

Swadeshi

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*A Road Map to
Nowhere*

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EDITORIAL POLICY

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UP farmers delay wheat sowing as mills hold back cane dues

THE Centre's multi-crore largesse for the sugar industry may have come as a relief to millers, but farmers aren't happy. Many cane farmers in eastern and western UP have been forced to put off clearing cane fields in time for sowing wheat. The reason: Sugar mills putting off cane crushing to avoid paying farmers the state advised price (SAP). Significantly, wheat sowing in several areas of UP is usually possible only up to December 10. This is likely to impact the area under wheat this Rabi season and, consequently, the output of wheat in 2008-09, paving the way for imports for the third consecutive year. UP has contributed the third highest quantity of wheat to the central pool, except in the last two years, when there has been a striking mismatch between estimated produce and the supply arriving at mandis. The Centre's relief package notified recently was also linked to the SMP, not the SAP. Against this, a petition was filed by the sugarcane farmers of eastern UP under the aegis of the Kisan Jagriti Manch (KJM) The Supreme Court had itself upheld the SAP in its judgement in 2004. The KJM petition challenges the later interim order of the Allahabad High court (Lucknow Bench) against the SAP. In an interim order, Allahabad HC had permitted the western UP Sugar Mills Association to pay Rs 110 per quintal, instead of SAP of Rs 125 per quintal fixed by the state government. Farmers in UP have, according to the petition filed against this order, been forced to sell their produce at Rs 50 per quintal against an actual production cost of Rs 110 per quintal, primarily on account of mills delaying crushing of cane. Farmers would suffer losses of more than Rs 2,000 crore if the high court judgement against SAP was upheld.

Prabha Jagannathan, NEW DELHI



Farmers Exploitation By Sugar Mills In UP & Maharashtra

Sugar mill owners continue to exploit farmers in UP and Maharashtra. Both private and co-operative mill owners are equally responsible for this exploitation. According to media reports President, Agriculture Minister at centre and state and several other politicians own and operate Co-operatives that exploit farmers in Maharashtra. Very few farmers get bank credit and have to take money at over 36% to 120% rate of interest. When they don't get paid for their produce on time it delays sowing of wheat crop? 1. High Interest to moneylenders. 2. Less prices for their produce. 3. Delayed payments. 4. Delayed starting of crushing delaying wheat crop and 5. Poor quality of seeds and inputs etc. push the farmer into a vicious circle of poverty hunger-Debt. Subjected to all kinds of harassment lead them to suicide.

Ravinder Singh

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Quote-Unquote



"The 123 agreement is finished, it's done, it's completed, it just stands to be approved finally by both the governments. I think with good will and hard work, it will be."

Nicholas Burns

US under-Secretary of state for political affairs

"India is a giant in south Asia and we would like to take its help to deal with multiple issues in the region and also in dealing with Burma, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and other countries in the sub-continent,"



Bernard Kouchner

French Foreign minister



"I'll concede defeat if I've made a single communal speech"

Narendra Modi

Gujarat Chief minister

"At the end of the day, we got an extremely weak agreement". "Its obvious the U.S. is not learning to be alive to world opinion."



Sunita Narain,

Head of the centre for science and the environment, ND



"The Situation in Pakistan is deteriorating fast, Put the entire sub-Continent in the grip of fear and terrorist violence.

India cannot remain untouched. It is a matter of concern for South Asia".

Rajnath Singh

BJP President (Reacts on Mr. Benazir Bhutto's death

"Ayurveda has now got a status symbol. There is a growing demand across the world for accurate information and consultancy on ayurvedic therapies,"

Mahesh Chandra Sharma

Director, National Institute of Ayurveda

Bali and After

How impertinent of Nature not to give a damn to the US's Super-power status. In audacious defiance of the US of A, it has in the recent past made some rather unpleasant visitations to the land of the rich and the mighty. Hurricane Katrina, furious forest fires and chilling snow-storms are only some of nature's unwelcome emissaries to have brought to the Americans incipient intimations of their mortality and, in conjunction with high oil prices, jolted them out of their innocent love of gas guzzling SUVs. Reluctantly, the Americans have begun to see the linkage between nature's unpleasant attentions and global warming. But America's belated recognition of the devastating potential of climate change isn't much cause for cheer yet. For it was the Americans who made sure that nothing tangible was achieved at the recently concluded Bali conference on climate change. Following cussed resistance to any movement towards definite cuts on Greenhouse gas emissions, the US, after uncustomary rebukes from tiny Papua New Guinea, was shamed into agreeing to participate in future negotiations and schedule of talks without, however, making any commitments whatsoever. Even this has been greeted as a major movement by some. The European Union, despite its urgency to commit industrial nations to emission reductions by 25-40% below the 1990 levels by 2020, had to abandon its efforts in the face of stiff US resistance. It is obvious that the threat faced by mankind from climate change is real and manifold. What looms are prospects of drought, shrinking glaciers, melting polar ice, rising sea levels, coastal inundations and consequent relocations of millions, changing wind and climate patterns, outbreak of diseases hitherto unknown in Europe and elsewhere. It's imperative that urgent steps are taken to reverse the damage to the environment. All countries have a responsibility in this regard but, more particularly, the industrialised nations, especially the United States and the European nations, which have been the biggest polluters. It is stating the obvious that without getting the US to agree to substantial cuts on its emissions, any international agreement on climate change will fail to realize its objectives. And that is precisely where the problem lies. At the time of the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 George Bush Sr had loudly declared that the American "standard of living" could not be compromised. The US position under Bush Jr hasn't changed much. He has merely substituted "standard of living" with "economy". The "deep cuts" America has talked about at Bali are perhaps meant more for others than for itself. That's why its stubborn insistence that China and India make similar commitments. How unfair the US stance is clear from the fact that, despite its rapidly growing economy, India is the lowest emitter of hazardous gases. China, with its ambitions to take on the US in every respect, shall not be amenable to the US demand. It is evident that, despite the ominous portents of impending environmental disaster, the roadmap to climate change is not an easy one. It is also, however, obvious that the poorer and less powerful nations will be loath to any longer allow themselves to be used as the industrialised nations' sink. What should India be doing in the given scenario? India is nowhere near the development levels of the West or the US and perhaps doesn't even, like China, aspire to be. But it has to reach a certain level of development for the sake of its citizens. It still has to lift over 200 million people above the poverty line. Industrial and agricultural production must rise for even relatively modest development objectives to be realized. As a responsible nation, we shall have to devise a plan of growth that is least environmentally damaging. For this, while insisting on the West and the US to share clean technologies with the rest of the world, it shall have to develop methods of its own. In the process, India must be wary of the CDM (Clean Development Mechanism) game to maintain carbon intensive technologies promoted by the industrialised world at the cost of developing indigenous low carbon technologies. Carbon credits, of which one hears so much these days, may bring financial rewards temporarily but they have a flip side insofar as they permit the industrialised nations to continue with their polluting ways. India must look for cleaner sources of energy. A note of caution on per capita emissions principle. Keeping both the historical and present culpability of the climate culprits in view, the per capita argument is a just one. But it is likely to start statistical wranglings on the different countries' land-mass, resources, population et al and their right to the enjoyment of their respective means. At the international level, India must appear responsible, articulate the concerns and apprehensions of countries most at risk from climate change and coordinate its efforts with other nations to make the US and other obstructionists fall in line and perform their part.

Swadesh Sharma

Sh. Swadesh Sharma, Reader Department of English PSDAV College, University of Delhi

Hazy Deal after High Drama at UN Bali Climate Talks

G. RAINA



Participants hammered out a compromise deal to save the planet at the climate change conference in Bali after they overcame bitter divisions on how to fight global warming. They agreed to reach a new deal by 2009. America that kept on wrecking climate talks was forced to accept the last-ditch agreement, though it backtracked later. Consensus at the summit was arrived after a day of high drama in which the United States drew taunts for threatening to reject a deal. The threat evoked angry revolt by developing countries.

The Conference, hosted by the Government of Indonesia, brought together more than 10,000 participants, including

representatives of over 189 countries together with observers from intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations and the media. The two-week period (3-14 December 2007) included the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), its subsidiary bodies as well as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

The main goal of the Bali Conference according to the organisers, was threefold: to launch negotiations on a climate change deal for the post-2012 period, to set the agenda for these negotiations and to reach agreement on when these negotiations will have to be concluded.

A breakthrough in the form

of a roadmap was needed for a future international agreement on enhanced global action to fight climate change in the period after 2012, the year the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol expires, said the optimists.

Last-minute compromise resulted in a so-called "Bali Road map". The Road map is a two-year plan to seek a treaty that would replace the Kyoto Protocol in 2012. The deal does not mention any hard numbers as targets. The targets were replaced with fuzzy references to reducing greenhouse gases. This disappointed delegates who had hoped to launch the talks with clear targets in hand. The European Union also in an aggressive campaign had pleaded to include specific emissions reduction targets for industrial nations - by 25 to 40% below 1990 levels by 2020

Canada sided with the U.S. and Japan in a small group of wealthy non-European countries that removed specific references to emissions targets for developed countries by 2020. The treaty was also stripped of references to longer-term targets.

The agreement, by consensus, was nonetheless hailed as a crucial development in the world's struggle to come to grips with global warming, which scientists say will lead to widespread drought, floods, higher sea levels and worsening

storms.

According to media reports even this malleable consensus came close to collapsing, when Chinese negotiator pounded his fist into a table and drew cheers from other developing countries when he angrily rejected an earlier draft amid complaints that poorer countries had been sidelined in 11th-hour discussions. The talks then appeared doomed when the U.S. rejected a subsequent compromise. Repeated appeals and open revolt forced U.S. to declare that they would accept the deal. U.S. was treated throughout the summit as a climate culprit. Canada, Japan, and a small group of other countries were also frequent targets of criticism.

Former vice-president of USA, Al Gore, also was highly critical of the Bush administration's opposition to mandatory emission cuts.

But all parties acknowledged that negotiations couldn't succeed without the involvement of the United States, the world's worst emitter of greenhouse gases.

As for developing countries, the final document instructs negotiators to consider incentives and other means to encourage poorer countries to curb, on a voluntary basis, growth in their emissions.

The Bali conference had been charged with launching negotiations for a regime of deeper emissions reductions to succeed the Kyoto deal, which requires 37 industrial countries to cut output of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases by five per cent below 1990 levels by 2012.

For years, the rest of the world has sought to bring the Americans into the framework of international mandates. But Bush



administration has been frustrating all such attempts.

US pours cold water on Bali optimism

The US backtracked on the climate change agreement reached after marathon talks in Bali, saying it had "serious concerns" about the new global consensus and that developing countries had to do far more if there was to be any pact in two years' time.

The reality check followed the drama and euphoria of the weekend when the US was shamed into joining the rest of the world in working towards a new climate change agreement to come into force after 2012. All 190 countries have agreed to take the talks further.

But the White House press secretary, Dana Perino, poured cold water on the Bali result, saying the talks had not adequately addressed the responsibilities of developing countries. "The US does have serious concerns. Negotiations must [now] proceed on the view that the problem of climate change cannot be adequately addressed through commitments for emissions cuts by developed countries alone."

In a clear signal that the US would agree to nothing unless China and India, the two largest

developing countries, agreed to significant cuts, she said that account had to be taken of the size of countries' emissions as well as their level of economic advancement. China's emissions are on a level with those of the US but on a per capita level, each American emits far more than a Chinese. "For these negotiations to succeed, it is essential the major developed and developing countries be prepared to negotiate commitments that will make a due contribution to the reduction of global emissions," she said.

A close study of the agreed text suggested that the world's biggest carbon polluters had been effectively allowed to carry on as before. Despite the scientific evidence, the 25-40% emission reduction range now risks being watered down. Japan, Canada and Russia have already made it clear they will resist taking on these targets, an Oxfam spokesman said.

"Ministers from some industrialised countries let down the people of the world. They reached agreement on a way forward but with little to guide them along the way. Future talks will now face a serious uphill battle," said Stephanie Long of Friends of the Earth International.



The talks were described as a "historic breakthrough" by the environment secretary, Hilary Benn. "For the first time, all the nations in the world have agreed to negotiate a deal to tackle dangerous climate change. What we have achieved has never been done before. Now we must make it work."

He was supported by business. "Now the hard part begins. Binding emission targets have to be set. This will create a very substantial market opportunity and then we will see the power of private money working for a moral purpose," said a spokesman for Climate Change Capital, a British carbon trading investment bank.

Environmentalists welcomed the final agreement, though some complained the document lacked specific emissions targets and did not include strong commitments for rich countries to provide poorer ones with green technology.

"The people of the world wanted more. They wanted binding targets," said Marcelo Furtado of Greenpeace Brazil.

Climate policy analyst Eliot Diringer, of Washington's Pew center, looked on the positive side.

"It puts no one on the hook

right now for emissions reductions," he said. "What's important, though, is that it lets no one off the hook either."

Now the United Nations will embark on at least two years of talks to fashion a more effective and widely accepted successor to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. The process could determine for years to come how well the world will cut emissions of greenhouse gases blamed for global warming.

The roadmap is intended to lead to a more inclusive, effective successor to Kyoto, which commits 37 industrialized nations to cut greenhouse gases by an average of 5% between 2008 and 2012.

President Bush has argued that the cuts required by Kyoto would hurt the U.S. economy and unfairly exempts China and other emerging economies.

The marathon negotiations to reach the Bali accord appeared on the brink of collapse several times.

Just when it appeared agreement was within reach Saturday morning, developing nations argued that their need for technological help from rich nations and other issues needed greater recognition in the document. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addressed the group, urging them

to overcome their differences.

In an apparent resolution, India and others suggested minor adjustments to the text, backed by the EU, that encouraged monitoring of technological transfer to make sure rich countries were meeting that need.

But the United States objected, calling for further talks and drawing loud boos and sharp floor rebukes. "If you are not willing to lead, then get out of the way!" shouted one delegate. Others pleaded with the head of the U.S. delegation, Undersecretary of State Paula Dobriansky, to reverse herself.

Dobransky told reporters after the adoption the appeals convinced the U.S. delegation that developing nations did not intend to dilute their commitment to take steps to stop global warming.

"After hearing the comments ... we were assured by their words to act," Dobriansky said. "So with that, we felt it was important that we go forward."

At one point, China also angrily accused the U.N. of pressuring nations to sign off on the text, even as sideline negotiations continued.

For developing countries, the final document instructs negotiators to consider incentives and other means to encourage poorer nations to curb - voluntarily - growth in their emissions.

India's role

Indian delegation led by union minister Kapil Sibal was able to greater extent to avoid being pushed into untimely commitments to reduce emissions. India is not one of the big polluters, and developing countries do much less environmental damage than do the industrialised ones. Also, countries like India have more pressing problems of providing basic human

needs to its vast population that is at present starving for two time meals. Moreover, Developing countries can't be expected to pay out unrealistically large sums for cleaner technologies developed in the West.

Therefore, developing countries have rightly demanded a fund to promote such a changeover. This can particularly affect the poorest, which need support to cope with some of the direct consequences of global warming, such as walls for protection from rising sea levels. And one has to remember that developed countries are primarily responsible for this problem of Global warming hence they must pay the cost as well as the penalty for bringing the world face to face with destruction. These are not new issues, and in some ways the Bali meeting looks like a re-run of the earlier conferences at Kyoto and Rio. The international community has only inched forward in these past several years, even while evidence about the nature and seriousness of the problem continues to mount. It is noteworthy that India and China have maintained the solidarity first seen at the Rio conference. This has been important to the conference outcome and has served to maintain a balance at a time when developing countries have come under increasing pressure to accept physical limits on their greenhouse gas emissions, irrespective of the impact on their development plans.

Environmentalists unhappy

environmental experts such as Sunita Narain feels that we end Bali deal is a weak deal.

"I think it's a no-deal right now. All Bali has agreed to is that we will negotiate what will



be the nature of commitments that will take place after Kyoto.

What has happened in Bali is not a weakening and not a strengthening, because the United States managed to get its way and not have clear targets mentioned in the document, which will now guide the deal for future countries," she said.

"India and other developing countries are quite rightly not going to allow mandatory commitments for the simple reason that we still need space to grow, Narain explained. "But," she added, "it's also important for India to put pressure as India has not done. India has let us down."

The politics of climate change

The Bali meet on climate change was not so much about science as it was about politics.

There was a serious attempt to scuttle the two-track framework under Kyoto Protocol, requiring developed countries to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emission and enabling developing countries to gain through transfer of clean technology and investments.

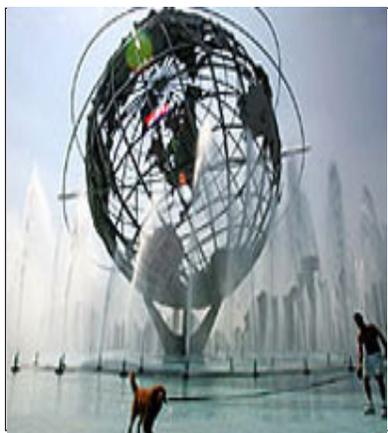
"We got the impression, confirmed by the draft that was circulated, that there was an attempt to seal a new agreement for future, (and dump the prevailing

system)," said Union minister for science and technology Kapil Sibal, who led the Indian delegation to Bali.

"They wanted to dilute this architecture for a new comprehensive deal," he added. The basis was the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which said that there was unequivocal evidence that climate change was happening and that it was human induced.

This was used to push for an agreement that would also bring countries such as India and China into the fold and subject them to commitments for emission reductions. "Our first achievement was to stave off this attempt to dilute the framework. India insisted that the climate change agreement should be consistent with the UNFCCC Convention and the Kyoto Protocol," said Sibal.

Developed countries, led by the US, then tried to get India and other developing nations to agree to "measurable, reportable and verifiable" actions. Under India's insistence, this wording was changed to "nationally appropriate mitigation actions" by developing countries "supported and enabled by technology,



financing and capacity building, in a measurable, reportable and verifiable manner". This means that not only the actions for mitigation of climate change, but technology transfer, financing and capacity building will also be "measurable, reportable and verifiable".

The biggest achievement for the world, since it was the hardest, was getting the US on board, Sibal said, evading questions about the chances of the US backing out. There is a serious question mark on whether it would remain in the fold, with the US beginning to make unhappy noises the very next day after the agreement.

What the developing countries achieved, according to minister of state for environment and forests Namo Narayan Meena, was to get a more comprehensive outlook for fighting climate change.

"Climate change has four aspects - mitigation, adaptation, technology and transfer of resources - but the entire developed world was talking only of mitigation," he said. In Bali, India and the rest of the developing world managed to get other aspects addressed as well. A lot remains to be done and "the next two years (till the 2009 Copenhagen meet) will see hectic and intense negotiations", said Meena. ●

Group Discussion on Bali Conference

Swadeshi Vichar Kendra organized a group discussion on climate change and Bali Conference in New Delhi on December 22, under the chairmanship of Shri Swadesh Sharma Reader English Department Delhi University. Several important people from different fields of life participated in the enlightening discussion.

Climate change and its effect on planet earth has become an important topic of discussion and have caused sufficient concern all over the world. Governments as well as international bodies are worried and are engaged in finding the solution to the one of the worst kind of challenges human kind has ever faced. Bali conference on Climate Change was the result of this increased concern over the issue and urgency to find solutions.

Swadeshi Vichar Kendra is regularly inviting intellectuals, professional and experts on various issues of vital importance to have some exchange of views and sharing of information.

Recently concluded Bali conference once again demonstrated the difference of opinion and clash of interests between different nation states. Even though a vague deal was signed in Bali it was clear that the humanity was still far away from any consensus approach to the issue of such importance as threatens the very existence of world.

Discussion in this background was enriching and stimulating. Almost all aspects of the issue including the politics behind global warming were discussed. There was consensus on following:

- a) Global warming and climate change is a reality that is being felt in routine normal life.
- b) Developed world, particularly USA is primarily responsible for the degradation of environment.
- c) West that was not ready to accept the issue as a problem has taken notice of it only after it started feeling the heat of climate change.
- d) Positive aspects of Bali include acceptance of issue as a serious threat and urgency to act before it is too late.
- e) USA, Canada and Japan isolated for their stubborn stand.
- f) Negotiations will take at a brisk pace now onwards and India should make proper preparations for these negotiations.
- g) Attempt should be made to take US on board and in case that country refuses to join international community must explore punitive measures against it.
- h) Indian people being aware of the cyclic phenomenon of 'Pralaya' should not feel unnecessarily over concerned on the issue.
- i) India shall utilise this opportunity to strengthen its position in every respect.

Can the environment and trade tango?

The US and EU proposal to introduce freer trade in green goods and services on the WTO agenda meets with opposition at the climate change conference in Bali

ASHOK B SHARMA



The US and the European Union (EU) are proposing the introduction of freer trade in green goods and services in the WTO agenda. It prompted a meeting of trade ministers on December 8 on the sidelines of the UN climate change conference in Bali.

According to OECD, global market for environmental goods and services is estimated at more than \$550 billion a year, out of which green services account for 65% and green goods 35%. The EU accounts for 30% of this market.

The US-EU joint proposal has invited severe criticism from environmentalists and trade advocacy groups, which allege that

it is based on a recent World Bank proposal that suggested "huge gains in trade volumes" from 3.6% to 63.6%. While some of them say that there is no need to introduce an additional proposal when those on the table have not yet been resolved. Developed countries are not yet eager to open up their Markets for goods from developing countries. They are also not prepared to reduce their level of farm subsidy and support. The introduction of the new proposals will only complicate and delay the process of trade negotiations, they say.

Environmental groups have criticised the US by saying the country, which has not signed the Kyoto Protocol and other

environment treaties, has no right to suggest how other countries should deal with the situation.

India has already made its position clear by opposing the introduction of environmental agenda in trade negotiations. India has said that the criteria of per capita emission by countries should be considered, if the developing countries are called upon to make emission cuts. Union commerce minister Kamal Nath has opposed the idea of terming India as an emerging economy.

"We are still a developing country with a large number of poor people," he said. According to one indicator in the OECD report, released recently in Paris, India is the world's third largest Economy behind the US and China.

The US-EU proposal made on November 30, 2007, is a two-tier process for much freer trade in "green" goods and services as part of the Doha Round of negotiation. The first step suggests an agreement to liberalise trade by reducing tariffs in at least 43 goods with clear environmental benefits drawn from a list prepared by the World Bank. The list includes solar panels, wind mill turbines, clean coal and energy-efficient lighting. The US is now shifting to clean coal technologies as global prices of crude oil are firming up.

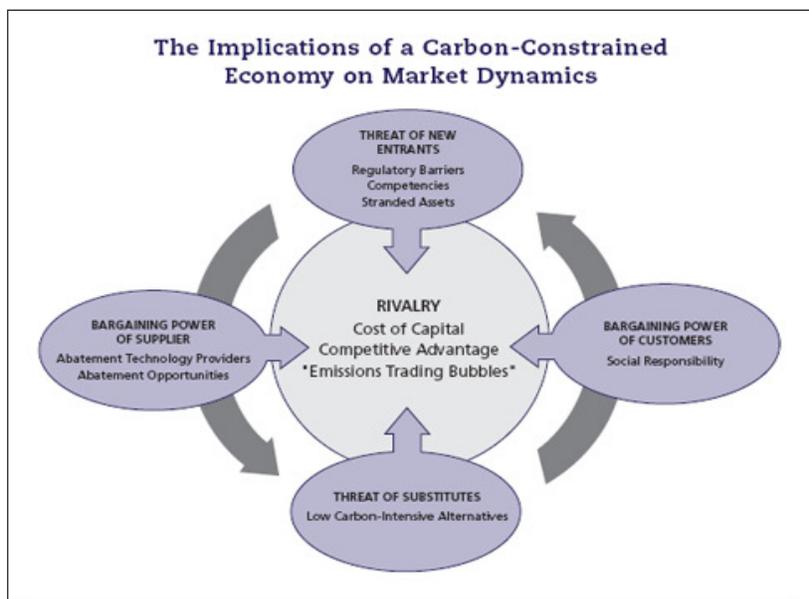
In the second process, the proposal suggested more far-reaching environmental goods and services

agreement (EGSA) to be negotiated by the WTO members which would foresee further binding commitments to eliminate tariffs and non-tariff barriers in trade in green technologies. In services, highly ambitious and comprehensive commitments would be undertaken to address environmental and climate change challenges such as waste management. Developing countries would be asked to make contributions proportionate to their level of development.

Intellectual property right is an issue in trade as far as green technologies are concerned. The developed countries have already failed in their assurance to transfer clean energy technologies, and the funds to finance it which was agreed upon at the Rio Earth Summit. Clean technologies with high price tag of intellectual property rights would make it difficult for developing countries to address the problems of climate change. Even in San Francisco Bay Area of California, there is no consensus within the industry about the necessity for global monopoly patents on important new clean energy technologies.

The reduction or elimination of tariff barriers on green goods and services as suggested by the US-EU proposal would severely affect the developing countries that have either developed some of these technologies or are in the process of development. It would be better to leave the option of applied tariff reductions to countries that want to mitigate climate change rather than making the tariff reduction binding.

Government action is more important in mitigating climate change, rather than emphasis on trade. Government action like placing a price on greenhouse gas emission, while trade rules will



minimise government action or incentives. Cost internalisation can come in many forms, including caps and/or taxes on carbon, renewable energy criteria, or even energy-efficiency standards. The imperative to internalise carbon costs should compel policymakers to protect and expand their policy space so that they have the freedom to enact necessary.

The US-EU proposal in the name of "breakthrough" priorities for a Doha deal include the opening of Markets for its energy services Companies like Halliburton in countries with large oil and gas reserves. So any benefits from trade in clean technologies would have to be offset with the WTO deepening world's dependence on fossil fuels.

Even though trade in cargo is fuelled by one of the dirtiest of all energy sources (bunker fuel), the US-EU proposal has not questioned the inherently increasing carbon footprint that will result from shipping. The UNFCCC is more competent to address the issues of climate change than the WTO.

As suggested in the background papers for trade ministers meeting in Bali, one area where trade policy could reduce its

restraints on climate policy is by increasing flexibilities to allow many forms of public support needed to accelerate the research, development and deployment of clean, efficient, energy technologies.

The background paper also proposed a discussion on "non-tariff barriers to investment", which could cover zoning codes, tax incentives, operating permits, or just about any measure governments enact that impact investment. "Non-tariff barriers" have too often, in recent trade policies, implied the legal protections for the environment or community development. Again, trade policy makers must keep away from restricting governments from internalising costs in energy investment and production today.

According to International Energy Agency, \$22 trillion investment in new energy infrastructure is required for the next 25 years to meet what it calls "runaway demand" for energy led by China and India. However with the likely carbon pricing regime in different countries, investors are uncertain about their future. Even OPEC's recent Riyadh Declaration has asked the oil-importing

countries to clarify their future demand for petroleum.

The massive bio-fuel programme backed by huge subsidy across the world has also become controversial. The recent UNCTAD annual report said that such bio-fuel programmes in Europe and US have distorted global trade and skyrocketed the prices of grains. It apprehended that massive cultivation of bio-fuel crops would displace food crops from cultivation and create food security problem. The Nobel prize winning chemist, Paul Crutzen, best known for his work on ozone layer has concluded that bio-fuels could increase global warming with laughing gas.

Leading scientists like David Pimentel of Cornell University, Tad Patzek of University of California, Florian Siegert, managing director, Remote Sensing Solutions GmbH, Munich, Mario Giampietro of Institute of Environmental Sciences, Barcelona and Helmut Haberl of Klagenfurt University, Austria have questioned the very basis of the contention of the IPCC report that bio-fuel programme causes a reduction in carbon dioxide emission.

The mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, who was in Delhi recently said that bio-fuels do not reduce emissions to the extent desired. London has prepared its own Climate Change Action Plan to deal with the intention of reducing 60% of the city's emission by 2025. According to the action plan, London is to promote low-carbon vehicles with hybrid fuel system which cut transport emissions by up to 4 to 5 million tonne. "Carbon dioxide emission from road transport would fall by as much as 30% if people simply bought the most fuel efficient car in each class," the action plan said. ●

What is the Kyoto protocol?

The Kyoto protocol is an international and legally binding agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. It came into force in February 2005 after being agreed at a 1997 UN conference in Kyoto, Japan. A total of 174 nations ratified the pact to reduce the greenhouse gases emitted by developed countries to at least 5% below 1990 levels by 2008-12.

Why do we need a new pact on climate change?

With the Kyoto protocol due to expire in 2012, a new international climate change deal must be put in place in time to ensure that necessary action is undertaken immediately.

The UN says that this year's scientific report from the its Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has "made clear beyond doubt that climate change is a reality", which poses a serious threat to the future development of the world's economies, societies and ecosystems.

According to the IPCC, if no action is taken on greenhouse gases, the earth's temperature could rise by 4.5C or more.

The effects of climate change are being felt already, the panel says. The Arctic is warming twice as fast as the global average and adverse effects on human activities are documented. Impacts of warming have also been observed in other regions and sectors, in particular on ecosystems.

As glaciers retreat, water supplies are being put at risk. And for populations living in dry lands, especially those in Africa, changing weather patterns threaten to exacerbate desertification, drought and food insecurity. Other regions are expected to suffer from floods, sea level rise and extreme weather events.

"We cannot go on this way for long," the UN secretary general, Ban Ki-moon, has said. "We cannot continue with business as usual. The time has come for decisive action on a global scale."

Why are developed nations expected to cut their carbon?

Climate change will hit the poorest and most vulnerable the hardest, according to the IPCC, but it will affect everyone. With their greater economic and technological resources, industrialised countries are considered to be equipped to do the most to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Moreover, it is these development countries who are primarily responsible for human induced global warming because of very huge consumption of per capita energy requiring burning of fossil fuels like oil and coal.

The summit's carbon footprint

The 15,000 politicians, activists, MPs, journalists, and civil servants from 180 countries who travelled to Bali for the talks emitted between 60,000 and 100,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide, according to estimates One netizen

Climatic Change, Reeling Humanity and Crocodile Tears of US

DR. ASHWANI MAHAJAN

Increasing pollution levels and global warming is turning out to be a reality and the humanity is reeling under the same. Lengthy summers, poor and untimely rains, destructive floods etc. are all causing havocs. In urban areas they have increased at such a high levels that breathing fresh air has become a luxury and business of oxygen parlors giving fresh oxygen to breath has gained a pace.

Increasing pollution levels are causing global warming due to the Green House Effect (GHE). The outer atmosphere of the earth has several gases, which are critical for life on earth as they keep some of the sun's warmth from reflecting back into space and without them the world, would be a cold and barren place to live. The "Green House Effect" refers to the temperature regulating effect that such atmospheric gases have on the earth. The temperature regulating gases are called green house gases, which form a blanket around the earth, keeping some heat from the sun within the earth's atmospheric orbit and this keeping the planet warm and habitable. Six types of gases have been identified as 'Green House Gases',

1. Carbon dioxide (CO₂).
2. Methane (CH₄).
3. Nitrous oxide (N₂O).
4. Hydro fluorocarbons (HFC's).
5. Per fluorocarbons (PFC's).
6. Sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆).

Increased level of pollution had

caused the emissions of these gases in increased and augmented quantities due to which the global temperature is increasing artificially. Some climatic change is now inevitable because of emissions of such gases over the years. The climate generally does not respond immediately to such external changes but after 150 years of industrialisation, global warming has gained momentum and it is bound to affect the earth's atmosphere in future.

Though green house gases makeup only one percent of the atmosphere, but they act like a blanket around the earth. Human activities are making the blanket 'thick', the natural levels of these gases are being supplemented by emissions of carbon dioxide from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas; by additional methane and nitrous oxide produced by farming activities and changes in land use; and by several long lived industrial gases that do not occur naturally.

surface on the earth has risen by 0.60 Celsius since the late 1800's and his expected by another 20 Celsius. Average sea level has also increased by 10 to 20 centimeters and his expected to rise further by another 40 centimeters by 2100, causing contamination of underground sources of water across the world. Pollution and global warming is endangering the living species. Higher temperatures are expected to expand the range of diseases like malaria, Influenza etc. **Who are the Culprits?**

According to Human Development Report 2007-08, High income OECD countries' total emissions of CO₂ was 10,055.4 million metric tonnes in 1990 and 12,137.5 in 2004. United States

Co2 Emitters	1990	2004
United states	4,818.30	6,045.80
China	2,398.90	5,007.10
Russian Federation	1,984.10	1,524.10
India	681.7	1,342.10
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	218.3	433.3
Pakistan	68	125.6
Nepal	0.6	3
Maldives	0.2	0.7
Bhutan	0.1	0.4
Global aggregates		
High-income OECD	10,055.40	12,137.50
South Asia	990.7	1,954.60
Medium human Development	5,944.40	10,215.20
World	22,702.50	28,982.70

The average temperature (Figures in Million metric tonnes)

alone caused 4818.3 in 1990 and 6045.8 in the year 2004. As on date US accounts for only 4.6 per cent of world population and is causing 22 per cent of world pollution, where as India which is 17.4 per cent of the world population, causes hardly 4 per cent of CO₂ emissions

UN Initiative, Kyoto Protocol and Bali Convention

UN took the initiative and made efforts towards coping with rising global temperatures and hazardous effects of global warming, in the form of Inter-Governmental Panel on climate Change (IPCC) which gave its assessment report in 1990. The UNFCCC took effect in 1994 and after a series of meetings and discussions an International Treaty was adopted at the Kyoto Summit in 1997, on International agreement linked to the existing treaty, but standing on its own. The text of the Kyoto Protocol was adopted unanimously in 1997; it entered into force on 16 February 2005.

Article 3 of Protocol binds the member countries to reduce their combined emissions to 5% below 1990 levels by 2012. The overall target of 5% varies from nation to nation and ranges between -8% to 10%. The overall 5% target is to be met through cuts of 8% in the European Union and most Central European economies, 6% by Hungary Japan Poland and Canada and 7% in the United States, 0% by New Zealand, Russia and Ukraine i.e. these counties have to maintain their present level of emissions, while countries like Norway may increase its emissions by 1%, Australia by 8%, and Iceland by 10%. All the countries, which have a fixed commitment in the Protocol, are classified as Annexure I countries. The current targets of all annex I countries are setup on the

basis of level of industrializations, current carbon emissions, geographic spread of the member countries, the economic progress done till now, the atmospheric contents and such several other factors.

Many developing nations like China, India, Brazil are not included in Annex I for the first commitment period as during negotiation stage, these countries resisted to the pressure of development countries for fixed commitments in their own national economic interests.

US Versus the Rest

It is significant to note that U.S. had pulled itself out of the Kyoto Protocol in 2001, saying implementing it would gravely damage the US economy. US is asking for an alternative way of emissions reduction commitments based on absolute emissions levels, instead of reduction of percentage terms. This should mean pressure on India, China, Brazil and also many other developing countries to reduce their emissions levels. Such an arrangement would put developing countries like India and China at disadvantage due to the fact that these countries will be forced to overhaul their production processes and embrace a process that has to be either developed anew or be imported from the ones who already have the technology. This is likely to affect their efforts aimed at reducing poverty and reduction in inequalities.

On the other hand developing countries including India are of the view than per capita approach be adapted instead. They argue that where as US accounts for 22 per cent of global carbon emissions with a population less than one third that of India and India accounts for hardly 4 per cent of global carbon emissions. In per capita terms this

comes to 20.6 per metric tons for US and 1.2 metric tonnes for India, which means on per capita basis US accounts for 17 times more emissions than India in per capita terms. Therefore from the point of view of equity instead of aggregate approach, per capita approach be adapted instead of aggregate or percentage approach.

Instruments of Kyoto Protocol

Though targets have been set for the member countries to reduce their emissions levels, and these targets have also been stated as binding targets, flexibility has also been provided in the protocol itself. To understand this flexibility, one needs to know about the terms like sinking, clean development mechanism, emissions trading etc.

Sinking

Member countries can partially compensate for their emissions by increasing "sinks" - by planting trees and soil conservation, which remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. That may be accomplished either on their own territories or in other countries. Or they may pay for foreign projects that result in greenhouse-gas cuts. This way the countries making such efforts are also to gain credits for activities which boost the environment's capacity to absorb carbon.

Emissions trading

We understand that according to Kyoto Protocol annex I countries are committed to reduce the emissions level. But the flexibility provided under the protocol allows countries to buy and sell their agreed allowances of greenhouse gas emissions. Highly polluting countries can buy unused "credits" from those which are allowed to emit more than they actually do. At micro level companies that need to increase their emissions must by credits from

those who pollute less. The transfer of allowances is referred to as a trade. In effect, the buyer is paying a charge for polluting, while the seller is being rewarded for having reduced emissions by more than was needed. Potential buyers of carbon credits are the entities which emit CO₂ to the atmosphere and maybe required by the law to balance their emissions through mechanism of emissions reduction. On the other hand potential sellers of the carbon credits are two kinds of entities,

1) Entities that manage forest or agricultural land might sell carbon credits based on the accumulation of carbon in their forest trees or agricultural soils.

2) Business entities that reduce their carbon emissions may be able to sell their reductions to other emitters.

Marketisation of Environment

From the above analysis on emissions trading, sinking etc. it is evident that that an attempt has been made under Kyoto protocol to find solutions towards environmental degradation using market tools. It may be noted it that emissions trading is already being used in US and EU, as a tool to check environmental degradation. As a consequence of Kyoto protocol emissions trading has got a boost. The carbon trading at London financial marketplace is expected to have grown into a market valued at \$60 billion in 2007. The voluntary offset market, by comparison, is projected to grow to about \$4bn by 2010.

There are active trading programs in several pollutants. In the largest trading scheme namely European Union Emissions Trading Scheme, which started on 1st January 2005, 362 million tonnes of CO₂ were traded on the market

for a sum of \$7.2 billion, and a large number of futures and options. Carbon emissions trading have been steadily increasing in recent years. **Can Emissions Trading Solve the Problem?**

Those who favor the idea of emissions trading argue that emissions trading would lead to the reduction in emissions by those who can do so. This mechanism also involves lowest cost of emissions reduction to the society. But there is significant opposition to this mechanism. The critiques opine that emissions trading does little to solve pollution problems overall, as groups that do not pollute sell their conservation to the highest bidder. Overall reductions would need to come from a sufficient and challenging reduction of allowances available in the system. Likely this would occur over time through central regulation. Emissions Trading Scheme came under fire recently when some governments issued more carbon allowances than emissions during Phase I of the scheme. They have also been criticized for the widespread practice of grand fathering, where polluters are given carbon credits by governments, instead of being made to pay for them.

Critiques further argue that carbon trading places disproportionate emphasis on individual lifestyles and carbon footprints, distracting attention from the wider, systemic changes and collective political action that needs to be taken to tackle climate change. Thus according to them solution to the problem of environmental degradation is not emissions trading but a tax on polluters but it seems tax on polluters is not found to be feasible politically.

Apart from this there are significant scientific questions about

solution to the problem of environmental degradation is not emissions trading but a tax on polluters

efficacy of sinking and emissions trading program. We understand that part of the reason of global warming is excessive land clearing. Therefore restoring vegetation is thought to be the solution to the problem. But the note of caution here is that in the name of emissions trading old growth forests (which have slow carbon absorption rates) are being cleared and replaced with fast-growing vegetation, to the detriment of the local communities **Kyoto Protocol, Bali Convention and Looming Dangers for India**

Though optimism is being shown at the outcome of Bali convention on climatic change, as developed countries have been supposedly pushed to the wall and have been forced to accept deep cuts in emissions (though without really quantifying the same). But the stand of US and its allies has thrown a challenge for developing countries specially India and China. Totally rejecting Kyoto protocol and refusing to accept reduction in emissions as per Kyoto protocol, US has demanded cuts in emissions by India and China. Given the fact that during the period from 1990 to 2004 CO₂ emissions of India has approximately doubled, thanks to its efforts to improve standard of living and reduction in poverty. If US succeeds in forcing India to reduce its emissions levels, our efforts towards growth would get jeopardised. And if instead we are forced to buy emissions credits, a significant portion of our fruits of growth would get transferred to the rest of the world. ●

Message and Significance of Sacrifice of Baba Genu

M.R. VENKATESH

Economic Independence and Political Sovereignty Integrated, Interlinked & Intertwined.



He was a congress party worker in the pre-independence era. Yet not many congressmen today may know him. Very few even within that party (or for that matter in any other political party in India) today may realise the profound significance of the message contained in his life. Fewer still would be in a position to recall the same. Even old timers within the Congress would be unaware that he was a four-anna member of the party - his registration number being 81941. None from his family benefited by his "joining" politics or the congress party, nor did he did not leave

behind a "rich" legacy.

Though he was sad on hearing the news of the death of his mother, he confessed that he was in a way relieved at her death as it gave him the necessary leeway in life to fully devote himself for the cause of the nation. Being a fully dedicated volunteer to the cause of India's independence; he did not have enough time and leisure to attend his brother's wedding. Contrast this to the vulgar

display of wealth in the marriages of those who are in power in modern times in India!

He was Babu Genu. On this day seventy-seven years ago (12th December 1930) Babu Genu was killed in the most gruesome manner while attempting to stop a speeding truck in Mumbai from carrying imported materials from Britain. Babu Genu lay on the ground before the speeding truck in the New Hanuman Road at Kalba Devi at around 11 AM on that fateful day in an attempt to prevent foreign goods from entering the Indian soil.

Even as the police were physically preventing him and his

colleagues from participating in this non-violent protest, Babu Genu never gave up his resolve to stop the trucks. The truck driver - Balbir Singh - an Indian would come close to the protestors and stop for he would not and could not drive over fellow Indians. Seeing this, the police once again intervened and physically removed the protestors from the road to enable the truck pass through.

Freeing himself from the policemen gathered there, Babu Genu once again lay on the road in another attempt to prevent the passing trucks. Seeing the procrastination of the Indian driver the British sergeant lost his temper and took on himself to drive the truck at full speed over Babu Genu crushing his head and leaving behind a pool of blood and mass of flesh. Babu Genu was seriously injured and within hours passed away. He was in his early twenties when he died. Yet his life is a message to every Indian.

A brief life history

Babu Genu was born in 1908 in a poor family in Pune district of Maharashtra - a family that was steeped in abject poverty. The only prized possession of the family was a bullock that was used for farming. His father was a farmer and the other members of his family were his mother, two elder brothers and a sister. His father passed away in 1910 when he was a mere two year old child.

And when the bullock died too - a terrible tragedy for the family given their economic background - his mother unable to continue living in her village migrated to Mumbai to earn her livelihood as a domestic help. She left her sons back in the village in the care of some neighbours

All this meant that Babu was deprived of formal education in his formative years. Yet that did not mean that he was neither ignorant nor unaware of the issues confronting the country. After a spending a few years in the native village Babu Genu joined his mother in Mumbai. As his mother could not support his stay in Mumbai Babu Genu was compelled to seek employment as a casual labourer in the mills of Mumbai.

On many days he would not get employed. This did not deter him and he did not feel left down. Quite the contrary that gave him enough time and space to interact with the leading lights of independence movement in Mumbai and in the process understand it in different perspective.

Babu Genu was highly influenced by the sacrifices of Lala Lajpath Rai and the trio of Bhagath Singh, Rajguru and Sukh Dev. Yet he was wedded to the cause of non-violence and satyagraha as enunciated by Mahatma Gandhi.

The message of his life

As briefly mentioned above Babu Genu was not formally educated. Yet he understood the symbiotic link between geo-politics and geo-economics. He understood that the geo-strategic interests of the British Rule in India. He knew that economics was the driving force of British rule; establishment of the British Raj was merely a ruse to perpetuate the economic dominance of the British over India.



It is in this context Babu Genu understood the socio-economic-politic arguments propounded by Gandhiji and its significance. That meant that should the British rule were to be economically unsustainable it would collapse as there would be hardly any incentive for the British to continue their rule in India.

He knew economic independence of India was interlinked, intertwined and integrated to the political independence - a fact that escapes the attention of our political and the debating class today. He was fully aware that the no price could be less by any yardstick for the economic independence of the country. For there lay the key to political independence of the nation. No wonder he did not hesitate to make the supreme sacrifice of his life for the cause he so dearly believed.

Decades later as the nation is in search of the economic model that is suited for its development (and crucially what that development means) one may be tempted to dismiss Babu Genu's economic thoughts as primordial, xenophobic or simply anachronistic. Yet one

cannot and should not dismiss the message contained in the life of these great men, who literally and physically in broad daylight, gave their life for upholding their beliefs.

Why? Firstly, that is so because the fact of the matter is that we the present generation live in independent India only because of the noble thoughts, selfless actions and supreme sacrifices of these great men. That is the least a nation may do to express its gratitude to such great men.

Secondly, and the far more important reason is that the context of the life and history of Babu Genu may seemingly differ significantly from what it is prevalent in India today. Yet, the text does not. Global powers clearly have a well-designed agenda - read global order - in imposing their will, thoughts, ideas and beliefs on others. If it was political domination through religion in the first millennia after Christ, it was done through the army in the second millennia. What is feared is that it could possibly be through economic intervention in the third.

Unfortunately, this brief history of mankind and a grim reminder of

how the world looks at others and the manner in which it seeks to engage others - as one of that has to subjugate and ones that need to be subjugated. Surely, it is not how we look at the world or presume as to how the others look at the world - as one of near equals.

As the ideas and ideals of the likes of Babu Genu fade from our collective memory, one is tempted to only quote the oft-repeated cliché: if you forget history you are condemned to repeat it. Obviously, to assume that global economic interests are completely independent of geo-political intentions or devoid of conspiratorial motives in these



Baba Genu Remembered

Rich tributes were paid to Amar Shaheed Baba Genu on his 77th martyrdom day in Two Separate impressive and well attend functions organized by Swadeshi Jagaran Manch in New Delhi.

On 12th of December, the day when Baba Genu sacrificed his life in the year 1930, a Hawan was performed in Shivshakti Mandir Sector 8 Ramakrishna Puram in the early hours. A large number of residents and Swadeshi activists participated in the Hawan and remembered the great martyr. After Hawan all the participants joined the Prabhat Pheri (morning procession) covering the entire Baba Genu Marg They were raising slogans, “Amar Shaheed Baba Genu Amar Rahey Amar Rahey”. Before dispersal Sh. Balraj Ji addressed the gathering. He cited several incidents from the life of Baba Genu and said that his life and martyrdom will continue to inspire generations of Indians. Another function was held on 16th December, in the lawns of “Dharamkshetra”, “Shivshakthi Mandir”. Quite a large number of people including the residents of the area attended the meeting and paid rich Tributes to the great martyr. Speaking on the occarasion Sh. Deepak Sharma “Pardeep” highlighted the circumstances in which Baba Genu lived and sacrificed his life. Throwing light on his weak economic background, Pardeep Ji said that all these difficulties did not deter the great soul from performing his duties towards the country. He was devoted to the service of nation and was ready to go to any extent for his convictions. It is because of such souls that India was able to gain freedom, he added. Pardeep Ji asked people to learn lesson of patriotism from the inspiring life and sacrifice of Amar Shaheed Baba Genu and adopt Swadeshi way of life. This according to him was important for preserving economic sovereignty of the nation.

modern times would be childish to say the least.

Yet this is what we seem to have done for the past several years. And the spectacular growth of our economy in the past few years seems to have made us oblivious to this risk. And that would mean necessarily understanding, redefining and recalibrating our concept of growth and development. Lop sided growth in recent years of our economy, rising disparity of income and crucially lack of genuine economic opportunities point out to a serious systemic imbalance, especially in the manner in which we have engaged the world - politically or otherwise.

And to correct the same we need to get our priorities right. It would be a fitting tribute to the life of Babu Genu if we could get our priorities right in our economic policies and begin afresh the debate on our development and growth and the terms by which we should engage the world, both in global politics and economics. And that in my opinion would be a fitting tribute to Babu Genu on his martyr's day. ●

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Unorganised Sector and Informatization of the Indian Economy

RUDDAR DATT

"There is no doubt that this "shining India" has expanded in the past and is still expanding at a very high rate. But this picture is spoiled by virtually stagnant consumption expenditure and miserable working and living conditions of the 77 percent of our population who are poor and vulnerable.... This is the other world which can be characterized as the India of the common people... whom the growth process, by and large, by passed," states The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (2007). The Planning Commission Special Group (2002) provided the answer to alleviate the situation: "The only answer to the situation is to increase productivity and job quality of the unorganized sector. It means that all attempts should be made to implement those policies, which will release the basic growth constraints and by ensuring a level playing field for this sector."

The National Commission on Enterprises by the Unorganised sector (NCEUS) was the first major attempt by the Central Government to address the issues related to unorganised sector and study in-depth the problems of the unorganised sector and recommend measures to improve the state of affairs in this sector which provides employment to 93 percent of workforce.

The main task before NCEUS was to suggest:

- a) Measures necessary for bringing about improvements in the productivity of enterprises and generation of large scale employment opportunities;
- b) Labour laws in the informal sector consistent with labour rights; and
- c) Expansion in the security system available for labour in the informal sector.

The Report studies in-depth the wide-ranging issues pertaining

to the enterprises in the unorganised sector and issues related with wages, employment, social security and growth of this sector. The Report is a strong indictment of the policies pursued after the introduction of LPG model of development in the Indian economy since 1991. It emphasizes the fact that the development process has failed to reduce the size of the unorganised workers standing at 423 millions in 2004-05, i.e. 92.4% of the total labour force. It has merely benefited 35 million i.e. 7.6 percent workers in the organised sector. Moreover, 91% of workers are denied the benefit of National Minimum Wage fixed at Rs 66 under the Act and 64% below the NCRL norm of Rs 49 fixed for the rural areas. It has brought out the stark reality of 836 million people i.e. 77% of the population whose income is below \$2 PPP, as the poor and vulnerable sections of the population.

The Report is a landmark in making recommendations

pertaining to the lot of 423 million workers in the unorganised sector. Since it has also framed two bills - one for agricultural workers and the other for non-agricultural workers, it has done commendable spade work and thus, left very little leeway for the Central Government to delay the measures pertaining to the action programme for the unorganised sector. The Commission needs the appreciations of the neglected sections to take up their cause and make a concerted effort to improve the lot the workers in the unorganised sector who have been bypassed by the reform process.

However, the Commission is guilty of not acknowledging the Report of the Special Group on Targeting Ten Million Employment opportunities per year appointed by the Planning Commission which submitted its Report in May 2002, under the stewardships of Dr. S.P. Gupta, the then member of the Planning Commission. The Special Group stated in a forthright manner:

"The only answer to the situation is to increase productivity and job quality of the unorganised sector. It means that all attempts should be made to implement those policies, which will release the basic growth constraints and by ensuring a level playing field for this sector.... In the attempt to increase labour productivity, more emphasis should be laid on the growth of this sector, rather than for substitution of labour with capital. Further, to improve the job quality and its security, major changes in legislation will be needed regarding social security measures, working conditions, minimum wages and protection of labour interests."

It is really strange that the Commission neglected the earlier attempt to boost the unorganised sector. Dr. Arjun Sen Gupta and other illustrious members of the Commission only know whether this is deliberate or unintentional. Since the Report was prepared under the NDA government, but could not be implemented, is no reason for ignoring its findings and recommendations.

A close perusal of the NCEUS recommendations reveals that some of the recommendations are distant goals which cannot be realized in the near future. The entire set of minimum conditions or work - eight-hour working day with a weekly holiday, national minimum wage of all workers in the unorganised workers, equal wages for men and women, child-care and basic amenities at workplace - is an attempt to implement the concept of decent work. These conditions do not exist even in the organised sector. Moreover, after the introduction of economic reforms, these conditions are being violated with impunity. The Report itself accepts that casual workers now

account for about 23 percent of all workers in the organised sector even, there the first priority should be to convert casual workers into regular workers and then take up the question of decent work. 'Regular work for all' should be the primary goal and then gradually the country should move towards 'decent work for all'.

Regarding 'bonded labour', the findings of the Commission are very weak. The Commission should have involved organizations like Gandhi Peace Foundation and Bandhua Mukti Morcha to prepare a plan for the effective abolition of bonded labour which it has failed to do. It only depended on Labour Ministry Annual Reports which is totally unreliable in this area. The Action Programme of the Commission blacks out any recommendation in this regard.

Despite weaknesses here and there, it may be stated that the Report of National Commission on Enterprises in the Unorganised sector is a unique document which intends to give Reforms a human face and as such, it should be welcomed. The Government should take steps to implement the Report and provide necessary financial support for the purpose. It would be desirable to give this task to a separate Ministry so that unorganised enterprises and workers in these are able to attain the goals set by the Commission in its two Bills.

Unorganised Sector and India's Informal Economy

It would be advisable to understand the concept of the unorganised sector. It may also be clarified that the terms organized and unorganised sector in India are used interchangeably with formal and informal sector at the international level as recommended by the ILO.

There has been lack of clarity and uniformity in the use of the term. The Central Statistical Organisation defines unorganised or informal sector consisting of enterprises producing for the market that do not have more than 20 employees (without power) or 10 employees (with power). The workers of these enterprises are not registered under any legal stipulation like the Industrial Disputes Act of 1948, etc. and can, therefore, be included in the household sector (and hence within the informal sector) as per the System of National Accounts (SNA) 1993.

Thus, employment within the unorganised sector has hitherto been derived as a residual of the total workers minus the workers in the organized sector as reported by the Director General of Employment and Training (DGET). It may, however, be mentioned that DGET figures do not include informal/unorganised employment in the organized sector - a phenomenon which is becoming increasingly significant in the Indian economy. To that extent, there is an element of under-estimation in the determination of unorganised sector employment in the economy.

The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector considered various aspects of the matter and defined the unorganised sector in the following manner:

"The unorganised sector consists of all unincorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or households engaged in the sale and production of goods and services operated on a proprietary or partnership basis and with less than ten total workers."

Following this definition, in agriculture, only the plantations and other types of organized agriculture

Table 1: Total Employment Sector-wise (million)

	Informal/unorganised workers	Formal/Organized workers	Total
	1999-2000		
Informal/Unorganised Sector	341.3 (99.6)	1.4 (0.4)	342.7 (100.0)
Formal/Organized Sector	20.5 (37.5)	33.6 (62.2)	54.1 (100.0)
Total	361.8 (91.2)	35.0 (8.8)	396.8 (100.0)
	2004-2005		
Informal/Unorganised Sector	393.5 (99.6)	1.4 (0.4)	394.9 (100.0)
Formal/Organized Sector	29.1 (46.6)	33.5 (53.4)	62.6 (100.0)
Total	422.6 (92.4)	34.9 (7.6)	457.5 (100.0)

Note: Figures in brackets are percentages

Source: NSS 61st Round (2004-05), and NSS 55th Round (1999-00), Employment- Unemployment Survey: Computed by NCEUS.

(i.e. corporate or co-operative farming) are excluded. Thus, a very large part of the workers engaged in agriculture are included.

Secondly, the NCEUS defined unorganised or informal employment as follows:

"Unorganised workers consist of those working in the unorganised enterprises or households, excluding regular workers with social security benefits, and the workers in the formal sector without any employment/social security benefits provided by the employers."

This definition excludes casual or contract workers and thus captures unorganised sector employment in a more realistic manner.

SIZE OF THE UNORGANISED SECTOR

NCEUS has prepared estimates of employment in the unorganised sector. As on January 2005, the total employment (principal and subsidiary) in the Indian economy was 458 million, of which the unorganised sector accounted for 395 million, i.e. 86 percent of the total workers in 2004-05.

However, a distinction has been made by the NCEUS in organized sector/unorganised sector

employment and organized and unorganised worker. The unorganised sector refers to enterprises which employ less than 10 workers. But the unorganised workers refer to workers who are employed whether in the organized or unorganised sector but are not covered for social security benefits.

From the data given in table 1, it is evident that out of 62.6 million employed in the organized sector, 29.1 million are unorganised workers applying the criterion of social security benefits. Similarly out of 395 million workers employed in the unorganised sector, 1.4 million workers avail of social security benefits and are, therefore, classified as organized workers. After applying the two criteria, out of a total employment of 457.5 million workers, only 34.9 million are entitled for social security benefits i.e. 7.6 percent of the total workers in 2004-05 and the remaining 422.6 million (92.4 percent) are treated as unorganised workers. Comparing this, with 1999-00, it is revealed that though during 1999-00 and 2004-05, total employment in the economy increased from 397 million to 458 million, i.e. an increase by 61 million during the 5-year period, the number of

organized workers remained stagnant at 35 million and the entire increase of employment was in the category of unorganised workers.

4. ESTIMATE OF ORGANISED AND UNORGANISED WORKERS

Out of a total of 458 million workers, agricultural workers constituted 259 million (56.6% of total) and non-agricultural workers were about 199 million (43.4% of total). Out of 458 million workers, males constituted 310 million (67.7% of total) and females accounted for 148 million (32.3% of total).

Among the 423 million workers in the unorganised sector, agricultural workers constituted 256 million (56.0 percent) and non-agricultural workers were of the order of 167 million (36.4 %). Among 35 million organised workers, merely 3 million were agricultural workers and 32 million were non-agricultural workers.

Poverty ratio among organised and unorganised workers

According to NSS 61st round on the basis of 30-day uniform recall period, the poverty ratio for the country as whole in 2004-05 was 27.5%. However, it was 28.3% in rural areas and 25.7% in urban

Table 2

Percentage of the Self-employed workers in unorganised Non-Agriculture Sector (2004-05)									
Employment Status	Rural			Urban			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1. Own Account Worker	50.2	38.6	47.6	47.0	35.4	44.7	48.6	37.1	46.2
2. Unpaid family labour	9.1	37.7	15.4	11.1	26.1	14.0	10.1	32.3	14.7
3. Employer	1.0	0.3	0.8	3.5	0.6	3.0	2.3	0.4	1.9
Total self-employed (1+2+3)	60.3	76.6	63.9	61.6	62.1	61.7	61.0	69.8	62.8
All workers	100.0								

Source : Computed from NSS 61st Round 2004-05, Employment - Unemployment survey.

areas. Overall poverty ratio among all workers was of the order of 19.3%, but there was sharp difference in the poverty ratio among unorganised standing at 20.4% as against the organised at a low level of 4.9%.

However, in agriculture, the poverty ratio among all workers was 20.4%, and among unorganised workers, it was 20.5% and among organised workers was 13.8%. This shows that poverty ratio among unorganised workers in agriculture was relatively much higher than poverty even among organised workers. In the non-agriculture sector, poverty ratio was 20.4% among unorganised workers in comparison to merely 4.1% among organised workers. This indicates among the non-agricultural workers, unorganised sector poverty ratio was five times more than of the organised workers.

SELF-EMPLOYED WORKERS IN NON-AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

'Self-employed' workers dominate Indian economy. On the basis of latest data for 2004-05, self-employed workers account for 56.5 percent of the labour force - the single highest group in the categorization of workers followed by casual workers (28.3%) and regular workers (15.2%). They fall in two categories those employed in agriculture constituting of farmers

marginal, small and big work in agriculture on their own and obtain a major part of their income from own cultivation and not wage labour. They are included in the unorganised sector and their number has been estimated at 166 million for 2004-05.

On the other hand, there are quite a large number of self-employed in the non-agricultural sector and they were around 92 million in 2004-05. Self-employed workers are grouped into three categories.

Own Account Workers: They work on their own using their labour power. To eke out a better living, they stretch their work for longer hours. Chayanov, a Russian economist, refers to this phenomenon as 'self-exploitation'.

Unpaid family workers: These persons do contribute their labour but do not get any separate remuneration. Their contribution becomes a part of the family income.

Employers i.e. those who hire at least one wage worker, but the total number of hired workers is less than 10, to use the definition provided by the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector.

Table 2 reveals that as a proportion of all workers, self-employed workers account for about 63 percent. Females contribute

about 70 percent and males around 61 percent. Share of the self-employed is much higher among women in rural areas, while in urban areas; it is more or less equal for men and women.

The Commission has recommended the following action programme for the unorganised sector:

A. Protective Measures for Unorganised Workers

Two sets of measures are recommended in this regard:

1) Ensuring Minimum Condition of work which include the following:

2) Minimum level of social security- NCEUS recommends two comprehensive bills separately for agricultural and non-agricultural workers providing the following benefits:

a. Life Insurance: Rs. 30,000 for natural death or Rs. 75,000 in the event of accidental death or total disability;

b. Health insurance: Hospitalization for each worker and his family members, costing Rs. 15,000 a year with Rs. 10,000 per ailment in designated hospitals.

c. Old age security: All BPL (Below the poverty line) workers will get a monthly pension of Rs 200 at the age of 60 plus; all workers other than BPL will be entitled to provident fund.

The proposed scheme is

Low income self-employed who are closer to or marginally above casual workers	High income self-employed who are closer to or higher than regular workers
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Handloom weavers (mostly women) 2. Chikan workers (mostly women) 3. Street vendors 4. Food processors 5. Rickshaw pullers 6. Rag pickers 7. Beedi rollers (mostly home workers) 8. Agarbati makers (mostly women) 9. Potters 10. Bamboo product makers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Independent professionals (such as doctors, lawyers, artists and accountants) 2. Shop owners in urban areas 3. Rice mill owners 4. Workshop owners 5. Commission agents 6. Brokers of real estate, housing etc 7. Owners of small hotels and restaurants.

Besides this, 20-40 percent of marginal and small farmers are excluded from formal financial sector due to lack of patta and title decades. The Commission recommends that the such farmers be extended credit on the basis of certificates issued by panchayats. To

expected to cost Rs. 1,095 per worker per year for 30 crore workers in the unorganised sector. The total cost of the scheme for both agricultural and non-agricultural workers will be Rs. 33,950 crores at 2006-07 prices after full coverage - - (Rs.19,400 crores for agricultural workers and Rs. 13,950 crores for non-agricultural workers). Workers below the poverty line (BPL) will be exempt from contribution and their share will be borne by the Central Government; and other workers will contribute Re. 1 per day and the Central and State governments each will pay Re. 1 per day. On the assumption that GDP will grow at the rate of 8 percent in the next five years, the cost of the scheme would be 0.20 percent of GDP in the year of its inception. This will rise to 0.48 percent of GDP in 2010-11 when all the unorganised workers are expected to be covered.

B. Package of Measures for the Marginal and Small Farmers The Commission recommends that during the Eleventh Plan period, the Government focuses a targeted programme to help small and marginal farmers. The Government could take as its priority tasks the development of area specific irrigation schemes; crop procurement, measures for reducing

risks, formation of self-help groups (SHGs) for farmers with respect to irrigation resources, inputs and marketing arrangements; tenancy reform and group farming. The Government can also undertake technological platforms which could be accessed by such farmers.

1. Emphasis on Accelerated Land and Water management The Commission is of the view that in rainfed areas, the watershed development programmes are of crucial importance and have a high benefit cost ratio. About 45 million hectares have been covered under watershed development programme so far, while about 75 million hectares remain to be covered. The Commission recommends accelerated expansion of watershed development programmes and Rainfed Area Programmes to revive agriculture in rainfed agricultural land on which a large number of the rural poor are dependent, as an immediate priority.

2. Credit for Marginal-Small Farmers The Commission recommends that priority sector lending guidelines of the RBI should be amended and a 10 percent quota, out of the 18 percent presently assigned for agriculture, be fixed for farmers with landholding below 2 hectares.

reduce the risk of default, the Commission is of the view that the Government may set up a Credit Guarantee Fund (CGF) in NABARD, on the lines of the CGF set up by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium enterprises which provides Guarantee cover on loans to small units.

3. Farmer's Debt Relief Commission To alleviate the distress faced by farmers with respect to 31 districts, in four states of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala, the Government has launched a special package of debt relief. To help other states as well, the Commission recommends the setting up of Farmers Debt Relief Commissions. The Central Government, as a part of the relief package, could extend assistance to State Commissions on a 75:25 basis.

C. Measures to Improve Growth of Non-Agricultural Sector

1. Improve Credit Flow to the Non-agricultural sector The Commission recommends in a detailed manner measures to improve access of bank credit for micro and small enterprises. At present, the priority sector targets are as follows:

Agriculture 18 percent, weaker sections 10 percent, and others

Salient Features of Minimum Condition of Work Proposals

- Eight-hour working day with half-hour break
- One paid day of rest per week
- National minimum wage for all workers in the unorganised sector, not covered by the Minimum Wages Act
- Piece rate wage to equal time rate wage
- Women work to be paid at par with men
- Deduction in wage rate to attract fines
- Right of unorganised workers to organise
- Safety equipment and compensation for accident
- Protection from sexual harassment
- Provision of child-care and basic amenities at the workplace

including micro and small enterprises 12 percent. There is no specific target for small and micro enterprises. The Commission recommends that an explicit target of 10 percent be set for lending to micro and small enterprises. Within this, a 94% target be set up for micro-enterprises with capital investment up to Rs. 5 lakhs. Since the priority sector quota for agriculture is 18 percent (of which 10 percent should be reserved for small and marginal farmers), and another 10 percent as recommended for small and micro-enterprises, this would leave a quota of 12 percent from the total priority sector allocation of 40 percent, which in the Commission's view, should be allocated for socio-economically weaker sections, for purposes of housing, education, professions etc. with a loan ceiling of Rs 5 lakhs.

2. Creation of a National Fund for Unorganised Sector (NAFUS) The Commission recommends an agency be created for the development of unorganised sector which shall be called National Fund for the Unorganised Sector (NAFUS) with an initial corpus of Rs. 5,000 crores, contributed by Central Government, public sector banks, financial sector institutions and other government agencies. The

target group of the fund would be micro-enterprises, with focus on those below an investment of Rs. 5 lakhs. These constitute 94 percent of small enterprises in the country about but they receive only 2 percent of Net Bank Credit despite providing employment to 70 million people and contributing 30 percent of industrial production.

3. Upscaling of Cluster Development through Growth Poles The Commission recommends the development of 'growth poles' for the unorganised sector, based on concept of a cluster of clusters with public-private partnership. This recommendation involves an upscaling of cluster development efforts through the provision of common infrastructure, service centers etc. designed to take the existing cluster development approach to the next level. The Commission believes that clusters once developed would lead to multiplier effect on production and employment in rural areas.

The Commission also recommends that 'growth poles; should be given the same incentives currently being offered to Special Economic Zones.

B. Measures to Expand Employment and Improve Employability Programmes

Expand employment through self-employment programmes The Commission recommends that target of employment under self-employment schemes should be raised to 5 million per year as against 2 million per year proposed by the Eleventh Plan.

Universalise and Strengthen NREGA. The Commission recommends the extension and universalisation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme to all districts in the country. At present, NREGA programme covers 330 districts. The Commission, in this respect, recommends that on the employment front, the cap on employment for 100 days a year to be provided per household should be removed and the programmes should be purely demand based, on the lines of Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme.

Improving the Employability through Skill Development The Commission noted the 'skill development initiatives' (SDI) being provided at present at a total cost of Rs. 550 crores. The objective of the scheme is to provide training to school leavers, existing workers, ITI graduates to improve their employability. On an average, an expenditure of Rs. 5,000 per person is expected to be incurred on training imparted and certification of trainees under SDI Scheme.

The Commission recommends that though DGET scheme is a step in the right direction, it should be expanded through a supplementary on -the job-training cum employment assurance programme for an additional sum of Rs. 5,000 per person to be provided as one-time payment as an incentive to any employer who is willing to provide on-the job-training for skill enhancement for at least one year to the trained worker. ●

Indian Outsourcing Companies Mantra to Survive

VIKRAM BHAT

Indian outsourcing companies are shifting some of their operations to China, the Philippines, Vietnam and Kenya in a bid to stay competitive as higher wages, and expensive property prices. Back-office services companies thrive on doing jobs such as taking customer calls, payroll management and accounting at a fraction of the cost for big multinational firms or governments. But costs in India are climbing on the back of a robust economy that has attracted skilled workers to other sectors, forcing companies to look elsewhere to stay in business.

Infosys Technologies Ltd, India's second largest software services exporter bought three of Royal Philips Electronics NV's back-office services units in Thailand, Poland and India to expand market presence. HTMT Global Solutions the Bangalore-based backoffice services provider used to generate all its revenue from India by providing services to its clients in the US. But India now accounts for little over half the total and with rapid expansion in the Philippines and Mauritius TMT Global plans to enter China and Vietnam soon. Wipro plans to set up two facilities in China to tap growing business opportunities there.

India's English-speaking workforce, a big factor in winning call centre jobs, faces competition from countries such as Kenya. When compared to India, it is better off in terms of salary and cost per seat,

India produces about 2.5 million graduates every year, compared with 400,000 in the Philippines, but only about 15% Indians are suitable for employment in the outsourcing sector.

and has a large pool of Kenyans with clear accents.

India's share in the global back-office services pie will drop to 50% in the next three five years from about 60% now, according to US-based Tholons Inc., which offers management consultancy for offshoring. India produces about 2.5 million graduates every year, compared with 400,000 in the Philippines, but only about 15% Indians are suitable for employment in the outsourcing sector.

US-based outsourcer 24/7 Customer, which has multiple facilities in Asia's third largest economy, interviews 5,000 candidates a month in India, but is able to recruit only about 250. This is pushing up wages rapidly as financial firms from Citigroup and HSBC Holdings Plc. to Standard Chartered Bank Plc. employ thousands at their back-office hubs in India.

Starting wages at Rs15,000 a month

are still about one-fifth of what their US counterparts earn, but they are rising 10-15% a year. Cost per employee for a back-office firm in Bangalore is almost similar to Manila, but is 20% lower in Guangzhou in China and 35% cheaper in Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. Analysts say while Vietnam does not have a vast pool of English-speaking manpower, it is a prime destination for non-voice back-office services, such as legal and medical transcription, claims processing, and finance and accounting.

While China have moved beyond Shenzhen and Hong Kong to the places like Guangzhou to attract back-office business services companies, India seems to have missed the bus and will slowly concede its dominance in Outsourcing Industry to the smarter nations. India has miserably performed in promoting tier 2 and tier 3 cities especially in North East J&K and other states. If we consider literacy and talent available in these regions they surely have edge over other preferred destination in country. If the authorities are sincere, then by promoting destinations in North East and J&K will not only help Indian Outsourcing Industry to remain competitive but will help in opportunities creation for younger generations and in changing economic profile of states in these states. This will take care of problems like Terrorism & Separatism also. ●

Political Parties will have to explain their position : SJM

USA Can't be our model : Gurumurthy
Swadeshi is the way of life : Sahsarkaryavah

SWADESHI SAMWAD

"WTO Is An Accumulated Democratic Deficit Because It Lacks Transparency And Credibility,"
Muralidhar Rao

Nandigram Is An Example Of Communist 'Stalinisation'
Govindacharya

"Agricultural Tracts Are Our Strong Point. Since Foreign Multinationals Are Entering Every Field To Gain Power, We Should Find Out A Way To Save Our Assets,"
M. Madan Dass Ji

SEZs Have Become Special Exploitation Zones
Arun Ohja

These were some of the remarks made by the leader of Swadeshi Jagaran Manch in their speeches delivered at the 8th National Conference held in Indore Madhya Pradesh from 7-9th Dec. 2007. Thousands of Swadeshi Jagaran Manch

activists from all over India including hundreds of women activists attended the three-day conference.

Inaugural Session was presided over by - and Sh. Madan Das Ji was the chief guest. Shri Madhu Verma chairman Indore

Development welcomed the delegates in the conference. Shri Arun ojha Akhil Bharti Sanchalak presented a brief account of the activities undertaken during the previous year. Yearly report was distributed to delegate's in printed form also. The report includes information about all the major activities undertaken by different units of SJM throughout the country. Some of these are Kissan Panchayats, protest against SEZs, agitation by Turmeric farmers, awareness campaign on GM foods, agitation against FDI in retail Trade and so on. Arun ji also gave information on organizational activities. Shri Muralidher Roa National convenor in his inaugural speech talked about the issues confronting the economy. He Termed Swadeshi as a movement to protect the sovereignty of the nation. Talking about the history of SJM, he said that there were several people in the country who were opposing the WTO like SJM.



RESOLUTION NO. 1

GOVERNMENT SPONSORED AGRICULTURAL CRISIS

The policies of globalization, liberalization and new economic policies in the name of reforms adopted by the government over one and half decades have pushed the agro crisis to its peak. Increasing number of farmers' suicides demonstrates the severity of the crisis. According to the government's own statistics over 1.5 lac farmers have committed suicides so far after adopting new policies and the attitude of the government towards farming community continues to be indifferent. If the same situation continues the country might have many suicides in the years to come. The rehabilitation package announced by the Hon'ble Prime Minister could not give adequate relief to the farmers entangled in debt trap and the corruption of administrative machinery in implementing the package bears testimony to the insensitiveness of government. Lack of adequate access to formal credit mechanism made farmers more dependent on informal credit and suffering its consequences.

SEZ A GOVERNMENT PROMOTED LAND GRAB CAMPAIGN :-

In the name of export promotion and development, the government had already approved 408 SEZ in the country and many more are in pipeline. For establishing these SEZs the Union and the State Governments are acquiring huge tracks of fertile and cultivable lands and transferring them to big corporate houses at throw away prices. Those lands which are treated as symbol of pride and also provide livelihood to millions of farmers are being forcibly taken away by the powers that be and in lieu of that the farmers are slapped with ignominy and even mortal persecution more often in the form of firing bullets. Nandigram is a classic example of a State sponsored terrorism to suppress the voice of the rightful owner of land for centuries with sentimental attachment to it. Acquiring huge tracks of fertile land for non-agricultural purposes is threatening the food security of the nation which is already in deep crisis.

INCREASING STRANGLE HOLD OF CORPORATE IN AGRICULTURE :-

Contract farming, genetically modified seeds, import of foreign seed. Futures trading in commodities, APMC Act., retail trade are some of the means through which the government had facilitated the big MNCs like PRO - AGRO, SINZENTA, MON-

SANTO, DU-PONT ect. to establish their strangle hold in agriculture. Because of the policies adopted by the government in agriculture with the abetment of big corporate houses, on one side the public investment in agriculture sector had sharply declined over different plan periods on the other side the government facilitated corporate investment into agriculture, resulting in unabated loot of farmers as well as consumers. The increasing presence of corporate strangle hold on agriculture had rendered farming as a non-remunerative vocation to small marginal farmers. The government's documents disclose that about 40% of the farmers are willing to give up cultivation (farming) indicating alarming situation. **LOOMING THREAT ON INDIAN AGRICULTURE DUE TO WTO NEGOTIATIONS :-**

Despite the stalemate in WTO negotiations due to the hard and strong positions taken by US and EU with regard to cutting down their farm subsidies, the developed nations are constantly demanding countries like India to provide them more agri-market access, and pressurize the third world countries to take forward the negotiations to suit their requirements. The undue interest shown by our Commerce Minister in building a consensus on the issue could be understood by the citizens. The farm bill, 2007 of US establishes beyond doubt the protective measures adopted by the developed nations to insulate their agriculture from external changes. The changes made to our laws in the form of new Patent Act, Farmers and Breeders Rights Act, Seed Act, etc. in accordance with WTO negotiations have already denied the Indian Farmer of all the rights enjoyed by him traditionally. On one side the developed nations are protecting their agriculture sector and on the other they are pressurizing the developing nations to import minimum percentage of their farm produce requirements, and government of India had willingly succumbed to their pressures due to which the import of agricultural products have reached record heights, worsening the agro crisis in the country. The developed nations have enlarged the agenda for negotiations to under mine Doha development declaration.

STEP MOTHERLY TREATMENT WITH WHEAT FARMERS-IMPORT OF WHEAT :-

For the second consecutive year the government of India had resorted to import of inferior quality

of wheat at a very high price of around 400 dollars (2007) per tonne in the name of improving buffer stocks and paying not even half the import price to Indian wheat farmer, who produces superior variety of wheat only shows the extreme bias of government towards MNCs and step motherly treatment with Indian Farmer. When the wheat was imported in the past alongwith wheat came several viruses, weed, pest and fungus with telling effect on Indian farms and farmers had to face the challenge using different pesticides which not only increased cost of production of wheat in India and reduced incomes of farmers but also resulted in erosion of micro nutrients in several states. This time again the government further liberalized the quarantine laws in the country paving way for import of infectious and inferior variety of wheat. The policy of import of wheat had conferred windfall gains to MNCs like Glencore, Cargil, AWB etc. and the corrupt administrative machinery allowed unsuitable wheat throwing phyto sanitary measures to winds. The fact that even cattle refused to eat imported wheat in Maharashtra speaks volumes about the quality of that wheat. Same is the case with many other horticulture crops to cite an example the imported apples from US contained huge pest residue, SJM considers these aspects as instances of bio-terrorism from the west.

THE SJM STRONGLY RESOLVES TO DEMAND

01. Government should recognize agriculture in India as lively hood/life style issue.
- 02 The government should immediately divorce its love for MNCs, formulate and implement

- plans/policies to promote the agriculture in general and farmers interests in particular. The government should enhance budgetary allocation to agriculture from present level of 6% to 25%.
03. To prevent the suicidal tendencies of farmers, the government should announce a package to write off their loans at the same time provide fresh loan to farmers at 3 or 4% rate of interest. Agriculture subsidy be given in the form of cash to farmers.
04. The farmers should be provided with the remunerative prices and mechanism should be evolved to enable farmers to reduce cost of cultivation.
05. SEZ act, 2005 should be repealed and the cultivable lands taken from farmers should be return to them with compensation for damages caused.
06. Ban import of wheat, pulses, oilseeds and other farm products and also implement special plan to increase their production in the country to ensure food security.
07. Promote organic and traditional farming methods with special budgetary allocation to support those activities.
08. Extensive social security measures like oldage pensions, health insurance etc. should be implemented for small marginal farmers and landless poor. Also extend crop insurance to all crops. Proposed Displacement and Rehabilitation Act should not be implemented without detailed survey and consensus.

But all of them took it as a fait accompli. SJM, he asserted, was the only organization to say that WTO can't exist in its present form. How can a self contradictory Institution Like WTO Survive, he asked? More and more people are now accepting it. Latest trends indicate that both developed as well as developing countries were leaving multilateral trade routes for bilateral or regional agreements. Lack of democratic set up and Transparency was the major reason for failure of WTO, he added. He also talked about the Model of

development being followed and declared that the Swadeshi has a global context. Realignment of forces was going on and Swadeshi has to integrate Sattvic Shakti. to become victorious.

Describing SJM as a form of Dattopant Thengde's Vision, Manniya Madan Dass Ji said that economic freedom was part of freedom struggle. Recalling some past events he said that not many people after independence comprehended the need to fight for economic sovereignty. It was because of this lack of

understanding among policy makers and ruling clan that country had to pay a heavy price. He cited several examples in this regard be that forced change in patent laws or impact of WTO on Agriculture. The decision makers always took agriculture Sector as a weakness, and not the Strength of Indian economy. This was reason for lack of attention given to it. Developed countries on the other hand were confident of stopping developing world from becoming economically self-sufficient. We lost confidence in

RESOLUTION NO. 2

STOP ENTRY OF CORPORATES IN RETAIL TRADE

The declared intention of the government in various fora to permit FDI in retail trade is highly deplorable. In our country 125 lakhs of small and medium shops exist providing direct and indirect employment to more than 4 crore people.

In this way this sector provides livelihood to more than 20 crore people with employment opportunities next only to agriculture and contributing 13% of GDP. This sector consists of hawkers, cart vendors, street sellers and also small and medium shops. The sector also is known for providing more employment with least amount of capital.

GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OF OPENING RETAIL TRADE TO CORPORATES

Under pressure from MNCs, the government has so far permitted 51% FDI in single brand retail and efforts are on to further open up the sector. After taking over the retail trade in U.S., U.K., the rest of Europe, South East Asia and China, the MNCs have now turned their attention to India. Because of popular resistance, the government is unable to proceed further in its intentions. This has resulted in MNCs making back door entry in association with Indian corporates. Some big Indian companies are also entering the retail trade in a big way trying to increase their hold on Indian Retail Sector.

EMPLOYMENT ENDANGERED

According to McKinsey report, labour productivity in Indian retail trade is hardly 6% of what it prevails in U.S., In other words every job created

in organized retail trade displaces 15 jobs of normally less educated people in the informal sector who cannot be employed elsewhere leading to high unemployment among ordinary people.

OTHER DANGERS

The entry of corporates will also affect the productivity of Indian manufacturing sector, wholesale trade and the consumers in the long run. It may be noted that MNC's finished the shoe industry of U.S., and led to the closure of Coats in U.K. After monopolizing retail trade, these companies start fleecing the consumers. According to a study made by the Fortune magazine, due to monopoly of retail trade, the MNCs sold the goods at a price of 40% over the existing price in Europe leading to increased cost to the consumers.

When the METRO Multinational tried to enter retail trade in Bangalore misusing the whole sale license, due to opposition by SJM-lead traders agitation, the company shelved its plan and also the lost the court battle. Opposition to the entry of MNC's and Indian Corporates in retail trade continues through out the country.

In this background, the SJM demands that:

1. Entry of MNCs and Corporates in retail sector be stopped forthwith to save the livelihoods of crores of people engaged in the sector.
2. Encouragement be given to the retail trade to modernize and expand their business by providing all out support including tax rebates and finance at an interest rate of 4%.

ourselves. Import of wheat is result of such duress created by international forces.

Referring to SEZ he asked why should government acquire land for a developer? Madan ji also talked about nonexistence of democracy in world institutions like, WF, IMF WTO, UNO etc. and warned that economic dependence can result in political slavery. He added that SJM and like-minded people only can plead the case of left outs and force course correction. He termed Swadeshi as a broad and all

encompassing concept that has potential to transform India.

Several books were also released on the occasion. These include a compilation of Swadeshi Songs titled 'Kadam Kadam Badaye Ja'; compilation of speeches of Sh. Muralidhar Rao and Sh. S. Gurumurthy titled 'Vijayee Bharat' and " Global Imbalances and the Impending Dollar crisis" by Shri M.R.Venkadesh.

Three resolutions were passed unanimously in the conference on Agriculture, Retail trade and Nandigram. There were parallel

sessions on 5 topics in the conference there were on Agriculture, WTO, Indian System of Medicine, Women and corporatization of Retail Trade. A public meeting and protest march was organised on IInd day of the conference. A large number of people from Indore Joined the protest march along with the delegates.

Special presentation on economy by S.Gurumurthy; and Agriculture by Prof. Yoganand kale on Agriculture were made during the conference. ●

RESOLUTION NO. 3

NANDIGRAM MASSACRE

Following the adage of Deng Xiao Peng that the colour of the cat is immaterial as long as it catches the mouse, the Marxist's attempt in Bengal to usurp the fertile agricultural land of small peasants in the name of industrialization, from the very same people it has so far proclaimed to stand for and the subsequent exposure of ugly sequence of events so far in Nandigram has sent shock waves across the country. Cracks have appeared not only among the coalition of the left front but also among the wider public. The noted intellectuals, artists and professionals have all condemned the state sponsored massacre of innocent agriculturists. This massacre has been condemned even by the constitutional authorities like the Governor of West Bengal and the National Human Rights Commission Chairman as well as the Kolkata High Court.. The reformer cum mass leader image of Buddhadev Bhattacharya crashed making him run from pillar to post seeking pardon day in and day out. Nandigram today is encircled by armed party cadre of CPI(M), who are terrorising the people. Despite the report of the Governor, the role of the central government is that of a mute spectator, encouraging the goons of CPI(M).

Nandigram symbolizes the wide spread resentment by small land owning peasants and their refusal to part with their livelihood earning asset inherited by generation after generation. Though the opposition and agitation is spread across the country, like POSCO in Orissa and Mangalore in Karnataka, Nandigram generated so much heat leading even to disruption of parliament and the subsequent debate putting the Marxists on the defensive. The nation started sensing the beginning of the end of Marxists Raj in Bengal.

Nandigram should be an eye-opener to other states involved in acquiring agricultural lands of small farmers in the name of SEZs. From IMF to the Finance Ministry all have pointed out the revenue loss of lakhs of crores year after year. It has also been pointed out that only shift in employment and relocation of industries will take place without addition to employment or productive capacity. The Approach paper to the 11th Five year Plan of the Government of Maharashtra has timely pointed out that the originators of the SEZs, namely the Chinese Government have admitted mainly real estate activities alone takes place in SEZs and the concept needs rethink.

The SJM fully shares the feelings of the people of Nandigram and assures that it will stand by them in this hour of crisis and in their valiant struggle to protect their livelihood. The SJM hopes that Nandigram will lead to two desirable things; exposure of the dual face of the Marxists and death to the concept of SEZs.

Interim Relief Demanded

Government Employees National Confederation (GENC) ASKS FOR PUBLICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF 6TH PAY COMMISSION'S REPORT WITH A MINIMUM WAGE OF RS.10, 000/- PER MONTH.

SWADESHI SAMWAD

More than 5,000 workers representing railways, defence, postal, central secretariat, armed forces headquarters, IMD, audit and accounts, currency and coins, etc., under the banner of Government Employees National Federation (GENC), an affiliate of Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) staged massive protest at the Parliament Street in New Delhi on December 11. They were demanding immediate interim relief and publication of the Sixth Pay Commission report with a grant of Rs 10,000 minimum wage per month, scrapping of new pension scheme, stopping of privatisation, lifting ban on recruitment, 100 per cent recruitment on compensate ground to the wards of affected government employees died in service and stopping of outsourcing. They said the recommendations of the Pay Commission should also equally be made applicable to the state government employees and the employees of autonomous bodies. The constitution of a new ministry was also demanded at the central level to look after the functioning and welfare of the employees.

Later, a delegation of the confederation led by the BMS president Shri Girish Awasthi submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh for grant of interim relief at 15 per cent of the basic pay plus DA subject to Rs 1,000 per month and early publication of the Pay Commission report with effect from January 1, 2006.

It was the sixth demonstration by the unions affiliated to the BMS since the beginning of this session of the Parliament. The first demonstration was staged on November 21 followed by subsequent demonstrations on November 27, 29, 30 and December 4. More than 8,000 workers attended the demonstration on December 4. The BMS general secretary Shri Udairao Patwardhan addressed most of these demonstrations and demanded scrapping of the SEZ act and ban on the entry of big business giants in retail trade.

Sethusamudram Canal: An Expensive voyage

SWADESHI SAMWAD



Sethusamudram Canal project is economically unviable, environmentally disastrous, culturally offensive and strategically dangerous. This was the outcome of a Two-day seminar on Sri Ram Sethu held in New Delhi from December 1-2. Scientists, intellectuals and scholars assembled at the two-day seminar and demanded a public apology from the UPA government for disparaging the faith of people by filing a derogatory affidavit in the Supreme Court. The scientists participating in the seminar unanimously declared that the Sethusamudram project is dangerous and disastrous for the nation from all angles. "From all angles whether it is history, environment, defence or economic reason the project is completely unviable and will endanger the nation. We unanimously appeal to the government to scrap the project forthwith and respecting the sentiments of people declare Ram Sethu a cultural heritage site," read a resolution unanimously adopted at the end of the seminar. The seminar was organised by Sanskritik Gaurav Sansthan at Constitution Club. Well-researched Papers on different aspects of the project from all possible angles were present in the seminar by experts of their respective fields.

Captain H. Balakrishnan, who has studied the

project in depth, presented the mariners perspective and explained the economic unviability of the project. He said none of the six proposals are going to work.

The basic justification of the Sethusamudram Ship Canal Project (SSCP) is that it will reduce the distance and hence save cost and time for ships. He cited all possible examples to prove the point that it will not. Distance between Kolkata and Tuticorin is projected to be reduced by 340 nautical miles and between Chennai and Tuticorin by 434 nautical miles, thereby saving for the ships plying between these places both fuel cost and time involved in sailing the additional distance, added the Captain.

This justification will be readily valid if the SSC is a free seaway, which ships can sail through without any payment to the project authority, he argued. But the SSC can not be a free seaway... as ships will be allowed to pass through the canal only under regulated pilotage, and pushed /pulled by tugs belonging to the SSCP. Obviously, even while saving on the cost of fuel, a ship passing through the canal will be expected to make a payment to the SSCP for using the facility. The likely pilotage charge to be levied by the SSCP has not been made public, but an approximate figure can be guessed by extrapolating similar charges levied by the Chennai and Tuticorin Port at present.

The approach channel to the Chennai port has a length of 7 km. A 36,000 tonne coal ship calling at Chennai has to pay approximately Rs.21.75 a tonne, or a total of Rs.7.83 lakh, as pilotage charges averaging Rs.1.11 lakh per km. Tuticorin's approach channel is only 2.4 km long and an identical coal ship calling at this port is levied Rs.17 a tonne, or a total of 6.12 lakh, towards pilotage, working out to Rs.3 lakh per km.

The projected length of the Sethusamudram channel is 56 km. Both capital and recurring cost will be much higher for the SSCP than for the Chennai and Tuticorin ports, and its levy of pilotage per km is likely to be substantially higher than that of even the latter if it has to have a 9 per cent return on the capital. Even if the Chennai rate is assumed, the same ship will have to pay over 60 lakhs to the SSCP for passing through the

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canal.

But the cost of fuel that will be saved by the same ship by taking the shorter route through the Sethusamudram canal instead of sailing round Sri Lanka will be less than Rs. 7 lakh, which is even less than 1/8 of SSCP's likely levy.

The saving in sailing time for that ship will also be substantially less than the 36 hours projected by the SSCP because the ship can not be towed through the canal at its normal speed through the canal, and the time will also be lost in embarkation/disembarkation of pilots and other inspection procedures. The saving in sailing time of just about a day will not justify the incurring of over 8 times the cost of fuel saved.

He repeated the estimates for all other possible and projected users of the canal and said that for none of them using this canal will be economical. He described SSCP as a Nautical Folly.

Shri D. Kuppaswamy, an advocate presented the point of view of the coastal community and underlined the fact that the coastal community will be the worst hit and will be displaced. He quoted figures from different sources to explain the loss country is going to suffer on account of damage to the existing export business in the area. Shri Kuppuramu, advocate in Ramnathpuram and president of Fishermen Association, said the project would snatch away the livelihood of lakhs of fishermen and therefore must not be implemented in the present form.

Manniya Shri Ashok Singhal president VHP declared that as long as the government does not declare Ram Sethu a national heritage site, the Hindu society will continue to agitate. He said a number of vested interests are involved in the project. If the government properly utilises the huge store of thorium available on the coastline in the area, every village of the country could be provided with electricity, which is now just a dream. He said the strong reaction from countrymen forced the government to withdraw the derogatory affidavit from the court.

Dr Subramanian Swamy, president Janta Party said

the government selected this disastrous proposal under a well-planned conspiracy and he would expose it in the court soon. Prof. Ramchandran under whom the government has constituted a committee to study the project was publicly seen garlanding and touching the feet of Karunanidhi. What he would say in his report could be understood from it, he said. He further said the government's claim of reduction in time and fuel after the construction of the project is misleading as only the lighter ships with less than 30,000 tonne weight will be able to pass through the canal and the number of such small ships is only five per cent of the total ships in the world. "Yes, it would certainly benefit the ships of LTTE and others owned by TRV Salvem, son of Shipping Minister T.R. Balu," he said adding that the shipping association has also opposed the project in present form. He said the project would further cost the government Rs 15,000 crore annually for regular maintenance. It would prove to be a white elephant as well as economic disaster. He proposed that instead of wasting time on Sethusamudram project the government should find the ways for laying railway lines and constructing highways as alternatives.

Concluding the seminar, Dr Murli Manohar Joshi, former Union HRD Minister, said destruction of Ram Sethu is not just the destruction of a monument, but an attack on Indian ethos, culture and traditions. "It must be protected at any cost," he said adding that we are not anti-America but pro-India. He appealed to the countrymen to contribute as per their might to save the Sethu. It is the task of saving the humanity and an engineering marvel. He also stressed the need to deeply understand the conspiracy of the government. He said a fraud has been perpetrated on us so that we forget our Indian greatness. He pointed out that there are more than 1000 cities in the world, which have been named after Sri Ram. "Traditions are regarded as correct as any book in our country. If traditions were not based on truth they would not have been followed by crores of people since centuries. These traditions are evidence in support of the Ram Sethu. The landmark of Aasetu Himalaya is also going to be finished. The Himalaya has been invaded by China and the Sethu is being destructed by our own government," he said.

Dr S. Kalyana Raman, chairman of Rameshwaram Ram Sethu Raksha Manch, said the project would lead to destruction of fish and marine life in the Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar resulting in loss of livelihood of thousands of fishermen and their families along the southern coastline of Tamil Nadu. It also does not include tsunami protection measures. ●

Building material from human waste

Now it is possible to prepare furniture and doors for your house from human excreta instead of wood, plastic or metal sheets. If Sulabh International has its way the day is not far when furniture, window frames and doors can be made out of human excreta instead of other materials. Each block measuring 215 x 75 x 20cm, are made of human faeces mixed with adhesive like Fevicol, an agglutinative plastic. "The faecal matter was collected in New Delhi and Jaipur, and was left to dry for three years, during which time the material became inert and degraded back to an earth-like substance, rendering it harmless from a sanitary point of view. Efforts are also on to manufacture cricket balls from this newly developed substance," said a spokesperson from Sulabh International. The researchers at the Sulabh International have succeeded in developing a strong raw material out of the human waste. Founder of Sulabh International Dr Bindeshwar Pathak while expressing great happiness over this startling discovery said that it could be termed as another milestone to protect the environment by saving lakhs of trees. Pathak, the brain behind this discovery, said that designers of these doors had succeeded in designing 22 sculptures in different shapes and size of doors out of manure converted from human excreta of the pits of Sulabh Shauchalayas. This is evident from the fact that at least 21 such designer doors have been put on display at the prestigious Lisson Art Gallery of London. The Sulabh technology is scientifically appropriate, economically affordable and culturally acceptable by several international organisations like the World Bank, WHO, UNICEF and UNDP. For more than three decades Dr Bindeshwar Pathak, who founded the Sulabh International Social Service Organisation, has been promoting toilets that are cheap to build and don't require a sewer connection.

Allot Minimum Airwaves along with Licence : Spectrum Panel

The official panel for reviewing spectrum allocation norms recommended allotting minimum airwaves along with the licence and favoured the auction route for distributing incremental spectrum - a move that may not find many takers in the GSM lobby. "First, grant a minimum allotment (sic) to an operator along with the licence, and then auction the remaining spectrum, with a cap on the total spectrum that any operator can have in a circle," the committee, headed by R Bandhopadhyay, said in its 22-page report. The panel said that a technical committee could be set up to specify the methods including auction for allotment of incremental spectrum. While on the issue of whether to consider subscriber-linked criteria as recommended by telecom regulator TRAI or the Telecom Engineering Centre (TEC), the committee has left the decision to the government due to sharp differences within the panel. Some members felt that TRAI prescribed criteria can be considered for CDMA-based mobile services, while that of TEC for GSM operations. The TEC report had become a bone of contention among the existing GSM players and the government, with the former challenging the report in telecom tribunal TDSAT. The panel also said that incremental quantum of spectrum should be reduced to 1 MHz from 1.8-2.4 MHz

till now for the GSM players as it was now possible to deploy an increment of 1 MHz effectively in the network. "The additional subscriber base supported by each extra one MHz is also large. The incremental quantum of spectrum allotted for GSM can therefore be reduced to one MHz. It is therefore recommended that the subscriber-linked criterion be modified to specify the subscriber base for steps of one MHz additional spectrum in the case of GSM," the committee said. It also noted that GSM operators have already exceeded subscriber-based criterion as per the existing policy without allotment of any additional spectrum. "Depending on the parameters assumed, one can get widely varying numbers including numbers higher than obtained by the Telecom Engineering Centre," the panel said.

Ayurveda Online

Ayurveda remedies now at the click of a mouse! This is what the National Institute of Ayurveda (NIA) Jaipur promises for those who want to follow the age-old herbal system of Indian medicine for any ailment. The NIA will begin its online consultancy services within a month and later also offer telemedicine, said institute director Mahesh Chandra Sharma. "With our online consultancy service, people will be able to report their illness on NIA's website. Operators will forward all queries to the expert concerned and submit back his or her advice. Ayurveda consultants anywhere in the world can also seek advice on treatment of a particular illness," Sharma said. NIA, run by the union ministry of health and family welfare and coming under the department of Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH), is known for its many pioneering researches in ayurveda. "Apart from online consultancy service, we are setting up web-server based centres at three divisional levels - at Jodhpur, Kota and Udaipur - in the state. Practitioners of ayurveda in hospitals in these places can regularly be in touch with experts of NIA for consultancy on treatment of patients," he added. "A panel of ayurveda experts is being constituted to provide advice on diseases like obesity, diabetes, depression and knee and abdominal pain. NIA will also provide information on different therapies like 'panchkarma', and blood purifying through ayurvedic treatment," he said. NIA has a hospital facility in the Rajasthan capital, research centres as well as an educational institute that offers courses in all branches of ayurveda

Double whammy "ration card" Scam

Recent study has put the number of "ghost" public distribution system cards at a staggering 2.3 crore and, what is even more damning, that as many as 1.21 crore "deserving" poor have been left out of the food security umbrella. So, the PDS or the "ration card" scam is actually a massive double whammy. Not only do a huge number of fake cards point to diversion of the PDS subsidized food grain, but the leaking system is bypassing those who are in dire need of state support. While the government is importing food grain to maintain buffer stocks, the delivery system is falling wide off the mark. The study, conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), has provided evidence to confirm that

food grain is being diverted to the black market and may even be smuggled into Bangladesh. In either case, the purpose of PDS to provide nutritional security to the poor is defeated. The report found that the rich had been given the lowest income group ration cards — AAY cards — in 70% of the cases in the Northeast and in 30-35% of the cases in other states. Even people who got their PDS supply of wheat and rice did not pay the stipulated price. Macro view of the health crisis the failing public distribution system is causing in the country. The nutritional security that PDS was supposed to provide to the poor has failed to work as a blanket covering the vulnerable, as it was envisioned. The number of BPL cards is inadequate and the basis of setting the poverty line is questionable, the special commissioners appointed by the Supreme Court on food security told the court recently. They have correlated the failing PDS coverage with the high levels of food insecurity in the country. A staggering 46% of children in India are malnourished. "This is completely unacceptable since it is double the rate of malnutrition for sub-Saharan Africa," the report said. The commissioners told the court, stood true across states as well as the rural-urban divide, proving that the poor in urban India fared no better than the rural impoverished. The commissioners have recommended that the poverty line for urban areas be increased to include people spending upto Rs 1,120 per month and in rural areas to Rs 615. The report also pointed out that whereas 87.5% of the richest lot had access to some or the other kind of ration card, 16.8% of them had secured BPL cards for themselves. The ones that should have been covered completely - in the poorest quintile of the Indian population - only 49% families possess either BPL or AAY cards. The public distribution system is meant to provide nutritional security to the poorest in the country but that is exactly where it fares the worst. In some states, the diversion of wheat and rice from the PDS system meant for BPL and Antyodaya Anna Yojana category (the BPL and the poorest even among the BPL) is an abysmal 100%. This was revealed in a report commissioned by the government to ORG-Marg and which has still not been made public. TOI had reported the overall diversion figures for the country in a previous report but it now has access to the entire report. Fifty-three per cent of the total food grain distributed in the country through PDS and 39% of rice was being diverted away from the poor, TOI had reported. But the rest of the report shows that the poorest suffer the worst from the diversion.

Wheat Import at any price

Government said it would not compromise on the issue of food security even if it has to pay a higher price for import. "We took a decision that the entire matter will be handled by STC. I am not fully aware about what is happening except what I know about the international market," agriculture and food minister Sharad Pawar said while replying to a query on whether India would import wheat at a higher price offered by global suppliers in the recent STC tender. When asked about whether STC should go ahead with the tender, Pawar said: "As I said many times earlier, in Parliament also, it is a question of food security. Unless and until there is enough stock, we are not in a position to compromise on the issue of

buffer stock level." STC has received three bids in the range of 460-580 dollars per tonne under its tender for wheat import. It would soon decide whether to import the food grain at such an exorbitant rate. PEC had purchased 1.5 lakh tons at 397 dollars per tonne. The minister expressed confidence that the buffer stock position was comfortable till the next season.

Burnt bodies recovered from Nandigram 'graves'

Police recovered half-burnt human bodies, wrapped in thick paper, from the five "graves" in Khejuri that a CRPF team stumbled upon while patrolling the area. Superintendent of Police, East Midnapore, S S Panda, confirmed that human bones had been recovered. "These have been sent to a forensic laboratory. Police have already started a suo motu investigation," he said. CBI joint director Arun Kumar was also present when the bones were exhumed. Both the CPI (M) and the Bhoomi Uchched Protirodh Committee (BUPC) claimed the bodies were of their supporters. The CPI (M) said the remains belonged to some people who had been killed in a mine explosion planted by Maoists on October 28. But the BUPC claimed that the bodies could be those of some of their supporters who have been missing since CPI (M) cadres launched their operation to recapture the villages. Meanwhile, CPI(M) Central Committee member Shayamal Chakraborty said that recovery of human bones from the area was not a abnormal affair. He said the bodies might be of those killed in a recent bomb attack by the BUPC. The grave was discovered by locals working at the paddy field on December 10. They informed CRPF men, who then cordoned off the area. Following the discovery, a huge cache of bullets, both live and used, were also unearthed from near the grave. CBI has also shattered the CPM's pretense of political morality by holding its activists responsible for rape and murder in Nandigram. The CBI has filed cases against CPM men for the alleged rape of a mother and her two daughters. According to the FIR, the CPM activists forcibly entered the house of the woman on March 14. The activists allegedly raped the three victims over two days and laid siege to their house. The activists then demanded money from the victims for lifting the siege. The activists left only after the mother paid Rs 1,000. This case is also mentioned in the status report filed by the CBI before the Calcutta High Court. The CBI registered all the four cases on December 15 till now the CBI has registered seven cases related to the Nandigram firing and ensuing violence. The accused in these cases include police officials, CPM activists and unknown persons. The CBI has told the Calcutta High Court in its status report that CPM workers dressed as policemen had fired at protesters, that witnesses were being threatened by CPM activists and that the authenticity of the medical reports handed over to the investigating agency was questionable. The agency has also questioned the police claim that only 57 rounds were fired and told the court that indications were that more rounds were fired. The CBI had submitted the status report on the investigations into the Nandigram police firing and violence in a sealed cover to the Calcutta High Court and had sought four months time for submitting the final report. The court had granted the CBI two months time to submit the final report on the March 14 Nandigram police firing.

Nuclear energy not sustainable

The Dutch government believes that nuclear energy is not sustainable as of now; hence it has not included nuclear energy in its clean energy policy. Interacting with a group of visiting journalists, the Dutch Minister for Environment and Spatial Planning, Jacqueline Cramer, said The Netherlands believed that nuclear energy was not sustainable yet as safety of the plants and disposal of waste continued to be a problem. "May be 30 years later, it will be sustainable. Not as of now," she said. Her government had not included nuclear energy in its clean energy policy. "We encourage the use of fossil energy, natural gases and clean coal in a judicious manner." The Netherlands' only operational nuclear plant will be shut down by 2033. The country plans to reduce greenhouse gases by 30 per cent by 2020 compared with 1990, thereby saving 2 per cent energy annually. To create "new energy for climate," the government had pumped in an additional 500 million Euros for developing sustainable energy. At the international level, it is pushing for production of biomass energy, new financial arrangements for adopting environment-friendly technologies and promoting clean development mechanisms in the developing countries. "We have a role to play in bridging the gap between the developed (like the U.S.) and the fast developing nations (India and China) and we have to act now," she asserted. Suggesting more funds for promoting clean development mechanisms, the Minister admitted that some developing countries had a bigger problem in adopting new technology due to shortage of funds.

Divorce is costly for the environment too

Divorce can be bad for the environment. In countries around the world divorce rates have been rising, and each time a family dissolves the result is two new households. "That really has a big impact in terms of the environment," said Jianguo Liu, an ecologist at Michigan State University. More households' means more use of land, water and energy, three critical resources, Liu explained. Households with fewer people are simply not as efficient as those with more people sharing, he explained. A household uses the same amount of heat or air conditioning whether there are two or four people living there. A refrigerator used the same power whether there is one-person home or several. Two people living apart run two dishwashers, instead of just one. Liu, who researches the relationship of ecology with social sciences, said people seem surprised by his findings at first, and then consider it simple. "A lot of things become simple after the research is done," he said. Some extra energy or water use may not sound like a big deal, but it

adds up. The United States, for example, had 16.5 million households headed by a divorced person in 2005 and just over 60 million households headed by a married person.

Indians in top 3 of legal immigrants in US

India is among the top three countries sending people to the US, where one in eight comes from outside America, bringing the total immigrant population to a record 37.9 million — highest since the 1920s. India is in the top three of legal immigration in the country accounting for a little more than 1.7 million with nearly 39 per cent being US citizens, said the study released by Center for Immigration Studies. Out of a total immigrant population of 37.9 million, an estimated 11.3 million are illegal with 57 per cent coming from Mexico and 11 per cent from Central America. Asia accounts for at least nine per cent of the illegal population in the country. The statistics showed that if about 2,22,000 people from India were registered as lawful immigrants in this country in 1980, that number has progressively increased to 3,14,000 between 1980 and 1989, to 5,39,000 between 1990 and 1999, and to 6,29,000 between 2000 and 2007, it said. Of the total legal immigration, more than 31 per cent come from Mexico, with South Asia coming in at 5.5 per cent for a total of a little over two million immigrants. The latest study also showed that immigrants account for one in eight US residents, the highest level in 80 years. In 1970, it was one in 21. In 1980 it was one in 16 and in 1990 it was one in 13. Since 2000, 10.3 million immigrants have arrived — the highest seven-year period of immigration in US history. More than half of post-2000 arrivals (5.6 million) are estimated to be illegal aliens.

Sunrays can reduce lung cancer

For years, experts have warned that spending too much time in the sun increases the risk of developing skin cancer. Now, they claim that the exposure may not be always bad as it may protect people from lung cancer. A team of researchers in the United States has carried out a study and found that after smoking, lack of sunlight may actually increase the risk of developing lung cancer, the 'Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health' reported. "Lower levels of UVB (medium wave ultraviolet) are associated with higher levels of lung cancer," according to lead researcher Dr Cedric Garland of University of California. In fact, the researchers came to the conclusion after looking at the association between latitude, exposure to UVB light and rates of lung cancer according to age in over 100 countries across several continents. The team used World Health Organisation

(WHO) data and national health statistics of America. Smoking accounted for between 75 per cent and 85 per cent of lung cancer cases although exposure to sunlight and UVB light, the principal source of Vitamin D for the body, also had an impact, according to their findings. Lung cancer rates were found to be lowest in countries closest to the equator - where exposure to UVB light is greater - and higher in those further away. Airborne aerosol levels were also found to be related to higher rates of the disease in the study.

India does it again

After billionaires and household names like Ambanis and Mittals, it is the turn of little-known micro finance institutions from India to hit the pages of famed magazine Forbes, which has named seven such entities in the list of world's top 50 -- highest for a country. In its first ever list of World's Top 50 Microfinance Institutions; the US business magazine has named Bangalore-based Bandhan at the second position. Bandhan, as well as two other Indian MFIs - Micro credit Foundation of India (ranked 13th) and Saadhana Microfin Society (15th) -- have been placed even above Bangladesh-based Grameen Bank, which along with its founder Mohammed Yunus was awarded Nobel Prize last year. Grameen Bank has been ranked 17th in the list topped by another Bangladesh-based institution, ASA. India, along with Bangladesh, is jointly home to the maximum number of MFIs to be featured in the list. One each from 15 other countries, including Russia, Pakistan, Mexico and Brazil has also been named in the list. Besides Bandhan, Microcredit Foundation of India and Saadhana Microfin Society, other Indian entries include Grameen Koota (19th), Sharada's Women's Association for Weaker Section (23rd), SKS Microfinance Private Ltd (44th) and Asmitha Microfin Ltd (29th). Two of the Indian MFIs featured in the list -- Grameen Koota and SKS Microfinance -- are working on the same model adopted by Grameen Bank. Forbes magazine said, "microfinance has become a buzzword of the decade, raising the provocative notion that even philanthropy aimed at alleviating poverty can be profitable to institutional and individual investors." "Billionaires, global leaders and Nobel Prize recipients are hailing these direct loans to uncollateralised would-be entrepreneurs as a way to lift them out of poverty while creating self-sustaining businesses," it noted.

Canada's visa regime

Canada should put in place a new visa regime as the current one is 'discriminatory' especially against Indians, Gurbax Singh Malhi, Member of Parliament has said.

"This Government has repeatedly ignored my calls for reform in the visa system," Punjab-born Malhi, who represents the Bramalea Gore-Malton for the Liberal Party, said. His comments came in the wake of alleged remarks by a Canadian official in New Delhi that Toronto should not be making efforts to recruit students and professionals from Punjab. "The remarks are evidence of a deeply flawed visa system. Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Diane Finley, must immediately condemn these comments and act to ensure that the visa system works fairly and without prejudice regardless of applicants' race, religion, or place of origin," he said. According to British Columbia Attorney-General Wally Oppal, visa officer Brian Hudson "said he did not understand why the heck we were recruiting in the Punjab." Oppal's claim was made following a recent trip to India by a group of BC College and university leaders. The delegation was visiting the country in an effort to attract Indian students and professionals to Canada. The Federal Immigration Finley has ordered a review in the matter. "For over a hundred years Punjabis have thrived in every facet of Canadian society," Malhi said and added: "This type of comment shows a complete lack of respect for all people of Punjabi origin in Canada and around the world."

Russia's new ballistic missile

Russia's military successfully test-fired a new intercontinental ballistic missile capable of carrying multiple nuclear warheads, a weapon intended to replace aging Soviet-era missiles. The RS-24 missile was launched from the Plesetsk launch facility in northern Russia and its test warheads successfully hit designated targets on the Kura testing range on the Kamchatka Peninsula some 7,000 kilometres east, Strategic The Interfax news agency said the RS-24 is capable of carrying at least three warheads. The Strategic Missile Forces said in a statement that the missile was launched from a mobile launcher. It said the new missile was based on the Topol-M and built by the same design team, Moscow's Heat Technology Institute led by Yuri Solomonov. The RS-24 was first test-fired successfully in May. "This missile is being created using scientific and technological solutions from the Topol-M missile which allows to significantly reduce time and cost of its development," the statement said. Existing Topol-M missiles carry a single nuclear warhead and are capable of hitting targets more than 10,000 kilometres away. The Strategic Missile Forces said the RS-24 missile is designed to replace Soviet-built missiles with multiple nuclear warheads, such as RS-18 and RS-20. Those missiles are known in the West as the SS-19 Stiletto and the SS-18 Satan.



Sugar subsidy

World's two leading exporters, Australia and Thailand have questioned India's inland transport subsidy for sugar exports at the WTO. India has not only come out in defence of its measures but is also gearing up to counter question the support given by these two countries to their sugar sector. India has been compensating inland movement in coastal areas to the extent of Rs 1,350 a tonne and Rs 1,450 a tonne for movement of sugar for exports by mills located in the interior. The official records have not termed this as 'assistance' nor as subsidy. Reacting to the move by Australia and Thailand, the Indian commerce minister, Kamal Nath has maintained the measure as WTO compatible. According to sources, India is also gearing up to question the subsidy and support given by Thailand and Australia for sugar exports. Thailand has set up Cane and Sugar Fund (CSF) and according to records 20,286 million baht had been disbursed to cane growers as interest free long-term loan in the 1998-2004. Most of the loan has not yet been recovered, which practically amounts to making "direct payments." Even till date, despite no recovery, CSF continues to extend loan. Australia is the member of Cairns group of countries, which advocates "free and fair" trade and asks other countries to phase out their farm subsidies. But it is guilty of veiled subsidization. It may be noted in the context that Australia and Thailand are guilty of veiled subsidization had successfully challenged EU's cross subsidization of sugar sector along with Brazil. Australia exports about 95% of its sugar and Queensland produces 95% of the sugar produced in the country. The Queensland Sugar Ltd has monopoly rights over procurement of raw sugar from growers for export, a measure that is contrary to the WTO provisions. Although the applied tariffs on raw and refined sugar in Australia have been scaled down to zero since 1997, domestic prices of refined sugar are regulated through a complicated internal mechanism of distribution.

India rejects market access draft at WTO

India opposed a proposal by a group of industrialised countries led by the United States and the European Union at the World Trade Organization on addressing the issue of market access for industrial goods in the Doha trade negotiations. The industrialised country coalition, comprising the United States, the European Union, Japan, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland, circulated a document calling on the Chair for Doha Industrial Market Access Negotiations Ambassador Don Stephenson for no change in the draft modalities issued in July this year. The chair is holding meetings with key members to prepare a revised draft that will be issued in late January next year. The developed countries said the chair's existing draft proposals captured all elements of the Doha mandate which requires industrialised countries to take bigger commitments than developing countries in cutting industrial tariffs based on the principle of less-than-full reciprocity. The chair had proposed that industrialised countries reduce their industrial tariffs by using a coefficient between eight and nine in the Swiss formula. Stephenson insisted on a coefficient between 19 and 23 for developing countries to cut their industrial tariffs. He also suggested certain exemptions for developing countries. Under the Swiss formula, countries with high tariffs, especially in the developing world, will cut them by a bigger margin than the industrialised countries, which have low tariffs. Several developing countries who are members of the NAMA 11, of which South Africa, India, Brazil, Argentina, Indonesia are key members, called for substantial changes in the draft parameters on the ground that they were fundamentally flawed and went against the mandate. A non-group of developing countries like Costa Rica, Singapore, Chile, Pakistan, Colombia, Mexico, however, supported the proposals given their low industrial tariffs. In the ensuing tug-of-war between different groups of countries in shaping the revised draft parameters, the Indian trade envoy, Ambassador Ujal Singh Bhatia, described the proposal made

by the advanced countries "as a mere repetition of their position and does not contribute to convergence in any way." Both Brazil and India, with other developing countries, also dismissed a proposal made by the US and the EU to eliminate tariffs on some 43 environmental products on the ground that the proposal was "biased" and "protectionist."

Ban on Hollywood Films

China has stopped granting permission for American films to be shown in its theaters in an apparent trade dispute with the US, according to several Hollywood executives and US government officials. The Chinese government has not announced any ban, but American movies are no longer being approved for release early next year, according to the officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. The Chinese action, these officials said,

might be in retaliation for the decision by the US last April to file an intellectual property rights (IPR) case with the World Trade Organization. The filing was meant to pressure China to enforce more strictly its IPR laws against the pirating of American movies and to give American companies greater access to the Chinese market. US government officials said they had raised the issue of the ban or suspension of film approvals at high-level economic talks held in Beijing, but the officials did not say how China responded. According to the officials, Chinese leaders expressed strong displeasure with the decision to file the IPR case this year. China may also be moving to protect its own film industry. Foreign films mostly from the US - typically account for nearly half of China's box-office revenues, which topped \$350 million in 2006. But Hollywood gets only a tiny slice of those revenues. Hollywood executives said they were worried about talking about any ban, which they said has been rumored in China for more than a month. The trade dispute over movies is just one among many now playing out between China and the US, involving things like currency reform, food safety and China's booming trade surplus. Among the worries in China is that the US and the EU may be moving toward protectionist measures to ease trade deficits. IPR are also a leading area of dispute. Last April, the office of the US trade representative filed a case against China with the W.T.O. concerning intellectual copyrights and market access. It covers authors and producers of books, music and movies. The largest and most prominent of those goods are American movies, which are popular in theaters in China but also available on counterfeit DVDs in most large cities, particularly those films that have never been released in China. This year, after the US filed its case, Chinese officials complained that the move would not help cooperation between the countries. Wang Ziqiang, a spokesman for China's National Copyright Administration, said he did not deny that IPR infringement and piracy occurred in the Chinese market, "but that doesn't mean the United States is founded to file complaints against China in the W.T.O."