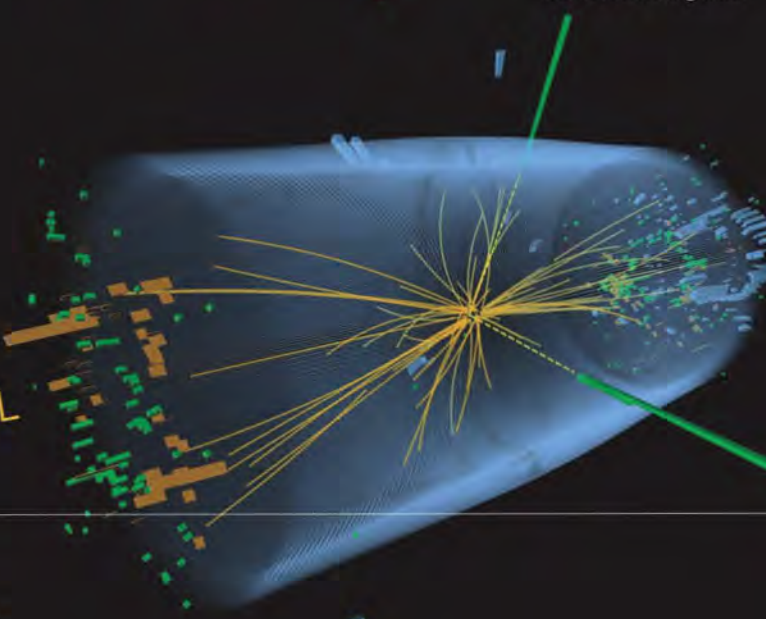


Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine



THE EIGHTEENTH CAMEL

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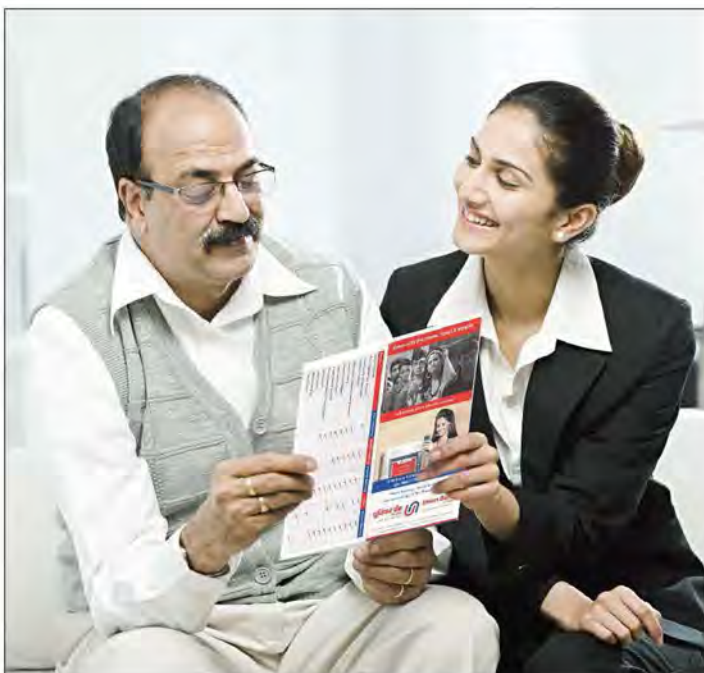
AGNI V – A GOOD DEFENSIVE SHIELD

WESTERN GHATS ECOLOGY

INDIAN SOCIAL WISDOM

INDIA AS A GLOBAL POWER

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Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine

Number 542 – August 2012

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Between Ourselves

We present you with a more streamlined version of this page; hopefully. In addition to the usual, what's new? Plenty. To begin with a new editorial team to help two aging editors in their work. Also with the retirement of Tina D'Souza who has now migrated to Pune after 4 decades of diligent toil, Kashmira Rao now takes on Tina's duties as well. What are they? Read for yourself. A little bird told me that the members of the Advisory Board need to be more visible and not listed as part of a statement which is more statutory in nature. So we give pride of place to the members of the Advisory Board where they deserve to be.

As we go to press comes the expected news that a senior member of the Indira Congress has been elected India's President. While wishing him well and hoping that he will keep Rashtrapati Bhavan away from his former Party's courtiers, we congratulate Mr. P. A. Sangma for having put up a brave fight. We hope that his loss does not prove to be the nation's loss.

Editor

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From Our Readers

Professor S. Radhakrishnan - RIP

It was very sad to know of the passing away of Prof. S. Radhakrishnan. He was a soft spoken, unassuming and sound economist with solid commitment to the liberal philosophy. We have lost a gem of a gentleman and a valuable supporter of the liberal movement in the South. He was a good motivator and I had so much to learn from him. I salute his memory.

Sunil S. Bhandare, Mumbai

I was shocked to know of the demise of our veteran Prof. S. Radhakrishnan. It is a great loss to the liberal movement. He was very affectionate, always involved in one or another activity and inspired people around him, particularly youth and students.

Narendra Ch., Hyderabad.

“Just received the July issue of *Freedom First* and your tribute to Prof S. Radhakrishnan. I met him at a nursing home a couple of weeks before his demise. He was still engrossed in the activities of the Institute of Economic Education (IEE) and the ILG, though I could feel his rapidly deteriorating health. Self effacing to a fault, SRK was active right through in promoting the cause of economic education.

“For long, I had been suggesting a pro-active initiative in the form of a model budget, well ahead of February rather than doing the post-mortem after presentation. SRK appreciated this thought and worked on this. I remember the passion with which he pursued the idea of a model liberal budget. He took along with him a few of us to Nashik and later to Mumbai to discuss this subject.”

In addition to the above directly received by us from Mr. S. Viswanathan, editor of the Chennai-based Industrial Economist he had, in his “Editor’s Notes” paid tribute to Prof. Radhakrishnan in the course of which he wrote inter alia:

“At the Sankara Educational Trust, he groomed students to appear directly for Bachelor’s degree examinations in commerce and economics. As a teacher he was outstanding; even though pushing 80, he taught economics to chartered accountancy students and, at a time when it is hard to hold the young ones’ attention, he kept them captivated.”

S. Viswanathan, Chennai

I came in contact with Prof. Radhakrishnan some thirteen years ago. Thereafter we met only a few times though we were in touch over the phone. I found him to

be a soft spoken person, rarely speaking about himself (that too only when pressed) but would listen to others with rapt attention and would appreciate even their most trivial achievements and shower them with handsome praise.

He would remain in the background and encourage the youth to think independently, shun prejudices and never be dogmatic. By his departure we have lost a true liberal and I, a good friend.

Suresh Shirodkar, Kolhapur

*

Miracle Men

Mr. Vasudev Nori writes (“God is within Us”, *Freedom First* No.541, July 2012) “When objects are materialised by a guru, for believers they are miracles; for others this is a sleight of hand.” and adds “Let us disagree with each other but never disrespect those with whom we do not agree.” But the matter is not that simple. First, we disrespect the claim made by the guru and his followers, and, second, if the guru uses his claim to dupe innocent people, he too should be disrespected.

We may also draw unfavourable conclusions when the guru refuses to take tests to prove his powers under scientific conditions. Abraham Cavor and, I believe, others have offered big prizes to anyone who claims such powers to demonstrate them under controlled conditions. Not a single guru has come forward to face the challenge. When a much-troubled believer asked another guru how a man like Sai Baba could refuse the challenge, the guru said that the Sai was entirely right, because if he is convinced about his powers why should he take tests to convince himself. The point, sir, is not whether *he* is convinced; it is the *doubters* who have to be convinced.

I do not know if this applies to Sai Baba, but when a person gets multiple crores by duping gullible people, it is shrewd policy to spend a few lakhs or even crores to win or preserve their faith by building hospitals, schools and colleges, and giving free medical service.

Sheryar Ookerjee, Professor of
Philosophy (retd.), Mumbai.

*

Bitter Seeds – A Documentary on India’s Development Strategy

It is officially agreed that almost 400 million people, one-third of the population of India, are poor. The poverty is more in the villages than in the cities. The overwhelming

number of people living in villages (about 70%) depends on agriculture (about 60%) which contributes only about 15% to the GDP. This gives an indication of the poverty in rural India. It is in this context that we have to appreciate the documentary, 'Bitter Seeds', made by the Israeli-American filmmaker, Micha X Paled (*India Abroad*, June 22).

India had neglected the agriculture since the second five-year plan, and had to depend on American wheat to feed its teeming millions - it used to be described as a 'ship-to-mouth' existence. The Green Revolution started in India in the late sixties with high-yielding varieties of seeds, increased use of fertilizers and expansion of irrigation. Dr. Norman Borlaug and Dr. M. S. Swaminathan brought about this revolution. The government set-up a network of extension services for the distribution of seeds, fertilizers and introduced minimum support price for the wheat produced.

This was not extended to all the regions of India but was confined mainly to Punjab and Haryana. The Green Revolution had its own adverse effects such as degradation of soil due to extensive use of fertilizers and pesticides. It also led to depletion of the water table.

The Green Revolution did not reach other crops such as cotton at all. Bt cotton seeds introduced by Monsanto and its Indian partner, Mahyco (Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Co.) assured higher yield. These seeds were what are called, 'terminator' seeds - they cannot be used again and the farmers have to purchase new seeds in every season at an increased price. The cotton-growing area of Vidarbha in Maharashtra is a drought-prone region. Many farmers have to depend on money-lenders for loan. If the crop fails or if the price of cotton falls due to over-production or import, these farmers find no alternative to suicide.

The government has to increase irrigation facilities in the region. It has to provide easy credit facilities through nationalized/cooperative banks. Its agricultural research institutes have to develop new cotton seeds or promote new crops such as soya beans or upgrade the traditional crops such as jowar (sorghum) and bajra (pearl millet). It has to facilitate formation of cooperatives of farmers to market the produce. It is to be hoped the documentary wakes up the government to the urgent need to attend to the problems of the farmers in Vidarbha.

M. D. Kini, kinis68@gmail.com

*

Wrong about Excreta

Jairam Ramesh and Aamir Khan have both

condemned manual handling of human waste. This leads to our thinking that there is something intrinsically dirty about human excreta. This obviously is not so; material which is part of our body for many hours, even days, cannot be considered to be dirty.

Dirt has been well described as "matter in the wrong place". Defecation on a cemented road is dirty, but defecation in a forest or a field is not "dirty". In fact, I believe that in our *Shastras* defecation on open land has been recommended because human excreta is a very desirable form of nitrogenous fertilizer. Simultaneously people have been advised to do so at a different spot each day so that the land is evenly fertilized. Dr M. S. Swaminathan, in one of his speeches, referred to the fact that in China the dry latrines were *auctioned* from time to time and farmers were happy to cart away the so called waste matter happily to their fields for use as manure.

In rural areas, even today, women handle cow dung manually, make cakes and dry them for their fuel needs. Why is it wrong then to handle human excreta manually?

In our country where people (specially women and children) have to trudge for miles before reaching potable water, to recommend that all children should be taught to wash their hands after defecation must sound strange to children with no visible water around. Let us first recreate our water sources ecologically and, when there is water at hand in all our populated areas, there will be no need to give extra lessons to children to wash their hands. They will love to do so. The desire to be clean is a human instinct.

The real shame is on us, people who keep flushing their wastes down the drain, with tons of water every day, and not even having the sense to ensure that the sewage, after treatment, does not find its way into our lakes, those marvelous reservoirs which could have been the saviours of Bangalore.

Of course we are grateful to Aamir Khan for pointing out, and berating us for the horrendous injustice of creating a caste of scavengers who alone are forced to clear the mess which the rest of us create. If all of us lend a hand, the problem would be solved in no time. In the USA, before the water flushing system was invented, the *entire* population cleared the dry-pit toilets of the country. They did not create a special caste to do the job. Restoring the dignity of labour is one of our major tasks.

Excreta are not execrable if managed properly and their handlers are not shunned as untouchables.

Zafar Futehally, Bangalore

Abid Hussain, R.I.P.



1926 - 2012

Freedom First and the Project for Economic Education join numerous organisations and individuals in paying our tribute to DR.ABID HUSSAIN an outstanding liberal and a wonderful human being. He passed away on 21st June in London. As a civil servant he held numerous positions in the government. He was, fortunately for India, during the early Narasimha Rao years India's Ambassador to the United States in the two years when India's economic reforms got underway. He was also a member of the Planning Commission. For nine years he was the UN's Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Opinion.

We have special reason to remember him for his outstanding Inaugural Address at the National Symposium on "Liberal Priorities for India in the Twenty First Century" held under the auspices of the Project for Economic Education and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation in Delhi on November 23 1999. His speech which received much applause

from a very knowledgeable audience was on the concept and practice of Liberalism in India and its crucial relevance to the average Indian. We reproduce here, as an expression of gratitude to Dr. Hussain, an excerpt from that speech on Liberal Democracy and Literacy:

Liberal democracy, without a mass base of education, remains precarious. Liberal democracy cannot sustain itself without a literate and educated electorate. In a democracy, where competitive politics unleashes a campaign for votes, illiteracy could be a great handicap. For a voter to exercise his vote diligently, he has to be informed enough to understand ground realities about the contesting electoral promises. An unlettered electorate can be more easily exploited by pressure groups, which could dissuade them from choosing the best in terms of programmes and values. One may not under-estimate the intelligence of an average common Indian, but it will be wrong to exaggerate the range of knowledge and information available to him to make the right choice of candidates and programmes. Ability to have access to knowledge could only be acquired through education. Education is still in crisis. A significant part of our effort should, therefore, be devoted to make the electorate educated. Liberalism cannot be expected to develop as a political vehicle for good performance unless people constituting the electorate are educated and well-informed.

Illiteracy undermines the basic power of the people to stop the State from imposing its will in violation of democratic values. In all cases, information and education have been necessary for the successful implementation of liberal policies. Education and information combine to raise the consciousness of people and enable them to break the shackles of servitude that constrains the people's will to assert and release that enormous moral and civic potential power that slumbers in them under the enforced mask of

apathy. It is an irony of the situation that India which had, for long, been a cultural centre of the world, and produced many of the brightest minds of the world, finds itself today in a cesspool of a vast number of illiterates. Education empowers the individual as an effective unit of polity. It raises him to his full potential and work in terms of the common good. It is enlightened self-interest that sparks the divine impulse in him to serve others by recognising the rights of others. It is imperative that India should launch a big drive towards mass education lest the prospects of liberal democracy languish.

Flowers of democracy instead of blooming perish as blossoms in the dust when the roots of democracy are not irrigated with the stream of learning. It is only a State that does not under-value human development nor over-values material development which could sustain material prosperity and liberal democracy. Educated men and women not only strengthen the forces of production but also enable the exercise of political rights to ensure a liberal forum of democracy to work towards a welfare State. India has a democratic framework. It has also got an intrinsic commitment to liberal thought and a very forward-looking Constitution. It could make it function much more purposefully and effectively if its electorate were to act more diligently as a consequence of liberal education at all levels inclusive of the grassroot level. Otherwise, a danger always lurks that the State machinery may act arbitrarily and erode the framework of liberalism as an essential aspect of democracy.

The Eighteenth Camel

Bal Phondke

Higgs boson, or the God particle as the popular press would like to call it, is this proverbial eighteenth camel that helps scientists solve one of the most difficult mysteries that has been plaguing them for a good part of the last century.

Birbal, or is it Tenaliraman, is credited with a captivating tale. Sons of a well known merchant once approached the sage with a peculiar problem which they could not resolve among themselves. Their old man had bequeathed his stable of 17 camels to his heirs. He had also stipulated the manner in which this estate of livestock was to be divided among the legatees. Half of the lot was to be given to the eldest son, a third to the younger one and a ninth to the youngest of them all. Birbal thought for a while and asked the young men if they would have any objection to getting a little more than what was due to them. Obviously, none of them had any qualms about that. On finding them in agreement, he brought one of his own camels and added it to the lot. Now the eldest could go home with nine of those magnificent beasts, the younger one with six and the youngest with two. That done, Birbal walked away with the remaining camel that, in fact, was his own. He had thus cannily found a solution to what was essentially a mathematical challenge.

Higgs boson, or the God particle as the popular press would like to call it, is this proverbial eighteenth camel that helps scientists solve one of the most difficult mysteries that has been plaguing them for a good part of the last century.

How did this universe that we live in come into being? That is a question that has vexed man since time immemorial. A definitive answer, however, had remained elusive. This was not for not trying. Several probable answers were provided at different times by different civilisations. These, nonetheless, depended on the spiritual bent or philosophical leanings of the time.

A paradigm shift occurred at the time of the Renaissance when it became clear that celestial events were not governed by divine edicts but by physical laws. Efforts to find cogent resolution of the conundrum with the help of the scientific method gained momentum. Even so, this was one problem where the experimental approach was a non-starter. One had to perform a kind of theoretical time travel and trace the beginning of the chain of events that had led to the visible universe of the times. It was possible to do this because more and more reliable and

verifiable information about the structure of the universe and manner in which it functioned so smoothly became available.

Discovery of the electron around the turn of the nineteenth century was a turning point. Since then the fundamental units that make up the universe have been identified. It is now acknowledged that several fundamental particles having different masses, electric and magnetic properties and spins constitute the building blocks of the universe.

Scientific pursuits have a very fascinating aspect. Resolution of one question does not end the quest. It opens up several other avenues to explore in order to find answers to the new questions that pop up. The discovery that the universe is composed of a few fundamental particles that knit themselves together in myriad ways to give form and substance to the universe did not reveal how this happens. Particularly when the beginning of the universe was attributed to a big bang, a gigantic explosion of a miniscule singularity the question became even more pressing. When that infinitesimally minute singularity exploded, enormous amounts of bottled up energy burst roaring out. The explosive force drove it outwards spreading its wings far and wide. That the universe is still expanding is just one evidence that supports this theory. There are others.

That issue resolved posed another equally perplexing one. For, energy is a nebulous entity devoid of form, colour, volume and, in particular, mass. But the universe that we are able to see, albeit only a mere five percent of it, is solid, has specific shape and size. More importantly, it has finite mass as do most of the constituent particles. How does this happen? How does the amorphous shapeless, massless energy get converted into particles having finite mass? That was the question uppermost in the minds of everyone.

The riddle appeared to have been solved satisfactorily when Einstein came up with his now famous equation, $E = mc^2$. Alas, the satisfaction proved to be only transitory. Einstein, of course, was right, in stating that

mass and energy are but two sides of the same coin. Further, nuclear fission demonstrated release of energy at the expense of mass. That was easy to grasp. However, the reverse was not so easy to fathom. Energy somehow contriving to bestow mass on particles, remained beyond comprehension. Quantum mechanics did contend that energy is radiated in the form of quanta, concentrated packets of energy as it were. These were akin to particles. A water gun throws out jets of water but a sten gun spews out bullets. That could be a simplistic analogy for this dual nature of radiative energy.

Even so, the precise manner in which particles acquire mass was not yet understood. Along came Peter Higgs, a British physicist, who proposed that among those particles created at the time of big bang was one of a boson category with mass two hundred thousand times that of an electron. It creates a force field that permeates right through. Other particles have to pass through this field. In doing so, they have interactions with the Higgs boson. Depending on the strength of this interaction particles acquire mass.

The Higgs field is difficult for a layman to visualise. But it has been likened to a group of *paparazzi*. A normal person would go unaccosted and would be able to accelerate through the group without any interaction and without being slowed down at all. Photons, particles of light, behave in this fashion. That is why they are just packets of energy without any mass. A minor celebrity would have a few interactions thus slowing him down. A major celebrity, in contrast, would be mobbed by the eager journalists angling for a byte. He would have several interactions reducing his pace considerably. In this process the particles acquire mass.

Higgs may have provided a possible answer to a very perplexing question. Still, the boson that is responsible for this had remained a flight of his imagination. The stated particle had never before been seen by anyone nor any

evidence of its existence found. This was not so unconventional because time and again in Physics research such a situation had obtained. A prescient scientist would propose a novel particle whose existence would be proven experimentally at a later date.

The whole scientific world thus awaited such a development for the last fifty years. Experiments after elegant experiments failed to demonstrate its existence. That is when an extremely ambitious experiment where the big bang itself was to be simulated was conceived. To achieve that incredible feat, a gargantuan apparatus known as the Large Hadron Collider was built underground near Geneva. The apparatus occupied a circular area spanning 27 kilometers and needed collaboration between hundreds of scientists drawn from all over the world. Indian scientists too played a very important role building several thousands of highly sophisticated magnets operating under super-cooled conditions.

The experiment, *per se*, involving collision between two massive beams of protons traveling at speeds very close to that of light, the ultimate speed limit of the universe, was successfully conducted on 30 March 2010. The overwhelming amount of data collected is still being analysed and statistically tested. The first results emanating from this world wide effort culminated in the announcement of finding a boson which, in all probability, is the elusive Higgs boson. One can thus say that man has come very close to understanding the mechanism of birth of his universe. That does not, however, permit him the luxury of boasting like Alexander the Great that all has been conquered and there is nothing left anymore to explore. It is more likely than not that this discovery having closed the door on one mystery would open many other doors showing vast regions where no man has gone before. The land of the unknown is without boundaries or limits.

DR. BAL PHONDKE is a scientist who had worked in the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) and later edited the Science Magazine of The Times Foundation.

It's the Atheist Particle, Actually!

Nearly twenty years ago, when the Higgs Boson was still an elusive particle, Leon Lederman wrote that it was "so central to the state of physics today, so crucial to our final understanding of the structure of matter, yet so elusive." He even called it the 'God-damned particle' because it was not to be found! Disastrously, he then had his second 'Oops-Leon!' moment when he allowed his publisher to call it the God Particle in the title for his 1993 best seller on the global search for the boson.

Leon Lederman is himself an atheist and he regrets the term, and Peter Higgs who is an atheist too, has expressed his displeasure, but the damage has been done! The God particle is today the most popular name for the Higgs boson. If anything, the discovery of the Higgs boson and the confirmation of the Standard Model of the Universe make God even more unnecessary to explain the universe. In the universe are inscribed laws by which the big bang was initiated and the functioning of the universe sustained. Since we have the Higgs boson we do not need God anymore! If ever there was a Godless or an atheist particle, it is the Higgs boson!

Babu Gogineni

(This is an excerpt) For the full text visit <http://postnoon.com/2012/07/10/its-the-atheist-particle-actually/58312>

Western Ghats Ecology – Expert Panel’s Report

Some Observations

Rca Godbole

Western Ghats constitute a practically unbroken hill chain (with the exception of the Palakkad Gap) or escarpment running roughly in a north-south direction, for about 1500 km parallel to the Arabian sea coast, from the river Tapi (about 21° 16' N) down to just short of Kanyakumari (about 8° 19' N) at the tip of the Indian peninsula; a hill chain that is extremely rich in biodiversity and crucial for the security of water resources of Peninsular India.

In view of the environmental sensitivity and ecological significance of the Western Ghats region and the complex interstate nature of its geography, as well as possible impacts of climate change on this region, the Ministry of Environment & Forests Government of India constituted, in March 2010, a Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) headed by Professor Madhav Gadgil:

- (i) To assess the current status of ecology of the Western Ghats region.
- (ii) To demarcate areas within the Western Ghats Region which need to be notified as ecologically sensitive and to recommend for notification of such areas as ecologically sensitive zones under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. In doing so, the Panel shall review the existing reports such as the Mohan Ram Committee Report, the Supreme Court’s decisions, recommendations of the National Board for Wildlife and consult all concerned State Governments.

In May this year the Panel’s report was placed on the public domain. www.westernghatsindia.org

The following observations were conveyed by Dr. RCS Godbole in a letter to the Chairman of the Expert Panel.

Dear Prof. Madhav Gadgil,

Having read through the entire set of documents which you very kindly

sent to me as a fellow BNHS (Bombay Natural History Society) member, I have the following observations to make. I am addressing you directly, as the chairman of the Expert Panel, being fully aware that every word written in it cannot have been written by you.

To begin with I endorse the position that the Western Ghat biosphere must be catalogued and conserved, along with the river sources and catchment areas within the Western Ghats. Reaching out to people, disseminating information about the biosphere as well as the way to manage it is a vital component of a democratic system, and deserves all the support.

However, for the past week you and your report are attracting newsprint space, and many of the things appearing there would do a disservice to the main cause of Western Ghat biosphere according to me. In the light of that, and in Bernal’s spirit of “organised enterprise of scepticism”, which you have quoted, I have the following points of objection about the WGEEP report.

1. The ill defined geographical spread of the Western Ghats is a major cause of concern: you mention forest area above certain elevations as your working



Western Ghats

criteria. These *forested* elevations on the eastern edge are above 500 m, and those on the western edge are taken to be above 150 m. Later on in the report (Part II pp 41), you recommend that no GM crops, like Bt Cotton should be cultivated in the Western Ghats. I found a photo in your organic agriculture section with a caption, but no hard data on this point. Exactly this arbitrary statement finds a place in the media excerpts. As you'd see, reconciling the rest of your report-geographical definitions etc. with this recommendation is rather inconsistent.

2. You have mentioned a lack of adequate information while preparing this report. Being far more handicapped as to expertise and resources compared to your panel, I dug up the only freely available and seemingly useful report (*Prioritising areas for Forest Conservation in the Konkan region of the Western Ghats hotspot (India) – a pilot study by Sameer Punde for the AERF and British Ecological Society*) about a tiny portion of the Western Ghats, and simply compared the observation therein with your report. If we look at the Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg part of the area variously described as NWG/ L1/ WGNG in your report, the area you consider to be Western Ghat is a subset of that considered in this report, especially on the populated coastal parts mentioned above. Now if you look at the mitigation recommendations made by your panel, you'll readily see the future difficulties. Was such supplementary information available, searched and used in this report? If yes, and if found to be divergent from your positions, was the methodology used in such reports vetted? Though tedious and perhaps going beyond the scope of your task, this would have aided the public understanding of the science behind this report, and *given people a clear answer whether their land holdings fall within the scope of your report. Most of the public objection to the recommendations of your report would arise from this misapprehension.*
3. You have made a number of recommendations as measures of mitigation and improvement for the conservation of the Western Ghat biosphere in part II of your report. Those made in a section "Organised Industry" and "Transport", cannot be reconciled with those made in the "Biodiversity" section. Not allowing means of transport in entire swathes of land would rule out a number of options for human habitations therein, let alone industry or agriculture, which are habitation derived. If you find that human habitation should be gradually eased out of certain parts of the Western Ghats for its conservation, you should clearly

say it. Balancing a multitude of interests at any one action point can only lead to suggestions of "status quo". There unfortunately, can be no status quo in a developing system. If experts decline to suggest a direction, then how'd you avoid the worst case scenarios brought on by various agendas of the participants? "Do nothing" can never be an answer under such circumstances; you must have feasible if hard suggestions as to what could be done given the present conditions.

4. Coming to the follow up response (to be sent on to the concerned ministry) which you have asked me to endorse, and forward, I have the greatest objection to the point: "Facilitate, not suppress freedom of assembly of people drawing attention to unacceptable levels of environmental degradation."

This is a deplorable formulation, which could hardly emerge from a scientific study. Define and disseminate "unacceptable" or "degradation" before demanding that people should be allowed to protest against something. Given the understanding and interpretation of scientific facts in the media, this is a simple invocation for populist, mob driven policy which cannot and should not be endorsed in the name of science. Empowerment of private citizens under "*Paryavaran vahini*" measure should also have some entry level criteria for *which* private citizens on *what* basis.

Despite these objections to the presentation of your chosen data, I strongly endorse the recommendations of the report: [a] To have it translated in all regional languages and disseminated to all *Gram Sabhas* and *Ward Sabhas* to obtain feedback to arrive at appropriate decisions in a down-top fashion, and [b] To initiate strong measures to address the issues of deficit in environmental governance as highlighted in the report. I thank you for reading this letter through.

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PS.

As this issue gets ready to go to press comes the news that the Western Ghats have been added to the prestigious list of UNESCO's world heritage sites as "Its rich biodiversity and natural splendor has made it one of the most remarkable spots on earth that need utmost care and protection."

Point Counter Point

Ashok Karnik

Every issue has at least two sides. A wise man examines all sides before coming to a conclusion. This is an attempt to present various sides of an issue so that a considered opinion can be formed.

Capture of a Terrorist

1. The arrest of Zabiuddin Ansari of Beed (Maharashtra) also known to have at least 8 more names, the more famous of which is Abu Jundal, was a great achievement for our intelligence agencies. Ansari escaped from Maharashtra in 2006 after being nearly caught in an arms haul near Aurangabad. His guidance/control of the 26/11 attack on Mumbai was known but he was out of reach in Pakistan and that country was unlikely to punish anybody on our complaint, particularly when it itself was the chief architect of the attack. In the circumstances, to get hold of somebody ensconced in a safe haven is nearly impossible; we find it to our regret in the case of Dawood Ibrahim, Tiger Memon and scores more. Ansari's capture exposed the machinations of the Pakistani state apparatus in the Mumbai attack and became embarrassing for Pakistan. How did we capture such an important player in the terrorist labyrinth? The details would never be known but some educated guess work might help unravel an interesting tale in the dangerous saga of terrorism. The importance of the capture is that Saudis and other Middle-East Governments may now be persuaded (with US pressure) to deport more Indian jihadis in hiding. It also sends a message to aspiring jihadis that their mentors consider them expendable and that they are no longer safe.

1. It is only when a terrorist's presence in Pakistan becomes embarrassing for Pakistan and he is in the 'use and discard' category that he would be made to leave Pakistan to a possible safe haven. India's task is to keep track of such discards and make the safe haven unsafe. In Ansari's case, this became possible presumably due to US help and Saudi cooperation. Ansari was reportedly traced from his electronic trail through e-mails and *facebook* overtures. This may not always be possible and we should not be naïve enough to believe that the doors are now open to get hold of the remaining 50 most wanted terrorists. The fact is that Ansari happens to be an Indian and the Saudis were persuaded to hand him over to India, despite his Pakistan passport. It would not be possible to get any Pakistani in this fashion. Even for Ansari, it had to be proved through a DNA test that he belonged to the Ansari family from Beed. We can argue that Ansari has exposed the Pak hand in the Mumbai attack but Pakistan's reply would be a standard denial that Ansari being Indian, it is not for Pakistan to explain his shenanigans. A country that has no illusions about its own credibility can get away with blatant lies! Why should we waste time trying to convince Pakistan that it is a rogue state? We know the answer would be a flat denial and counter accusations.

Moral Police

2. The action initiated by the Mumbai Police against bars, restaurants, hookah parlours, night clubs, discos etc., is *prima facie* welcomed by the common man. There is a belief that these dens of inequity promote vice of all kinds like alcoholism, drug addiction, gambling and prostitution. The moral police personified by the hockey-stick wielding night-raider Vasant Dhoble, Assistant Commissioner of Police, are out to save our moral fibre. Dhoble, equipped with the Bombay Police Act, the Prevention of Illegal Trafficking Act (PITA) and various Shops and Establishment Act provisions can swoop down on any of these to detect the offences of overcrowding, noise pollution, breach of time limitations, gambling, drug dealing and prostitution. The High Court has ruled that the mere presence of a person in a public place where drugs are consumed does not turn a person into a criminal but the police think otherwise. Dhoble's main objection is that these

2. There is real life dilemma of a do-gooder running amok! True, we are all disturbed by the loose morals flaunted by the *nouveau riche*. However, should the use of the Law be allowed against all those attending parties in such establishments? Some may be prostitutes, drug dealers or gamblers but all those attending such parties are surely not guilty of any offence. The rich and famous give birthday parties, celebrate anniversaries and generally have a good time with their friends at such parties. 'Rave parties' where drugs are freely used are a different kettle of fish and are certainly not acceptable. Obscene amounts are spent on such occasions, which is beyond our understanding. However, should the police not concentrate on serious crime rather than these self-inflicted injuries like drug abuse, alcoholism or even prostitution? Is it not more important to detect the wholesale drug-dealer and flesh traders rather than arrest the victims of the vice?

fancy establishments encourage women by allowing them free entry while men have to pay entrance fee. The obvious conclusion by the protectors of our morality is that women are allowed in to encourage prostitution. The problem is that a few such establishments may be really guilty of wrong-doings, but the right of the police to arrest any and all customers and then brand them as drug users and or prostitutes, till proved otherwise, reeks of medieval attitude. On the positive side, Dhoble has rescued more than 90 girls from dance bars, saving them from being dragged into prostitution.

And in the process humiliate innocent party-goers. Dhoble and the moral police need much more evidence than a party being held in an upscale hotel. Mere conjecture or suspicion should not become the ground to humiliate and destroy the reputation of people whose only fault is that they are at a place the police do not like! We are still a country which allows singing, dancing, drinking and even smoking at hookah parlours! Let morality be taught at homes and schools; the policeman should be the last one to be entrusted with judging our moral standards. Self-righteousness coupled with power is a dangerous mix.

Escape from Toll

3. The Maharashtra Navnirman Sena(MNS) is seemingly doing great service by opposing toll charges on highways in Maharashtra. The MNS started with smashing toll booths and has now started the more civilised action of counting vehicles passing through each toll 'naka' to determine how much the toll contractor earns per day. It questions the Government's build-operate-maintain policy. The Government seemingly calculates the cost of construction, interest payments, cost of maintenance, and reasonable profit to arrive at the toll rate and duration. The problem is that after a few years the road requires a complete overhaul and the contractor is asked to do it by extending his toll collection period. Now the Government is toying with the idea that toll payments may have to be made permanent if the road/bridge is to be maintained properly. That may be acceptable provided the roads are maintained properly and the toll collection system is made efficient in keeping with technological advances. The suspicion that the toll collector is taking us for a ride needs to be addressed.

3. The allegation is that the private contractor, who builds, operates and maintains a bridge/highway is allowed to charge toll for excessive number of years, long after he has recovered his cost and is allowed to make indecent profit at the cost of the public. It is argued that the contractor underplays the number of vehicles paying the toll and thereby collects much more than the assessed toll. However, the Government assessment is made in advance from statistical data before the bridge/highway is built and therefore the actual counting of vehicles now is not the solution. Surely, the Government policy and calculations could be obtained in the Legislative Assembly or through RTI. Was there a need to smash toll booths and then put volunteers to count the number of vehicles going through a toll 'naka'? What are the theatrics for? The Government's policy should be scrutinized through an expert and flaws pointed out. Or suggest better alternatives. That would be a real public service, not the violence let loose on toll booths.

Readers are invited to email their points of view on serious issues of the day to ashokkarnik2001@yahoo.co.in

Readers who do not have the facility of a computer can also post (mail) their points of view on serious issues of the day to "Point Counter Point, C/o Freedom First, 3rd floor, Army & Navy building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400001.

BBC's John Simpson Prefers Suicide to Old Age Misery

BBC journalist John Simpson has said he would rather commit suicide than live in misery in old age.

The 67-year-old, who moved in with a pensioner and visited a care home for dementia patients for a new BBC series, said old age was pretty much round the next corner.

Appearing on BBC1's forthcoming show When I Get Older, he said: "I've made no secret of the fact that I would rather just sort of take a pill and end things rather than live in misery and be a nuisance to people.

"Life is a wonderful thing, but life just in its most technical sense with just the heart still going is not worth having."

The BBC was accused of helping to promote assisted suicide in a TV documentary by Sir Terry Pratchett last year.

In the film, millionaire hotelier and motor neurone disease sufferer Peter Smedley, 71, was seen taking a lethal dose of barbiturates at the Dignitas clinic in Switzerland.

HuffPost Social Reading reported 27 June 2012

Corruption

– The most successful Service Industry in India

Arvind Ilamaram

Corruption, the genesis of modern antagonism towards the State by Indians

Those facilitators who form the crux of the State are the primary players in this ever continuing conundrum. But is it right to say that the fire of corruption is kept alight fuelled by the greed of the powerful alone? We have always seen corruption to be a negative phenomenon with respect to a common man, but is it so? When a whole nation is professedly against the notion of corruption how does it manage to flourish? It is a natural law that, for something to continuously survive, its preconditions need to exist.

What Makes Corruption Survive?

So, what are the preconditions of corruption? A benefactor, a beneficiary and a benefit. Benefit or the bribe can be of monetary or non-monetary form. Conventional wisdom says that the benefactors are the public and the beneficiaries are bureaucrats, politicians and other State agents (police, judiciary etc.). People could have stopped this malice at any point of time by simply not being the benefactors for, only in very few cases is money made to be forcibly paid under physical threat. In other words if you see the act of bribery as an act of voluntary economic transaction, we realize that bribe is one of the goods being exchanged for a certain service offered by the beneficiaries. From this perspective the beneficiaries are the State agents who offer a speedy and efficient public service, which they should have otherwise provided without the need of any bribe.

The administrative machine of our State is so complex that getting quick service is actually a privilege. And this privilege comes at a certain cost in the form of bribe. One cannot deny that if bribery were to be totally abolished and if every State agent acted according to the word of the law, people would not get quick service keeping in mind the plethora of procedures, regulations etc. imposed by the State on the people. The disharmony between economic, social and political development in the nation is the primary reason for this scenario. A common man today cannot stand in line for weeks and run from one office to another to get signatures from tens of people to get his job done. The world is moving very fast and

the Indian economy has become fast enough to compete at a global level. But the lack of innovation and improvement in administrative service is costing us dearly and forms the foundations of corruption.

Corruption – An Issue of Demand and Supply

The reason why corruption will not disappear by enacting Lokpal or to be more abstract, by checking the actions of State agents is because in economic terms, this is nothing but supply regulation. That is, there is a demand in the social market for goods and efficient governance. This demand is catered to by officials who know the loopholes of the laws and regulations for which bribe is the fee. In actuality, this extra service being offered by the officials or politicians is beyond their job description for if they acted as required by rules, such a speedy response to public demand would be impossible. By regulating officers, we are regulating supply while the demand in the form of a need of good governance always exists. What we do not realize is that the economy always finds a way to supply a demand. If one mode of supply is depleted another is devised. The same will happen to corruption in India as well. By regulating officials, we are providing more incentives for other interest groups and interest-vested individuals to take advantage of loopholes in the laws of the land.

Need for Quality Governance

Quality governance is the demand. Public needs it, officials provide it and bribe is the price. This tenet when not understood leads to the misconceived perception that those who take the bribe stand more to gain from those who give the bribe. But even if punishment is enforced on those who give bribe, we are again meddling with the consumer base without effectively doing anything to diminish the nature of demand. The reason why I previously spoke of disparity between economic, social and political growth is that the Indian public has been a very active participant in the economic growth of the country thereby influencing the supply-demand mechanism and institutions which cater to these mechanisms to suit the needs of society. Take for example any industry where

people are active participants such as telecommunication, banking, e-shopping etc, the direct interaction between buyers and consumers results in change of price structure, commodity availability and catering to changing demands in an ever innovative way profiting both parties. But in the case of governance, we have two issues, firstly the role of government itself and secondly the archaic administrative apparatus of the nation. I shall not dwell on the former for it is an argument for 'limited government' and needs an elaborate discourse but as for the latter, in our nation, government sets the platform for all functions, be it primary, secondary or auxiliary. The political development in India is greatly stunted due to lack of active participation by civil society primarily during elections and almost *nil* thereafter. What this implies is that the changing demands of the people go unattended due to a lack of voice to ask for it. Voting is a quasi-active participation due to its ephemeral nature.

During elections, we exchange vote for promise of good governance. *Note* that vote is exchanged for merely a promise of good governance and not good governance itself. Whether someone after getting elected to power is able to keep the promise is one issue but what happens when s/he does not? In that case another party claims to provide the same service, but the bottom line is that voting doesn't ensure good governance. Why? *Anyone you elect in today's scenario doesn't have public service as their agenda and quality governance is not their vision.* They also know that with the limited alternatives we have politically, even if they get defeated, next time they will get power the time after that. This becomes a strategic Schelling Point¹ among the political players and finally

people end up losers. The only way to ensure good governance is by active participation by those creating the demand for it – the people.

People's Participation – the Only Solution

By avoiding active participation in politics, we forego the only mechanism (political power) we have to bring about an institutional change required for good governance. By foregoing that, we try to satisfy the need for good governance by buying it from those who sell it (bureaucrats and politicians) at a certain price (bribe) depending upon the market value of that service. In essence, we have created the largest service sector in Indian market – only it lacks legitimacy. That's why Gurucharan Das made the famous claim that the only way to defeat corruption is by legitimizing bribery!

For the above reasons, Lokpal is a waste of time and energy and the only way to defeat this national disease is by active participation in politics. If you want the change, demand it, fight for it and may be you shall get it. I joined Freedom Team of India to make my voice heard, to fight for the quality governance I deserve. Depending upon your conviction join any political group or start your own but just remember that battles are not won by standing at the sidelines.

MR. ARVIND ILAMARAN is secretary, Freedom Team of India and Engineer with ONGC Petro-additions Limited. vi.arvind@gmail.com

¹. Schelling point is "that which gives a group of like-minded individuals their common purpose."

To Make Democracy Work – The Indian Tradition

Every people has its own history, culture and customs. So far as we in India are concerned, whatever the particular community to which we belong, we have all of us, inherited traditions, scriptures and literature, which are silently waiting to serve us. We have been led in recent days to ignore this inheritance in favour of seeking wealth. Material wealth is a moving target and does not stay fixed. It flies higher and higher as we try to reach it. It is through the spoken word and pious worship and the rituals, that the knowledge as well as the capacity to work and suffer for the Good were acquired and conserved by our people through the ages. And it is this old and tried instrument that we must use, over and above the production of new literature whose lessons can be directly absorbed by those who have learnt to read.

C. Rajagopalachari,
Swarajya, June 4, 1966

Agni V – A Good Defensive Shield

Nitin G. Raut

*In April this year India successfully tested the Agni V ICBM with a range of 5000 Km.
A nation's defense is measured by its deterrent capability and Agni V ICBM is a
major boost to India's defense arsenal.*

Agni V will not only act as a stabilizing deterrence but also gives India's 'No First Strike' nuclear doctrine a strong retaliatory force which is bound to restrain China, given the fact that Agni's strike range covers Beijing and Shanghai and nearly the whole of China except its north east region. Agni V is no doubt China specific and hence China's hostile reaction while even the United States appreciated India's test of this missile.

China's hostile and contemptuous reaction cannot be dismissed lightly. For China 'peaceful co-existence', 'peace' and 'stability' are terms fit only for diplomatic communiqués or joint press statements with visiting dignitaries. These terms are good so long as there is no parity in economic and military strength. China aspires asymmetrical strength in its relentless pursuit of Asian domination - a stepping stone to its ambitions of world supremacy.

China has imperiously arrogated to itself the status of an undisputed Asian Power and a rival to the United States after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was the only country that reacted adversely and gave unsolicited warning of an arms race following the testing of Agni V. *Global Times* the Chinese Communist Party's mouthpiece in a caustic comment said "India should not overestimate its strength. Even if it has missiles that could reach China that does not mean it will gain anything by being arrogant about its dispute with China". Note the word "dispute". It is significant because for China, India's capacity to strike near parity in defense capability upsets its unbridled quest for Asian hegemony. For China "dispute" with India is more important than "co-operation".

When China adopts a belligerent policy it pursues it with fanatic zeal. If the strategic community's opinion is that China will attack India in 2020, it is not unlikely that China will advance that date. It may mount pressure on the nearly 6000 km. long India China border or even launch a limited and swift attack across the border merely to test India's political and military resolve, undermine India's stature as an Asian power and prove to the world that India is incapable of counter balancing China in Asia.

India is in a better position to deal with China diplomatically and militarily with Agni V. If Agni V is China specific, China's ICBMs with 11000 – 12000 km. are India specific. India should now expedite its production and deployment without bureaucratic hurdles. Agni V gives strategic advantage and operates as a tactical deterrence. It will bolster India's ground forces and fills a strategic gap. China respects strength and therefore its bitter yet nervous reaction.

China is indulging in Nuclear weapon proliferation with impunity. Its collaboration with Pakistan is the world's worst kept secret. It has helped Pakistan to test its Nuclear weapon in the Lop Nor desert and is helping Pakistan's missile programme. The China –Pakistan axis is India specific and the latter will always allow it to be used against India.

Agni V is no doubt a big boost to India's defense capability but deterrence also requires equally capable air and sea based missiles that will complement it and give the Indian Navy and Air Force the much needed edge and force multiplier capability. India's 'No First Strike' Nuclear Doctrine can be meaningful only if India's Armed Forces have swift retaliatory capacity which will act both as a deterrent and have effective second strike capability that can target key military and economic centres of hostile powers.

In short the strength of our deterrent capability will have substance only if the offensive strike becomes swiftly operational in the event of a nuclear attack. Therein lies the strategic importance of Agni V.

In the chill of the Cold War of the last century a Nuclear attack by either the United States or the Soviet Union had an interregnum of about 30 minutes to prepare retaliation. In the case of a nuclear conflict with Pakistan it is a razor edge of just a few minutes. A Chinese Nuclear attack may give India barely a gap of 10 minutes to retaliate.

MR. NITIN G. RAUT is an Advocate and a member of the Advisory Board of Freedom First.

Self-reliance : the keynote of our independence

Long before we won our freedom, self-reliance was the goal of those of our people who could think for themselves and shed the shackles of dependence: men of foresight and determination, like Ardeur and Pirosha Godrej, who had confidence in the country's capabilities and shared the same ideals with Yask, Tagore, Gandhi and Nehru who practised self-reliance.

In Godrej, self-reliance has been considered indispensable to progress, the aim being not just self-sufficiency for the or-

ganisation but for the whole country. Progress can only be achieved in a milieu of progress.

Based on our country's needs, and exploiting the country's own resources, Godrej have diversified.

Made to international standards and backed by continuous technical innovation, their products range from locks and security equipment, machine tools, forklift trucks, architecture and furniture, typewriters, refrigerators, computers and electronic business

systems as well as soaps, detergents, toiletries, chemicals, animal feeds, agro-products and edible oils.

The Godrej industrial garden township at Vidrasi-Prasannaagar is an example of self-reliance and progress. For their workers Godrej have provided—in a unique environment—many social benefits: extensive housing, schools and adult education, recreation, medical and family-planning benefits.

Self-reliance is both a means and an end.

For Godrej it is the essence of independence.



India as a Global Player : Power And Purpose

B. Ramesh Babu

In the broad realm of the North-South divide in global affairs, India should stand firmly with the poor and developing countries. We should champion the interests and welfare of the South and also the poor and the marginalised millions in the North. A return to the Bandung Spirit is not as impractical as some make it out.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's address at the Rio+20 Global Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio-de-Janeiro (Brazil), is a good starting point to discuss the role and reach of India as a global player in the 21st century. He admonished the western countries for *lacking in political will* to make difficult decisions when their economies were in bad shape. (That this applies to him equally well is another matter!) He announced a ten billion US dollar contribution to the Euro Zone Fund to help the "*beleaguered rich countries*" to come out of the financial crisis and economic gloom! Ten billion dollars is not too big a price to pay for being a global player and to lecture to the rich and powerful countries, I guess. Be that as it may, the very fact that India's Prime Minister *told* the advanced white western countries what they should do and *offered aid* to rescue them is indeed *an ironic reversal of roles!*

Non-Aligned India and the Cold War

India's elites and political leaders led by Nehru wanted the country to play a prominent role on the world stage. Under his leadership non-aligned India played a role that was larger than its actual "power." The two Super Powers of the day (the USA and the USSR) found Nehru's India to be useful as a mediator in preventing their all out global confrontation escalate into a direct armed conflict. Consequently, the unique Cold War context provided us the opportunity to be a global player for world peace. To this significant contribution we must add the very prominent role India played for decades (and continues to play today) in the peace keeping operations of the United Nations around the world.

India was a weak and poor country then. Our situation today is altogether different. India's rapid and sustained economic growth over the last two decades encouraged many leaders, some sections of the elites, media pundits, and foreign policy experts at home to claim that the *country has become a Major Power*. They want India to assert itself and project its "power" in global affairs. Many external observers seem to agree with such an

assessment. However, more conservative analysts say that India is *emerging as a Major Power*. Some others scoff at the idea and say how can a poverty stricken country like India be a Major Power on the world scene? Poverty at home has never been a hurdle to playing a big role abroad and the two are not mutually exclusive, others insist. America has been the undisputed Super Power since the end of the Second World War even though ghettos and slums filled with millions is a permanent feature of the country, they point out.

India's Global Role

The world today is very complex and integrated and intertwined to an unprecedented degree. In addition to the 200 odd states/countries, a number of institutions of global governance, huge global and multinational corporations, non-state actors (NGOs, think tanks, terrorist outfits, etc.) and a few powerful individuals (Bill Gates, Warren Buffett) are actors on the global stage. It is in such a world that India has to play its part. The choice to opt out is not available. However, what we do as a nation, fail to do, or choose not to do, will make a difference to our lives at home and also affect the rest of the world in many ways. Furthermore, there is hardly an important issue confronting the world today (be it climate change, trade and tariffs, global recession, non-proliferation, disarmament, stability in the Af-Pak region, peace in South and Southeast Asia) that can be tackled effectively without India's participation and cooperation. India's importance on the world scene was acknowledged recently by the Big Two, it may be added. Both the US and China publicly declared that their bilateral relations with India are one of the defining partnerships of the 21st century! (See *Freedom First*, July 2012, p. 21)

The real issue is not whether such a key role makes India to qualify as a *Major Power* or not. The key questions to ask are what is India's role and what should it be? What is the extent of its reach? For what purpose does India deploy its "power" in the global arena? Can this power be enhanced significantly qualitatively and quantitatively

in the near future? Are the goals India is seeking to achieve through its “power” (and through the power of example) for the betterment of its people and also the world at large? To me these are more pertinent questions to ask than whether India is a Major Power or not? For example, the rapid and sizeable economic growth India is struggling hard to sustain could be and should be more truly and genuinely inclusive. The economic, political, and governance reforms, which were stalled for long, are very crucial for our growth and development. Unless our economy continues to grow rapidly, we cannot play a bigger role on the world scene. If the benefits of growth reach the poor and people at the bottom of the pyramid, our voice will be more powerful in global affairs.

Similarly, the purpose of India’s power should not be confined to our narrow and immediate nation state interests as commonly understood in international politics. The four centuries of Western legacy of conflict and justification of the sovereign nation state’s “right” (not merely its power) to aggrandisement at the expense of world peace and common good of mankind should not be our model (or of any other nation) in today’s globalizing world. Cooperation and mutual benefit are as much a part of human nature as selfishness and greed. The world today is too closely integrated to persist in the seventeenth century mindset of narrow self-defeating realism. Nationalism and realism have done enough damage to humanity over the centuries. It is time to grow beyond them and move on.

What is interesting about power is that you need a lot of it to obstruct, destroy, and harm others. Much less power goes a long way if you want to cooperate and help others, even as you help yourself. This overarching principle should govern our policies at home and abroad. Unilateral concessions rather than mathematical reciprocity should guide our relations with our smaller neighbours in South Asia. I know that it is easier said than done. I am also fully aware that our relations with Pakistan and China belong to a more difficult category and need to be handled on a different plane.

In the broad realm of the North-South divide in global affairs, India should stand firmly with the poor and developing countries. We should champion the interests and welfare of the South and also the poor and the marginalised millions in the North. A return to the Bandung Spirit is not as impractical as some make it out. On issues of trade, commerce, foreign investment, climate change, pollution, disarmament, nuclear proliferation, etc. we could bargain for better terms from the rich countries through bilateral negotiations today because we are more “powerful” than before. But, in the long run, forging a common front with the Third World and working for more equitable balance between the North and the South across the board is going to be far more beneficial and also better on grounds of sustainability, justice, and morality. Our enduring goal of a multi-polar world cannot be achieved without multilateralism, without working closely with other like minded nations across the continents.

For India to be one more Major Power playing the zero-sum game in world politics and seeking regional (and global) hegemony is and would be out of character. It will be contrary to our culture, heritage and longing for world peace. Let us remember how our cultural influence (soft power in modern jargon) spread far and wide in Southeast Asia so peacefully in the past. It is because of this legacy that India’s rise today is not seen with suspicion and fear (unlike that of China) in the region and beyond. I do not want my India to be true to its spirit however big and powerful it may become over time. I sincerely believe that an overwhelming majority of Indian people are on the same wave length. According to me, *power without a socially and morally redeeming purpose is a curse.*

DR. B. RAMESH BABU is a specialist in International Relations and American Politics and Foreign Policy. He is currently associated with the Foundation for Democratic Reforms led by Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan. Dr. Babu was formerly the Sir Pherozeshah Mehta Professor of Civics and Politics at the University of Bombay. As already mentioned in this column in July Dr. Ramesh Babu has accepted our invitation to write a monthly column on Foreign Affairs.

Anthropomorphic Nouns!

The English language has some wonderfully anthropomorphic collective nouns for the various groups of animals. We are all familiar with a Herd of cows, a Flock of chickens, a School of fish, a Gaggle of geese and a Pride of lions. However, less widely known is: a Murder of crows (as well as their cousins the rooks and ravens), an Exaltation of doves and, presumably because they look so wise: a Congress of owls.

Now consider a group of Baboons. They are the loudest, most dangerous, most obnoxious, most viciously aggressive and least intelligent of all primates. And what is the proper collective noun for a group of baboons?

Believe it or not a Parliament. A PARLIAMENT OF BABOONS! I guess that pretty much explains the things....you know where!

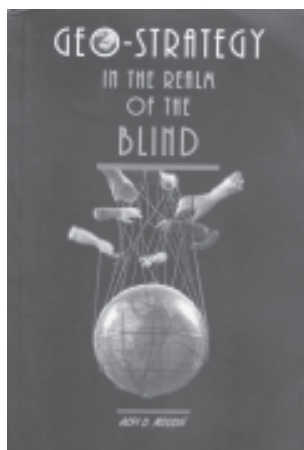
From the net; contributed by reader Asrarul Haque

Geo-Strategy in the Realm of the Blind

A. D. Moddie

“The tragedy of life is that it can only be understood backwards, but has to be lived forwards”.

**This quote is cited in the Preface of Mr. Aspi Moddie’s latest book,
“Geo-Strategy in the Realm of the Blind”.**



This title is not available at bookstalls. Those interested in a copy may send us Rs.400/- (inclusive of packing and postage) by cheque drawn in favour of the ICCF or by Money Order to Freedom First, 3rd floor, Army & Navy Building, 148 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400001. Please mention clearly that the payment is for this book by Mr. Aspi Moddie.

Please note we have very limited number of copies.

It used to be said that in a country of the blind, a one-eyed man is king. In the globalizing world of the 21st century, good geo-strategists need more than two eyes, and a good head. They need Himalayan heads of history and geography, knowledge and technology, and what makes for sensible globalizing power, and the golden key of balances of power without war. Not least a Confucian planetary wisdom to know the fault lines of conflicts, the limits to power and the time when not to cross the last river of human hell, war. There will be no glory in future wars, nor for future Alexanders, or future Genghis Khans or future Hitlers.

As a historian, especially of modern India, I have long been surprised by the Indian leadership’s lack of a strategic mind, from ancient Bharat to contemporary India. So I began by trying to respond to ex-President Dr. Abdul Kalam’s most important question for present and future Indian leadership, in Chapter 1, “Why has the Indian mind never known strategy?” Then it extended into contemporary India after Independence in Chapter 2, “The Non-Strategic Mind of India”; and to some suggestions in Chapter 3.

I thought it might be useful to extend the exploratory essay from India to the globe in later chapters, largely to attempt to reflect on the wider significance of

global geo-strategic issues of our time, extended into the very uncertain planetary situation in the first half of the 21st century. In so doing, macro uncertainties may then be clearer in scenarios, fault lines and future prospects and possible responses: most of all, in the new global power shift from the Atlantic to the Asia-Pacific region. Another objective is not to repeat the disastrous conflicts of narrow nation-states in Europe in the previous four centuries, ending in self destruction in World Wars I and II, especially in the far more dangerous age, with non-NPT nuclear powers, and terrorism, trade and technology complexities of the modern world. What are the lessons from the pre-World War II world for the 21st century world?

I thought it useful in this next century – so different in scale and complexity than any previous one – to open up geo-strategic ideas from the mind of experts of the next hundred years, especially till 2050; and its strategic fault lines of major conflicts. What will the future chess board of the world look like?

And finally, the three questions – First, is the nuclear bomb obsolete for all practical purposes, except as a deterrent? Second, is the “sovereign state” of the last three and a half centuries also getting obsolete for the peace and survival of life on this planet? Is it dated organizationally, technologically and conceptually? Lastly, the question addressed by Einstein and Freud, but not by historians who should be the primary source – “Why Wars?”

We are all in this complex realm of the blind. Hopefully, the exploratory essay will open up clearer visions for wiser decision-making by leaders and public opinion to minimize conflict and violence; when humanity and planet are both under enormous serious threats, which no civilization has faced before. Future survival means survival of all. There are no future Roman Ottoman or Celestial empires, without the prospect of the destruction of human civilization and the planet; the ambition of the insane. It looks like the fate of a blind Samson, or a Confucian world for survival and a peaceful, prosperous future on a planet of limited resources and unlimited greed; and man’s nuclear arsenal of the state or terrorist tribalism.

The cover design is meant to illustrate the many aspects of geo-strategy on a global scale, apart from the traditional military. They include diplomacy, Intelligence, trade, technology, demographics, geography and historical cultures. So geo-strategy calls for the very unusual, deep and comprehensive mind swimming in many waters. Future geo-strategy will increasingly be regional and global, with a shrinking planet.

This essay has one clear and simple purpose – to open Indian (and non-Indian) minds to a historically neglected area in past centuries of relative geographical and cultural isolation; despite invasions. It is a long psychological mindset of the past, which dangerously continues in the 21st century's complex, globalizing world. In the process, foreign and security policies, institutions

and administrations need a serious rethink. It will call for many in the state systems, Parliament and the media to make that important transition into India's future geo-strategic mindset in the new Asia-Pacific century. That mindset has yet to emerge, even six decades' after Independence. Without a sound geo-strategic mindset, supported by geo-strategic policies, institutions and technologies, any significant state of the future will flounder and possibly sink, despite size and resources, as India and other states have sunk before. That is the basic lesson of history. As has been said earlier, "History is not one damned thing after another". It is a book of past learning for a better future.

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Success Sans Ethics

Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi's father, lived by democratic values to guide the fledgeling Indian democracy. His other failings notwithstanding, Nehru's political morality was unquestionable. More than Nehru, as Indira Gandhi's immediate predecessor, Lal Bahadur Shastri is more relevant. Morally Shastri stood well above Nehru. The aristocrat Nehru never faced financial stress. Shastri, a poor man with a large family, was ever-stressed. Yet, born poor, he lived and died as one, despite being Union home minister and prime minister.

Known as the 'homeless home minister' of India, he had rented a house in Lucknow and lived in a government house in Delhi. Shastri occupied just two small rooms of 10'x20' in the government accommodation, both opening into a backyard porch with a huge mango tree under which only his sons got married. When Shastri resigned as Union railway minister owning 'moral responsibility' for accidents, he forthwith surrendered his official car, stood in a queue in a bus stand for a bus to his home. After he had resigned under the Kamaraj Plan, Ramnath Goenka saw him waiting for a bus again and drove him home. Goenka used to recall Shastri tearfully as the decline had started after him. An illustrious Shastri had kept his personal life and political office of the prime minister he had held, clean, investing both with the highest moral authority.

Such was the high moral stature of the office that Indira Gandhi inherited from Shastri after he mysteriously died in 1966. While the ruling paradigm was political morality, Indira Gandhi soon substituted political power for political morality. She blatantly used

political power and discarded political morality by engineering the defeat of the party candidate for presidency and ensuring the victory of the opposition candidate. Raw power became her weapon to subdue her own party and government and ultimately the country itself. She deliberately split the party, trivialised all senior leaders – including the illustrious K. Kamaraj, who made her prime minister – as 'Syndicate', threw them out of the party, allied with all enemies of the Congress, won the elections with their support, but forthwith turned her back on them too. She amended the constitution to acquire more power to the ruling party (read herself). In the words of Nani Palkhivala, she "defaced" and "defiled" the Constitution. She made political success, not political morality, as the ultimate test.

It was during her time that the office of the prime minister, always beyond reproach, lost its moral stature, faced charges corruption (Maruti affair) and was even suspected of other crimes (Nagarwala scam). It was in her time that thick-skinned politics evolved, shamelessness replaced shyness in public life. Finally, she imposed Emergency in 1975 and threw all political leaders, including dissenters in her own party, into jail. Thinking that the nation was dead and her government alone was alive, she ordered elections in which the people threw out her regime.

Contributed by reader Minocheher Damania. Excerpted from the article by the well known commentator on political and economic issues Mr.S. Gurumurthy in the *New Indian Express*. For the full text a visit to <http://newindianexpress.com/opinion/article542130.ece> highly recommended.



Cornucopia

Firoze Hirjika

Maharashtra's Not-So-Adarsh Chief Ministers

What made Adarsh a roaring scandal was that somebody spilled the beans.

It is well known that the Adarsh Housing Society scam did not materialize overnight. It germinated for almost a decade through the mis-reign of three of Maharashtra's Chief Ministers. Sushilkumar Shinde fostered the manipulation, Vilasrao Deshmukh brought it to fruition and Ashok Chavan was left holding the can, not to mention plush flats at a throwaway price in one of the most upscale localities in Mumbai.

In absolute terms, there is nothing unique or outstanding about the Adarsh scam. Similar cozy *quid pro quo* arrangements have been an established practice in the world's oldest *shamocracy* or decades. They have passed into the sunset with barely a whimper. What made Adarsh a roaring scandal was that somebody spilled the beans. The media is getting a lot of credit for uncovering the rot – and to a certain extent this may be justified – but I suspect that the initial leak came from a disgruntled politician or bureaucrat who felt he wasn't getting his just share of the spoils. The problem with scratching mutual backs is that you cannot afford to leave anyone out.

So, assorted politicians, bureaucrats and retired defence personnel got disproportionate returns for doling out favours...*tsk, tsk*. Personally it does not raise my bile. What does make me gag with distaste is the sheer venality and lack of conscience with which the defendants have been trying to wiggle out of owning any responsibility. This is particularly apparent in the case of the dishonourable former CMs. I have no problem with them trying to pass the buck to each other. They are cut from the same cloth, after all. However, when they callously plead ignorance and shift the blame to trusted bureaucrats who have served them faithfully for years, it displays a lack of character that is truly despicable. It is a classic case of rats deserting the sinking ship, without a thought to those who have provided them with subsistence for

so long. These CMs will do whatever it takes to save their skins. Virtues like loyalty, appreciation and standing by their subordinates have no place in their lexicon. It is truly disheartening to realize that these are the sort of "leaders" who are guiding the destinies of our nation.

One would have to be incredibly naïve to believe that the government in power is serious about getting to the bottom of this matter, or prosecuting the guilty. If further proof was needed, just before the CBI was to deliver its findings, they have dropped the bombshell that they did not grant the CBI permission to carry out an investigation in the first place. One has to understand that to our politicians, corruption is a sacred cow. It is to be revered, not condemned. No doubt, the Opposition will now make the right noises about the government shielding the perpetrators, but they will secretly be hugely relieved if the whole thing fizzles out. When it comes to looting the public, all Indian politicians belong to the same party.

The latest news is that Ashok Chavan is the designated scapegoat. A chargesheet has been filed against him, while his two predecessors do not merit even a dishonourable mention. This is hardly surprising considering the fact that the two gentlemen are sycophants and favourites of She-Who-Commands. Naturally, Chavan, in true politico style is protesting his innocence and insisting it is a politically motivated conspiracy against him. Really it's high time these guys hired a new script writer. That line is getting so stale.

If the general public is getting excited that the high and mighty are finally going to get their just desserts, I would advise them to curb their enthusiasm. There is many a slip between the cup and the lip; and in the case of the powerful that slip somehow manages to get them off with no more than a gentle tap on the wrist.

The Absolute Power of Hype

The projection of Modi as the BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate may turn out to be a blessing in disguise

A recent newspaper report disclosed that an increasing number of students are opting for streams like Mass Communication, Event Management and so on. For a practical demonstration from a master, they would do well to study the stratagems of that superb communicator,

Narendra Modi has elevated the power of hype to stratospheric heights. He has successfully convinced the people of his state that he is the Messiah they have long been waiting for; the god incarnate who has transformed Gujarat into a land of milk and honey. Even his critics would

be forced to admire the guile and subtlety with which he is perpetuating his illusion. Gujaratis living in cities like Ahmedabad and Baroda point with justifiable pride to the impeccable roads, 24 hour electricity supply and the growth in industrial units. Modi is also making every effort to spread his aura internationally by wining and dining NRI Gujaratis at the annual 'Pravasi Divas' he organizes with great fanfare. The NRIs are dazzled with the splendiferous progress he chooses to show them; with his promises to slash through the traditional morass of Indian bureaucracy. At these extravaganzas, shrewdly realizing that the spectre of Godhra and its aftermath has not been fully expunged, he trots out a few token Muslims to declare how generous and magnanimous the Chief Minister has been towards them. They go back to England and America and extol the transformation he has set in motion.

They never venture into the villages, the interiors of Gujarat, however, because Modi takes care to shield them from the realities they would witness there. There are no tabletop roads here; and electricity is available for only eight hours a day. There are Muslim ghettos where there is virtually no development. Indeed, Modi's brandishing of a shining Gujarat is itself a well-orchestrated smokescreen that has dazzled his own party. Recent economic surveys have shown that Gujarat does not figure in even the top five developed and high-growth states. In another manipulative masterstroke, Modi has wooed

and beguiled the media, so that inconvenient statistics like this are barely mentioned and rarely pursued.

The media and the BJP are now proclaiming that Modi's ascension to the Prime Minister's chair is virtually inevitable and unstoppable. In mocking tones, they are deriding a Prime Ministerial battle between Modi and Rahul Gandhi in 2014 as a no-contest. Moreover, the party is bending over backward to accommodate Modi's autocratic diktats. The impression being created is that Narendrabhai has already been anointed and it is all over bar the shouting.

If I was a Congressman, I wouldn't be too worried. In fact, the projection of Modi as the BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate may turn out to be a blessing in disguise. It is true that Modi's writ is absolute in Gujarat; and that it is difficult to find a Hindu Gujarati prepared to say a bad word about him. The same is not true in the rest of the country however. The Muslims of India abhor him as a block and he does not cut much ice even in BJP ruled states like Bihar and Chattisgarh. He is a virtual non-entity in the South; and Maharashtra and Bengal have no time for him. If the BJP gets taken in by the aura of invincibility that Modi has taken great pains to project – and consequently ignores stalwarts like Jaitley, Swaraj and Nitish Kumar – the Congress candidate has a fighting chance where no hope existed before. In short, the BJP may find itself hoist with its own petard.

No Chai for the PM

Why do our “leaders” behave in this disgusting fashion? Why are they convinced that throwing their weight around bestows on them a sense of importance?

A minor news item in a city tabloid caught my attention. The British Prime Minister, David Cameron, on his way to a political rally, dropped into a local tea shop for a cuppa. The waitress curtly told him to wait his turn. Cameron politely did so; and no, the waitress was not executed, or even loses her job. This trivial incident symbolizes, for me, the fundamental difference in national character of our former overlords and the legacy of inferiority they bequeathed to their erstwhile subjects.

Now imagine the same scenario in India, with the PM being substituted by a junior minister or even a local MLA. In the first place, that exalted being would not condescend to get the tea himself. That job would be designated to one of his ever present hangers-on. That *chamcha*, in turn, would stride to the head of the queue as if it was his due. Any challenge would be met with a peremptory “do-you-know-who-I-work-for” and that would be that. Even worse, most of the people in the tea shop would resign themselves to this arrogance as the way

things work in their glorious country.

Why do our “leaders” behave in this disgusting fashion? Why are they convinced that throwing their weight around bestows on them a sense of importance? I know it is not appropriate in these democratic times to say a good word about the old aristocracy, but at least they had class. Many of them may have been rank tyrants, but they knew how to conduct themselves. Many of our *netas* have emerged from the dregs of society. They have spent their formative years being bullied, shouted at, or simply ignored. It gives them a massive inferiority complex. Then they win an election and suddenly the tables are turned. Now the same *sahibs* who treated them like dirt come groveling to them for favours. They feel a compulsion to constantly demonstrate their new-found clout and ill-gotten wealth by acting mightier than thou. They behave like complete boors, but very few have the guts or

(Cont'd. on page 23)

Indian Social Wisdom & Proverbs

R. Srinivasan

Robust common sense almost bordering on cynicism of everything whether social relations, family members, neighbours, elders, god himself seem reflected in these proverbs. Caste identities and yet cynicism of other castes seem to be pervasive.

While studies are not wanting, which analyze and estimate formal *genres* of literature such as the novel and plays, surprisingly not many engage themselves with popular or folk literature. Till about a century and a half ago these oral expressions were the only means of communication among common men and this encapsulated popular wisdom, and passed on from one person to another. Forgotten fables songs and heroic ballads and above all proverbs were the stock in trade of almost all people of all ages and women were great repositories of these.

With the emergence of the print media, which had a respectability of their own, folk expressions gradually lost the savour and thrust that they had in earlier times. They do not command the audience that they had earlier. With the advent of the cinema and more recently the T.V. the once popular media gradually have lost to new *genres*. However it must be confessed that the loss is certainly of the community and it is well-nigh irreplaceable. They have to be recorded in books and monographs to refresh what was one everyone's *vade-mecum*.

This brief study devotes itself to one of these – the proverbs as distilling the political wisdom of the common man. It restricts itself to Telugu proverbs. I have written earlier on Tamil and Marathi Proverbs.

These centre on the little community and one does not read of petty kings and their minions, of the unquestioned authority of their parasitical hangers-on in royal courts or of local panchayats and government. It is all about the felt intimate society where face to face relations matter. Formal religion has no appeal to the authors of these, and what is pervasive is a deep sense of cynicism.

“Offering the molasses in the bazaar to the image in the temple.”

“All the offerings go to the priest and the noise to Gangamma” (the local deity).

One reads of no fears or apprehensions of God or

of higher religious sensibilities. There is no reference to any indignant God who would in divine fury punish your transgressions. Also, no prayers in mellifluous Sanskrit or religious songs. In short, these are surprisingly secular in a largely dominant religious country. They are down to earth and they accept the harsh social realities.

“If all get into the palanquin, who will be the bearers?”

“I am below all, but Nambi Ramayya is below me.”

“The elephant is subject to the man who has mounted it.”

In these, social inequality is taken for granted and the emotional satisfaction experienced by the social superiors is approvingly referred to. It is sweet to be in an elevated position than to occupy a subordinate status. The lowly person exults in the fact that there are others even lower than him. It is accepted that some have to be low as they are destined and others elevated. This is a hard fact that cannot be burked. The elephant indeed is huge but what of the mahout? There is none so superlatively eminent that he has no equals.

A large number deal with the all pervasive caste differentiations. Many of them are derogatory of other castes and are unfeeling in their expression and see caste distinctions high and low as one of the givens of social life. The interesting fact is that the proverbs do not spare any caste and almost all of them are ridiculed. The Brahmin bears the brunt of many proverbs. His hands are never still like the trunk of an elephant. It is no wonder that he knows no poverty. His palms continually itch for self gratification and even when saluted by a lower caste he asks for fees for the privilege bestowed on him to salute his superior! Keep away from him as far as you can for he is a venomous reptile. The village accountant is one who has to be kept at some length for he is not to be trusted even when he is taken to the cemetery.

If the Brahmin is a subject of ridicule equally so is

the Setty, the village grocer and petty moneylender. He is regarded as avaricious and grasping; the sharpness and craftiness of the Komati, another caste of traders and money lenders, is equally held in apprehension. One ought to be careful in one's dealing with him. His commitment to truth is tenuous; he keeps away from all troubles; self-interest; self-advancement are all that matter to him. He is extremely well-to-do. He is meek to the point of being a coward.

If the traditional and dominant castes are not worthy of emulation what of the lower castes? Neither are they paragons. There appears to be a scepticism of all members not belonging to one's own group. They seem to be acceptable in an utilitarian sense. Caste taboos and a limited social acceptability smoothened social relations, more because of centuries of social conventions than due to anything else. The entire community lived in peace and amity and instances of social conflict seem to have been not common. The subterranean discontent was expressed off and on but besides venting them verbally nothing could be done. With the pervasive extension of colonialism, they burst out on occasions.

Both caste stereotypes and observations on women interest a large number of proverbs. Statements on women are generally unfavourable, except the few that relate to mothers in general. In other cases one did not find any reference to them in any positive sense. She is characterized as fickle, undependable and lacking in common sense. Derogatory references form a significant number; and viragos are not unknown. Close friendship is not to be seen among them. Generally they are vain and ostentatious. Even references to one's own wife are not complimentary. The husband has to provide for the running of the family. She can be a curse to her spouse. Her lot can be unenviable when she has to bear children. Many of the proverbs are humorous, some comic but by and large they are far from complimentary. Many are indefensibly offensive particularly to us who have been brought up in a culture that is sensitive to the social position of women. One of them is brief but extremely poignant – I lack nothing but I am a widow. I am giving below a selection of the proverbs.

A dancing foot and a singing mouth are never quiet.

She is not his mate but his fate.

The house is small and the wife like a monkey.

Putting on fine clothes when turned out of the house: adorning the threshold when driven out by her husband

Will the woman with child refrain from bringing

forth? Will the woman who cooked will not help herself.

Some things must be hidden even from the mothers who bore you.

What does the barren woman know the pangs of child birth?

The wife who has eaten breakfast does not think of her husband's hunger.

To save her hand from being burnt she stirred up the food with the hand of her fellow wife's child

A mother is divinity, a father a treasure.

A laughing woman and a crying man should not be trusted.

A house full of young girls and a fire of little things.

Even the goddess of pestilence passes over the woman unloved (by her husband)

Where three women join together the stars come out in broad daylight.

Three hundred men may come together but three women should not get together.

The women who could not bear warm water said that she would become a *sati*.

Surprisingly, we do not see any endearment of little girls or reference to the gambol of girls. But neither do we read of the sorrow of girls marrying and inevitably going away from their natal families. Nor do we read of the happiness of mothers gazing with fondness at the sight of girls playing. (In defense it must be said that there are neither references to young boys).

The above are only a selection from proverbs relating to women.

If we were to summarize the opinion expressed by these, they tend to regard children as a necessary nuisance.

If the references to women are not complimentary those centering on the mother-in-law are far from benign. In the unchanging joint family which remained almost intact for centuries there doubtless were conflicts and familial rumblings. These naturally surface in some of the proverbs. The servile position of the daughter-in-law is part of Indian folklore and some of the sayings reflect these unfeelingly. "When the daughter-in-law said she was hungry, her mother-in-law told to swallow the pestle."

But there are no references to the father-in-law though the one relating to him and the young daughter-

in-law is scathing on the elder. "I salute you blind father-in-law" to which he replies "Is this the commencement of strife adulterous daughter-in-law." Between the young bride and the older matron there is no love lost; the hypocrisy is clear when the young lady laments the old lady's death after a lapse of six months. It appears that the mother-in-law had no goodness even as the margosa tree has no sweetness. She is constantly meddlesome dipping her finger into every dish prepared by the young girl. An extreme saying says the daughter-in-law christening her young infant in the mother-in-law's name threw the innocent into the fire. Indeed a terrible thing even to contemplate. Was not the mother-in-law herself once a daughter-in-law? Has she forgotten this?

Robust common sense almost bordering on cynicism of everything whether social relations, family members, neighbours, elders, god himself seem reflected in these

proverbs. Caste identities and yet cynicism of other castes seem to be pervasive. One of the surprising things is how with such a social philosophy the larger community survived successfully for centuries. Are we missing if we take these proverbs seriously as reflecting social realities? As mentioned earlier there were no other social thought that was pervasive all over society.

The moral maxims expressed in Sanskrit or in the regional languages were not for the common man. They had no access to them. It is claimed that Vemana and Sarvajna were on the lips of the common man. Were they indeed so? Whatever the claims, what went home to the hoi polloi were these proverbs.

Reference: Capt. M. W. Carr, A Selection of Telegu Proverbs, New Delhi 1986

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Cornucopia (Cont'd. from page 20)

inclination to tell them so.

So have we replaced the old aristocracy with the new? I hardly think so. To call these mutts aristocrats would reverse ten thousand years of civilizations. Maybe one day, our politicians will have enough self-confidence to

behave naturally; even get a cup of tea by themselves. But I don't think it's going to happen in my lifetime.

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The Lal Masjid Affair

Suresh C. Sharma

*The incident has left the Pakistan Army weaker due to its diminished moral power.
It has been trying to please both, the USA and their enemies.*

Lal Masjid [the Red Mosque] was built in Islamabad in 1965 by veteran jihadi, Maulana Abdullah who took a prominent part in the jihad in Afghanistan. He was assassinated in 1998 and was succeeded by his two sons, Abdul Aziz and Abdul Rashid Ghazi. The mosque hosted two religious schools for about 7000 students. After the defeat of the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001, Al Qaeda decided to provoke a clash between moderates and Islamists in Pakistan. Their objective was that Pakistan should support them against US forces or at least remain neutral. They hoped to control the two provinces of NWFP and Balochistan. Al Qaeda leader Sheikh Issa approached Abdul Aziz for help. Abdul Aziz was a favourite of the Pakistan military due to his contribution in mobilizing the youth for insurgency in Kashmir. He issued a fatwa in 2004 that soldiers killed in the fight against the Mujahedeen did not merit burial in a Muslim graveyard. Five hundred clerics signed a decree in 2004 calling military operations in tribal areas as un-Islamic. Hundreds of officers and soldiers applied for retirement and many defied orders from their superior officers for which a few soldiers were court-martialed. Sheikh Issa advised Abdul Aziz to launch an Islamic revolution in Pakistan instead of a jihad in Kashmir.

Encouraged by Al Qaeda, Lal Masjid clerics planned to use 1.8 million students in the 13500 madrasas to create maximum friction between Islamists and the Pakistan establishment. They expected that some army formations will have to be pulled back from the tribal region to control the disturbances. In July 2007, Lal Masjid volunteers started busting brothels and video shops. Some Chinese girls were kidnapped which caused embarrassment to the Pakistan Government. The Islamists occupied the library next to the mosque and demanded imposition of Sharia throughout the country. Ejaz-ul Haq, the son of Zia and Minister for Religious Affairs, touched Aziz's feet and pleaded with him to stop all disturbances. The Government invited the renowned Islamic scholar, Usmani, from Karachi to advise Aziz, but in vain. The last card played by the Government was to invite Sheikh Abdul Rehman-ul-Saudais, the prayer leader from Mecca mosque. This step also proved futile. Military action was the only choice left to the Government. On 3 July 2007, there was exchange of fire between the Army and Lal Masjid occupants. About 1000 students

accepted the offer of amnesty and left. Aziz thought of escaping and lead the movement from outside. He was intercepted while trying to escape in a burqa and was humiliated wearing the same burqa on Pakistan TV. 164 elite commandos attacked from three sides on 10 July. Eight soldiers and 173 rebels including Ghazi and Aziz's son were killed. To the dismay of Al Qaeda, not a single student from whom they were expecting a revolution stood up. Zawahiri used the occasion to declare jihad against Musharraf. He called for his murder and exhorted the army to rise. Earlier Musharraf had been targeted twice.

The event laid the foundation for a fresh military struggle and the strengthening of Pakistan Taliban. Between July 1 and 22 2006, 194 people died in suicide attacks. The militants launched fierce attacks in North Waziristan and the Pakistan Army was losing control. Maulana Fazlullah took control of Swat. It could be cleared only by December. The number of blasts went up from 30 in 2006 to 141 in 2007, killing 162 security personnel in FATA. Army operations in North Waziristan led to exodus of terrorists to South Waziristan. Operations in South Waziristan were subsequently launched in the wake of surrender by Frontier Corps troops in large numbers. The morale of the soldiers suffered when they were ordered to fight those who claimed to be fighting for Islam.

This operation was one of the reasons for the assassination of Benazir Bhutto who had supported the military operation and it has produced serious strains in the ethnic cohesion of the army. The incident has left the Pakistan Army weaker due to its diminished moral power. It has been trying to please both, the USA and their enemies. It is reluctant to acknowledge the presence of radical elements in its ranks. Brigadier Ali and four officers were investigated for links to militants. One of the attackers on Mehran naval base was an ex-commando. The army has become an object of scorn and open criticism. A group of protesters even tore down a poster praising the ISI near the ISI HQ and the shopkeepers cheered.

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Dr. Kotnis *Ki Amar Kahani*

- And that of his wife Guo Quinglan

B. M. N. Murthy

“The terror was not that of battle, of shells and tanks and of guns and grenades. It was not even terror of bombs from the air...It was not the terror of death, of combat, of the clang of metal against metal... No, the terror was that of man, what men of one race could do to fellowmen of another race.”

This excerpted quotation is from the pen of the famous Chinese writer Lin Yutang in his novel ‘A Leaf in the Storm’ on the Sino-Japanese war of 1937 when Japan unleashed a brutal war against China. With poor medical facilities unable to cope with the magnitude of the disaster on the battlefield the Chinese appealed to Jawaharlal Nehru, the leader of the Indian National Congress, to send some doctors from India to China to take care of the wounded soldiers.

When Pandit Nehru made a moving appeal to the nation for enlistment of doctor volunteers to be sent to China, there was appreciable response from all over the country. A committee of eminent medical practitioners including Dr. Jivraj Mehta and Dr. B. C. Roy interviewed dozens of candidates who had volunteered. Four doctors were selected: Dr. Atal, Leader of the Mission, Dr. M. Cholkar, Deputy Leader, Dr. Dwarakanath Kotnis, Dr. D. Mukerji and Dr. B. K. Basu.

Of these five, Dr. Cholkar was the oldest [60 years of age]. He was a Gandhian and a leading doctor from Nagpur. Dr. Mukerji was from Calcutta and Dr. Dwarakanath Kotnis hailed from Sholapur and had just then graduated from the Grant Medical College, Bombay. Dr. B. K. Basu, hailed from Dacca. All three were unmarried and adventurous sportsmen in their thirties. The five doctors were given a warm send off at Bombay by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. On 1st September 1938 the Mission set sail from Bombay by a P&O Liner S.S. Rajputana. Thousands of citizens came to see them off. Dr. Kotnis could count the largest number of friends and relatives, including his aged father and mother. Both of them blessed their gallant son, as he touched their feet before walking up the gangway. It was indeed a touching farewell. They carried an ambulance truck, an ambulance car, 60 cases of medicines and surgical instruments, one portable X-Ray apparatus and the good wishes and blessings of the entire nation.

The Mission reached Canton in China on 17th September 1938. Canton, once a flourishing center of trade and commerce and the leading city of South China, turned

out to be a battle-charred city. Several buildings had been razed to the ground by Japanese bombers. Without adequate defense the local residents had built bamboo roofs over their terraces to break the fall of bombs. Into such a valley of death and destruction, rode the five valiant Indian doctors donning on their military uniforms.

They spent seven days in the Military Hospital of Canton attending to the wounded soldiers. The sight of the few Chinese military doctors feverishly working day and night to cope with the hundreds of wounded men, women and children lying in the wards, in the verandas and even in the open courtyards, gave the Indian doctors some idea of the desperate need for doctors and medical supplies. From Canton, the Mission went to the city of Chung Yen, about 400 miles away, accompanied by a few Chinese doctors. Chung Yen brought them face to face with the horrifying realities of war. In all their collective experience, this was the first time the Medical Mission saw ghastly sights—hands and legs amputated, faces blown off by bullets, pieces of shrapnel in lungs and abdomen, and above all the amazing capacity for silent suffering.

Within three months of their having reached China, Dr. Kotnis received the tragic news of his father Shantaram's demise. He was a poorly paid clerk in a textile mill at Sholapur who had sent his son Dwarakanath to Bombay to study medicine and unknown to his son incurring heavy debt in the hope that after obtaining a medical degree, his son would set up private practice in Sholapur which would enable him to repay the loan. After the departure of his son to China, the financial condition of the family worsened. Unable to bear the strain of poverty, the old man committed suicide. On receiving the tragic news, Dr. Kotnis's colleagues urged him to go to Sholapur to console his mother and others in the family. Dr. Kotnis refused to go on the plea that the call of duty was far more important than his personal tragedy.

A few months later, sometime in May 1939, when the team was working in Yen-an, Dr. Cholkar left for India

as his constitution could not bear the extreme cold weather. Two months later, Dr. Mukerji developed acute kidney trouble and returned to India. Dr. Basu continued to work in Yenai while Dwarakanath shifted his work and organized the Bethune Memorial Base Hospital and Medical School.

By the time Dwarakanath took charge of the Base Hospital, he could speak Chinese fluently and had developed a wonderful rapport with the Chinese doctors, nurses and other medical staff in the hospital. He was increasingly getting attached to China. Dwarakanath fell in love with a Chinese girl by name Guo Qinglan—a small, attractive, jolly girl about five feet tall. She taught nursing at the Medical School. She hailed from a well-to-do family from Peiping and had received her education in the Union Medical College and could speak English fluently. After the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, she had been separated from her family and after trekking hundreds of miles to escape the Japanese invaders; she had joined the Eighth Route Army and posted to the Medical School of which Dwarakanath was the Principal. On 25th November 1941 both Dwarakanath and Guo got married. In July 1942, she delivered a baby boy.

The strain of work in the hospital round the clock was telling on the health of Dr. Kotnis. For more than a year he had been suffering from fits of epilepsy. And yet, sensitive and brave that he was, he never let anyone know about it, not even his wife. Being a doctor himself, he could feel the fits coming in advance and he would quietly go out in the hills while it lasted so that no one could notice it and worry on his account. The lack of rest and nourishing food, the strain of overwork, absence of proper medical care—all these proved fatal and on 9 December 1942, Dr. Dwarakanath Kotnis died. He was just 32. Death came to

him, as he lay in a mud hut in an obscure corner of North China. It was only in January 1943 that his family in Sholapur received an official letter from China informing them that Dr. Kotnis had died.

His widow Guo remarried a Chinese in 1944 and had two children from him. However, Guo's attachment to India was so strong that she visited Sholapur and Bombay, along with her first son in August 1950. Guo died on June 28, 2012 at the age of 96. Dr. Kotnis's two younger sisters from Poona, Manorama [88] and Vatsala [82] with whom Guo maintained cordial family relations for over seven decades, went on a 'special visit' to China to be present when their brother was posthumously honoured by the Government of China as one of the ten most influential foreigners who had positively shaped the history of Modern China. They were chosen through an online poll in 2009, with more than 50 million Chinese casting their votes.

China also honoured Dr. Kotnis by erecting his statue in 1982. It is learnt that Dr. Kotnis is the only Indian to receive such a high honour from China, with the exception of Lord Buddha whose statue was erected in China more than 2,000 years ago!

MR. B. M. N. MURTHY is a retired Chief Engineer, Life Insurance Corporation of India. After his retirement Mr. Murthy has devoted his time to inform "the younger generation of the spiritual wisdom of India, reminding them of the great traditional lineage to which we all belong". On the 14th of July he completed 700 weekly articles spread over twelve and half years. Appropriately his 700th is on the subject of "What is True Bhakthi."! On behalf of the readers of *Freedom First* we congratulate Mr. Murthy on his achievement and look forward to his completing the 1000th article. He can be contacted at bmmurthy@gmail.com

Incredible - Listing Air India on the Stock Exchange

Why do companies get listed on stock exchanges? Generally, the purpose for raising money is to fund future expansion plans and to create liquidity by facilitating trading in the share market.

But what if a company issues an initial public offering (IPO) just so that it can facilitate employee stock options for its employees? And what if that company is none other than debt-ridden loss-making public sector firm Air India?

So far the government has been supporting this ailing national carrier with tax payers' money. But if the recommendations of the pay parity report, also known as Dharmadhikari report, are implemented Air India could soon be listed on the stock exchanges. The report recommends listing of the state-owned firm so as to facilitate employee stock options. That too, as

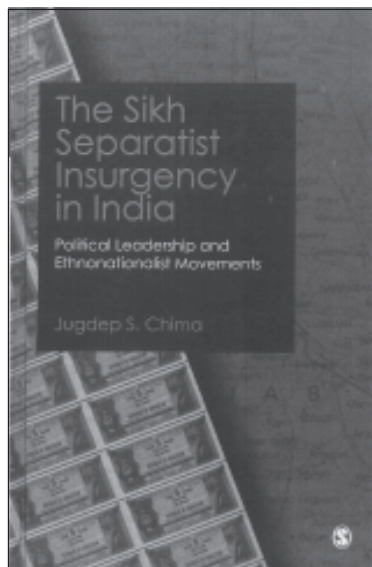
part of voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) for probably 7,000 of its 'voluntary retirees'.

In theory, this novel idea may seem to be a quick fix to Air India's ongoing financial constraints. But can the government allure investors to buy shares of Air India? For one, the sentiments in the IPO market are not too encouraging. Secondly, investors have already burned their fingers on other aviation stocks. And given Air India's abysmal financial health, inefficient operations and excessive government interference, the chances of a successful IPO are very bleak.

Do you think Air India should be listed simply to facilitate ESOPs for its employees? Share

Contributed by Hina Manerikar from The 5 Minute WrapUp 5minwrapup@equitymaster.com

BOOK REVIEWS



THE SIKH SEPARATIST INSURGENCY IN INDIA by Jugdep S. Chima ● Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd. B/1-11 Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area, Mathura Road, New Delhi 110044 ● sagepublications.com ● 2010 ● Pages: 314 ● Rs.750

Reviewed by Brig.S. C. Sharma (retd.) Advisor to the telecom industry, a freelance writer and a member of the Advisory Board of *Freedom First*.

Punjab was a model of political stability and economic development. Insurgency commenced there in 1984 and declined by 1993. More than a quarter million security forces were deployed in Punjab during this period.

The author was born and lived in California. The book is a result of his Ph.D thesis.

The earlier explanations for insurgency were unemployment amongst the rural youth, Indira Gandhi's interventionist style of administration, conspiracy by Pakistan or a sense of ethno-nationalism amongst the Sikhs. If it were so, the violence should not have declined in 1993 since there had been no change in these conditions then. The book traces the political history of the Punjab crisis and examines the role of patterns of political leadership to explain the insurgency. Violent movements arise when state and ethnic elites cannot resolve their political differences. Violence is a means for the ethnic elites to increase their hold on power.

In 1925, the Shromani Gurudwara Prabhandak Committee (SGPC) was officially recognized. The SGPC and the Akali Dal form the core of the Sikh political system. The SGPC provides the Akali Dal funds and access to gurudwaras for political campaigning. They consider politics and religion to be inseparable. The Akali Dal wanted a separate Sikh majority state. Factionalism in the Central Government and Sikh parties led to the Punjab crisis. The author considers that the campaign by Hindu organizations for purification of scheduled caste Sikhs created an apprehension among Sikhs of re-absorption into Hinduism. Some Muslim clerics have also expressed similar views against Arya Samaj activities. It is strange that religions activists want the right to preach and expand own religion but deny the same right to others. In a large

number of Hindu families, the eldest son embraced Sikhism. Inter-marriages amongst Hindus and Sikhs were common. The wedge was driven by unprincipled politicians.

Factions within the Sikhs grew after the Nirankari-Akali clash in April 1978. Three factors led to the emergence of extremist groups in the Sikh community. Firstly, Zail Singh, Home Minister in the Central Government, actively supported extremist groups like Bhindrawale and Dal Khalsa to undermine Chief Minister Darbara Singh. Secondly, Indira Gandhi's attempt to weaken the Akali Dal helped the Sikhs to mobilize themselves against the Central Government. Thirdly, factions within the Akali Dal tried to compete amongst themselves to support the extremists. Bhindrawale became a tool for all the groups and became the premier Sikh leader by 1984. It was resented by both the Akalis and Zail Singh, even though they did not have the courage to openly criticize him.

The author has not referred to the killing of innocent citizens and the collection of arms in the Golden Temple in Amritsar. A commando force was being raised and trained under former Major General Shabeg Singh who had been dismissed from the Army for corruption. Due to deployment of arms and volunteers in the Temple, it became necessary to employ the Army to remove the arms and restore the temple to its rightful use as a place for worship. A half hearted proposal to arrest Bhindrawale before he moved into the Temple was dropped. A timely cordon around the Temple complex to check smuggling of arms may have averted the launch of Operation Blue Star.

The Sikhs were alienated from the Akali Dal for their meek surrender to Blue Star instead of keeping their declaration to fight till death. Indira Gandhi did not succeed in her attempt to take control of the Sikh institutions and negotiate an agreement. The situation took a turn for the worse after the assassination of Indira Gandhi and the anti-Sikh riots of 1984. Rajiv Gandhi reached an accord with Longewal who was soon murdered. The 1985 elections brought the moderates under Barnala to power. It took time to implement the Rajiv-Longewal accord terms and

the extremists took full advantage of this time lapse. On 29 April 1986, the Sikh Panthic Committee declared the formation of Khalistan. It was from a position of weakness and was done to please Pakistan and the overseas Sikh Diaspora. The militants started killing Hindus to drive them out of Punjab. Under pressure from Rajiv Gandhi, Barnala arrested the militants. Insurgency resurfaced. V P Singh made a show of visiting the Golden Temple in an open jeep but failed to make any progress in the political dialogue.

The violence declined due to effective action by the security forces under K. P. S. Gill and absence of any factions in the Central Government of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao. Chief Minister Beant Singh and K. P. S. Gill were able to follow a coherent policy of limiting the Akali Dal's ability to inflame ethnic sentiments. By 1993, militancy had been wiped out. It can be judged by the fact that in 1993, only 24 civilians and 23 security personnel were killed. The last act of the militants was the assassination of Chief Minister Beant Singh. Gradually, the Badal faction of Akali Dal gained prominence and an Akali Dal [Badal]–BJP coalition government was formed in 1997. K P S Gill was replaced and Akali Dal leaders were released, signifying a revival of the process of political engagement.

After World War II, eighty one countries faced violent self-determination movements in which four million people died and twenty five million people rendered

homeless. The author looks at the patterns of political leadership as the reason for such movements. Primarily, based on the history of Punjab insurgency, a similar pattern can be traced in Chechanya, Ireland and Assam. It is not correct for the author to conclude that the attempt by the Centre to split the Akali Dal led to increased support for violence. Creating divisions in the ranks of the insurgents is a well established technique to weaken the rebels. What went wrong was lack of judgment to identify the credentials of the factions created in the Akali Dal and lack of support to the security forces. In Jammu and Kashmir, personal rivalry between Mufti and Azad emerged as a negative factor. Personal loyalty took precedence over national interests.

Interaction between national and ethnic elites does play an important part. The author has erred in considering it to be the only or even a major deciding factor. Actions by the elites are determined by their chance of success or failure. The Punjab insurgency declined not primarily due to a change in the outlook of the elites but due to the action of the security forces when the Centre could negotiate from a position of strength. The people realized that insurgency would not succeed. A judicious mix of political negotiations and operations by security forces led to peace.

The book gives a good account of the political history of the Punjab insurgency and developments within the Sikh leadership.

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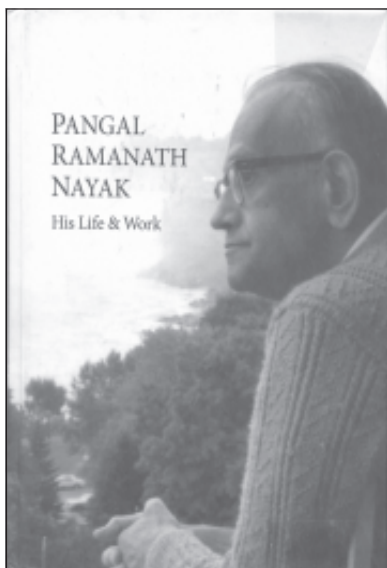
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PANGAL RAMANATH NAYAK: HIS LIFE, Edited by P. Ranganath Nayak ● Published by the editor at Belmont, Massachusetts, U. S. A. ● 2011 % pp. 258 ● Design and Print: Mudra, 383, Narayan Peth, Pune 411030, Phone: 020-24456836, mudraoffset@gmail.com ● (price not stated).

Reviewed by Dr. P. M. Kamath, formerly professor of politics, Mumbai University; currently Honorary Director, VPM's Centre for International Studies and Adjunct Professor of Geopolitics and International Relations, Manipal University.pmkamath@vsnl.com

Pangal Ramanath Nayak, popularly known as P. R. Nayak was Commissioner of Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) from 1952 to 1957. The book

examination such subjects like Anthropology, Psychology, Political Theory and Organization, International Law and Relations and Chemistry! Those who even today oppose inter-disciplinary studies may take note of this!

under review is published by his son to commemorate P. R. Nayak's birth centenary that was celebrated in March 2011. The Book is in reality a miscellany; with three sections. Its first section and substantial one is written by his grand daughter – Lakshmi Nayak and ends with a glossary and a bibliography. The second part includes P R Nayak's published articles and honours conferred on him for his public service and part three deals with reminiscences contributed by relatives and friends.

He was assigned to the Bombay Presidency, after special study of Indian history from British angle, British Criminal Law and study of Marathi. He, along with 24 new officers, was given a farewell at the end of 1935. Under-Secretary of State for India, Mr. Butler told them: "It is now up to you to do your duty to make the new order a success" (p. 32). British rule in India, during the years he spent in England, were witness to the freedom movement led by Mahatma Gandhi. After he returned to Bombay he was informed that he had been posted to Sindh, which was, then a part of Bombay Presidency. The World War II years followed by Independence and the partition of India were spent in Delhi.

Though the family considers itself from Pangal, a small village in South Kanara, now called Dakshina Kannada, in Karnataka, P. R. Nayak was born on 26 March 1911 in a place called Katapadi near Udupi. He had his early education in Udupi. In 1927 he moved to Mangalore for higher studies. After two years he moved to Presidency College in Madras.

In November 1948 he returned to Bombay and served in the Education Department and later in April 1952 posted in the State's Agricultural Department. However, these were brief postings as he was appointed as Commissioner of Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) in 1952. Soon he had to handle epidemics like Asian flu and plague.

He had set his eyes on entering the ICS – colonial Indian Civil Service, predecessor of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). Any one aspiring to serve at the highest level in the then Imperial Government in India had to pass the ICS examination. Hence, he sailed to London from Udupi via Colombo in August 1932. In 1933 he appeared for the ICS competitive entrance examination. In the first attempt he came very close but did not qualify, but succeeded in the second attempt.

Though many features of the Commissioner's work in BMC have changed since his days, I am sure the practice of pouring in of gifts during Deepavali continues, with a greater vigour these days! Though I have not witnessed it in Mumbai, I have seen huge packets of sweets etc. being brought to the Indian Institute of Public Administration in cars for distribution to faculties! The narration goes that as "Commissioner," P. R. Nayak "received many gifts of sweets and fruit," many of which his family gave away, "but of course there was always more than enough" for the family (p.67).

Towards that goal he made a determined effort by continuing his education in the Royal Technical College, Glasgow, wherefrom he graduated in 1934 and in the same year also appeared for the ICS examination which he successfully completed being in fourth rank in the order of merit.. Even today, interdisciplinary approach is a dirty word in traditionally organised university academic departments! But he had offered for his civil service

The agitation for the reorganisation of linguistic states saw the agitation for two separate states of Maharashtra and Gujarat erupt in Bombay in June 1957. It was at this time that he was transferred to Delhi. He was posted to work under Govind Vallabh Pant. Nayak's first task in his new posting was setting up the Delhi

Municipal Corporation.

Later he was transferred to Petroleum and Chemicals Department where he became Secretary in 1965 and was also chairman of the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) for some time. In a long stint in this ministry he worked under different Prime Ministers and Ministers. There are extremely interesting observations on the personalities and developments of the period. In January 1966 Mr. Alagesan became Minister. P R Nayak describes him as “a very upright and knowledgeable gentleman from Madras, under whom it was a pleasure to work” (p. 88). But his comments on the political situation under Indira Gandhi, reflecting the period before and after the imposition of the National Emergency by Smt. Gandhi are significant. “From January 1966 to June 1967, she governed as I would expect the Prime Minister of a country to, more or less along the lines of her father” (p.89).

But after the 1967 elections due to a sense of insecurity, and not getting a clear majority in the Lok Sabha, the biographer states that “her government seemed to falter... and she gathered around her a set of advisors and assistants” according to Mr. Nayak, of “curious background” and “strange values...” (p. 89). This of course became evident during the National Emergency imposed by her. Protesting against government’s stand on the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in October 1968, the then Minister for Petroleum and Chemicals, Ashok Mehta resigned. P. R. Nayak and Mehta had the same wavelength on many policies. But now, Indira Gandhi appointed Raghuramiah who was a junior minister in the same department. He had a grudge against Mr. Mehta and probably against P. R. Nayak as well. Not surprisingly he was transferred in February 1969. But as the book under review says, he had worked in the oil sector for more than eight years and had the satisfaction of setting up refineries in Assam in 1961, Bihar and Cochin in 1965, Gujarat in

1966 and Haldia in 1969 (p.90).

He had another two years to retire from service, which he spent as Secretary in the Ministry of Works, Housing and Urban Development. During those two years he recalls only two events worth remembering and lasting achievements. First, the setting up of the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) and the second, building housing for employees of the central government in all large cities. In reality, while HUDCO has done substantially good work, it is doubtful how far government has been able to create good housing for central government employees. What is clearly evident is that the successor service of ICS – the IAS and other services like IPS and IFS officers of prominence, have been able to grab prime lands in major cities while denying land to public service institutions like schools and colleges.

But those two years also demonstrated how even as an officer of the government one could be non-corrupt, and yet be harassed by politically well connected people filled with ill intentions towards an officer. That is what happened with P. R. Nayak as well. To cut a long story short, a parliamentary committee went into pipeline contracts given by the Petroleum ministry in the early 1960s. During those two years of investigation the committee never heard P. R. Nayak but held him guilty of errors in judgment in awarding various contracts. He was suspended after ordering a departmental enquiry. Eventually a full bench of the Supreme Court exonerated him in December 1971. That the Commission of Enquiry headed by Justice Takru did not conduct itself well, was clear. *The Times of India* on 30 January 1986 commented that what was expected to be a quick enquiry lasting for six months” prolonged his probe for almost seven years “pillorying ...the finest and most upright of civil servants, Mr. P. R. Nayak. In the end nothing whatsoever could be proved against Mr. Nayak” (p.100).



Of Four Real Leaders

By Minoo Masani

Minoo Masani died on May 27, 1998. Four years earlier in December 1994 he wrote what was to be his last booklet “Reminiscences of Four Great Figures.” For reasons explained in the booklet, it was printed last November and released at a seminar on Leadership marking his 106th birth anniversary.

The reminiscences are frank, even irreverent, first person accounts of his encounters with the “Four Great Figures: Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, C. Rajagopalachari and Jayaprakash Narayan. The booklet also carries his article entitled “Two Styles of Leadership” published in a *Freedom First* special issue on Leadership in January 1980. Though written 21 years ago, it almost seems like he wrote it as a foreword for his “Reminiscences.

In today’s world there is an almost universal, almost fatalistic acceptance of the poor quality of ‘leaders’ not only in public life and politics but in almost every field of human endeavour with no discernible evidence of the likely emergence of the kind of leadership thrown up by the freedom movement or even in the early years after independence.

Price Rs.50/-. Add Rs.30 if you wish to receive the booklet by courier.

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Planning And Democracy

At a press conference held a few days before he left for Soviet Russia the Prime Minister made a remark which deserves very serious consideration. He is reported to have said while talking about planning: "And if there can be no planning within the democratic framework, then one will have to think again of the structure."

The remark may be a random statement made on the spur of the moment without any thought. In that case one need not pay any attention to it and dismiss it as inconsequential. It may also be an expression of an unconscious thought; and the thought may at any time influence action.

There are many avowed democrats in the country who value democracy and would like to preserve it, provided it does not come in the way of the economic reorganisation they consider necessary. To them economic reorganisation is the primary objective and democracy, at best, an instrument with which to accomplish that objective. If democracy, the instrument, cannot help the attainment of the objective, they will drop the instrument with, may be, a few sighs and tears.

If economic reconstruction is the only objective it may not be difficult to show that democracy hinders planned economic development. Freedom of discussion; freedom of movement, freedom of trade, freedom of choosing a job and last but not the least the freedom of criticising the government and changing it – all these freedoms which are inherent in a democracy may upset the calculations of planners and make it difficult for them to stick to their schedules. Ardent planners are therefore apt to be impatient with democracy and if they had their way they would abolish democracy without much thought. It will not be possible to resist their demand, unless democracy is accepted as a value in itself and economic planning is regarded as a means to be adopted for making democracy more worthwhile and more satisfying.

There is no conflict between democracy and planning. Planning is nothing but a rational arrangement of available resources in order that they may be put to the best possible use. Democracy would not object to such a rational use of the available resources. A certain amount of arrangement or organisation is inherent in every form of society. There is all the more reason why in a democracy it should be on rational lines, for rationalism is one of the corner stones of democracy.

Democracy should not be confused with *laissez faire* or unrestricted opportunity for individuals to amass wealth at the expense of society. These are among the evils which arose during the early days of democracy. Democratic societies have since

then discovered many remedies to keep those evils under check and some of them have even succeeded in completely eradicating them. Nobody in his senses now advocates *laissez faire* or pleads for untrammelled rights of property. It is accepted on all hands that property and privilege must be subjected to necessary controls and must not be allowed to hold society at ransom. Democrats do not object to restrictions and controls. What they object to is the abrogation of democratic rights and liberties. The democratic structure of society must be left intact. Economic progress is for men and they can enjoy it only in a free society. Alan's striving is for freedom and not merely for economic well-being. Democracy has been evolved through history as a form of the free society towards which man is striving. There are still many blemishes in that form of society, but the attempt should be to remove those blemishes and not to pull down the structure. Planning is essential to remove the blemishes but it must be halted as soon as it begins to harm the structure.

Economic progress is essential for the well-being of the people. The well-being of the people is the sum total of the well-being of the individuals who constitute the people. A democracy enables the people to determine what constitutes their well-being. To give the go by to democracy in the name of economic progress is to defeat the very purpose of popular well-being which that progress is meant to serve. Economic progress then begins to serve other ends, such as the glorification of the nation, of the party or the leaders and ends by enslaving the people whom it was supposed to uplift.

There are some who suppose that freedom and economic progress cannot go together. Instances are quoted of tremendous economic progress made by totalitarian countries. It is forgotten that those countries have progressed only in certain limited spheres and not in others. The sphere in which they have made spectacular strides is that of heavy industries feeding the war machine. In other spheres they continue to lag far behind. There has been no rise in the standards of living of the peoples of Soviet Russia and other totalitarian countries. It is a free man alone who can strive for his economic betterment and, if need be, lift himself even by his bootstraps. A slave will not work unless he is driven by the whip and when he is driven, he is made to work not for himself but for others. A free society alone can ensure progress if that progress is to be for the people.

Those who in their zeal for rapid economic progress give the first place to planning end by destroying democracy. The tragedy is that, having destroyed democracy; they get not the popular well-being they hankered after but a society of slaves engaged in the service of an inhuman machine.

Educating Adults

Youth And The Environment

History at the Heart of Biodiversity and Environmental Concerns

Let's Handle Environment and Biodiversity with Intelligence and Heart Rather than as a Subject

Jyoti Marwah

Women (young and old) turned up in large numbers at the National Conference on Biodiversity SGPW-2010 to commemorate the International Year of Biodiversity organised by Indian Women Scientist Association IWSA and Gokhale College, Kolhapur.

Academicians, researchers and students were invited to share their views on World Environment Day (June 5), though all through the year Environment is compromised at every step to satisfy our consumerist desires without any concern and thought for its conservation, regeneration and revival.

They either expressed their helplessness to prevent the degradation of the environment or to be able to guide others on how to develop eco-friendly techniques in agriculture, while the experts pondered over government policies which probably lead nowhere. There were others like Dr. Ayesha Sultana from University of Delhi who were jubilant about government efforts in the making of the Aravali Biodiversity Park in Delhi. What never ceases to surprise me is the fact that we waste, destroy what we have inherited free of cost and then spend crores to show 'Nature' that we can also make what Nature makes 'Naturally'. How incredible! Man truly is a laughing stock of Nature and God!

Our Farcical Concerns for Nature

My students of SYBA and TYBA made a poster presentation on "Eco-feminism: Vandana Shiva and Medha Patkar" viewing them as a contemporary force to reckon with. They represent the face of "Diverse women for

Diverse Issues" who have questioned the Government and MNCs for their inability to secure traditional and indigenous agriculture for India. What was even more unbelievable was that at a seminar on Biodiversity and Environment Conservation it was not mandatory for the participants to use bio-degradable and eco-friendly materials for poster exhibits. That shows our farcical concern for issues of such deep concern. It is a paradox that on one platform we discuss and exude pessimism talking of the dreadful phthalates and pollutants and on the other hand we use the very same materials, plastics and acrylic sheets to put our point across through our posters.

Make Nature a Part of Daily Living

As a *rapporteur* for the session on "Environmental Pollution", it was my privilege to put to rest many questioning faces – History and Bio-diversity? Working with *Parvatiya Jadibooti Kalyan Samiti*, Garhwal, Uttarakhand, I have contributed my mite to the conservation and domestication of two indigenous plants that grow at high altitude – *Jatamasih* and *Kapurkatcheri*, demonstrating the fact that it is the **spirit** which is the **driving force**.

As a student of history, I must remind all that history



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and culture source their content and depend heavily on archaeological sources, paleo-botanical sources, ethno-botanical sources, quaternary and prehistoric studies. Also, it can't be overlooked that history is the mother of all social sciences, in fact, all sciences. Consider the importance of taking bio-diversity issues to **all**; water tight 'compartmentalisation' will get us nowhere. The ancients understood and assimilated Nature not as a subject of study, but as a part of their daily living. Let us give it a chance to live, so that we can live. Must we wait for the Rio+20 confusion to be sorted out ? No hopes then!

Give Nature a Chance

The Earth will resurrect itself if given a chance but mankind must display the desire to do so. This belief is not without the support of documented efforts that gave birth to an ageless beauty – *Silene Stenophylla* – the oldest plant ever to be regenerated. It lay buried deep in the burrow of an Ice Age Squirrel's freezing treasure chamber of fruits and seeds on the right bank of the lower Kolyma River in the Siberian permafrost. The plant dates back to 30,000—32,000 yrs. Till now it was believed that the ancient genetic pool had vanished. For any environmentalist it is heartening to note that the revived

plant is very similar to its modern version with high adaptability to altered conditions. Well known Environmentalist and Director of the Centre for Science and Environment has aptly said that if we want this Earth to be a home for our coming generations then "Every day should be treated as World Environment Day." She has rightly stressed 'Don't make the planet a backyard' to dump the garbage of infinite destruction.

Awareness is growing but is slow to match the process of destruction. Local communities in India have begun actively to protest to against their land being vanquished in the name of development projects for power, mining infrastructure and waste disposal. In fact people of Himachal, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Sikkim, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Assam, Orissa, and Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Manipur and Andhra are locked in a state of conflict with their governments over this issue. The battle is long and difficult but must be fought.

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Effect of Altered Bio-Diversity on Human Health

Ishita Marwah

We marked 2010 as the International Year of bio-diversity and recognised the need to assess changing bio-diversity patterns around the world. The Earth itself, if considered as one ecosystem, consists of millions of distinct biological species; the product of nearly 3.5 billion years of evolution. There is a constant interaction between these millions of genera, species and families whilst we co-habit the earth. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), three species are getting extinct each day and in 10 years this may increase up to 3 species per hour. Besides a loss in species, the introduction of species brought about by human activity, deliberate or accidental, changes bio-diversity patterns in specific regions. How changes in bio-diversity impact human health is the subject matter of this article. I am keeping in focus the influenza virus, tracking its incidence and prevalence patterns, especially in relation to its interaction with humans.

Variants of Influenza

Variants of influenza virus are named according to the species the strain is endemic in or adapted to. The main variants being: Bird Flu, Human Flu, Swine Flu, Horse Flu and Dog Flu. Three influenza pandemics occurred in the 20th century killing tens of millions of people, two out of these pandemics caused by the appearance of a new strain of the virus in humans. Understanding the shifts that have caused these pandemics is of extreme importance.

Antigenic Changes in Viruses

Influenza viruses which have undergone antigenic shift caused the Asian Flu pandemic of 1957 and the Hong Kong Flu pandemic of 1968. Until recently, such combinations were believed to have caused the infamous Spanish Flu outbreak of 1918 also, which killed 40~100

million people worldwide; however more recent research suggests that the 1918 pandemic was caused by the antigenic drift of a fully avian virus to a form that could infect humans efficiently. Similarly the Avian Flu of the late 1990s and early 2000s was an avian virus that was capable of infecting humans. One increasingly worrying situation, therefore, is the possible antigenic shift between avian influenza and human influenza. Scientists are concerned that the H5N1 virus one day could infect humans and spread easily from one person to another. Though these viruses do not commonly infect humans, there is little or no immune protection against them in the human population.

The point of concern here is that as we continue to crowd the planet, there are greater instances of close juxtaposition of humans and other species. When they are both likely to be infected by a common pathogen, it provides an easy platform for micro-organisms to ‘swing’ between humans and other species. Several zoo-noses are transferred to humans, but in the case of organisms like the influenza virus, it aids the change of the infecting

organism into newer undiscovered forms. The threat this carries is of more virulent forms of microorganisms becoming a part of the ecosystem, to which we have not developed any comparable immunity yet.

This is a process that has occurred at various points in evolution, but in these rapid times, even such changes are occurring at a previously unheard of pace. It becomes all the more vital to track the changing nature of such infectious agents and put in place processes to check the nature of infection. **The effect of our rapidly changing environment on the development of newer organisms is now more real than it has been. Our understanding having increased tremendously over the last century, it is now important to improve our defenses against newer virulent pathogens.**

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Environment and Commitment of Youth Towards its Protection

Sangamitra Sengupta

We should clearly understand that it is only our generation that still can and must save our planet! Through some elementary actions, we could help our Earth directly. Every move of ours will be a small one but a very important remedy for our planet.

A greener, safer and healthier environment is the crying need of the hour and we must do our bit to protect and preserve the ecological balance of the planet earth. The gradual depletion of the protective layers of the earth calls for urgent attention and a team of dedicated revolutionaries to make a difference. And who better than the youth can do this? It is they who are taking charge now and volunteering in large numbers to safeguard the environment. The youth can fulfill their commitment and do their share no matter how big or small it is. It is essential to educate the public and make them aware of their rights as citizens of this country to a clean environment, clean water, clean air and clean surroundings.

Youth Activism

A single country or even a few countries working

together cannot have a significant impact on redressing these problems. Solutions will have to be conceived that are truly global in scope. Of all the sections pursuing the protection of the environment, the most successful and fruitful alliances are those driven by the youth. At the core of every social movement is a surge of youth activism. If the last decade saw the establishment of general and special interest environmental organizations, then this decade marks the rise of environment non-profit organizations led by the youth. By providing young people with meaningful experiences, such projects benefit our communities, supporting our environment socially as well as ecologically.

Across the globe, the confluence of improved information technology, access to education, and the rise of civic organizations have led to an increased awareness in the youth of their potential contribution through voluntary action. Today millions of young people are becoming involved locally, nationally and globally through new programs. At the local level, numerous programs are being established to provide education, leadership training, and opportunities for youth to serve as resources to the

society.

As recognized by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the involvement of youth in environment and development decision-making is critical to the implementation of policies of sustainable development. Young people should be involved in designing and implementing appropriate environmental policies. The future of the nation is in the hands of the youth. Hence, grooming should begin from childhood itself for the youth to realize the importance of the protection of the environment.

Small Steps Lead to Big Results

We should clearly understand that it is only our generation that still can and must save our planet! Through some elementary actions, we could help our Earth directly.

Every move of ours will be a small one but an important remedy for our planet. Basic stuff such as reducing use of air conditioning, riding a bicycle to school or opting for public transport to reach our workplace, using rechargeable batteries, using laptop on battery mode after charging, minimizing wastage of packaging materials, buying environment friendly products, reduce or refuse or re-use plastic bags and planting saplings in the neighborhood would lead to a safer and greener environment in due course of time. The youth should start working today for securing a better tomorrow for the next generation.

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Role of Youth to Save the Environment

Rita P. Bhambi

Chapter 25 of Agenda 21, adopted at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development states, "It is imperative that youth from all parts of the world participate actively at all relevant levels of decision-making processes because it affects their lives today and has implications for their future. In addition to their intellectual contribution and their ability to mobilize support, they bring unique perspectives that need to be taken into account."

Seven billion people now live on our earth. There are more young people living in the world today than ever before. The number of young people (aged 14 - 24) in the world has increased dramatically in the last few decades: from 461 million in 1950 to more than 1.2 billion in 2010. There are a number of environmental risks and climate hazards that disproportionately affect young people and their health and well being. For example, young children are especially vulnerable to risks associated with lack of access to clean and safe drinking water.

Pope Benedict XVI while addressing an organization "Sister Nature", which focuses specifically on environmental matters, spoke to the youth about creation with these words, "But above all I greet you, youth, and dear young people, and I would like to tell you that I appreciate very much your choice to be "guardians of creation," and in this you have my full support."

Role of Youth

Young people today are conscious about what is important for protecting the environment. There are students who believe that every small bit works in making a contribution somewhere. A few are of the opinion that by using dustbins and not spreading clutter they are helping in keeping the environment clean and a few opine that by using paper bags over plastic, they are doing their bit. Colleges across the country have made environmental sciences a compulsory subject and have also started clubs like scrub society to spread awareness and take part in activities like 'clean city green city', 'beach clean ups' etc. Switching off the lights before leaving the room, keeping taps off while brushing, minimizing the use of showers, not lining dustbins with plastic covers, recycling old stacks of newspapers, re-using re-cycled objects and carrying cloth bags to the market are the least most people are seen doing today.

As we inch closer to destruction and it is only through such small little efforts can we prevent the fatal impacts of global warming and other such issues. Today's Youth are seen employing various ways for saving 'mother nature'. It is time that everyone takes mundane things like using the dustbins, preventing the use of plastic bags,

not smoking in public and using bicycles so that we are able to give back what we owe to the environment.

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Youth: Harbinger of Ecological Preservation

R. K. Cheema

Youth, who constitute the major part of the population, need to take lead in the process of protecting and preserving the environment and in return having a better and healthy future.

A global ecological system, upon which human life depends for its existence, needs to be protected, preserved and balanced. We are poisoning the ecological system through the process of population explosion, industrialisation and growing urbanisation. This leads to acute environmental problems related to development and human settlements. The present youth, who constitute the major part of the population, need to take the lead in the process of protecting and preserving the environment and in return having a better and healthy future.

Waste Caused By World Events

Various studies focusing on events like the Summer and Winter Olympics, Super Bowl, and World Cup showed how they indirectly affect the environment. It has been brought to light that the amount of carbon dioxide emitted from transportation and use of facilities in the 2006 Super Bowl of the National Football League totaled up to over 500 tons. The Athens Olympics in 2004 recorded 500,000 tons in its two weeks of operations. The study mentioned that the World Cup consumed three million kilowatt-hours worth of energy for every game it played besides the litter amounting to over ten tons.

Greater Involvement of Youth in Environment Protection

Today a number of educational programmes and activities conducted by NGOs and public-private partnerships are motivating the youth to join movements for environment protection. Alertness has been observed amongst the youth who raise their voice with regard to degradation of forests, sea and rivers being polluted during festive seasons, land mining and many such issues.

The youth today are voicing their concern through wall paintings, street plays and advertisements. Yet, more inclusiveness of the youth in the mainstream is essential. The youth's potential needs to be tapped and channelized into the policy and decision making programmes of environment protection and conservation. Like India in Hong Kong too, there are some environmental organizations working on these lines such as, 'Friends of the Earth', 'Green Power', and the 'Conservancy Association'.

It must well be understood by the youth that in the international arena there are treaties such as 'The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development'. This treaty draws attention to issues of environment relating to sustainable development and brings forth the precautionary principle in environmental protection. 'The Geneva Convention on Long-Range Trans-boundary Pollution' is another such international agreement that focuses on trans-frontier pollution that creates adverse effects on the environment.

The youth should also be alert to the enforcement of environmental laws so that the destroyers of nature are punished. Youth are the strong and influential agents for promoting earth friendly practices to maintain and protect the health of our planet and this can be a boon for the future generations. The recent 'Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development' held in Brazil in its common vision statement articulated the need for promotion of environmentally sustainable future for our planet and for present and future generations.

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(to be continued)

TIBET'S ONGOING STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

Tenzing Tsundue

Press Release 20 June 2012

Two young men in Eastern Tibet set themselves on fire this afternoon at 3.30pm. One is dead and the other left behind with serious burn injuries. The report was first filed by Gyalchoe, a Tibetan journalist working for Independent radio service called the Voice of Tibet. The journalist quoted an exile Tibetan monk Sangay, who received gory photos of the self-immolations from Tibet.

Sangay said that Ngawang Norphel, 22 and Tenzin Khedup, 24 set fire on themselves to protest the Chinese brutal occupation of Tibet. It was reported that around 3.30pm local time in Tibet, the two youth walked into the street of Zatho township of Yushu County, and set themselves on fire. They are reported to have raised free Tibet slogans before collapsing on the road. Tenzin Khedup is reported to have died instantly while Ngawang Norphel is reported to be in critical condition with serious burn injuries.

In the 7 second video footage the twin protesters are seen carrying Tibetan national flag which is banned in Tibet. They are seen shouting slogans, and then Tenzin Khedup collapses right at the site while Ngawang Norphel is seen running.

Sources from Tibet have sent photos and videos of the self-immolation which were taken by anonymous citizen journalists. The incident happened in Yushu county. Ngawang Norphel hailed from Amdo Ngaba, the one place where most self-immolations had happened so far. Son of Lhakpa Dhondup and Tsering yangchen, Ngawang had settled down in Yushu for the last few

years in Za-tho. While Tenzin Khedup is the native of camp 3 of Nya-Tso township. Yushu is the same place that was rocked by a major earthquake in April 2010 leaving behind hundreds dead.

After the self-immolation, people close to the two youth found written statement in which they called for the unity of the Tibetans and demanded that their leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama be allowed to return to Tibet.

"Since the first self-immolation by monk Tapey 42 Tibetans have self-immolated in Tibet, and yet the Chinese government is still adamantly running a brutal military control in Tibet, cutting off the occupied country from the rest of the world by keeping media people and tourists out of Tibet" said Tenzin Tsundue, Tibetan writer and activist.

"Now is the time for every Tibetan to rise up and respond to the call of the 42 martyrs and take action. The western world is blinded by their economic interests in China. Human Rights is no longer an issue for them when our people are dying in Tibet one by one" said Tsering Yangchen, Vice President of Dharamsala chapter of the Tibetan Youth Congress, Dharamsala. "We are calling a major protest rally and prayer process in Dharamsala tomorrow" said Yangchen.

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Street of Zatho township of Yushu County, where self-immolation took place



Nagawang Norphel, 24 (in critical state)



Tenzin Kechok, 22 (dead)

THE MAJORITY-MINORITY CONUNDRUM

Let the Silent Majority Speak Up

We need a society in which no individual or group has the right to go against the common welfare. For instance people ought to take the initiative in stopping all kinds of *bandhs* in this country, because those who are really affected by a Bharat *Bandh* or a Bombay *Bandh* or any other *bandh* are the common people.

Then we have a very strange dilemma of democracy . A minority-majority divide not in terms of community but in terms of numbers . The projection of India as a land of violence, as a land where the democratic structure is collapsing is created by not even 1% of the total population of this country. Wherever there have been problems, half the miscreants have been hoodlums and undesirable elements. Now the dilemma is how to organise the real majority of this country. When people have vested interests, they spend money, effort, campaign, do anything to get themselves served. But the right thinking people who constitute nearly 95% of the population, the silent majority, which is the strong majority think they have nothing at stake. Actually, they have everything at stake. We should concern ourselves with the techniques, programmes and strategy on how to get the real majority heard.

India is not really changing into a soft democracy, it is not collapsing. But we have become spineless, we do not have the right to enjoy the benefits of democracy if we lack the courage to put the 1% miscreants in their place. We have indeed lost our courage. Witness the sorry spectacle of hundreds of men and women watching three women being molested by two men; one college girl being burnt alive in a college room while fellow students, boys, girls, teachers, policemen and principal watch on. This democracy will survive only if we can summon back the courage and conviction which we have lost. The problem is not communalism. The problem is the indifference and apathy of those who love this country.

This is an excerpt from a Report of a Seminar held on January 9, 1993. The Seminar was sponsored by Freedom First Foundation, Indian Secular Society and the Department of Politics, SNDT University on Secularism Precept and Practice in Contemporary India. What was unique about this Seminar was the fact that it was held on January 9, 1993 right in the middle of a recurrence of mindless violence the like of which Bombay city had not witnessed in the 300 years of its existence. It was as if the whole city had gone mad. Despite the killing, the arson, the looting and the curfew, the sponsors persisted with the seminar which was attended by as many 51 participants. These 51 comprised the cream of the city's intellectual, and academic and social activists.