenge from the emerging Indic paradigm. Allegations of a concerted effort to infiltrate India's political landscape and undermine its trajectory through foreign-funded NGOs and mass protests have surfaced. Despite these claims, India's resolve remains unshaken, with Modi's governance providing a beacon of moral and spiritual leadership during a period marked by global conflicts and transitions.

"India's Sovereign Choice"

The narrative of India's ascent on the global stage has become a focal point of international discourse. The Western establishment, long accustomed to setting the glo-

bal agenda, now observes India's rise with a mix of interest and apprehension. The crux of their concern is not merely India's growing influence but the assertive leadership of PM Narendra Modi, which challenges the status quo. As the 2024 elections approach, there is palpable anticipation among Western media and think-tanks about the potential outcomes and their implications for global dynamics.

The cultural ethos of the West, characterized by individualism and liberal values, finds itself at a crossroads with the cultural revival of Asian and Global South nations. This resurgence is seen as a counter-narrative to the Western model that has dominated for decades. President Xi Jinping's recent embrace of China's ancient heritage exemplifies this shift towards civilizational pride.

Modi's leadership is emblematic of India's civilizational reawakening. Representing one-sixth of humanity, India's burgeoning economic, military, and technological capabilities, coupled with its rich cultural legacy, present a new paradigm. This has led some in the Western liberal order to view Modi's India as a challenge to their traditional hegemony.

The upcoming general elections in India are thus cast in a broader light, with potential consequences that extend beyond national borders. The choice of leadership is not only about domestic governance but also about India's role in the world. The outcome will be closely watched, as it could signify a reaffirmation of India's path and its civilizational values on the global stage. □□

<https://garumurthy.net/shaping-our-global-impact-the-significance-of-the-2024-elections/>

Why Electric Vehicles?



The country's economy and supply chains may both profit from recycling mandates and allow incentives wherever they apply because the aim of deployment of Electric vehicles on a large scale will definitely result in degraded batteries in the long run, and at least two batteries need to be changed for a lifetime in general, which will for sure demand the recycling of the batteries.

**Dr. S.
Lingamurthy &
Ms. Shivanjali
Shukla**

Despite India accounts for around 17% of the world's population, the country's historical impact on total global greenhouse gas emissions is negligible. Annual emissions per capita in India are around one-third of the world average. It has been made readily apparent in the Summary for Policy Makers (SPM) of the Working Group III contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) [2022] that the carbon footprint of Southern Asia as a whole is only approximately 4% of the past's overall net emissions from human activities. During this period, North America and Europe have individually accounted for nearly ten times more total greenhouse gas emanations at the global level despite comprising less than thirteen per cent of the world's population. In light of the need for wealthy nations to achieve carbon neutrality by investing extensively in net zero emissions and offering sufficient climate financing, technology transfer, and capacity-building assistance, India has every right to demand that these nations do it early, at least prior to 2050. At the Conference of Parties 26 in Glasgow in 2021, in the presence of a significant portion of the global vehicle industry, the statement aiming to achieve a 100% transition to zero emissions by 2030-40 was made. India, while signing the declaration, said that all governments should promote the transition of light cars to zero-emission automobiles. This objective is projected to determine India's zero-emissions pathway in the years to come. NITI Aayog said in 2019 that by 2030, it wanted seventy per cent of all business cars, thirty per cent of all private cars, forty per cent of all buses, and eighty per cent of all two-wheelers and three-wheelers to be electric. There is a pressing need to place the rules and long-term plans by keeping all kinds of convergence activities with all line departments in general and infrastructure projects in particular to give the market more confidence in accomplishing the targets in a targeted time.

In contrast to other international markets, the Indian EV market is characterised by a distinct set of factors, including market demands, consumer tastes & preferences, and economic dynamics. Electric automobiles emit no tailpipe emissions, are less noisy, more environmental friendly, and less complicated, perhaps leading to less servicing and maintenance costs. As such, the combination of decarbonisation of energy systems and electrification of transportation systems provides a significant possibility to cut emissions of greenhouse gases. However, the potential amount of greenhouse gas emissions that may be reduced by electrification is reliant upon the energy carriers that are used to create the electricity that is used to power electric vehicles. When electric vehicles (EVs) are fuelled by electricity derived from fossil fuels (such as coal, gas, or oil), there is a 20% decrease in the emissions that are produced by vehicles. In terms of greenhouse gases as well as air pollutants such as particulate matter, sulphur oxides, and nitrogen oxides, the operation of electric vehicles that are fuelled by energy derived from renewable sources such as solar and wind is virtually totally non-polluting.

In India, the adoption of electric cars has taken significant momentum and growing despite having several obstacles and hardships. Certainly it is attributed to the government's introduction of electric car incentives through FAME India in order to meet the aim of producing 7 million EVs by 2030 and satisfy the goals set by NEMMP 2020, EVs having low operational expenses and the cost of crude oil is

increasing due to the fact that 80 percent of the nation's crude oil needs are imported from abroad.

Despite being in its early stages, India's electric vehicle (EV) industry now has more possibilities than obstacles. However, if the government takes the appropriate measures to encourage the growth of EVs at different levels, it is expected to change into a market with abundant potential in the future, but still, it lacks the infrastructure required in the form of charging stations at all the nooks and corners of the country and one of the main catalysts to solve the issue of range anxiety among the EV owners, especially for long distance journey.

In addition, the present infrastructure for accessing fuel and diesel would need to be replaced with a network of public and private charging stations in order to facilitate the transition to electric vehicles. Nationwide, there are 12,146 public electric vehicle charging stations that are functioning. In order to facilitate the promotion of electric automobiles in India, the Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) has been making persistent efforts to do so. As part of the FAME-II plan, financial assistance was provided in the form of a subsidy for the establishment of public charging infrastructure. This was done with the intention of fostering trust among electric vehicle users. In addition, the Ministry of Power has implemented a number of efforts to speed up the deployment of public charging infrastructure for electric vehicles (EVs) throughout the nation. Some of them are: public charging stations (PCSs) will get a 20% discount on the average cost of supply (ACoS) from DISCOMs during solar hours and a 20% fee outside of those hours, making it possible for people to charge their electric vehicles at home or at the workplace using

the power outlets that already exist, providing land for public charging stations at discounted prices via a revenue sharing mechanism, supplying power to public charging stations (PCS) in a timely manner as agreed upon, until 31st March 2025, the one-part EV tariff for public charging stations cannot surpass the Average Cost of Supply (ACoS), and During solar hours, the maximum price per unit of power utilised for slow AC charging of electric vehicles at PCS is Rs 2.50, while during non-solar hours, it is Rs 3.50. There is also a restriction of Rs. 10/-per unit of power used for DC Fast charging of EVs at PCS during solar hours and Rs. 12/-per unit of energy used during non-solar hours.

India is going to examine the adoption of vehicle-grid integration alternatives in order to enable the coordination of increased demand on the energy grid (Das & Deb, 2020; FICCI, 2020). This is in addition to growing the country's production of electric vehicles and batteries via production-linked incentives (PLI) programs. In order to keep up with the growing demand for electric mobility, there are plans to increase the decarbonisation of the grid and to set up off-grid renewable hybrid charging and swapping stations for batteries. In the short to medium term, India will also address rules pertaining to the management of recyclables associated with electric vehicles (EVs), as well as concepts of circular economies for the electric vehicle industry. As the electric vehicle sector continues to expand, there will be a need for the workforce to undergo retraining in order to be able to produce and operate new technologies and infrastructure that are associated with them.

Various state Governments in India can embrace the EV program as a chance to develop local production as a component of the industri-

al strategy and keep a portion of the value chain inside their national boundaries in order to provide employment opportunities and secure economic benefits. The policies play a crucial role in developing the electric vehicle industry; as part of the broader Make in India initiative, the policies at both central and state levels can complement the national government's efforts to execute the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for the car and battery-related sectors. In general, there are two approaches: the first is to include electric vehicle (EV) production in the industrial strategy, and the second is to provide incentives for manufacturers to establish businesses inside the respective state.

There are a number of states that have clearly proclaimed plans to become manufacturing centres of electric vehicles (EVs) in order to provide job opportunities and local economic benefits. It has been expected and planned by a number of states that investments in electric vehicle (EV) programs and production will result in a generation of new jobs, as many state policies aimed at skill development and innovation programs. Also, there is a need for skill development and reskilling of the new and existing employees in general and vehicle service segment in particular in order to tackle the shift from ICEV to EV along with technological innovation and development with the help of contributing R&D practices. The country's economy and supply chains may both profit from recycling mandates and allow incentives wherever they apply because the aim of deployment of Electric vehicles on a large scale will definitely result in degraded batteries in the long run, and at least two batteries need to be changed for a lifetime in general, which will for sure demand the recycling of the batteries. □□

Global Scrutiny of Packaged Food

The packaged spices industry is witness to cheerful growth rates, both locally and internationally. But it came under scanner since internationally it was questioned on safety norms as per global standards. There have been calls for bans and stringent actions to prevent any malpractices. There is much at stake for the nearly Rs. 50,000 crore industry if things are not set right, and soon.

Hongkong and Singapore recently detected presence of ‘excess’ ethylene oxide in some spices exported by MDH and Everest from India. A ban on sale there was imposed. These two countries are not alone. Complaints about Indian spices have been registered in Australia, US and some other nations as well about dangerous contaminants in these Indian products which have the potential to even development of certain type of cancers. The two companies have tried to downplay the regulatory authorities action one way or other. For example, MDH denies using ethylene oxide. Still, the regulator of the field – the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) – decided to put all manufacturers of spices under scrutiny. Likewise for the spices Board of India, which has decided to undertake checks with greater intensity. And yet the regulatory authorities are quick to say that Indian regulatory standards are fairly stringent. The FSSAI rejected the malicious reports that Indian herbs and spices contain excess pesticides.

But the stark fact is that while the standards prescribed for food items may be fairly comprehensive and strict, the enforcement of these rules governing food processing is soberingly inadequate on safety tests. At the basic level the sorry fact is that the government does not have right – and enough number of – labs, nor adequate staff, for testing purposes.

It is also a fact that export regulations vary from country to country with no common standards. Thus the exporting companies have to have sufficient knowledge about the regulatory aspects governing each country. Thus it is not intention-



While Indian packaged food industry has shown promising growth, both locally and internationally, there are many health related concerns which merit government attention.

KK Srivastava



al that a company may sell ‘adulterated’ product; instead the problem may be ‘knowledge gap’. Not only this, even the test methodologies may be compromised since the company in question may fail to comply with standardized standard operating procedure (SOP). This then may lead to passing a sample which should not have been cleared.

Whatever, but Indian spices have come under spotlight for a bad reason. But the trouble is not confined to merely ‘exported’ spices. In the recent past the media is full of reports on India’s food safety regime in background of allegation against multiple products such as infant food, health drinks and of course spices. Thus questions have been raised about excessive sugar in Nestle’s baby food productions (Nestle of course denies it, saying the sugar content is less than permissible in India). Indian spices have been declared carcinogenic aboard. In the US the refusal rate for import of Indian spices has doubled in past one year. The European Union has put some items originating from Indian under scanner. And all this for generally well known brands. The controversies have raised fears that a larger section of the Indian market could be at the very least non conversant of regulation and testing procedures (which does not make the offence pardonable) or that they have been deliberately trying to bypass the regulatory radar. Every citizen continues to worry as to whether food products we ingest are safe or not; lately this concern has taken us under its grip at accelerated pace since issues like cancer, nervous disorder, DNA damage, elevated blood pressure

The govt must prioritise creating more accredited labs, ensuring actually functioning foods labs at state levels, deploying more trained manpower & ensuring enforcement of norms.

– the list is very long – are taking us under their clutches at alarming rates. Most of these issues are being traced back to food contamination. To top it all, nowadays 24x7 media plays a very important role in making this information, which sometimes may even be unverified or inaccurate, easily accessible, easily digestible.

Growing affluence is changing our food habits. We are tilting towards ‘healthy’ products (organic, hydroponic, ‘health’ drinks and so on). Then we realize that there is excessive added sugar in our packaged foods, that ‘healthy’ drinks are not providing health benefits. Reactively then our FSSAI stops malted beverages and mixes from being sold as ‘health’ drinks. But that is not enough.

The FSSAI was established in 2008, two years after the enactment of the food safety and standards Act. It oversees the standards of safety for all the companies, small, medium, and large, local, and international. Indeed it oversees a very large swathe, though it has been consistently hamstrung by staff and infrastructure shortage. No wonder it has had a chequered record. This has led a large section of the marketers to view regulations as paperwork rather than regulator inspections dictated by ex-

pert guidance and SOPs. The agency is actually mandated to educate both consumers and businesses on food safety issues and norms. It is supposed to “collect and collate data regarding food consumption, incidence and prevalence of biological risk, contamination in food, residues of various contaminants in food products and identify risks.” Indeed a very ambitious and (almost) unachievable canvas to paint, given the kind of backing it gets from the government in terms of resources. No wonder, food items generate umpteen controversies around them – questions being raised about their safety, falsification of labels, etc. – as regards fitness about their consumption. And immediately FSSAI is blamed that the agency has done scarce justice to its remit. Not only this, at times the courts too have struck down the agency’s actions due to procedural shortcomings, for example in the 2015 vital Neutraceuticals case.

As gatekeepers of the nation’s alimentary canal, FSSAI needs more guts. Though it has a network of more than 200 food testing labs, given the size of the industry, number of players and the segments they play in, and expanding export market to cater to, this number is inadequate. The government must prioritise creating more accredited labs, ensuring actually functioning foods labs at state levels, deploying more trained manpower, and ensuring enforcement of norms.

There will always be scientific uncertainty (how much ethylene oxide is safe) and the variance in rules. Hence the need for updating standards regularly and enforce it strictly. Government needs to come forward. □□

Swamy Vivekanand thoughts on Swavlambhi (Self Reliant) Bharat - 2

(To be continued of previous issue...)

First Bread and then Religion

I do not believe in a God who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven! Pooh! India is to be raised, the poor are to be fed, education is to be spread, and the evil of priest craft is to be removed to get the best religion in the world. Make European society with India's religion. It is possible and must be.

Independent India will embrace materialism

Western nations do not give up their stark materialism, another world war is inevitable. He Prophesied that INDIA when independent will embrace materialism of the west and attain material prosperity to such an extent that it will surpass its past records in that filed. He also foretold that Countries like America would become increasingly spiritual because they will have realized from the height of material prosperity. The simple truth that gross materialism cannot give eternal peace. Bharat the crusader of world peace shall imbibe the morality in the mind of future generation with a special attention to spiritualism.

Worship Womanhood

The uplift women, the awakening of the masses must come first, and then only can any real good come about for the country for India.

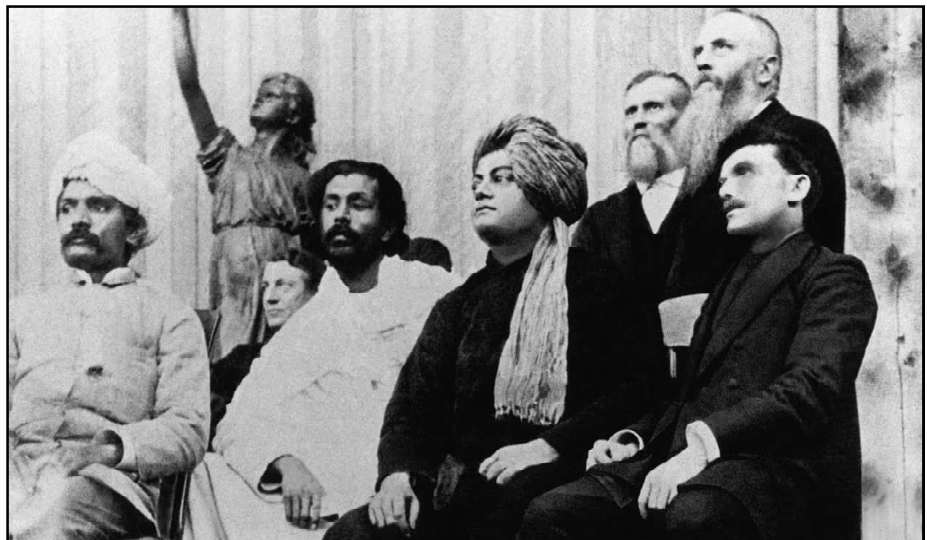
The urgent need for Rshtreeya Educaiton

The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give education to develop their lost individuality. Give them ideas, that is the only help they require.



The Great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and that is one of the causes of our downfall.

**Mahadevayya
Karadalli**



All the wealth of the world cannot help one little Indian village if the people are not taught to help themselves. Our work should be mainly educational both moral and intellectual.

Reciprocity between East and West

Love is life and hatred is death. Give and take is the law. If India wants to raise herself once more, it is absolutely necessary that she brings out her treasures and throws them broadcast among the nations of the earth. India has to learn from Europe the conquest of external nature, and Europe has to learn from India the conquest of Internal nature. Then it is the union of the two that is wanted and there will be the ideal humanity.

Call to Nation Builders

New India has to build upon Indian Traditions. We must grow according to our nation. Money does not pay, nor name, fame does not pay, not learning, It is love that pays. It is character cleaves its way through adamant walls difficulties.

Three things are necessary to make every man, every nation great—

1. Conviction of the powers of goodness
2. Absence of jealousy and suspicion
3. Helping all who are trying to be and do good
4. Have faith that you are all . Do not afraid of small beginning, great things come afterwards. Be courageous. Men are more valuable than all the wealth of the world. Do not lead your brethren, but serve them. Be unselfish even unto death and work.

National Resurgence in industrial sector

Accidentally, Swamiji met great Parasi Businessman JN Tata on 12 days ship trip to Chicago. During discussion Tata told about his plan to import steel from Japan in India and then trade it. On hearing this swami suggested that instead of importing, he should learn the technology from Japan and should produce steel in India itself. So that, Indian youths would get employment and India would be self reliant . When Japan and Britain refused to deliver technology , he went to US and signed technology transfer contract , as a result, First factory of Tata Steel in Jamshedpur started. Further, an idea of establishing Indian Institute of Science Bengaluru for Research oriented activities. This idea has the roots in conversations held between Tata and Swamiji on a voyage in 1893. It is a step to take country ahead on the road to self reliance and development. That time it was not a easy dream to realize in the hostile administration. Sister Nivedita contributed her might through active campaign to establish Iisc research center .

National Resurgence in scientific field

Renewed Scientist Jagadish Chandra Bose's research paper on radio waves disappeared in abroad and after couple of months on same lines it was patented by Marconi. Bose was deeply depressed.

At that time Sister Nivedita arranged a meeting of Jagadish Chandra Bose with Swamiji. Swamiji asked him to prove the India Vedanta's formula- there is life in vegetation. Bose worked on it diligently and proved the truth to

world. And became the first Indian scientist to receive an American Patent.

20th Century Physics Influenced by Swami Vivekanad

Viveknand thoughts on the relationship between force, matter and energy and underlined its similarity with the ideas of modern science are inspiration to me - Nicola Tesla Renowned Scientist.

Before he left London , one of his British friends put this question to him: Swamiji, how do you like now your motherland after four years experience of the Luxurious, glorious, powerful west? Swamiji replied: India I Love before I came away. Now the very dust of India has become holy to me, the very air is now to me holy, it is now the holy land, the place of pilgrimage, the Tirtha.

Awakened, Rejuvenated Bharat

There were many good things in the ancient times, but there were bad things too. The good things are to be retained, but the India that is to be , the future India, must be much greater than ancient India. Mother Bharat has awakened once again, sitting on her throne, rejuvenated, more glorious than ever. India will be raised, not with the power of the flesh, but with the power of spirit, not with the flag of destruction, but with the flag of peace and love.

The messages of Swamiji's with inspiring thoughts and actions are stepping stones for Swalambhi Bharat. The time tested thoughts (materialism with spiritualism) are to be studied, practiced in our daily routine. Then only the dream of Swalambi Bharat. Balwan Bharat and Samrudda Bharat can be achieved. □□

Marching Towards Third Largest economy and Beyond - 2

In the previous article, we discussed the path of Bhartiya economy from globally tenth slot to fifth largest economy, epochal decisions of the Union Government and phenomenal progress in fields of science & technology and artificial intelligence. The growth of our economy resonates in the highest ever monthly collection of GST at Rs. 2.10 lakh crore in April 2024 and over 6 lakh ITRs filed with Income Tax Department in April 2024 itself. Further discussion is continued in this article.

Metaverse

The world is transforming too fast so the challenges are growing multi-dimensional. The technology is surpassing all economic models, principles, rules, standards and recognitions. Technology has grown at a breakneck pace in the last decade, and we should expect even more in the coming decade. Yes, I am talking about Metaverse virtual world reshaping economy. This is the next generation of internet, say Web 3.0 for Gen Z and millennials.

The metaverse is a network of interconnected virtual worlds that may be accessed through a variety of devices such as virtual reality headsets, augmented reality systems, cell phones, and PCs. Key principles of the metaverse include decentralisation, interconnection and inter-operation, safety and trust. It is a simulated digital environment that incorporates various technologies and social media concepts to create areas for rich user interaction that mirror the actual world. Metaverses are powered by blockchain technology.

The best of Government policies on self-reliance, Atmanirbhar Bharat, swadeshi and social welfare face stiff challenges of latest technology and mandate quick remedies to adopt what is beneficial for the country and guard against evil effects as we did to cryptocurrency.

Opportunities across multiple industries include higher education, medical, military and other types of trades can deliver a more immersive learning experience. According to an analysis by Bloomberg and data from Newzoo, IDC, PwC, Statista, and Two Circles, the potential worldwide revenue from metaverse technologies could approach \$800 billion in 2024, up from about \$500 billion in 2020. The Government needs to sensitize policy makers to evaluate impact of metaverse economy in national perspective while making its best use in education, tourism, digital currency, creation of jobs and reaching masses to sensitize on environment. Opportunities are immense and we have to tap metaverse technology to the highest advantage to our economy and governance.

Highway towards the 3rd Largest Economy

The highway towards the 3rd largest economy is on solid pillars of high GDP growth, technology, manufacturing, infrastructure, national security, exports, revenue growth, Innovation and R&D, Intellectual property rights, health, educa-



The more globalised the rupee is, the more it would become vulnerable to external shocks in terms of commodity price fluctuations or global interest rates. In such a scenario, it would be difficult for RBI to ensure exchange rate stability.

Vinod Johri



tion, skilling, robust start up ecosystem and service sector while this list is endless.

While 3rd Quarter of FY 2023-24 pegged GDP at growth rate of 8.4%, the GDP growth for FY 24 is expected at 7.6%. GDP growth rate in Q1, Q2 and Q3 are consistently above 8%.

Semi-conductor Projects

The Union Government approved three semiconductor projects worth Rs.1.26 Trillion including the country's first Rs. 91000 crore similar conductor fabrication proposal by TATA group in partnership with Taiwan based semiconductor giant at Dholera, Gujrat. The other major project is also by Tata group - Rs. 27000 crore assembly, test, marking and packaging project by Tata semiconductor Assembly & Test at Morigaon, Assam. The third carrying an investment of Rs. 76000 crore is of CG Power in partnership with Japan based company at Sanand, Gujrat. The main challenge is from China which discussed as a part of "Global Challenges" in this article. The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji says that it will raise our country's profile in global semi-conductor supply chain.

Mobile Manufacturing

Mobile manufacturing has

grown 21 times over 10 years, valued at Rs. 18,900 crore in 2014 to Rs. 4.1 Lakh crore in the current year. Domestic mobile manufacturing caters to 97% mobiles for internal consumption. Apple and Samsung have catalysed the spur in domestic mobile production.

Oil Refining Industry

The oil refining industry is gaining one of the most vital factors in the growing economy on way to globally third biggest slot. The scope of this industry is gaining momentum to the extent of being the largest exporter of oil-based products after China which is considering slowing down the oil refining industry for certain reasons. Oil refining industry has issues of carbon emissions, the vital concern of COP28 besides dependency on crude oil imports. It is important to note that Bharat is one of the major exporters of refined products with a net export close to 1 million barrels per day (MMb/d) in 2022. To make Bharat a refinery hub, there is a need to secure long-term crude oil supply, given the domestic demand-supply mismatch. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji declared investments of \$67 Billion to improve the energy mix. On February 6, 2024, in his address at inauguration of Bharat Energy Week 2024, Hon'ble Prime

Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji said "Additionally, we have solidified our position as one of the largest refiners globally, with our current refining capacity surpassing 254 Million Metric Tonnes per Annum (MMTPA). By 2030, we aim to elevate Bharat's refining capacity to 450 MMTPA." The country's refining capacity has increased from a modest 62 million tonne annually in 1998 to 254 MMTPA. Our refiners would add 56 MMTPA by 2028 to increase domestic capacity to 310 MMTPA.

Rooftop Solar installations

The Union Government has also approved Rs. 75000 crore for rooftop solar installations in 10 million houses.

Progress Data

Some comparable data shows fast paced growth in crucial sectors directly impacting the people in the last 10 years. The direct tax collections have increased from Rs. 6.38 Lakh crore in the year 2013-14 to Rs. 22 Lakh crore in the current financial year. The foreign exchange reserves have increased from US \$ 303 billion to the present reserve of US \$ 626 billion. The functional airports have increased from 74 in 2014 to 149 in 2023. The number of universities have increased from 676 in 2014 to 1168 in 2023. Infrastructure capital expenditure has increased from Rs.1.57 Lakh crore to Rs.11.11 Lakh crore in FY 2024-25 (Interim Budget). Ease of doing ranking has improved from 142 in 2014 to 63 in 2023. Metro rail network has increased from 5 cities in 2014 to 20 cities in 2023. Renewable energy capacity has increased from 76 Giga watt in 2014 to 181 GW to 2023. The expense

on welfare schemes in social sector has increased from Rs.6.6 Lakh crore in 2013-14 to Rs. 22.4 Lakh crore in last ten years. Total 24.8 crore people have come out of poverty line in last 9 years. The GDP has increased from US \$ 1.675 Trillion in FY 2010 to US \$ 4.11 Trillion in FY 24 (projected) has rode to 5th largest economy from 11th rank.

Bharat signed trade deal with European Free Trade Association (EFTA) which includes Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland after more than 15 years of negotiations and it will remove import tariffs on industrial goods from EFTA states. The agreement entails \$100 billion worth of investments across a range of sectors in India, including manufacturing. The agreement enhances market access and simplifies customs procedures making it easier for Indian and EFTA businesses to expand their operations in the respective markets. The agreement further aims to facilitate and promote investment opportunities between the Parties.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) has re-classified Bharat's de facto exchange rate regime from 'floating' to 'stabilised arrangement'. The exchange rate variability for 6 months to 13 months till October 2023 has been between 1.88 to 3.26 with minimum rate of Rs. 80.6483 per US dollar to maximum of Rs. 83.2746 per US dollar. IMF has stated that from December 2022 to October 2023, the Rupee - Dollar exchange rate moved within very narrow range, suggesting that Bharat's foreign exchange intervention has likely exceeded levels necessary to address disorderly market conditions.

Bharat signed trade deal with European Free Trade Association (EFTA) which includes Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland after more than 15 years of negotiations and it will remove import tariffs

The recently concluded Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) summit in Francisco in Nov. 2023 witnessed significant progress in negotiations on the Indo-Pacific Economics Framework (IPEF). THE 14 members of the IPEF announced a substantial conclusion of negotiations for Pillars 3 and 4 - clean economy and fair economy of the negotiating agenda. This follows the earlier conclusion and declaration of the legal text for agreement for Pillar - 2 on supply chains.

Global Capability Centres (GCC) started in Bharat as back-office operations. Today, they are at cutting edge of technology, driving key initiatives of their parent companies. It is estimated that GCC hiring will rise by 12.9% in the year 2023, on top of the 1.7 million employees, the segment had at the end of 2022. There may be an addition of 2.1 lakh employees.

Rupee in international trade

Ever since the Reserve Bank of Bharat brought out a circular on International Trade Settlement in Bharatiya Rupees on 11th July 2022, Global rupee trade-off has got a good start. Bharat's recent deal with the UAE will allow our exporters of oil to pay in rupees

and lead to the development of Bharat's Rupee - United Arab Emirati Dirham market. Our exports to Russia in April - December period of 2023 was US \$ 3.1 Billion which is 41% up over the corresponding period of previous year. The jump is attributed to the new mechanism of trade settlement in rupees. Our efforts towards internationalizing the rupee will prove to be substantially beneficial. In March 2023, the RBI has put in place the mechanism of rupee trade settlement with as many as 18 countries - Botswana, Fiji, Germany, Guyana, Israel, Kenya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Myanmar, New Zealand, Oman, Russia, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda, and UK have been allowed to open special Vostro rupee accounts (a foreign bank account in Bhartiya Bank) for settling payments Bhartiya rupee. The experts have pegged the near - term potential of rupee denominated trade of \$ 8-10 Billion, but raising the trajectory higher is fraught with challenges. First, the rupee is not fully convertible, so countries will hesitate to hold rupee balances. Bharat's trade imbalance with major partners may also dampen prospects for rupee - denominated trade. So Bharat should strive for a more balanced trade relationship. There may also be domestic challenges. The more globalised the rupee is, the more it would become vulnerable to external shocks in terms of commodity price fluctuations or global interest rates. In such a scenario, it would be difficult for RBI to ensure exchange rate stability.

We will discuss global challenges from US, China, Japan and Germany in the third and final article next month. □□

GMO Bio-Imperialism

Over the past few decades, GMO crops have been imposed in countries around the world, touted as a solution to food insecurity and malnutrition crises. However, hunger, disease and malnutrition have increased, while biodiversity has declined and toxins have spread. GMO imperialism has destroyed the lives and livelihoods of small farmers and biodiversity in the centers of origin. These centers of biodiversity origin are the cradles of the world's food supply and protection against disease, climate challenges, natural disasters or other obstacles to food production.

In Mexico, which is the center of origin of corn, there has been a long struggle by society and organized communities against GMO imperialism which threatens the subsistence and culture of local peoples. It is following this mobilization that the Mexican society obtained a ban on planting genetically modified corn through a collective lawsuit brought against the companies Bayer-Monsanto, Syngenta and Corteva Agriscience. This ban is still in effect.

Recently, the Mexican government issued an executive order phasing out the use of glyphosate and banning the use of genetically modified corn in tortillas, a staple food. Faced with this decision, the US government, on the basis of the United States-Mexico-Canada Free Trade Agreement (USMCA), activated the dispute resolution mechanism with the aim of canceling the order and forcing the introduction of GMOs into the country.

The Mexican government as well as the non-governmental organizations from Mexico presented their Technical Opinions before this Panel, based on detailed scientific evidence, including new found evidence by Mexico's scientific



In the wake of Mexico's battle against the United States, it is necessary to support and strengthen international solidarity against the corporate imposition of industrial food systems.

Dr. Vandana Shiva



advisory board CONAHCYT, rooted in scientifically rigorous evidence from academic institutions. This evidence pointed out and warned about the multiple risks that make it pertinent and urgent to stop the presence of genetically manipulated maize in the food of the Mexican population, and as raw material for other industries.

From 12 to 16 March 2024, Navdanya International, together with Latin American partners and the Mexican Government, organized a series of events in Mexico City to build a common strategy against the imposition of new and old GMOs. The mobilization in Mexico City counted on the presence of representatives of Latin American movements such as Argentina, Colombia, Bolivia, Costa Rica and others, in collaboration with Mexican civil society organizations, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and the Ministry of Culture. It was at the Ministry of Culture that the Garden of Milpa, the biodiverse traditional farming system of Mexico, was blessed at the Museum of Corn.

The case of Mexico represents the attempt of a people to protect their biodiverse cultures, their thousand-year-old food heritage, the health of their population and ecosystems. It is the case of a people who demand respect for their sovereignty and represents a beacon of hope for the places where this imposition continues. People have the right to have sovereignty over their health, and that starts with food sovereignty.

However, the GMO agenda has always been about patents

Agribusiness and biotechnology giants are trying to circumvent existing biosafety regulations, such as the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols of the Convention on Biological Diversity, by subtly making changes to GMO regulations, in order to promote GMOs under new acronyms, such as NBT, NGT or TEA.

and profits, not food and health. Food sovereignty is a high-level concept, because it implies the sovereignty of beings to manage and organize themselves and protect their right to health. This is why the goal of industrial agriculture has always been to push farmers off the land. It is inherent in the very definition of industrial agriculture. The sovereignty of people, farmers and nature has been violated by the imposition of agrotoxins, GMOs and ultra-processed foods, destroying diversity and ancient food cultures and threatening land, water and biodiversity.

Agribusiness and biotechnology giants are trying to circumvent existing biosafety regulations, such as the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols of the Convention on Biological Diversity, by subtly making changes to GMO regulations, in order to promote GMOs under new acronyms, such as NBT (New Breeding Techniques), NGT (New Genomic Techniques) or TEA (Techniques of Assisted Evolution). These new GMOs have been silently inserted into the agricultural legislation in force in various countries, with the aim of maintaining patent monopolies in the hands of the chemical and biotechnology giants.

Today, our seed sovereignty is threatened by intellectual property rights and new GMO

technologies that have transformed seeds from a common good into a commodity under the control and monopoly of multinational agri-food companies. Impositions continue to take place, violating the sovereignty and rights of people and nature, in furtherance of the corporate agenda. While multinationals get rich by stealing our biodiversity. Faced with this, building relationships, based on common struggle and the vision of an ecological future, contributes to creating international networks of resistance and solidarity. Together, as global citizens, we must unite to oppose the bullying of GMOs and defend our seeds.

Citizens are rising up against the unscientific, anti-democratic and anti-ecological imposition of GMOs by multinationals and the US government. The first generation of GMOs failed. But multinationals continue to impose genetically modified organisms, or new GMOs, in centers of diversity. They continue to shift the narrative towards framing nature and biodiversity as commodities to be commercialized and monopolized. In the wake of Mexico's battle against the United States, it is necessary to support and strengthen international solidarity against the corporate imposition of industrial food systems.

<https://navdanyainternational.org/gmo-bio-imperialism/>

Time to Ring Warning Bells on High Risk Technologies of Genetic and Other Modification of Insects

Various technologies of manipulation and modification of insects, including genetic modification, have been attracting a lot of debate in recent years, particularly in the context of mosquitoes. This debate heats up further if we include the hidden possibilities of the use of some of these technologies for biological or entomological warfare, even though at the more apparent level this research is taking place for admirable civilian objectives like protection from disease and development of agriculture.

Here it should be pointed out that the Biological Weapons Convention has banned the research and development relating to biological weapons and therefore anyone taking up research on bio-weapons is constrained to either hide this entirely in top-secret facilities, or else has to take up this in the garb of civilian and development research. When extensive testing in field conditions is needed, then the second option is the only option. To give an example of such debates, we may take up the example of the 'Insect Allies Program' implemented by Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) of the USA. Although at the more obvious level this is projected as a work of agricultural development, the fact that a leading defense agency is implementing it raises some suspicions, which have been confirmed by senior scientists and legal experts.

Here we quote from a document titled 'A Step towards Biological Warfare with Insects?' (October 4, 2018) of the Max Planck Institute of Germany. This document says—"A project funded by a research agency of the US Department of Defense is now giving rise to concerns about possibly being misused for the purpose of biological warfare. The program called 'Insect Allies' intends for insects to be used for dispersing genetically modified viruses to agricultural plants in fields. These viruses would be engineered so they can alter the chromosomes of plants through 'genome editing'. This would allow for genetic modification to be implemented quickly and at a large scale on crops that are already growing in fields, such as corn. In the journal 'Science' scientists from the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Biology in Plon and the Institut des Sciences de l'Evolution de Montpellier along with legal scholars from the University of Freiburg point out that this type of system could be more easily developed for use as a biological weapon than for the proposed agricultural purpose."

Further this review of year 2018 informs us that at the end of 2016 DARPA put out a call for tenders for a 4 year research work plan. This program has distributed a total of 27 million US dollars, aiming to develop genetically modified viruses that can genetically edit crops in fields, the review says. Maize and tomato plants are reportedly being used while dispersal insects include leafhoppers, whiteflies and aphids.

This review says that the DARPA program risks being perceived as a biological warfare research program that is justified on the basis of stated peaceful purposes.



It is time to ring the warning bells rather loudly to prevent the various dangers and risks, mostly irreversible risks, from spiraling out of control.

Bharat Dogra

The review warns that this can start a trend of similar research with biological warfare implications by other countries as well. “This kind of technology can easily be used for biological warfare”, says Silja Voneky, law professor from Freiburg University involved with this review. “It is very much easier to kill or sterilize a plant using gene editing than it is to make it herbicide or insect resistant,” says R.G. Reeves, scientist involved with this review, supporting this view.

There have been several other reports on biological warfare implications or linkages of some research on insects being pursued for stated development purposes. In India the Genetic Control of Mosquitoes Unit (GCMU) project was heavily indicted by the Public Accounts Committee of the Parliament due to such suspected linkages, and the issue was much debated during the 1970s and early 1980s. In this debate scholars were quoted as saying that if someone was thinking of spreading yellow fever as a biological warfare tactic, then the data gathered in this project could be very useful in this. This along with other reports of bio-warfare research relating to spread of yellow fever actually taking place at the Fort Detrick facility in the USA, caused concern (there were subsequent reports of this research being discontinued).

However even without the sinister linkages to bio-warfare, on just environmental grounds and distortion of development priorities, there have been several critical voices against insect modification and genetic modification. In addition there have been objections relating to lack of proper consent from affected people and provid-

ing them complete information as well as lack of proper regulation.

A publication of the British Parliament (Houses of Parliament, Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, Report No. 360) on Genetic Engineering relating to insects tried to summarize the objections being voiced by several British environmental NGOs—

- New insects or diseases may fill the ecological niche left by the insects suppressed or replaced, possibly resulting in new public health and agricultural problems.
- The new genes enforced into the insects may ‘jump’ into other species, a process called horizontal transfer, causing unintended consequences in the ecosystem.
- Releases would be impossible to monitor and irreversible as would be damage to the environment.

Writing in *The Scientific American* a scientist Helen Wallace, (then) Director of Gene Watch, UK, commented on the release of modified mosquitoes in several places, “Decisions appear to have been taken by a small circle of powerful investors who have decided they must rush to commercialize a particular technology, rather than in consultation with the people who will be affected. Who is liable if anything goes wrong? And will any problems be reversible as releases happen on an ever larger scale?”

In another essay written for *Conversation* (October 2019) Natalie Kefler, Francoise Baylis, Graham Dellaire and Landon J. Getz have combined concerns relating to science, ethics and governance (essay titled ‘Genetically modifying mosquitoes to control the spread of diseases carries unknown risks’).

A publication of the British Parliament (Houses of Parliament, Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, Report No. 360) on Genetic Engineering relating to insects tried to summarize the objections being voiced by several British environmental NGOs—

The authors tell us that with approval of Brazilian authorities Oxitec (the leading company in GM Mosquito technology) released nearly half a million GM Mosquitos every week into shared environments in Jacobina over a 2 year period from 2013 to 2015. This was done without the benefit of adequate risk assessment and without proper consultation. Plans have been made to extend field trials to other areas including the Florida Keys in the USA.

The authors further say—like GM soyabean or corn there is legitimate concern about the propagation of new genetic material in wild populations with as yet unknown consequences.

These authors ask—Shouldn’t Oxitec have made plans to assess the risk of gene transfer to wild populations during their initial trials? Shouldn’t the Brazilian government have required such an assessment as part of the regulatory approval process given their awareness of the risk?

In another review the Max Planck Institute has raised the issue –‘Genetically modified insects could

disrupt international food trade'. This review tells us that environment releases of genetically modified insects have been approved by US regulators in 2014 very near farming areas. The question is whether fruits and vegetables, exported by USA, can be sold under the organic label if genetically modified insects have developed on these.

These are only some of the concerns that have been voiced. However a bigger controversy relates to whether disease may even be aggravated due to the various problems related to the technology of modified mosquitoes, even though these mosquitoes are released with the stated objective of reducing disease. This is much discussed in the context of Brazil where there was so much of release of various kinds of modified mosquitoes, including genetically modified mosquitoes, in the name of reducing dengue disease but in 2024 dengue cases suddenly increased to alarmingly high levels instead of decreasing. Instead of this tragic situation resulting in reconsideration of the technology of modified mosquitoes, plans are being made to scale it up!

Let us see what various commentators are saying about this strange situation. The website KleanIndustries says (27 February 2024)—"Dengue fever surges by 400% in Brazil after Bill Gates-backed GMO mosquitos released. Dengue fever has spiked four fold in Brazil in 2024 following the release of millions of gene-edited mosquitoes. In the first five weeks of 2024, over 364,000 cases of dengue infection were reported, according to the country's health ministry, which is 4x greater than previous cases in

the same period in 2023. The dramatic spike has prompted Brazil to purchase millions of doses of the dengue vaccine."

Further this review notes that after the release of modified mosquitos cases of dengue have increased sharply this year instead of falling. The review states that both the WMP (World Mosquito Program) release of modified mosquitos and the recent desperate mass purchase of dengue vaccines from a Japanese firm was facilitated by Gates funding which is "involved in all sides of the situation"!

The Guardian reported a little earlier that emergency conditions existed in three states of Brazil due to sudden dengue upsurge and Brasila will start vaccination of children in the 10-14 age-group.

Checkup, MIT Technology Review weekly biotechnology newsletter, reported in March 2024 that dengue has sickened more than a million Brazilians, overwhelming hospitals. Cassandra Willyard reported earlier visiting WMP's insectary in Medellin, Colombia buzzing with mosquitos in netted enclosures. The report said that WMP is about to start construction on a mass rearing facility, the biggest in the world, in Curitiba and most of urban Brazil will be covered by the modified mosquito program in 10 years.

An earlier report in MIT Technology Review by Devienne Ferreira titled 'Inside the Mosquito Factory that could stop Dengue and Zika' reported an amazing, but also deeply worrying situation of a van moving around Piracicaba city in Sao Paulo, its rider casually releasing genetically modified mosquitoes from containers every two minutes or so and by the time the

daily route is completed 250,000 of these mosquitoes would be released! These have been 'produced' at a facility near the city of Campinas. This is likely to cost the city \$2.7 million a year, according to a rough estimate in this report. This report also tells us that in 2015 Oxitec was acquired for \$ 160 million by the US conglomerate Intrexon, which owns a portfolio of transgenic organisms including salmon and apple trees.

A report in Nature by Mariana Lenharo (14April 2023) tells us about plans for a 'massive mosquito factory in Brazil' which will produce up to five billion bacteria infected mosquitos per year to fight dengue.

According to a 2022 review by the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, USA, since 2019 over a billion modified mosquitos have been released at world level, in several countries.

A report in The Guardian by Gabrielle Canon (26 March 2022) tells us that US is poised to release 2.4 billion genetically modified male mosquitoes to battle deadly diseases and the EPA has cleared the UK based biotech company Oxitec to release a maximum of roughly 2.4 billion of its mosquitos till 2024.

Clearly all the voices of caution and all the adverse evidence have not prevented the technologies based on modified insects, including genetically modified insects, from being scaled up to new heights, increasing their high risks. It is time to ring the warning bells rather loudly to prevent the various dangers and risks, mostly irreversible risks, from spiraling out of control. □□

The writer is Honorary Convener, Campaign to Save Earth Now. His recent books include Protecting Earth for Children, Planet in Peril, A Day in 2071 and India's Quest for Sustainable Farming and Healthy Food.

A scientifically-evolved and truly accountable FSSAI need of the hour



We can't let the FSSAI to get away with it. There are 26 scientific committees that FSSAI has constituted for setting standards and yet if the norms are so relaxed it becomes obvious that the 'conflict of interest' is much larger than what has often been talked about. Nestle India Chairman and Managing Director Suresh Narayanan's denial of the accusation of a higher sugar content in baby food formulations as being "racially stereotyped is unfortunate" and untrue, has to be taken with a pinch of salt.

"There is no local of approach to making a nutritional adequacy study. Globally the recipes are engendered in an age where energy dense

products are needed by growing children. So there is no distinction that is made between a child in Europe and a child in India or any other parts of the world," he was quoted as saying in the media on April 29.

He was responding to news items based on a report released by the Switzerland-based NGO Third Eye and the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) accusing the company of double standards — having high sugar content in the baby food cereal (Cerelec) that is marketed in developing countries, including India, when compared with the product sold in Europe.

"That we have the need in India is the reason why we have added this, but at levels which are much lower than what is even specified by the local regulator and I think one has to have the trust and confidence that the local regulator knows what we are putting there. So it is not a dramatic deviation that has been done."

He further adds that the formulations get translated into a product locally on the basis of "different considerations on local regulatory requirements on local availability of raw materials on some of the maternal feeding habits."

If all that has been said by way of the denial statement was true, I don't see any reason why the Ministry of Consumer Affairs should have directed the regulatory agency – the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) — to take "appropriate action" against Nestle.

Following the directive, the FSSAI has already initiated an investigation into the controversy regarding the composition of Nestle baby food product. And let me add here, despite the seemingly tough directive for probe into the allegations I am not sure how far will the promised investigations reach to its logical conclusions.

If the FSSAI had worked with an iron fist in first setting up tougher standards, and then following it up with tougher implementation, no food giant would have taken the Indian market so casually. The denial statement from Nestle itself



Nestle accused of varying levels of sugar content in products for India and European nations

Devinder Sharma

bears the visible fault lines when it says (and I repeat): “That we have the need in India is the reason we have added this, but at levels which are much lower than what is even specified by the local regulator.” If you look at this statement carefully, the question that immediately crops up is where is the need in India that prompted the company to go in for higher sugar content in baby food? Who has asked the baby food companies to add more sugar for the products sold in India?

I haven’t seen any study or report from nutrition bodies in India that seek more sugar in baby foods as energy diffuser.

At the same time, Nestle says that it has added only 7.1 grams of sugar per 100 grams of feed, and that too against the permissible limit of 13.6 grams that the FSSAI has prescribed, opens up another worm of cans. It only shows how lax have been the FSSAI standards, allowing even an elephant to pass through. FSSAI should be asked to release the data based on which it set the permissible limit of sugar in baby foods. We can’t let the FSSAI get away with it. There are 26 scientific committees that FSSAI has constituted for setting standards and yet if the norms are so relaxed it becomes obvious that the ‘conflict of interest’ is much larger than what has often been talked about.

As senior science commentator Dinesh C. Sharma, says: “For years, consumer groups and public health experts have been demanding a distinct health label for food products high in salt, sugar and fats, but the food safety authority and the industry have constantly opposed this. On the other hand, the regulator is quick to meet

industry demands and even endorse their products, which is not its mandate.”

It only shows how corporations influence public policy.

Now let’s move to pesticides. Amidst the heat generated over certain Indian spice brands violating the quality standards thereby inviting import bans, it has now become clear that the FSSAI (through an order issued on April 8, 2024) itself raised the permissible residue limit (MRL) of pesticides in spices and herbs by 10 times. Against the permissible limit of 0.01 mg per kg, the limit has now been raised to 0.1 mg/kg. This comes at a time when (based on RTI) it has been found that in the past five years, the presence of pesticide residues has increased from 22.6 per cent to 35.9 per cent in the tested samples.

Under the given conditions, and knowing that tighter pesticides regulations in Europe and America have led to Indian export consignments being increasingly rejected on quality parameters, the relaxation of MRL norms by FSSAI clearly comes as a surprise.

Coming back to sugar, while it is important to be mindful of your sugar intake, much of it remains hidden in processed foods. Even an enlightened consumer will find it difficult to identify the added sugars. Since several studies have shown that there are at least 56 different names for sugar that normally are used to deceive consumers, but at least the FSSAI should be able to read these and drastically restrict its usage knowing the harm it causes.

I am not only talking of diabetes that too much sugar consumption can lead to, but as a study

published in the Journal of Dermatology has shown that besides genetic characters, even sugar-sweetened beverages can lead to hair loss in men.

Where does it all lead to especially seeing the quantum jump in junk foods consumption over the years? If FSSAI could emerge as a tough regulator, the average consumer will become satisfied and comfortable with whatever he is buying off the supermarket shelves knowing it is safe and healthy. But it is not happening. A dominant section of the consumers knows that the processed foods that he/she is buying are not healthy but he is left with little choice. Global studies have shown that a whopping 89 per cent of the processed foods available in India (and six other major economies) are unhealthy (see my earlier column: Processed foods and beverages are silent killers, Jan. 18, 2024).

We already have a situation where childhood obesity is going to be a bigger problem than childhood hunger. On the other hand, India is already among the top five countries in adult obesity. Reports say an estimated 135 million Indians are either obese or overweight.

I don’t blame it entirely on food habits and consumption but the ‘chalta hai’ attitude to regulate quality of food is pushing more and more people in that trap. The urgent need is to convert FSSAI into a body that the country can have faith and confidence in. Even if it comes to overhauling the existing structure, we must do it.

That’s the kind of guarantee the nation needs. □□

(The author is a noted food policy analyst and an expert on issues related to the agriculture sector. He writes on food, agriculture and hunger)
<https://www.bhaskar.com/news/opinion/a-scientific-validated-and-truly-accountable-fssai-need-of-the-hour-1311705>

Iran vs Israel

Iranian diplomacy is a fine balance between audacity and caution, which is how Tehran survived decades of US hostility and sanctions. It is therefore not surprising that Tehran did not rush to fire missiles at Tel Aviv after the April 1, 2024 attack on its consulate in Damascus, Syria, which took the lives of 16 persons, including Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Zahedi, a senior Quds Force commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and seven other IRGC officers. Bewildered at the delay, Russian philosopher Alexander Dugin mused, “Observing with perplexity Iranian procrastination” (Apr 08, 2024).

Calibrating its moves carefully, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian held separate telephone conversations with his Saudi, Iraqi and United Arab Emirates counterparts on April 10 evening, and he urged them to put pressure on Israel to end the massacre of Palestinians, especially in Gaza. Early on April 11, the US Middle East envoy Brett McGurk called the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar and Iraq and asked them to urge Iran to lower tensions with Israel.

Within Israel, however, the newspaper *Haaretz* wrote, “It shouldn’t be said, but there is no choice, we have completely failed. The objectives of the war will not be achieved, prisoners will not return under military pressure, security will not return, and international hostility and isolation will not disappear. We failed and that’s reality.”

Visiting Damascus, the Iranian foreign minister asserted, “the coming days will be difficult days for Israel, and I say it loudly from Damascus” (April 10, 2024). Amir-Abdollahian said Tehran has communicated to the US, through diplomatic channels (most likely Oman), that it is responsible for backing Israel, and has informed all countries that Israel has crossed all red lines and that punishment is certain. Ayatollah Khamenei had already vowed to ‘punish’ Israel for the Damascus strike. As a precaution, Israel evacuated 28 embassies in countries considered unsafe. Tel Aviv reversed its GPS to limit Iran’s ability to launch missile strikes against Israeli targets. But the risk of escalation remains.

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and Foreign Minister Israel Katz in turn threatened (April 10) that if Iran launched an attack from its soil, then Israel would strike back inside Iran.

The London-based *Elaph News* on April 9 cited an anonymous “Western security official” as saying that Israel is preparing to target Iranian nuclear facilities and other key infrastructure in such an eventuality. The Lebanese *Al-Akhbar*, affiliated with Hezbollah, reported that Iran has told Washington that it will refrain from retaliation if there is a ceasefire in Gaza and Israel does not attack the southern Gaza city of Rafah. Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has meanwhile announced that the date to attack Rafah has been decided.

Washington believes that Tehran may ask friendly forces like the Houthis, Hezbollah, and the Islamic Resistance in Iraq to respond, to avoid a direct confrontation with the United States. Hezbollah has vowed to respond as a member of its elite



The Lebanese Al-Akhbar, affiliated with Hezbollah, has reported that Iran told Washington that it would refrain from retaliation if there is a ceasefire in Gaza and Israel does not attack the southern Gaza city of Rafah.

Sandhya Jain



Radwan forces was killed by Israel in an air raid in the eastern city of Baalbek, after Hezbollah shot down an Israeli drone. A senior advisor of Ayatollah Khamenei, Yahya Rahim Safavi, warned that Israeli embassies were “no longer safe.”

Speaking in Beirut on “Quds Day” (April 5), 2024, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah called the attack on the Iranian consulate a “turning point.” In a pointed message to Israel, he said, “We have not used the main weapons nor the main forces and we have not called in the reserves.” Observers believe this was a signal to Washington to rein in Tel Aviv.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Cairo to discuss a possible ceasefire (April 9, 2024) and proposed a deal whereby Hamas would release 40 hostages held in Gaza in return for a six-week ceasefire and Israel releasing 900 Palestinian prisoners. Hamas responded that it would discuss the new US proposal “in a responsible manner” and convey its response to the Qatari and Egyptian mediators.

But on April 10, 2024, three sons (Hazem, Amir, and Muhammad) and four grandchildren (Mona, Amal, Khaled and Razan) of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh were killed in an air strike on Gaza

City’s Al-Shati Camp. In a statement to *Al Jazeera*, Haniyeh said, “The enemy will be delusional if it thinks that targeting my sons, at the climax of the [ceasefire] negotiations and before the movement sends its response, will push Hamas to change its position.”

Tel Aviv’s relentless offensive led to the targeted killing of seven aid workers from the NGO World Central Kitchen in Gaza, including one American and three Britons, on April 7, 2024. Faced with international outrage, Israel claimed the first air strike was due to mistaken identity while the second and third were “grave” mistakes. However, observers said the strikes were to stop food and aid from entering Gaza where 33,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, have died in six months of bombing, which has destroyed all hospitals in the Strip. The UN has accused Israel of using hunger as a “weapon of war.” The Crisis Group warned that Israel’s campaign in Gaza has pushed many to the edge of death from starvation and disease.

After a telephone call between Prime Minister Netanyahu and US President Biden, the Israeli War Cabinet on April 4, 2024, announced that it would open the Erez border crossing and the port of Ashdod

for humanitarian aid into Gaza. But as of this writing, both remained closed, according to Juliette Touma, director of communications for the United Nations Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA).

Earlier, the UN Security Council passed a resolution calling for ‘an immediate ceasefire’ during the month of Ramadan (March 25, 2024), the immediate and unconditional release of hostages and “the urgent need to expand the flow” of aid into Gaza (Washington abstained). As Israel ignored the UNSC resolutions and International Court of Justice (ICJ) rulings, Washington said the UNSC resolution is non-binding, making a mockery of international law.

The UN Human Rights Council on April 5, 2024, adopted a resolution calling for Israel to be held accountable for possible war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Gaza Strip (28 in favour, 13 abstentions, and 06 opposed, including the US and Germany). However, the US conceded that Israel had not done enough to mitigate harm to civilians. Michèle Taylor, US permanent representative to the Council, said, “in just six months, more humanitarians have been killed in this conflict than in any war of the modern era.”

In later resolutions, the Council endorsed the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, and denounced Israeli settlements in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem and in the Golan Heights, captured from Syria in 1967. It said these endangered the viability of an eventual Palestinian state alongside Israel.

Norway condemned the bombing of the Iranian consulate while Spanish Prime Minister Pedro

Sanchez plans to encourage Norway, Ireland, Portugal, Slovenia and Belgium to recognize the State of Palestine. The new Irish Prime Minister Simon Harris openly admonished Netanyahu saying, "Allow me to convey to you the position of the Irish people. And it is very clear: what you are doing disgusts us. Cease fire immediately and allow humanitarian aid to pass through."

Meanwhile, on April 9, 2024, Palestine's quest to be a full member of the United Nations was checked by the US which asserted it should be admitted as a full member at the end of a peace process with Israel, giving Tel Aviv a virtual veto on Palestine's UN membership.

Natural gas

A little-noticed aspect of the ethnic cleansing in Gaza relates to Israel's desire to monopolize the

natural gas deposits found off the Mediterranean coast. In November 2023, soon after the hostilities began (October 7, 2023), Israel granted 12 exploration licenses to six companies, including the UK's BP, Korean subsidiary Dana Petroleum, Italy's Eni, and Israel's Ratio Energies (RATIP.TA), to explore gas deposits within the maritime jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority, in blatant violation of international law.

Golan Heights

Soon after the attack on the Iranian consulate in Damascus, Moscow announced it was moving auxiliary forces to the Syrian Golan Heights (April 3, 2024) and requested a meeting with the UN Security Council. Just before the special military operation in Ukraine in February 2022, Russia's deputy ambassador to Geneva

told the UN Security Council that "Russia doesn't recognize Israel's sovereignty over Golan Heights that are part of Syria."

Climate

A far deeper impact of the war is the ecocide of natural ecosystems in Gaza, which could make the land uninhabitable for years, even generations. In March 2024, Forensic Architecture reported that over 2,000 agricultural sites, including farms and greenhouses, have been destroyed in Gaza since October 2023. Nearly half of the trees in Gaza have been razed. International humanitarian law (IHL) prohibits warfare that may cause "widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment". However, having dropped over 65,000 tonnes of bombs on the Gaza Strip, Israel seems unable to stop. □□

<https://www.sandhyajainarchive.org/2024/04/11/iran-vs-israel/>

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Why demographic dividend eludes India's gig economy

The rapid expansion of the gig or platform economy over the past decade has provided growing opportunities for India's young population. It's hardly surprising that this segment of the economy has seen the fastest growth in workforce—from 2.5 million in 2011-12 to nearly 13 million in the current fiscal, and is predicted to grow to 23 million by the end of the decade, according to NITI Aayog estimates. With such opportunities opening up for India's youth, there are heightened expectations that the country has finally reached the stage from where demographic dividend can be reaped.

It may, however, be pointed out that the realisation of demographic dividend critically depends on the workforce's ability to increase productivity under conditions that the International Labour Organization terms "decent work". This implies that for India's young workforce to progress, it is necessary to examine their working conditions so that appropriate policy interventions can be formulated.

Over the past two years, the NITI Aayog and the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) provided similar perspectives on the ever-expanding platform economy, though they have focused on two distinct aspects. The NITI Aayog report, 'India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy', and the NCAER report, 'Socio-economic Impact Assessment of Food Delivery Platform Workers', convey similar messages. One, it confirms that the gig and platform economy creates opportunities for India's youth and is the basis of reaping demographic dividend. Two, there is a move towards formalisation of the informal workforce, and it therefore acts as a tool for social protection. It's a wonder how these reports could project such a cheery image, sidestepping discussions on the precarious nature of their work.



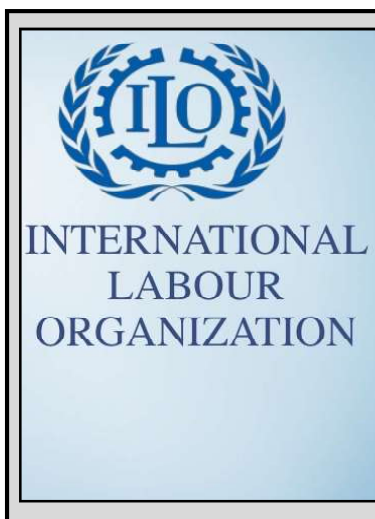
A new study shows the working conditions of most Indian platform economy workers flout ILO norms. It also implies that the productivity of workers in the 21-40 age group is affected, sharply curbing the possibility of reaping demographic dividend from this young nation.
Biswajit Dhar



The reality of the working and living conditions of app-based workers has recently been unveiled in a report by the People's Association In Grassroots Action and Movement (PAIGAM), University of Pennsylvania and the Indian Federation of App-based Transport Workers. The report is a significant contribution to the understanding of this segment of workers for it is based on responses of over 5,000 drivers and delivery persons in eight cities. It shows the working conditions of these workers do not conform to the criteria of "decent work" that the ILO says involves "opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for all, better prospects for personal development and social integration", among other things.

How do their working conditions deviate from the ILO norms and what are the implications? That app-based drivers have excessively long working hours is common knowledge, but what this latest report does is provide an assessment of the length of their working day. Over 83 percent of the respondents worked for over 10 hours a day, and close to 60 percent worked for over 12 hours. As many as 31 percent of the drivers reported that their average working day was in excess of 14 hours.

So the working day of an overwhelming majority of app-based workers contravenes the ILO Convention on Hours of Work (Industry) Convention, one of the earliest norms of the organisation. It sets a general standard of working hours that are not expected to exceed 48 hours a week,



Given the unacceptable condition of the drivers, the government needs to urgently reverse further moves towards irresponsibly flexible labour markets and strongly enforce the ILO labour standards.

with a maximum of eight hours per day. In the Indian context, the Factories Act provides a yardstick—it indicates that a work day cannot exceed nine hours.

The rationale for stipulating the length was to find a proper balance between work and leisure that has long been considered a sine qua non for achieving higher productivity. It is empirically proven that working hours tend to decrease when incomes rise and people can afford more of the things they enjoy, including more leisure. In fact, in more productive economies, workers have been progressively working less. In contrast, the less productive poorer economies have seen workers working longer to earn more and compensate for lower productivity.

The relationship between working hours and productivity has greater significance for India in view of the PAIGAM, UPenn and IFAT report, which shows that 78 percent of respondents were between 21 and 40 years. Thus, excessively long work days can have an inimical impact on the productivity of younger workers involved in this occupation, which in turn implies the possibilities of reaping

a demographic dividend diminish quite drastically.

Further, the large share of the youth engaged as app-based drivers could also be an indication that in this profession, those in the older age groups cannot generally take on the excessive workload. In other words, the working age for these drivers effectively ends at 40 years, instead of the generally considered 64 years. With about 70 percent of the drivers reporting that their earnings are not adequate to meet their expenses, their working conditions can be best described as precarious.

This represents one of the worst examples of labour market flexibility, the form of worker engagement that has generally found favour with Indian businesses. Given the unacceptable condition of the drivers, the government needs to urgently reverse further moves towards irresponsibly flexible labour markets and strongly enforce the ILO labour standards. Only then can the country's young population be productively employed, ensuring that demographic dividend becomes a reality.

Biswajit Dhar: Former professor, JNU; Vice President, Council for Social Development
<https://www.newindianexpress.com/opinions/2024/Apr/16/why-demographic-dividend-eludes-india-gg-economy>

Narrative Alert

The narrative has an important role in earning support for an idea, gaining a market for a consumer product, availing services, convincing the audiences, to follow health practices, running the system, advertising the product, and selling the services that in turn resulting in a favorable outcome for the narrative builders in terms of financial revenue and public support or whatever is the desired target for the narrative builders. The narrative builders have to defend themselves from the opponent's narrative and this results in a sequence of narrative and counter-narrative building races. The race becomes intense and below-the-belt benchmarks keep sliding, this happens usually in the political domain whether that be local politics, regional politics, national politics, or international politics. But the elections happen every five years and relying on the wrong narrative to win elections has a short-term gain only as the voters in the next election punish those politicians and political party or group of politicians and political parties who build the wrong narrative to cheat voters. There do exist other domains apart from politics where the existence of wrong narratives is deadly to the existence of civilization. The countering of such narratives and setting the correct narrative is the responsibility of every knowledgeable and able individual as well as organization. The contemporary civilization provides a vast platform and sources for spreading narratives. Academics and media are the two important domains where reversing the established wrong narrative is a tough job.



The narrative-building exercise is a data war and it's happening everywhere, it happening in corporates, in international trades, in stock exchanges, in academia, in media, in war zones, in technology development, and everywhere.
Alok Singh

The civilization of narrative building and narrative demolishing existed for a long and it has become an important driver today as life has become fast as well as lengthier and the access to social media platforms to everyone has turned the narrative building exercise to twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, fifty-two weeks a year, non-stop marathon race. The damage due to the wrong narrative by the wrong group of people is so high that the right narrative by the right group of people is the only visible solution. Every responsible citizen should own the responsibility to demolish the wrong narrative even if it does not affect their personal life but affects their social, national, human, and planet's life then they should do their part in setting the wrong narrative right. The wrong narrative will of course die naturally in the long term but the cost of short-term ignorance of the wrong narrative is like waiting for monsoon to extinguish the burning house.

The narrative building has various tools including awareness campaigns, data-based reports, journal publications, editorials in newspapers, articles in magazines, debates and panel discussions on television, posts on social media platforms, course curriculum, school syllabus, arts, theater, cinema, music, drama, painting, movies, literature, stories, poems, poetries, entertainment, conferences, seminars, books, even sports and any other format that involves a group of individuals as a participant or as an audience. The important element in narrative building is to

engage outsiders whether it be an individual or an organization to do the narrative building on behalf of the interested individual or organization country or group of other entities. The corporate world and the manufacturing sector as well as the services sector are the leaders in the narrative setting and the same tools are being engaged by political parties and social organizations including religious organizations to propagate their narrative. There are many illustrations of failed narratives that have killed the establishment and damaged it so much that it is yet to be revived. In our own country a narrative was set by the vested interest that all of us need iodized salt and the awareness campaign was extensively run by the government from the government treasury later the Supreme Court nullified the mandatory consumption of iodized salt and this whole narrative was demolished by Swadeshi Jagran Manch but the damage that it has caused is so huge that still people are unnecessarily consuming iodized salt leading to negative health repercussions and those manufacturers and traders who used to supply non-iodized salt are still missing from this business. The other narrative is by Coca-Cola which has set the narrative like "Thanda Matlab Coca-Cola". Although it's an advertising punchline and legally it can't be checked. The social organizations in the sector of food and health should aggressively engage resources to counter such narratives. The other illustration is that of Cadbury Chocolates which has built up the narrative that "Pappu Paas Ho Gaya- Kuch Meetha Ho Jai" means Cadbury chocolates. They have set the narrative

The corporate world and the manufacturing sector as well as the services sector are the leaders in the narrative setting and the same tools are being engaged by political parties and social organizations including religious organizations to propagate their narrative.

that Cadbury chocolates are substitutes for sweets and this has affected our traditional sweets and eating habits.

The celebrities are well paid to spread the narrative, they are paid advertisement fees and it is dominated by actors and actresses and sportspersons. Can we think of regulating legally the role of celebrities in spreading narratives? Can we come up with a framework that binds celebrities to follow practices that safeguard the consumer's interest?

The media always positions itself as unbiased and independent of the parties involved in a particular issue. But the traces of media funding including foreign funding raise doubt about the credibility of such media houses. The narrative building always needs someone who is not linked with the issue to promote the narrative and this is like an independent think tank or independent research organization. But how independent are such think tanks and organizations? Our country has been consistently the victim of international think tanks and international research organizations who have diluted their research methodology, cherry-picked the data, and analyzed the statistical outcomes based on insufficient data and all this is nothing but narrative buildup to the malign devel-

opment of our nation. The ranking of our nations in the hunger index is an example. The world of academics is full of frameworks for narrative building like the rankings of universities and the market of research paper publications.

Recently China Development Forum (CDF) clipped the wings of Prof. Stephen S Roach of Yale University. He has been attending CDF for the last twenty-five years but his current observations did not suit the narrative of CDF. Prof. Peter Higgs received the Nobel Prize in 2013 for his 1964 work on the Higgs Boson (God particle) which was confirmed in 2012. He died at the age of 94 on 8 April this year and said that in this publication-based narrative-building academia he would not have been hired by any good university as since 1964 he has less than ten publications.

The narrative-building exercise is a data war and it's happening everywhere, it happening in corporates, in international trades, in stock exchanges, in academia, in media, in war zones, in technology development, and everywhere. We need to be alert, open our minds, and make decisions based on our judgment and our primary inputs.

(Alok Singh has a doctorate in management from the Indian Institute of Management Indore and is currently co-founder and director at AGET Business School, Jhajjar, Haryana).

Mewar as Focus of Guhila State (Part-XXII)

The state also depended on local Bhil Chiefs for the occasional mobilization of Bhil as militia for the state. This statement can be true at least for the territories within the limits of Oghna-Panarwa and Undri.

The chief of Oghna-Panarwa has been significantly described as the 'head of five thousand bows'. Traditions have preserved accounts of the Bhils fighting for both R??a Hammira in the fourteenth century and Rana Pratap in the sixteenth century. The chivalry exemplified by the Bhils in the battle of Haldigha?i remains a popular theme in Bhil folklore. The mobilization of armies by the different deities of Chittaur leading to the victory of the mahara?as of Mewar is a recurrent theme of Bhil songs. These songs not only reflect the popular image of the Guhila rulers but also Bhil involvement in the Mewar army. However, such themes seem to emanate more from the ranks of Bhil chiefs.

All these contributions made by the local Bhil population towards the maintenance of the state ran parallel to the continuing process of peasantization of the Bhils in the nucleus of local Rajput states. Direct evidence of this process comes from the Mala copper plates of the thirteenth century from Vagod. Two Bhils, Nadhol and Ralhu?, figure as witnesses to the royal grants made in the village of Mala near Dungarpur. In his discussion of religious attributes of the Bhils, R.S. Mann observes that the plough is an implement of occasional worship, possibly since the time the Bhils shifted to a settled agricultural economy and became dependent on agriculture. The importance of agriculture is also reflected in the folk-songs of those Bhils who were settled in villages. Themes such as field preparation, the harvest and protection of crops from animals are common.



All these contributions made by the local Bhil population towards the maintenance of the state ran parallel to the continuing process of peasantization of the Bhils in the nucleus of local Rajput states.
Prof. Nandini Kapur Sinha



However, peasantization seems to have involved very few Bhils in the core of the Guhila state. It must be remembered that the majority of Bhils had been practising hunting, gathering and shifting agriculture. The traditional economic pursuit of a majority of Bhils is reflected in one of their legends popular among the Bhils of Gujarat. Once Mahadeva took a Bhil-girl as his bride. Her brothers went to Mahadeva for the bride price. They were offered Nandi, the bull. Pervati (the Bhil bride in this case) told her brothers that the hump of the bull contained unlimited wealth-hinting thereby that by yoking the bull they would be prosperous. The greedy foresters killed the bull to possess the wealth immediately. This angered the goddess and she cursed the Bhils to perennial poverty. The legend proves the unpopularity of agriculture among most Bhils, but the economic process of state formation (involving the horizontal spread of rural settlements) brought about a transformation in some tribal pockets in which at least a small section of the Bhils emerged as agriculturists.

In spite of Bhil participation in the functioning of the state apparatus, a paradox emerges: in the state's image of the Bhils they were a socially despised ethnic group. Though the tik ceremony performed by the Bhil chiefs at the royal coronations is known to have continued at a latter period, there is no such mention in the official Guhila records. The official attitude is clearly expressed in a thirteenth-century record from Chittaurgarh: 'the enemies of king Alla are incapable of showing their contempt towards him in the battle-

field, treat Sabara women disrespectfully and they describe his actions as pleasures in each of the mountains'. This official attitude possibly also point out that the fact that women were used as weapons in a clash between two political opponents and that 'disrespect' (rape) of women was used to denigrate the opponent points to the patriarchal nature of the polity in which women had no say except as instruments of patriarchal political interests. Secondly, the Bhil residents of the village Mala have been merely designated as 'Bhils' without any such titles as raval, raval, etc., that designated some of the contemporary Rajput residents of the village Mala. An understanding of the official image of the Bhils perhaps reveals the actual situation of the Bhils in society and highlights the problem of tribal integration in the state. In spite of a close and long Bhil-Guhila interaction, the state had to reassert itself again and again in the Bhil localities.

The problem is especially evident in the fifteenth century, probably due to the long absence of Guhila authority in Mewar for a major part of the fourteenth century. Also, the element of egalitarianism, dominant in the Bhil social structure, would have generated problems for the Bhil chiefs (even those of Oghna-Panarwa and Undri) in controlling Bhils beyond their limited territorial jurisdiction. Recurrent Bhil revolts have plagued the history of Mewar. Rana Hammira is credited with victory over the Bhils of Jilwara (Merwara tract) in the Srngeri Inscription of the early fifteenth century. Rana Khet is eulogized in the Amarakavyam for having con-

quered and annexed the territories of the Bhils and the Minis. In the fifteenth century, Maharana Kumbha fortified many passes to control the Bhils of Panarwa. Every possible step was taken to fend off possible attacks by Bhils. Significantly, Tod observes that khalis (royal land) in Mewar was bounded on three sides by wandering barbarous tribes. In the area between the Bhil tract and the core of the state were estates of Rajput chiefs. Bhil discontent was perhaps responsible for the settlement of a Solamki Rajput chief, Aksaya Rana, in Panarwa in the fifteenth century. One of Aksaya Rana's successors settled in Oghna in the sixteenth century. Prior to the Solamkis, a Rajput of Yadu lineage, and a Dudhi Brahmana Udairja, are known to have lived in the Bhil areas of Panarwa and Oghna respectively. All this had a significant impact on the Bhil chiefs. The presence of Solamki chiefs in Oghna-Panarwa is likely to have been responsible for the Bhil-Solamki marriage in the subsequent period and claims to Solamki descent by the chiefs of Oghna-Panarwa. It is well-known that the Bhil chiefs of Oghna-Panarwa claim descent from the Solamki lineage of the Rajputs. Similarly, some other Bhil groups of Mewar, Magra, Kalyanpur, etc., claimed descent from different Rajput lineages. The Solamki Bhils of Oghna-Panarwa may be the oldest case of 'Rajputization' among the Bhils of southern Rajasthan. The Bhils claiming Rajput descent are called the Bhilpals (progeny of Rajput fathers and Bhil mothers). They claim a rank superior to the Bhils.

To be continued ...

Any inheritance tax in India risks flight of wealth from the country: Dr. Ashwani Mahajan



India's ongoing national elections are witnessing an intense political debate over inheritance tax and wealth redistribution triggered by a comment by Sam Pitroda, the chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress, an arm of the Indian National Congress. Weighing in on this debate, economist Ashwani Mahajan says India may lose wealth to foreign countries if such a tax is imposed on the super-rich, which would consequently discourage investment and entrepreneurship.

"Finance is highly mobile in nature. In anticipation of inheritance tax if people transfer their wealth abroad to avoid high taxes on their offspring on inheritance after their death, then we shall be losing national wealth to foreign countries. That will be the worst scenario," Mahajan told Moneycontrol in an interview. India did in fact have an inheritance tax, which was introduced in 1953, but after over three decades in existence it was abolished in 1985 under the Congress government led by Rajiv Gandhi.

According to Mahajan, when the duty was in existence an increase in tax evasions was noticed. And given that India has largely been able to tackle the menace of tax avoidance in the last few decades, a return to such a duty would undo that progress. Mahajan added that India cannot follow the footsteps of the UK and the US when it comes to taxing the rich given that India both economically as well as culturally is different from the West.

"We cannot compare India to countries like the US and the UK that have some form or the other of an inheritance tax. They are developed countries but India is looking to become a developed nation by 2047 so we need to encourage entrepreneurship, savings and capital formation, in a bid to reach the goal of 'Viksit Bharat' and a measure like inheritance tax

does not help with that goal," the economist said.

Congress leader Praveen Chakravarty echoes the same sentiment on this issue.

"Given that we are still a developing economy, the tax proceeds from an inheritance tax will not be large. Therefore, it is not worth taking the risk of slowing down investment for a very small tax revenue gain. I understand, in a developed country it is a good idea because they don't have as much shortage of capital, and they have more advanced capital markets and capital raising capacity, Charkravaty said.

Therefore, inheritance tax will not work in the Indian economy as it currently stands, the Congress leader told Moneycontrol. While in the US there is a tax of up to 40 percent on estates valued at over \$13 million, which is levied in 13 states, the inheritance duty is imposed by a fewer number of districts on property or other assets when the person dies and passes it on to the next in line. And, the British government puts a tax on the value of the deceased's net estate at the time of death at the rate of 40 percent above a threshold, which is currently at 325,000 pounds.

Both Mahajan and Chakravarty feel that for now India needs to focus more on encouraging investments rather than taxing the rich. Mahajan goes a step further and terms the very idea of redistribution of redistribution of wealth as a bad idea.

"If there is an unequal distribution of income, wealth and consumption it is not because of a single regime. Over the years since 1991 inequality in distribution is visible. But taking away wealth from the rich and redistributing it to the poor is not going to solve the problem. As per my understanding, there is nothing wrong if poor people in India are fed through free food grain schemes, especially when we have a surplus, but in the long run we need to make people capable of earning from themselves, so that their dependence on the government reduces," Mahajan said. The economist said that the whole world is facing the challenge of keeping up with distributing welfare money, including rich nations like Europe and the UK.

<https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/any-inheritance-tax-in-india-risks-flight-of-wealth-from-the-country-says-economist-ashwani-mahajan-12711503.html>

'India Is Not Xenophobic': Analysts Slam Biden's Flawed Logic on Immigration

US President Joe Biden is once again in hot water in India for his indiscreet remarks blaming "xeno-

phobia” for India’s lower growth projections in 2024.

“Why is China stalling so badly economically, why is Japan having trouble, why is Russia, why is India, because they’re xenophobic. They don’t want immigrants. Immigrants are what makes us strong,” Biden told a fundraiser for his re-election campaign in Washington. According to International Monetary Fund (IMF) projections, the US economy will grow by 2.7 per cent in 2024, up from 2.5 per cent in 2023. By 2025, US economic growth is expected to slow to 1.9 per cent, a fact conveniently ignored by Biden.

India, meanwhile, is expected to grow by 6.8 per cent this year, compared with 7.8 per cent in 2023. Significantly, unlike the ageing US and Western societies, India has one of the largest working-age populations on the planet, which has been a key motivation for foreign companies to set up factories in the South Asian nation.

Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) questions Biden’s economic logic. “The remarks of President Biden terming India as ‘xenophobic’ lack context,” SJM told Sputnik India. The academic reasoned that invoking a “slowed growth projection for one particular year to claim that India is slowing was difficult to comprehend”.

“India still remains and will continue to remain the fastest-growing major economy. It is poised to become the world’s third largest economy in the next five years. India has been performing well on all economic indicators, be it record foreign exports, record foreign investments and in being able to increase its Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection to a record \$25 billion in 2023-24 fiscal,” SJM highlighted.

SJM also stressed that India has never been against “legal immigration”.

“We have followed a humane approach to accepting immigrants, being persecuted on religious grounds, as reflected by the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). What we’re against is illegal immigration. We have already witnessed the perils of illegal immigration in Europe, where there is a rising tide of anger against illegals due to the threat they pose to social fabric and national security,” the Indian activist and economist remarked.

Dr Gulrez Sheikh, a geopolitical analyst, noted that Biden’s remarks against India appeared to be “purely driven by domestic considerations”.

“Biden is very conveniently bringing in geopolitics and India into his presidential re-election cam-



paign, while he continues to ignore pressing domestic problems such as illegal immigration through southern border, growing disenchantment among US voters on continuing aid to Ukraine or the growing anger among young Democrat voters over his administration’s support to Israel,” the Indian pundit suggested.

Sheikh accused Biden of “distracting” American voters from his policy missteps in the face of ex-President Donald Trump’s popularity.

<https://sputniknews.in/20240502/india-is-not-xenophobic-analysts-slam-bidens-flawed-logic-on-immigration-7270289.htm#>

Telecom equipment production crosses Rs 45,000 cr. milestone

Telecom equipment manufacturing and exports are becoming a new success story following the success of smartphone exports. In the financial year 2024, the telecom equipment production exceeded the milestone of Rs 45,000 crore with exports totaling approximately Rs 10,500 crore, supported by the production linked incentive (PLI) scheme of the Centre.

According to government data shared with ET, the scheme has resulted in the creation of more than 19,500 direct jobs. “Telecom equipment manufacturing was a dream for our country and the Make-in-India and PLI programme have really succeeded,” telecom minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told the financial daily.

Vaishnaw said that India has been importing telecom gear for many years, but this changed due to the Make-in-India and PLI scheme, leading to the production of equipment valued at over Rs 45,000 crore in the country. Telecom equipment includes intricate items like radios, routers, and network equipment, among others.

Furthermore, companies are permitted by the government to avail benefits for producing 5G fixed wireless access (FWA) equipment. Major telecom companies like Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel are heavily investing in FWA to capitalize on 5G, and all the products are manufactured domestically.



According to govt data, global firms contributed Rs 36,537.68 crore out of the total sales of Rs 45,988.54 crore until February, while domestic firms accounted for Rs 6,768.74 crore and MSMEs for Rs 2682.12 crore. Regarding employment, domestic companies generated 14,525 jobs, with MSMEs creating 2984 jobs and global firms contributing 2041 jobs.

Telecom equipment manufactured in India is currently being exported to North America and Europe, with top telecom companies worldwide as customers. “Lots of our Indian manufacturers are getting design inputs into the products. Products are designed in India, made in India and then exported, and the quality of products is good,” the minister said.

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) notified the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for telecom and networking products in February 2021 with a budget of Rs 12,195 crore spread over a period of five years.

In total, 31 companies received approval on October 14, 2021, for the scheme, which provides incentives ranging from 4% to 7% for various categories and years. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are proposed to receive a 1% higher incentive in the first, second, and third years.

The scheme was changed in April 2022 to support manufacturing based on design with an extra incentive rate of 1%, allocating Rs. 4,000 crore from the total fund. The scheme was prolonged by one year because many chosen companies could not meet production goals due to disruptions in the supply chain caused by Covid.

A total of 42 companies, which included 28 MSMEs, were chosen as part of the updated program. These companies pledged to invest a total of Rs 4,115 crore and were projected to generate extra sales amounting to Rs 2.45 lakh crore, along with creating over 44,000 additional jobs during the scheme’s duration. Some of the well-known companies participating in the telecom PLI scheme are Samsung, Dix-

on Technologies, HFCL, Jabil, Flextronics, Sanmina, Rising Star, Nokia, Tejas, and others. Nokia and Ericsson have used mostly radios made in India to deploy 5G networks for Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/new-success-story-after-smartphone-exports-telecom-equipment-production-crosses-rs-45000-crore-milestone/articleshow/109724260.cms>

RCC Cyberattack: Ransom in cryptocurrency demanded, 20 lakh patient data stolen

In one of the highest volumes of cyberattacks in India, details of 20 lakh patients with the Regional Cancer Center (RCC) here were compromised, affecting 11 out of 14 servers and causing disruptions in many divisions, including the Radiation Department.

The attack compromised the health information of over 20 lakh patients and demanded a ransom in cryptocurrency, sources told UNI. But there were allegations that the Korean-based cybercriminals successfully infiltrated the data source of RCC and extracted sensitive information of over 80 lakh patients and demanded a ransom of USD 100 millions.

“The cyberattack on the Radiation Department at the RCC in Thiruvananthapuram took place on April 30, 2024. It is a state-owned premium cancer care hospital and research centre, serving patients from across India. The attack targeted software used for radiation treatment. The software administering radiation to patients was hacked.

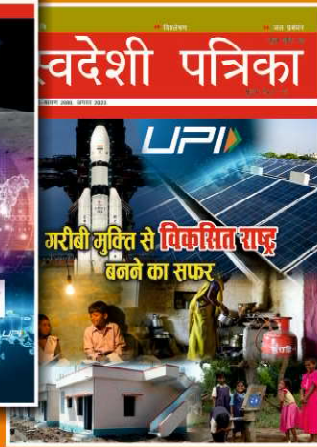
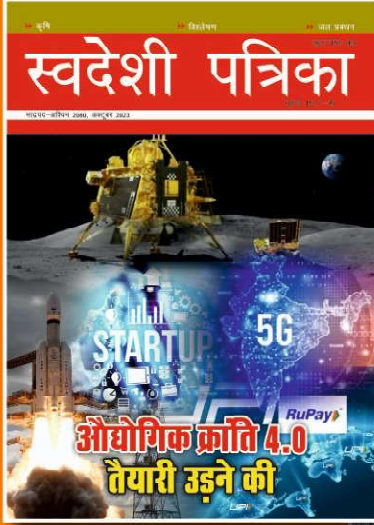
The group responsible for the attack is known as the Daixin Team,” the sources said. Two key servers storing health information for more than 20 lakh people were compromised. Servers containing surgical, radiation, and pathology results of lakhs of patients were attacked. The attack sabotaged the treatment and follow-up examinations of patients.

Patients could receive incorrect radiation doses, posing life-threatening risks. The hackers claimed responsibility and sent an email from abroad. They demanded cryptocurrency worth billions of rupees. Radiation treatment has been halted since the attack and is expected to resume in the coming days. The attack put sensitive patient data at risk, including personal credentials like names, ages, addresses, phone numbers, and medical histories. According to the Cyber Police probing the case and the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-K), the role of Chinese and North Korean hackers is suspected. □□

<https://www.uniindia.com/~/~/~rcc-cyberattack-ransom-in-cryptocurrency-demanded-20-lakh-patient-data-stolen/States/news/3194877.html>

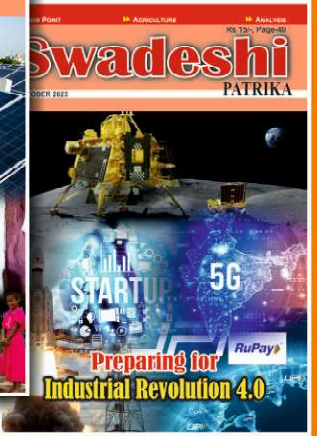
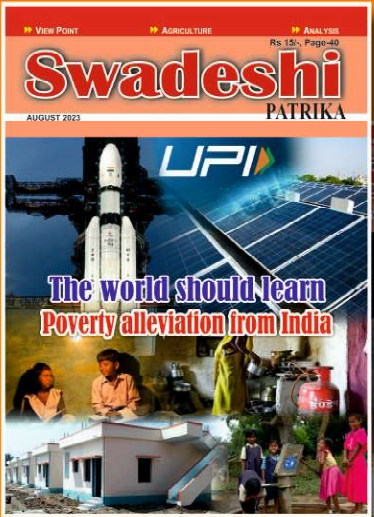
VOICE OF

SELF RELIANT INDIA



स्वदेशी

पत्रिका



SWADESHI

Patrika

पढ़ें और पढ़ायें

Swadeshi Activities

Swavlambi Bharat Abhiyan

Meetings

Pictorial Glimpses



Bahraich, UP



Solan, HP



Bijnore, UP



Kashi, UP

