

Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine

A GREAT END TO THE YEAR. ALMOST.

The Congress (I) was routed. A party rose from obscurity to instant success. It seemed like a great ending to the year, till Section 377, resurrected by the Supreme Court, came back to haunt the nation.

Freedom First believes in an open society based on minimum government and maximum freedom tempered by a sense of individual responsibility, in which the people's genius has a fair opportunity to develop and grow; we reject any ideology, movement or policy that sets one group of citizens against another be it based on class, caste, religion or envy.

State Control Of Films

There is so much of talk these days in official and other circles about the virtues of State control and regulation that it was very refreshing to hear Mr. Shantilal Shah, Minister for Education of the Government of Bombay, disapproving of "State interference in or control of the Indian film industry". Speaking on "Films and the Nation" at a meeting organised by Film Journalists' Association, Mr. Shah observed that "ultimately State control of the industry would result in regimentation." He said: "Once the State decides to control the film industry then films of a particular pattern will be screened; again such control will stifle the growth of the industry and come in the way of our cherished Principle – freedom of expression.

These weighty words of Mr. Shah should serve as a warning against the dangers of State control and intervention. The State is already possessed of numerous powers. Let it not also have the power of deciding for the people the entertainment that they should have. If the State is given that power, the State, which means a bureaucrat in charge of the particular matter, will lay down the law and all, including producers, directors, writers and actors, will have to conform to it. This, as pointed out by Mr. Shah, will stifle the growth of the industry as well as the creative powers of all persons connected with it.

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Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

In Dr. Ambedkar's death, India has lost an outstanding scholar, politician and administrator. As one of the principal architects of India's Constitution, Dr. Ambedkar's name will forever adorn the pages of India's political history. He was not merely a scholar or administrator, but, as Mr. Nehru rightly pointed out in the Lok Sabha, he was a "symbol of revolt against all the oppressive features of Hindu society. He rebelled against something against which we all should rebel."

Dr. Ambedkar was a man of strong convictions, which he pursued with great intensity and persistence. In many ways he was a controversial figure, but no one could ever doubt his abilities and scholarship. He was a tower of strength to the Harijans. The deep emotion with which they reacted to their loss bore testimony to it. Although he could not bring the depressed classes on a par with the advanced ones, there is no doubt that he put them on the road to economic and social recovery. Although he demanded special treatment and reservations of seats in legislatures and social, economic and educational opportunities for the depressed classes, he was convinced that ultimately these classes will have to stand on their own legs and was preparing them for that eventuality. Dr. Ambedkar was comparatively young when he died — he was only 63. Indeed he died in harness.

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The Difference

We reproduce below the Editorial which appeared in December 18 issue of *The Times of India*. It admirably sums up the point of view that *Freedom First* and the Democratic Research Service have been trying to place before the Indian public over the years.

"Nehru's statement that all foreign troops should pull out of the countries where they are now stationed has, according to our special correspondent covering the Prime Minister's trip, puzzled American opinion. To our policy of non-alignment, opinion in the United States, both governmental and public, is now largely reconciled. Indeed informed opinion recognises that a non-aligned country such as India, constituting as it does the largest democracy in Asia, is peculiarly well-positioned to play a useful and positive role whenever a crisis or a collision threatens between East and West. What American opinion finds difficult to understand is the habit of India, a democracy, of equating totalitarian with democratic systems and of placing America or Britain on a par with Russia or China. Here, argues the U. S., is both a difference and a distinction. If a totalitarian country is to rate equal with a democratic country, then the difference and distinction lose all meaning and are valueless.

"It is a point of view which merits more consideration than it has hitherto received in and from our country. Some might argue that non-alignment presupposes that the scales should be held even as between the totalitarian and democratic countries, and indeed this erroneous view infects and clouds the thinking of not a few in the higher echelons of our External Affairs department. Yet this is far removed from what should be the right and ethical interpretation of our foreign policy for it is not India's claim that as between the functions and operations of totalitarianism and democracy she sees and makes no difference. To do so would be to mortgage the democratic values of our people and hold them to totalitarian ransom.

"There is a difference and distinction between totalitarian and democratic values and it is high time we recognised this more positively in our foreign thinking. If, as is sometimes suggested, we cannot go the whole way, because of our non-alignment policy, either with the democracies or the totalitarian bloc, how can we convincingly explain our performance in going the whole hog on Egypt and in desperately striving to hold our horses on Hungary? The truth is that there is no convincing explanation, and that our clouded, confused thinking has led us into positions from which we now find considerable difficulty in extricating ourselves. There is nothing intrinsically wrong in our policy of non-alignment which indeed is eminently suited to India's interests and to the cause of world peace. But we would be indulging in a dangerous form of self-delusion if while implementing this policy we leaned invariably in favour of the totalitarian bloc against democratic countries, and thereby helped to undermine the very foundations of our own ideals and values. At the very least, let us when it comes to giving the benefit of the doubt give it to the democracies with whom we are ideologically linked than to the totalitarian countries whose avowed aim it is to disrupt and destroy the things we cherish and would like to preserve. 'What we are now doing is to use the totalitarian knife to cut our democratic throat.'

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What you have just read are excerpts from the comments in *Freedom First* in its issue No.56 of January 1957. You will find these comments and more in our archives – www.freedomfirst.in

Freedom First wishes its Readers a Happy New Year

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In this Issue

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Mr. Nitin Raut

Cover Design:

Vivek Raju

Administration, Accounts,

Subscription, Circulation:

Ms. Kashmira Rao

Contact:

Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom

3rd floor, Army & Navy Building
148, Mahatma Gandhi Road
Mumbai 400001
Telefax. 022 22843416 /66396366
Editor's Cell: 9820016392

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Dr. Sheryar Ookerjee

(24th February, 1925 - 3rd December, 2013)

Professor Sheryar Ookerjee passed away peacefully on 3rd December 2013. He was a student of Philosophy at Wilson College, Mumbai, winning the Telang Gold Medal at the M.A. examination of the University of Bombay in 1949. His Ph.D. thesis was entitled 'F.H. Bradley's Approach to Logic'. He joined the Philosophy Department at Wilson College and retired 36 years later as its Head in 1985, but continued to give post-graduate lectures at the Department of Philosophy of Mumbai University.

As a UGC Scholar, he worked on the political thought of Plato and the Arthashastra. In 2001 Professor Ookerjee was invited to lecture on Plato, Bradley and political philosophy at City College, New York. He read papers at numerous conferences in England and published a number of essays in learned journals. Though *Freedom First* is not an academic journal he was always happy to write for us. He was the author of three books: *Human Reason and Its Enemies: A Rigorous Critique of Post-Modernism*, *Plato and the Arthashastra*, and *The Limits of Reason and Other Essays*.

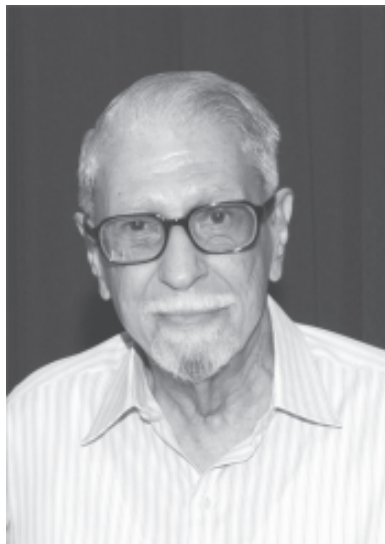
He was the chairman of Alexandra Girls English Institution, a top-drawer school in Mumbai founded by his great-grandfather Maneckjee Cursetjee 150 years ago to impart education in the English medium of instruction to girls, and was the first school in Western India to do so.

A keen aficionado of Western Classical Music Professor Ookerjee was a well-respected music critic.

Despite poor health he would occasionally drop in at our office. The last one was almost a year ago. For me as the editor every moment of a conversation with him left me better educated. His humility and soft spoken exterior hid a man of firm resolve and someone who knew his mind – qualities that came out in his writings. On the occasions I sought his guidance on some aspect of our publication his advice was clear and unambiguous.

Our tribute will be incomplete if we do not share with our readers brief extracts from a couple of his writings in *Freedom First*.

During a debate on Secularism when there was a reference to the Ramayana and Mahabharata, he wrote



(in 1994): "To the average and even many educated Hindus, Ramayana and the Mahabharata the epics are not just great literature but are highly charged with emotive power... In this context, it is instructive to recall what Plato had to say. More than two thousand years ago, giving his blueprint for an ideal republic in *The Republic*, Plato said that epic poets like Homer and Hesiod should not be allowed in such a republic. His reason was that epic poetry as the Greeks of his time knew it and on which the young were brought up were full of morally dubious stories about gods and goddesses and that, though these were poetic fictions, they had a harmful moral effect on young

or immature minds. ...

... While we and our Hindu brothers do not believe that the Greek epics depict the truth, the average Hindu does take his epics very seriously and believes that what is written therein has historical truth. If so, they have enormous emotional potentiality and the capacity to influence thought and action. In expelling the poets from his republic, Plato knew his onions".

Coming across an article on so-called miracles by holy men in India he retorted:

"We may draw unfavourable conclusions when the guru refuses to take tests to prove his powers under scientific conditions. Abraham Cavoar 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," he wrote " is not whether he is convinced it is the doubters who have to be convinced.

We shall miss him. We convey our deepest sympathies to his daughter Pervin and to the management, teachers and students of the Alexandra Girls' English Institution.

SVR

From Our Readers

Between Ourselves

– Editorial in *Freedom First* December 2013

Your comment on Obama's version of Nehruvian socialism was interesting. Your parallel between the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and India's Food Safety bill couldn't be more far-fetched!

The ACA brings millions of additional customers to private health insurance companies. Estimates by the non-partisan CBO (Congressional Budget Office) indicated that the ACA will actually save some money in the national budget!

The Food Safety bill, on the other hand, is just a give-away program, spending money India can't really spare. Instead of bringing health care and education to the poor to turn them into productive citizens, it just throws food at them. Actually, they would be lucky to get 20% of the budgeted aid; the rest will fill the coffers of the politicians and the middlemen.

Your comments on the sanctimonious attitude of the *New York Times* are right on the money. The same goes for some other liberal American media. Just this morning I heard a report on NPR (National Public Radio), in which an Indian American Muslim was interviewed. He was in Gujarat at the time of the riots and is currently living in Gujarat working for some NGO. He painted a picture of Modi as the Devil incarnate. It was an embarrassingly one-sided report.

Dr. Sardul Singh Minhas, California USA.
Sminhas@sbcglobal.net

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I have to take issue with this paragraph: "Incidentally a thought that has been nagging some of us after the first few Obama honeymoon years is that the American people are getting some first hand experience of "Nehruvian socialism" no less – more state control even if means inflicting pain on the American *Aam Admi* and spending money that is not there, on grandiose schemes – their Obamacare like our Food Security Act for instance."

I am sorry to read this coming from *FF* folks who I thought usually read a bit before dashing off missives.

1. The American *Aam Aadmi* has had Medicare since the 1960s - single-payer, "socialist" healthcare for those over 65. And she/he "loves" it, whether Republican, Democrat, or unaffiliated. It's paid for through a tax on everyone's salaries - even mine.
2. A couple of other "socialist" initiatives - Social Security, Medicaid (health insurance for those below the poverty line), food stamps (SNAP).
3. Social Security is doing fine. Every few years, the Trustees issue a report stating it's going broke in a few years. Hasn't happened in decades. We tinker

around the edges a little, and it chugs along.

4. Medicaid actually costs less than Medicare - the government chooses to use their bargaining power with doctors and other providers, unlike some parts of Medicare. The sooner people can see a doctor, the sooner diseases are caught, which eventually lowers healthcare spending.
5. Food stamps are about the equivalent of \$1.44/person/meal, which barely buys a cup of coffee. If you want to complain about that as wasteful spending in a rich country like the US, you've gotten your priorities seriously misplaced.
6. Health insurance is currently provided to a vast majority of Americans through their employers, and this form of compensation is not taxed. This is a major (government!) give-away to Americans, and they seem just fine with it.
7. Not taxed prior to the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare). A "Cadillac Tax" pays for part of ACA - a tax on the health insurance portion of people's incomes, if the insurance costs over \$27,000/year for a family of four. At least the Affordable Care Act is paid for, explicitly through taxes and cuts in provider payments, and is designed to encourage ways to cut healthcare spending. The US currently spends twice as much on healthcare as any other OECD nation, I believe, on a purchasing-power-parity basis - and isn't any healthier.
8. Obamacare makes people buy insurance through private companies. If the regulations are too onerous for these companies to operate, they are free to leave the market. That hasn't happened; if I did not get health insurance through my employer, I have over 50 private insurance plans to choose from, here in Pittsburgh, PA.

R. Subramanian, PA, USA.
randomsubu@gmail.com

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Leader and the Law

While putting up publicity material placed near a BJP rally venue, Shri Omar Abdullah, Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, is reported to have said:

"This is my state - if I want to install a hoarding, I will. Why this irritation?"

The Chief Minister should realize that it is not his state. He is merely a servant of the people of that state. And, if he wants to install a hoarding, he has to follow the law like everyone else. In fact, as Chief Minister, his compliance with the law of the land should be exemplary.

M. B. Damania, Mumbai. minocheher@gmail.com.

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The Good New and the Bad News

First the Good News – The Congress (I) is Trounced

The Assembly Elections in Delhi overshadowed the sweeping victories of the BJP in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. And this is crucial for the AAP not so much to realise, but to understand.

To begin with they must understand that they have arrived, and an impressive arrival that on the Indian political scene, as a party to reckon with. But they have not won – at least not enough to form a government. When Kejriwal kept saying that he would win and bring about policy changes, he meant not only his victory but a majority for his party. And so it was right that his associate Yogendra Yadav kept saying that the Aam Admi Party did not have the numbers. In a different context when the Swatantra Party in Gujarat was short of “numbers” to form the government in Gujarat after the 1967 elections, there were several offers from some moneyed people to ‘persuade’ some winning candidates belonging to the Indian National Congress to join (in fact defect) to the Swatantra Party in enough numbers to form the Government. Minoo Masani then national General Secretary of the Swatantra Party without a day’s hesitation declined the offers of the Party’s “moneyed friends”. He simply said: “We have not received a mandate from the electorate to govern but to play the role of the Opposition Party in the State Assembly”. This was emphatic. An emergency meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board of the Party reaffirmed the position taken by the Party’s General Secretary. Talking of “numbers” would give an impression that numbers can be “arranged.” by the party’s well wishers who will then extract their pound of flesh when the time comes.

If Yogendra Yadav and Arvind Kejriwal had said they have received a mandate only to be in the opposition and not to govern and said they would offer issue based support to the BJP the single largest party if it decided to form a ministry, then there would have been much appreciation of the position taken by the Aam Admi Party and it would have been a test of the Congress (I) – would it oppose for the sake of opposing or also provide constructive opposition? If the latter it would have worked to their advantage in 2014 as a responsible party.

Perhaps (the word underlines the uncertain scenario because the two parties consider themselves as ‘enemies’ and not as parties in the opposition). On the other hand both the Congress (I) and the BJP are engaged in muddying

the waters so if the Aam Admi Party jumps in for a swim it will get muddled.

There is no such thing as “unconditional support”. Rajiv Gandhi had put and later pulled the rug from under the feet of the Chandrashekhar government at the centre in November 1990 after the fall of the V. P. Singh Government. Reminds one of an advice given by Lenin on United Front governments supported by the commies – support them as “the rope supports the hanged man”

Nevertheless what has happened in Delhi is indeed a game-changer and could well be the tipping point that augurs well for the parties in the opposition to tip the scales in 2014. Good for democracy not so good for the Congress(I).

Now for the Bad News – A Supreme Court Judgement that Violates Human Rights!

The following excerpt from an article by Laksmi Chaudhry argues why:

“The highest court in this land has delivered an enormous blow to all Indians, men and women, gay and straight. It has declared that we the people are not free citizens, but mere subjects of the state whose bodies are subject to its jurisdiction even in the privacy of our bedroom. It has upheld the Indian state’s right to decide what sexual acts are permissible between two consenting adults, and in doing so, it has enslaved us all in one fell swoop.

“For that is what the Supreme Court ruling represents: The triumph of colonial-era law over our very own constitution; the brute power of the state over the fundamental rights of the citizen.

“The 2009 High Court ruling stated, “We declare that Section 377 IPC, insofar it criminalises consensual sexual acts of adults in private, is violative of Articles 21, 14 and 15 of the Constitution.” In other words, criminalising violates the fundamental rights to freedom, equality, and against discrimination. In decriminalising gay sex, the court was not just upholding the rights of the gay community but also the sexual freedom of all consenting adults.

For that is what the Supreme Court ruling represents: The triumph of colonial-era law over our very own constitution; the brute power of the state over the fundamental rights of the citizen.

More about this in the February issue of FF along with what is 377. *Freedom First* of course is deeply disappointed and disturbed by the Supreme Court’s judgement.

Winds of Change Presage Hope of New Political Order

H. R. Bapu Satyanarayana

From the time of S. H. Kapadia, who was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, there has been a refreshing change in the attitude of the judiciary which has left little scope for the UPA government to protect itself by adopting dilatory tactics or suppressing facts to justify its questionable stand.

The Idea of India

Sixty-six years ago India gained independence from the British bifurcating a large sub-continent into India and Pakistan. Both countries paid a heavy price when millions were massacred as a consequence of this largest mass migration and cross transfer of people in history. It may be unrealistic to expect dramatic changes during this span of life in the evolution of a nation and yet it is amazing how much has happened to shape the nation's destiny. All signs are that at present India stands at the threshold of breaking into the ranks of developed countries, a tribute to the inherent strength of its 5000-year-old culture.

It is said that the decline of a nation starts when values suffer and morality dips precipitously. Events in the past few years have seen India plunging into such a situation with ubiquitous corruption catalyzed by political values and morality reaching its nadir. However, it is fortuitous that recent developments give hope of a reversal of the situation. This perhaps can be attributed to the same syndrome of the past when despite repeated onslaught by invading armies and India ruled by a diverse conglomeration of kings and local satraps, the land mass now called India successfully resisted the invaders' designs to subjugate India. In fact, the reverse happened. They could not break the spirit of India notwithstanding the machinations of Mir Jaffers; instead, the invaders were absorbed into the mainstream of Indian culture. That, in fact is the strength of India's heritage, of its values and culture. It is this same spirit that is thwarting the designs of corrupt politicians to subvert the system for their selfish ends and is forcing them to fall in line.

Rahul's Outburst

Rahul Gandhi's youthful indiscretion caused serious embarrassment within his own party by his statement describing the proposed promulgation of an ordinance that sought to negate the verdict of the Supreme Court to disqualify politicians with criminal record from contesting elections and debarring them from Parliament as "nonsense". This has dealt a body blow to the politicians

with criminal background who enjoyed political patronage and immunity from prosecution.

There is a lot of speculation as to why Rahul Gandhi so suddenly upset the apple cart by challenging the decision, which was taken by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his own mother Sonia Gandhi. What is amusing is that wisdom suddenly seemed to have dawned on the Congress leaders to reverse their stand to say that Rahul's view is the party's view! It is not as if Rahul was ignorant of the series of scams that have brought infamy to the UPA government. The question is why has Rahul been silent until now when it has already resulted in considerable collateral damage to the economy and security of the country? By his action he must be conscious that he has created a hurdle for himself for he has to live up to this image every time the UPA government embarks on a move that could subvert the system.

My Perception

This outburst says something about Rahul's political philosophy, which has always been an enigma and continues to be so even now. Perhaps it was prompted by his youthful exuberance and discomfiture with the maneuvering of the caucus of elder politicians or the fact that youngsters of the party whose cause he espouses are being denied a role in politics. Possibly, he was himself feeling unequal to the job and besides he must have felt uneasy about his family's dynastic politics that has only brought many family tragedies. There is a touch of his father's idealism in him.

Remember Rahul had once mentioned that there is no inner party democracy in the Party but nobody seemed to have taken him seriously. Even in the case of the Jan Lokpal Bill, which created a lot of heat and controversy in Parliament, Rahul's suggestion of a constitutional amendment did not attract much attention either, particularly in his own party. The other crucial observations of his are worth noting. Rahul says, 'It is time to stop this nonsense, political parties, mine and all others. If we want to fight corruption, we cannot continue making these small

compromises. Because if we make these small compromises, there will be compromises everywhere.' Many political commentators and mainstream TV media, who are generally pro-Congress, may consider Rahul's statements as an expression of an angry young man without realizing the damage he has inflicted on his own Party. May be emergence of Narendra Modi who is making waves has been a contributing factor. Whatever may be the compelling reasons, at least the people have welcomed Rahul's action as a turning point in the changing political order.

Judiciary to the Rescue

From the time of S. H. Kapadia, who was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, there has been a refreshing change in the attitude of the judiciary, which has left little scope for the UPA government to protect itself by adopting dilatory tactics or suppressing facts to justify its questionable stands. This is evidenced by a series of judicial verdicts that have caught the government on its back foot. Some of these are: Disqualification of criminals to contest elections; giving voters the right to reject all candidates on the ballot paper (popularly described as "none of the above" or NOTA); asking the Centre to amend the Indian Penal Code to provide life imprisonment till death without any remission for heinous offences; its ruling on the question of seeking government approval when it is being monitored by the SC; these issues have discomfited the ruling coalition led by the Congress(I). This attitude has spread to courts across the country so that delivery of justice is becoming faster and stricter and getting bail that much harder.

The Case of Lalu Prasad Yadav

The 17-year-old fodder scam finally caught up with RJD Chief Lalu Prasad Yadav with the special CBI court in Ranchi pronouncing him guilty, sentencing him to 5 years in jail and a fine of Rs. 25 lakhs, and convicting 44 others including an ex-chief Minister of Bihar and several IAS officers. If those convicted remained untouched until now it was because the system was subverted by mutually self-serving interests by a close-knit criminal nexus of ministers, bureaucrats, businessmen, aided and abetted by maneuvering by the central government interested in ensuring its own continuance in power. In fact, the unsuccessful attempt to promulgate the ordinance described earlier in this article was primarily to save Lalu Prasad Yadav from losing his seat in the Lok Sabha!

The Congress Persists in its Old Ways

Union Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde wrote to all states asking them to avoid detaining innocent Muslim youths wrongfully. By making such invidious

distinction referring to Muslim youths specifically and not youths in general is a blatant move to woo minority votes. In fact, this directly violates the doctrine of secularism and has serious implications for enforcement agencies putting them in a dilemma hampering investigations. This kind of vote bank politics is evident in every move of the UPA government, whether it is permitting IAS-IPS officers to travel abroad for medical treatment on the taxpayer's money; announcing the creation of Telengana or the setting up of a 7th Pay Commission.

Conclusion

It may be a quirk of fate, but Rahul's time bomb has already had positive fallout; the corrupt and criminal elements that had a free run of the country are getting unnerved. The UPA government can no longer afford to continue in its arrogant ways. The government cannot trifle with the courts as they have been doing hitherto. Probably the CBI, which was lampooned and accused of dancing to the tune of the government, will feel emboldened to assert its independence. Hopefully, there will be more accountability now and the Jan Lokpal, Bill may see the light of the day as originally given shape by the Anna Hazare movement.

After President Pranab Mukherjee's forthright utterances during his recent visit to Belgium and Turkey, clearly identifying the Pakistan government's perfidy and driving home India's foreign policy compulsions, it is to be hoped that both, our External Affairs Minister and the Prime Minister, will take a leaf from his bold lead and shed the impression of following weak-kneed policies that have only emboldened Pakistan to mount repeated and unprovoked attacks on India.

H. R. BAPU SATYANARAYANA a political commentator and freelance journalist based in Mysore.
Email: what_option@yahoo.co.in

H. V. R. IENGAR, ICS, was in charge of a sub-division in Broach District (now Bharuch) when Mahatma Gandhi launched the Salt Satyagraha campaign in 1930. He was surprised to notice the change as Gandhiji walked through the area. The villages were completely deserted. They came to their homes after sunset. Their property could not be attached during the night while in daytime, the authorities could not enter the houses due to lack of witnesses. He was sorry to note that the Government did not adhere to such rules after Independence. The constitutional method of demonstration by the RSS in 1948-49 was put down ruthlessly. Kids of 13-14 years age were put in prison for shouting slogans.

COURTESY: Excerpted from the article by Suresh C. Sharma in One India, One People, November 2013.

Point Counter Point

Ashok Karnik

Every issue has at least two sides. A wise person 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.

26/11 Anniversary

1. Five years after the 26/11 attack on Mumbai, it is time to review what we learnt and did to ensure that another such attack never takes place. As a security analyst put it, 26/11 was not only a terrorist attack; it was a successful war-by-infiltration. We killed 9 invaders and captured one. In the final analysis, did it mean success or shame? Shame, because we allowed the attack to happen despite advance warnings. We were shocked out of our slumber and initiated some measures to improve our infrastructure, intelligence and preparedness. How far have we come? There is some improvement in raising commando units, some up-gradation of equipment and a little more coordination. Formation of the National Investigating Agency (NIA) was a big step but other bright ideas to counter terrorism are still gestating. There is no dearth of ideas but implementation is our traditional weakness. We tend to pontificate on what needs to be done but when the time comes to act, we find excuses why it cannot be done. And then the urgency is lost. For example, the need for CCTV cameras is understood but their placement is delayed interminably.

1. Vast areas of counter-terrorism effort remain unresolved. The National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) has got stuck in the state autonomy debate; National Technical Research Organization (NTRO) is shackled by turf wars. Intelligence gathering has not improved; states still blame the Centre for not providing specific and timely intelligence. Coastal security is still a huge problem. Most states have yet to form dedicated intelligence units whose full time job would be intelligence gathering. Police officers are shuffled from police stations to intelligence branches as if mere transfer from one to the other would make them experts at intelligence collection. Other countries less severely hit by terrorism have moved heaven and earth to meet this threat, by amending laws, setting up specialist units and revamping entire machinery for coordination of intelligence. We still debate if the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) is good or bad; Anti-Naxal strategy is buried in philosophical debate; the Kashmir problem swings between hard action and no action. In this bleak scenario, one can only hope that although we may not be as good as the situation demands, we are not as bad as it appears.

Snoopgate

2. In the mud-slinging season of elections, all kinds of allegations are floated by political parties; people like us are confused what to believe. Generally, people believe the worst of all politicians as their stock is very low. A case in point is the surveillance allegedly mounted on a girl by the Gujarat Government in 2009. The event is old but since Narendra Modi's Home Minister Amit Shah had mounted the surveillance, the issue became suddenly relevant in 2013. Various organizations pretended to be concerned over the girl's privacy that was breached through this kind of stalking. Their main agenda was to wield a stick to beat Modi with. The arguments were well made out: Why was the girl being followed round the clock? Why was so much security man-power utilized when no threat was perceived? How was telephone tapping of the girl and her contacts done without legal authorization? There were many questions without answers. At the worst, it meant that the girl was placed in something akin to a mobile prison and at best a lot of police man-power was being (mis)used at the request of the girl's father who was Modi's friend. It is an embarrassment for Modi/Shah at

2. BJP's response was that the girl's father had asked Narendra Modi to look after his daughter. The type of surveillance revealed by the tapes (not authenticated yet) does not look like it was protection for her; these indicate a check on the girl from running away with someone. Without the girl's statement it is difficult to determine the exact problem faced by her; everything else is speculation, including allegations made by IAS Officer Sharma who knew the girl. These range from the Leader's (Saheb) 'personal' interest in the girl (not borne out by the father's conduct), the possibility of her running away with somebody in spite of her father's opposition or her fear of being harmed by somebody, etc. Since there was no definitive information, the media went haywire on speculations. The most important point being overlooked is that the girl may be happily settled in these four years and does not want her past to be exhumed; those who are fighting to protect her right to privacy of the past may be damaging her present private life in their eagerness to do justice to her. All that is tenable for now is the misuse of government resources for private purpose. The Centre

an inopportune juncture. The Gujarat Government has appointed a Commission to look into the matter but Modi's opponents have already dismissed it as eyewash.

threatened to initiate its own enquiry but backed off later for want of jurisdiction.

Feet of Clay

3. '*Tehelka*', the harbinger of sting journalism, was regarded with respect for the lofty goals it pursued despite serious consequences. There was of course some cynicism about its motives in exposing selected politicians/institutions and remaining mute about others. There were suspicions of a *quid pro quo* too. The left-liberal image of Tarun Tejpal, its founder, allied with his perceived proximity to power centres created a halo around the journal. However, *Tehelka*'s promoters were seen to be as fallible as their victims. Tarun Tejpal was accused of sexually molesting his junior colleague. After initially apologizing to the victim, the accused turned around and suggested that there could be another version to the incident, which meant that the victim had some explaining to do. In short, he argued that the complaint could be a misrepresentation of facts. In the ensuing mess, the 'holier than thou' guru of investigative journalism lost his halo.

3. Whatever be the court verdict in this case, what stands out is the attempt to denigrate the victim. How is it different from any other victim of rape being placed in the dock by the accused? How has the high-sounding '*Tehelka*', protector of women's dignity, suddenly become an inquisitor and not the supporter of the victim? The case should take its legal course but in India does law always take the due course when the powerful are in the dock? Laws have indeed been strengthened to mete out more stringent punishment to molesters and the weight of evidence favours the victim but the trauma of narrating life and career ruining details of rape and molestation still requires an exceptionally brave girl to even lodge a complaint. The law can do only so much; the rest has to be done by the society.

Mini General Elections

4. Assembly elections in Delhi, MP, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Mizoram, just before the next general election in 2014 were considered a dress rehearsal for the latter. Of course, the two sets of elections are fought on different grounds and cannot be compared. However, it is a barometer to test the people's mood. UPA II was always considered inadequate on many counts but there was hope that some of its populist policies might strike a chord to dispel the gloom. Food Security Bill, in particular, raised its hopes. Price rise which is not entirely its fault weighed it down as people do not blame international events when their pockets shrink. Non-governance turned out to be UPA II's Achilles heel. The glib and smart answers of Congress wordsmiths to all questions satisfied no one except themselves. The spin-masters nauseated the common man with their evasions and the party was made to pay for it. The Congress (I) was annihilated and questions raised about its prospects in 2014, with internal bickering and uneasiness among its allies becoming immediately visible. Rahul Gandhi promises to be aggressive and make changes in the organisation but we have heard too many such declarations. The spectacular emergence of the Aam Admi Party (AAP) gives hints of a dawn of a moral dimension to the hitherto 'dirty' politics. Is it there to last?

4. The Assembly elections would be analyzed minutely over the next months and a gain here or there might be used to provide a fig leaf to the Congress but the message is clear: UPA II is on notice. Mizoram is always a case apart but the other 4 states have shown the red light to UPA II. It needs to do something drastic in the next 4-5 months to turn the tide. Will Dr. Manmohan Singh now act Prime Ministerial, stand up and be counted as a leader or will he still hide behind the cloak of silence which has proved so disastrous for UPA II? Will Rahul Gandhi stop talking in abstractions? Price rise is out of its hands but corruption, terrorism, Pak and Chinese bellicosity and Naxalite menace need decisive responses. The Government needs to be seen to act and not make vacuous pronouncements. The AAP promises much but the fear is that it may not be able to stand up to the high expectations it has raised. Its refusal to form a government in Delhi is a principled stand but does it not owe it to the people to give them a government? Delhi can perhaps afford another election but can such vacuum be acceptable at the national level? JP's 'Total Revolution' and euphoria of 1977 reminds one to be cautious, while at the same time laud somebody for doing something to cleanse our politics. Hope trumps cynicism!

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, 400 001.



Cornucopia

Firoze Hirjikaka

Snoopgate : A Comedy of Errors

A glorious fable that even Aesop would have been proud of.

Whichever way you look at it, the unlawful surveillance scandal involving Amit Shah, his saheb and the Gujarat state security apparatus - popularity known as Snoopgate - is a comedy of errors. It is a classic example of the knots individuals and political parties tie themselves into when they try to defend the indefensible.

One fact our politicians and public figures have yet to grasp is that in this electronic age, nothing they do or say is likely to remain secret - or sacred - thanks to an ever more aggressive and inquisitive media with sophisticated interception devices at their disposal. Amit Shah probably could not have imagined that his private instructions to the state security agencies he controlled would one day become public property and hand the Congress an opportune weapon to embarrass the BJP.

Not surprisingly, there are differing interpretations of the sequence of events depending on which political party is doing the interpreting. I will only elaborate on the most plausible and logical one. A young lady architect came to the notice of saheb and they grew quite close. The Saheb showed his appreciation by affording her preferential treatment in awarding her a few lucrative state building projects. After a while, the ardour apparently cooled. Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned, they say. Well, that applies to egotistical men as well; and saheb has a monumental ego. I suspect he became over possessive and demanding. Whatever the reason, the lady moved on to greener pastures and probably this was an affront saheb's pride could not stomach. He instructed his Man Friday Amit Shah to keep a strict watch on the lady's activities and report back to him. Either from over-zealousness or a burning desire to please his master, Shah went overboard, employing not only the police, but the state's Intelligence Bureau and Anti-Terrorism squad among others. The lady's every movement and encounter was meticulously observed and recorded - and methodically reported to the boss. What the spies were unaware of was that their own conversations were being secretly recorded by a journalistic website. Not surprisingly, when the snooping was exposed, the shit hit the fan.

To say that the persons concerned, as well as the BJP, were surprised would be an understatement. They were so shell shocked that the initial reaction was a

stunned silence. Not the media however. Having got their teeth into one of the juiciest titbits of the decade - garnished with intrigue, secret liaisons and misuse of state machinery - they were determined to milk it for all its worth - as was the Congress. In my opinion, the wisest strategy by the principals and the BJP would have been to maintain the silence and let the storm wash over them. It would be unpleasant and even embarrassing, but eventually the media would have become bored with the lack of reaction and moved on. In any case, if the saheb is indeed Narendra Modi - as has been inferred though not conclusively proved - even if he had a romantic or otherwise relationship with the lady, there was no need to get defensive about it or try to conceal it. Modi is a bachelor and is perfectly within his rights to have a relationship with whoever he chooses. Adopting a holier-than-thought attitude, which is so typical of our political leaders, is likely to eventually prove counterproductive. A frank admission would have served him better; and maybe even earned him some envious admiration.

Doing the wise thing is not in the DNA of our political parties, however. Almost instinctively, they settled on the time honoured strategy of initial denial, followed by a series of convoluted and sometimes bizarre justifications. The first spin was to convert the blatant and intrusive surveillance into a security issue; although it was never clarified from whom or what the lady was to be protected from. It is a strange concept of security indeed where the individual purportedly being protected is not even aware of the fact. When that didn't fly, there miraculously appeared a letter from the father of the young lady, virtually exonerating Modi of all wrong doing - and the myth of protection was persisted with even though it was increasingly becoming untenable.

The BJP stuck doggedly to this defence, in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. All the while, they persistently obfuscated the fact that it was unconstitutional and outside the tenets of basic law to use state law enforcement agencies - and that too at the highest level - to carry out surveillance of a private citizen, unless the individual was suspected to be a threat to national security. Tellingly, Narendrabhai who rarely misses an opportunity to impart his folksy wisdom to the huddled masses at the slightest provocation remained ominously

silent. As for Amit Shah, the expression of consternation mixed with embarrassment on his face spoke volumes. The cherry on the cake was when the Gujarat Government constituted a commission of inquiry to determine, not whether the surveillance was justified or lawful, but how it got leaked to the media. All in all, it was all a glorious fable that even Aesop would have been proud of.

The Congress, as is its wont, went in for the overkill where none was required. They keep hammering away. There is now talk of the Centre instituting a formal inquiry. Let it go, guys. All you need to do is sit back and rub your hands with glee as the BJP falls deeper into the hole

it has dug for itself. The more the Congress rubs it in, the more it will look like one of those political vendettas that political parties routinely engage in. The impact will be dissipated - to the BJP's advantage.

In the final analysis, it is a tale as old as time: that of a relationship gone sour and an Alpha male determined to demonstrate to his estranged lady the consequences of thwarting him. Normally, it should be nobody's business but that of the individuals concerned. But when one of them is aspiring to the highest post in the land, it gets more complicated. Stay tuned.

Tarun Tejpal : How the Mighty Have Fallen

Tehelka had been a thorn in the side of politicians for so long that they were not likely to forgo this heaven-sent opportunity to stick it to him.

Tehelka had been a thorn in the side of politicians for so long that they were not likely to forgo this heaven-sent opportunity to stick it to him.

Once upon a time there was an ambitious young crusader who was determined to take investigative journalism in India to a new level. When he started his quest, tales of political leaders accepting wads of cash in return for political favours - strictly off the record and therefore unaccounted for - were already legend. Everyone knew this, but the politicians concerned were least perturbed since there was no admissible evidence. The journalist shattered this complacency by implanting his own people impersonating favour-seekers and secretly recording the transactions. Confronted with the damning truth, a few ministers of the ruling dispensation were forced to resign. The party was livid at this unmasking, but the general public approved and applauded. The crusader's star was in the ascendancy and along with accolades, his personal wealth also accumulated. Then one day, either through lapse of judgement or raging hormones, tried to impose himself on a young female employee - confident that his charm and authority would carry the day. The young journalist was made of sterner stuff however, and decided to fight back. That is when things got ugly.

Tarun Tejpal was living the good life. *Tehelka*, the publication he started, was doing very well commercially and financially. Possibly it had many well-wishers - with activities they preferred to keep out the public gaze - who deemed it prudent to keep him in good humour. Whatever the reason, Tejpal amassed enough wealth to buy a palatial villa in Goa, among other luxuries. Typical of tycoons who get bored with just making money, he decided to set himself up as a cultural and literary icon by organizing

an annual Thinkfest in Goa which was touted as an eclectic gathering of eminent writers and thinkers, with Tejpal as the presiding deity. Also present was one of his employees, a pretty young journalist (PYJ) who also happened to be a good friend of his daughter.

One evening he found himself in the hotel lift with the young lady. Perhaps as a result of being somewhat tipsy or over confident, he tried to get amorous. The PYJ must have been initially stunned, then bewildered and finally outraged. This guy was her best friend's father, for god's sake. Possibly if he had left it there, the young lady might have taken it as a manifestation of momentary madness and let it slide. But such was Tejpal's arrogance that he probably could not believe any woman could resist him. Perhaps he thought she was playing hard to get. Throwing caution to the winds, he tried it again; and that is when things got out of hand. The PYJ shot off a letter of complaint to *Tehelka's* managing editor Shoma Chaudhury, and upon getting a less than satisfactory response, complained to the police.

Initially, Tejpal made a show of contrition by heroically admitting that he may have misread the "signals" sent out by the lady and offering a guarded apology. He no doubt presumed that the PYJ would be overwhelmed by the magnanimity displayed by her mentor. She was not. By this time moreover, the media smelt a juicy story and they pounced. Never foregoing a chance at gratuitous publicity, the politicians got into the act too. Tejpal soon realised that his grand gesture was not going to fly; and he reverted to type. In the revised version, he declared that although he may have got a bit carried away, the initial invitation was extended by the lady. To buttress his claim, he stated that the lady appeared reasonably cheerful after

the alleged assault. It was a flawed strategy. To start with, it lost him any initial sympathy he may have garnered, particularly from the set that indulgently believes that 'boys will be boys'. He also failed to appreciate that *Tehelka* had been a thorn in the side of politicians for so long that they were not likely to forgo this heaven-sent opportunity to stick it to him. The police too, realising that for once they were on the same page as the politicians lost no time in registering a case of sexual assault. At the time of writing this, Tejpal is in a Goa prison - although I suspect he will shortly make bail.

Meanwhile the PYJ shot off a detailed email to her immediate boss, Shoma Chaudhury, comprehensively relating the sequence of events. Since Chaudhury had been projecting herself as a champion of feminism, the PYJ probably expected a sympathetic response. Choudhary initially tried to shield her boss. However, when she realised the public outcry against her misguided loyalty, she put on a show of impartiality and support for the PYJ. But the damage had been done. She got an unexpected boost when a clownish BJP politico, appropriately named Vijay Jolly, descended on her house with his loutish cohorts and defaced her property, but it was too little too late. Choudhury has now resigned from *Tehelka*.

Tehelka is now virtually buried, which is a pity because it has been doing a fairly good job of keeping politicians looking over their shoulders. Whether a single indiscretion by one individual, even a powerful one, justifies the demise of an institution is debateable. *Tehelka*'s downfall is being accelerated by the media blitz, which I believe is unwarranted. It is time the media was shaken out of its smug superiority. The media's primary purpose is to report the news, not to set themselves up as moral crusaders. We have enough self serving politicians to do that. In this case, they are destroying one of their own merely to improve their own ratings.

As for Tejpal himself, he will now have plenty of time to reflect on his folly. He could not have imagined that what he regarded as an act of harmless flirtation would snowball into grounds for criminal action. He had relied on his sense of authority and entitlement; and failed to appreciate the public's growing appetite for scandal. Once the media got the bit between their teeth, he did not stand a chance. How the mighty have fallen.

(Continued on page 18)



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Indictment of Justice Ganguly: To What Avail?

Keshav Rau

After all, it was a Bench of the Supreme Court which had laid down comprehensive guidelines for dealing with cases of sexual harassment. Therefore, when it came to dealing with similar cases involving its own fraternity, the CJI should have gone all out to ensure a thorough probe in a transparent manner and also ensure that stringent action taken against the persons concerned

The allegations made by a lady law graduate of the National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata, on November 6, 2013 in a blog for the Journal of Indian Law and Society that she was sexually harassed by a Supreme Court (SC) Judge while she was interning with him has been established to be correct. On November 30, it was made public that the Judge in question was Justice A. K. Ganguly, who retired on February 3, 2012. A little over a fortnight before the disclosure of the identity of the Judge, the Chief Justice of India [CJI], P. Sathasivam, had constituted a 3-Judge Enquiry Panel consisting of Justices R. M. Lodha, H. L. Dattu and Ranjana P. Desai to enquire into the allegations.

In unequivocal terms, the Enquiry Panel concluded:

“The statement of the law graduate, both written and oral, prima facie discloses an act of unwelcome behaviour (verbal / non-verbal conduct of sexual nature) by Justice (retired) A. K. Ganguly with her in hotel Le Meridien on December 24, 2012 approximately between 8 pm and 10.30 pm.”

The high hopes aroused by the prompt constitution of a Committee consisting of senior judges of the Supreme Court were belied just nine days after the Committee submitted its Report, when the CJI passed an order saying that since the Supreme Court had no administrative control over a retired judge “no further follow up action is required by this court”. The CJI went on to say that “he had promptly constituted a three-judge inquiry panel on November 12 because that day’s *Times of India* [ToI] had run a story headlined ‘SC judge harassed me, says intern’, which gave an impression that allegations were made against a sitting judge.” [ToI December 6]

The ToI report had quoted extensively from the blog in which the intern recounts how the month of December 2012 (when the “Nirbhaya” case shook the nation) “was momentous for the feminist movement in the country....” She goes on to narrate how at that time she went past hurdles put up by the police “to go to the assistance of

a highly reputed, recently retired [emphasis mine] SC judge whom I was working under during my penultimate semester. For my diligence, I was rewarded with sexual assault...from a man old enough to be my grandfather.”

Surely, the country does not expect the CJI to rely on mere newspaper headlines to take decisions on matters concerning serious allegations against a serving or retired judge of the SC – or, for that matter, even the High Courts? Newspaper headlines, for one thing, have necessarily to be abridged because of space constraints. Secondly, newspapers arouse readers’ interest through headlines. In this particular case, however, ToI’s headline “SC JUDGE HARASSED ME...” was not at all off the mark because in a headline a Judge of the SC or of a High Court – whether retired or serving – could safely be inferred”. If the CJI was genuinely not sure whether the allegations in the blog had been made against a serving or retired Judge, he could have, by virtue of the high office that he holds, obtained information from the intern as to the status of the Judge concerned – whether retired or serving.

If the allegations were against a serving judge, the procedures laid down for initiating impeachment proceedings should have been followed by the CJI. In case the judge concerned had retired and the matter did not relate to a period when he was a serving judge, the logical follow up action would have been to direct the SC’s Registrar to file a comprehensive FIR on the basis of not only what she narrated in her blog, but also what she said in an interview to “Legally India” subsequent to her blog. In her interview (as reported by ToI in its issue November 6), she said,

“I have heard of three other cases (of sexual harassment) by the same judge and I know of at least four other girls who’ve faced harassment from other judges – perhaps as (bad as mine): most of them were in the chambers of the judge and other people around, so it’s never gets so bad. A girl I know faced continuous sexual harassment throughout and sexual advances, and actually faced troubles through her work because of it.”

Hold up the Mirror

The CJI should have constituted a Bench to monitor the progress of the investigation on the FIR and the progress of the criminal case, if registered as a consequence of the FIR. After all, it was a Bench of the Supreme Court which had laid down comprehensive guidelines for dealing with cases of sexual harassment. Therefore, when it came to dealing with similar cases involving its own fraternity, the CJI should have gone all out to ensure a thorough probe in a transparent manner and also ensure that stringent action is taken against the persons concerned.

Now, with the CJI deciding to close the matter even after setting up a high-powered Enquiry Panel, which returned a finding of inappropriate behaviour on the part of the Judge concerned, either the intern files an FIR or the Police registers a case as a cognizable offence (as was done by the Goa Police in the Tarun Tejpal case). At the time of writing, newspapers have reported that the Delhi Police have geared themselves to registering a case against Justice Ganguly. For that, the intern's statement has to be recorded by the Police either before it or before a Magistrate. The response of the intern has been: she was travelling and for the present unavailable for giving her

statement to the Police.

This may well turn out to be routine sort of case being registered by the Police, and may well fall through for lack of evidence to establish guilt with proof beyond doubt. In that event, the three Judges who indicted Justice Ganguly would be placed in an extremely embarrassing situation even if theirs was a fact finding investigation. On the other hand, an FIR lodged on the direction of the CJI and monitored by a Bench of the Supreme Court would have provided the required degree of seriousness to the case and allowed it to reach its logical conclusion.

The only saving grace in this entire sordid affair is that the belated lodging of complaints/FIRs has not been viewed with suspicion as some courts have tended to do so on some occasions. Nor has there been any attempt at casting aspersions on the character of the lady concerned. Hopefully, this will serve as a good precedent because the moment a complaint or allegation of this nature is lodged, an attempt is made to examine whether it was a belated complaint or try to fish out something against the complainant's activities.

KESHAV RAU is a freelance writer. keshav.rau@gmail.com

Chinese Imperialism in Tibet

The Hypocrisy of the West

Hypocrisy does not make you wrong, but it hands your critics a convenient weapon. When David Cameron, Britain's prime minister, visited Sri Lanka for the recent Commonwealth summit, he was right to insist loudly and publicly on the need for a proper investigation into the carnage at the end of its civil war in 2009. But this week, on his next trip to Asia, that robust riling of his hosts laid him open to charges of double standards, as he indulged in three days of conciliatory schmoozing in China.

Neither Sri Lanka's nor China's government would be surprised that the passion for truth and justice aired so volubly in Colombo was buried far deeper in Mr. Cameron's luggage in Beijing. Neither accepts that Western "meddling" in their internal affairs on issues such as human rights flows from a genuine belief in universal principles. Rather, they see it as a self-serving diplomatic optional extra, to be discarded as soon as it jeopardises other interests. And China, unlike Sri Lanka, is powerful enough to make Western leaders hold their tongues.

If China is getting its way diplomatically on Tibet,

it is not because repression there has eased. Over the past two years, more than 120 Tibetans have set fire to themselves in protest. This week, exiles reported the sentencing of nine Tibetans for alleged separatist activity. Similarly, although freedoms for the majority in China have expanded, dissidents are still persecuted. The most famous of them, Liu Xiaobo, winner of the 2010 Nobel peace prize, remains in jail for no more than advocating peaceful, incremental political reform.

China has succeeded in shifting human rights and Tibet far down the agenda of its international relations for three reasons. One, of course, is its enormous and still fast-growing commercial clout. Not only is it an important market for sluggish Western economies. It is also a big potential investor – in high-speed rail and nuclear projects in Britain, for example.

Second, alarm at China's expanding military capacity and its assertive approach to territorial disputes is also demanding foreign attention. Joe Biden, the American vice-president, arrived in Beijing from

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India and Latin America (Part Two)

The Big Thing in the Making

B. Ramesh Babu

A new brand of popular leaders across the continent is demonstrating that capitalism should and can be regulated; and genuinely inclusive growth is possible in electoral democracies!

Even a brief look at the bilateral relationships India has been forging with the Latin American (LA) countries since 1990s testifies to the primacy of the India-Brazil equation. Historically however, our equation with the largest nation in LA went through a very rough patch. The Government of Brazil championed the cause of Portugal in India and officially represented the country during the anti-colonial struggle for the liberation of Goa and its integration in the Indian Union. Naturally India did not appreciate Brazil's posture and policy on this issue of crucial importance for the country. But, now all that is part of the bygone era.

President Fernando Henrique Cardoso's (1994-2002) "new global strategy" envisioned stronger ties with developing countries like India and that was the beginning of a new chapter in the bilateral equation between the two countries. However, it was under the inspiring leadership of President Inacio Lula da Silva, the dynamic and the most popular public figure in Brazil (2003-2010) that everything changed at home and abroad. His strategy of genuine inclusive growth galvanized the marginalized millions and deepened and widened Brazilian democracy. Lula's transformative economics and politics influenced developments in other countries in Latin America, where ordinary people are showing that a better world is possible. A new brand of popular leaders across the continent is demonstrating that capitalism should and can be regulated; and genuinely inclusive growth is possible in electoral democracies! Corruption free and transparent governance for the welfare of the masses is attainable! India has a great deal to learn from Brazilian experience in this regard!

Bolsa Familia

Recently (in November 2013), Brazil celebrated the tenth anniversary of Lula's most famous and revolutionary programme called "Bolsa Familia" (Family Grant), which lifted 50 million people out of poverty. According to an impartial research study, endorsed by the UN, Bolsa Familia "helped poor to put money on the table, money in the bank, and children in the school." Hunger, poverty, and

primary education were targeted at one stroke. This innovative, brave, and massive programme inspired social welfare policies in scores of countries, including India.

President Lula also transformed India-Brazil relations irreversibly. It was his vision that broke the usual dilemma in foreign relations: trade first or politics first? He envisioned political alliance as a starting point from which trade links would be fostered and he did so at the right time. He understood that Brazil and India see the world through the prism of North vs. South, West vs. non-West, and colonisers vs. colonised. President Lula took the initiative to forge strong political and economic relations with India, which responded with commendable enthusiasm. President Lula visited India thrice. He was conferred the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding for 2006 and the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament, and Development for 2010.

Mutual Benefits

Brazil and India are committed to and have been working closely for more democratic global governance. The two are cooperating closely with Germany and Japan for the membership of an expanded UN Security Council. Brazil and India are members of intercontinental organizations like BRICS and IBSA. The two (along with other nations) are working closely to strengthen the role of the developing countries in the IMF and the World Bank. Together with China, the two countries are seeking to establish the BRICS Bank with a view to create an alternative global monetary and financial order to contain the dominance of the dollar and to negate the impact of sanctions America imposes on Asian and African countries that stand in the way of its global hegemony.

India and Brazil are multi-national societies of continental dimensions and are huge "emerging economies." India is the third and Brazil is the seventh largest economies in the world. Working together they can pioneer a more equitable development agenda for the world. Under the rubric of BRICS they should tackle the

global economic slowdown. At home both countries are confronted with many obstacles to equitable development and have much to learn from each other.

There is a unique opportunity for mutual benefit in the field of agriculture. Brazil has vast cultivable land and plenty of water. Brazil's agricultural knowledge will go a long way in increasing our farm productivity. Indian farmers can go there in large numbers and expand Brazil's land under cultivation on a large scale (as is being done in Africa). Indian companies could enter agri-business in Brazil (and Argentina). The two countries can do wonders in promoting food security in Africa. India is already providing "adaptable, appropriate, and affordable" technologies in the agricultural sector to many countries in Africa. Brazil has launched food security initiative throughout Africa. Together the two could supply inputs in the form of affordable services and the much needed technical expertise. An African collaboration between India and Brazil would indeed be a marvellous example of South-South cooperation for the benefit of people in the three continents.

India has much to learn from Brazil in the foreign policy arena. Snowden's scandalous revelations of the unprecedented global snooping by America's National Security Agency (NSA), which did not spare even close allies and leaders of friendly countries, shocked the world beyond belief. While India's response was guarded, President Dilma Rouseff of Brazil cancelled her State Visit to the US and demanded a public apology from President Obama. After blasting the US at the UN General Assembly, she announced a plan to host an international summit of governments, industry, civil society, and academia in April 2014 on internet governance.

In the era of globalization it is preposterous to allow WWW to be an exclusive American lagoon. Her principled and brave stand forced India to publicly support Brazil. At the end of the sixth meeting of the India-Brazil Joint Commission in Brazil in October 2013, India's External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid was constrained to say that India was working with Brazil on cyber security. He declared that "many countries would want to work together to find an appropriate system and architecture to protect privacy, freedom of expression, sovereignty, and security of cyber space." There was a time when India was leading the Third World in such initiatives for non-hegemonic global governance!

Economic Relations

Coming down from cyber space to commerce and investment, it is necessary to note that trade between India

and Brazil has been growing rapidly. It has grown steadily from the low of US \$ 400 million in 1999, to 2 billion in 2005, 7 billion in 2010, 9.3 billion in 2011, 10.62 billion in 2012, and is expected to cross 15 billion by 2015. India is dependent on Brazil and Argentina for edible oils and pulses. We also import sugar and wheat (!) from Brazil whenever domestic production falls short.

The growing commercial relations have gone hand in hand with increasing frequency of mutual visits by top leaders from both sides. Indian Prime Ministers P. V. Narasimha Rao (1992), Manmohan Singh (2006 and 2012), Presidents K. R. Narayanan (1998), and Prathiba Patil (2008) visited Brazil. Brazilian Presidents Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1996), Inacio Lula da Silva – popularly known as Lula – (2004, 2007, and 2008), and Dilma Rouseff (2012) currently in office, visited India. Several Ministers dealing with external affairs, defence, commerce, and agriculture etc. of both nations paid official visits to each other's countries in large numbers. Besides, leaders in business and industry from both countries interacted with their counterparts on many occasions.

India's major exports to Brazil are: diesel oil, coke of coal, peat, equipments related to wind energy, engineering, electricity, cotton and polyester yarns, naphtha, pigments, pharmaceuticals, and chemicals (not necessarily in that order of importance). Our main imports from Brazil are: crude oil, copper sulphate, soya oil, raw sugar, denatured alcohol, copper, asbestos, valves, motor pumps, airplanes, wheat, precious and semi-precious stones (nor necessarily in that order of importance).

The two way investment also has been growing. Brazilian companies invested in automobile, IT, mining, energy, bio-fuels, and footwear sectors. From the Indian side investments in Brazil are in IT, pharmaceutical, energy, agri-business, mining, engineering, and automobile sectors.

India and Brazil have set up a bilateral Trade Monitoring Mechanism for periodic consultations. India has also signed a framework agreement with MERCOSUR, a regional international organization, in June 2003. This entered into force in June 2009. Under this arrangement 450 items from each side are eligible for 10% to 100% duty reductions. Efforts are underway to broaden and deepen the scope of this agreement and link IBSA and SACU. In addition India-Brazil Chambers of Commerce based in Sao Paulo and Belo Horizonte work in close cooperation with the Embassies and Consulates in both the countries. On top of all this are the cultural exchanges galore between the two countries.

The multi-dimensional India-Brazil equation is

discussed at some length because it, in a way, typifies our bilateral relations with many other Latin American countries. The trade and investment mix varies from country to country. But, the overarching political/ideological ambience is similar. All of them are struggling in their own ways to shape a new and independent path of inclusive politics and development. We should learn

from their success.

DR. B. RAMESH BABU is a specialist in International Relations, American Politics and Foreign Policy. He was a Visiting Professor, University of Hyderabad in 2012. Formerly he was the Sir Pherozeshah Mehta Professor of Civics & Politics, University of Mumbai. brameshbabu08@gmail.com

Cornucopia *(Continued from page 15)*

“The Semi-Final”

Assembly Elections - A Remedy for the Congress?

The recently concluded assembly elections in four states were a mixture of predictability and surprise. Expectedly, the Congress was routed in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh; and almost pulled off an upset in Chhattisgarh with a sympathy wave which did not go quite far enough. In Delhi, the forlorn hope, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) figured in a near dead heat with the BJP. The Congress will take a long time to come out of its stupor and stupefaction.

The decimation of the Congress was so complete that even the usual suspects realized that the familiar and time worn excuses would not cut any ice. They trotted out the usual adage about state elections not being a harbinger of the national elections, but one could see that their heart was not in it. It was left to Rahul Gandhi to frankly acknowledge the debacle, without excuses; and that the Congress needed to re-invent itself.

To no one's surprise, the pundits who participate in television debates could hardly contain their glee in writing off Rahul Gandhi as a non-entity in Indian politics. One gentleman suggested sarcastically that it was time the Congress heir apparent chose a different profession. I do not entirely agree. In a curious way, the Congress

debacle could work to Rahul's advantage. Rahul may lack the charisma of Narendra Modi, but I believe is definitely more sincere and straightforward than his nemesis. His public speeches may lack punch and drawing power, but one gets the feeling that he believes in what he says; unlike Modi whose speeches are cleverly crafted for impact, even if they are a bit short on facts.

In my opinion, Rahul has been held back from realizing his potential by the old guard in the Congress. Contrary to the regular public displays of sycophancy by even senior ministers, the veterans are quite content with the prevailing system since it has served them well in terms of amassing personal wealth and privileges. They have been able to thwart Rahul's somewhat idealistic notions of honest governance and entrusting greater responsibility on the young generation, by keeping in the good books of his mother. Sonia Gandhi is certainly no master political strategist and one of her most glaring decencies is prizing loyalty to herself and the Family, even at the expense of incompetency and opportunism. The old guard has hitherto taken full advantage of this frailty.

FIROZE HIRJIKAKA is a retired civil engineer, a blogger and a freelance writer and a member of the Advisory Board of *Freedom First*. leonardo8_99@yahoo.com.

Aam Admi Party

When the Aam Admi Party was launched, I welcomed it. It is the first modern political formation in India since the Swatantra Party in 1959. Their economic philosophy is a polar opposite of Swatantra but they are an attempt to break the vacuous homogeneity of populist clientelist corruption which is common to all other parties. They have an open membership and people join not to seek tickets and line their pockets (thus far) but for an ideal. Urban modern India has been thrilled by the arrival of AAP.

Even so, these are early days. Radical, movement-based parties taste success at first but do not always repeat it. We need to see if AAP can be scaled up. Delhi is a municipality (or two), Not a real state. You can do intense door-to-door canvassing with a few hundred volunteers. Mumbai will be different as the Shiv Sena used the same techniques 50 years ago and is entrenched there at street level. Kolkata is a perpetual battleground between the Trinamool Congress and the CPM gangs for local control. No entry there. Still good luck to them

MEGHNAD DESAI. Excerpted from his column 'Out of my Mind',
The Sunday Express, December 15, 2013.

Can We Legislate for A Better Society?

Rca Godbole

Everybody seems to see stringent legal measures as the only effective way to solve any and every societal problem.

In the year 1997, Justice J.S. Verma, then the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, had laid down guidelines to prevent “sexual harassment at workplace” (popularly referred to as the “Vishakha guidelines”), which now have come to haunt our public intellectuals and self proclaimed custodians of journalistic standards.

On December 23, 2012 a three member Committee headed by (former) Chief Justice J.S. Verma, was constituted to recommend amendments to the Criminal Law so as to provide for quicker trial and enhanced punishment for criminals accused of committing sexual assault against women. The Committee was constituted in response to the roiling anger and frustration expressed all across the country in response to the bestial gang-rape and murder of a young student in Delhi in December 2012. The Committee submitted its report on January 23, 2013.

The report has suggested no <new> or <stricter> legal remedies. It has reassigned certain crimes such as acid attacks on women to the category of sexual violence, it has pointed out the shortcomings in certain acts such as Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act 1956, which does not define trafficking comprehensively since it only criminalizes trafficking for the purpose of prostitution; and it has suggested procedural reforms in management of cases related to crime against women, along with educational and electoral reforms. This is what a serious, reasonable and responsible committee would be expected to do, but unfortunately we in this country, cannot hope for such guidance every time. We, as a society, and our government as our elected representatives, clamour for and constitute a committee for each and every outrage that occurs in our country, headed by a legal luminary. Everybody seems to see stringent legal measures as the only effective way to solve any and every societal problem.

There is a fundamental fallacy at work here, which renders most of the work done by most of committees meaningless. We must understand that the law system, legal framework, and to a large extent the government delivery mechanisms are ALL designed to prevent undesirable outcomes. This avoidance is achieved through punitive measures of the legal framework and through accounting and reporting systems of the government mechanisms, but fact remains that these are preventive measures. The oft lamented gap between law and implementation of law is so daunting because of this

avoidance mechanism squared.

There is no provision in the law to induce desirable outcomes, elicit exemplary behavior or to single out positive initiative for notice. Offences are documented, categorized, and differentiated minutely, but merit does not fall within the purview of this system. The government mechanisms are put to work to realize theoretically laudable objectives in terms of public benefit, but are designed with a chain of decision making which practically impedes delivery of anything anywhere with anything resembling speed.

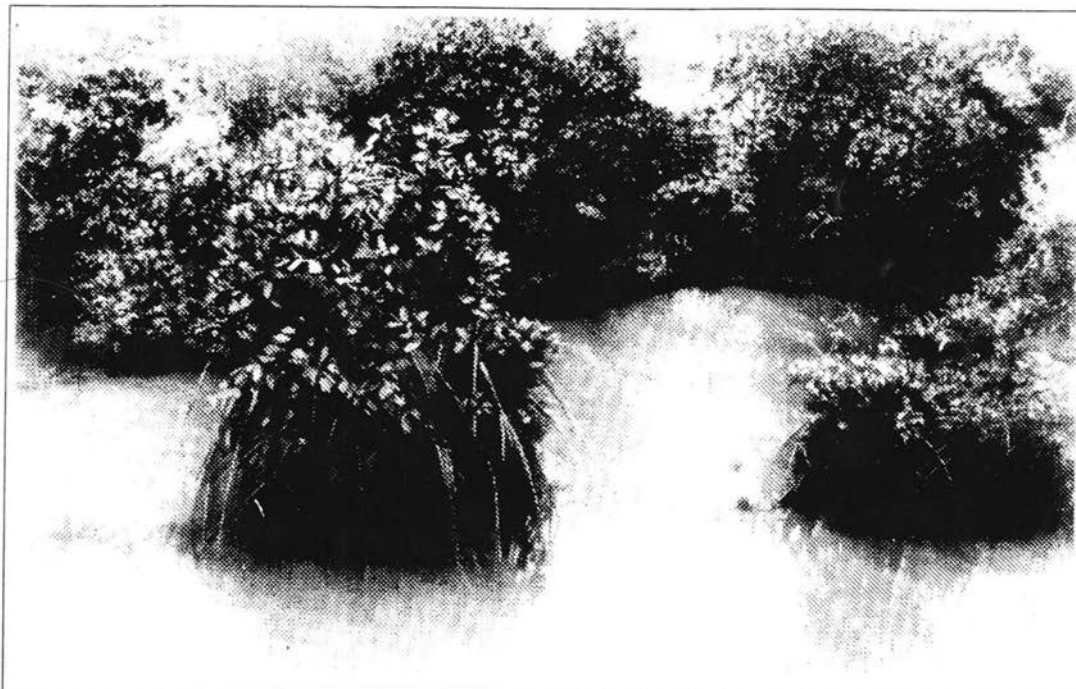
For a society to function normally, it must do so with some decency or kindness or dare we say, even beauty. It is just not enough that people are prevented from doing bad things, or social interaction is sanitized of bad outcomes. One could argue that a better way to have a community worth living in would be that a few people do active good, perform acts of merit, are motivated to intervene positively and where most people are prevented from doing bad things.

Law or government delivery system thereof are, by definition, incapable of ensuring this. As the recent Verma committee report suggests, reforms on various levels, change of mind sets would be the elements to stress if a few good people are to be motivated to intervene positively. In response to the Delhi gang rape and women’s safety concerns we got fatuous suggestion with budgetary implications such as arming the Railway Police guards on suburban local trains, who man the ladies only compartments at night. With the present set of WWI standard arms that our police personnel carry on trains, a prior written permission is required to fire them. Providing better equipment under these circumstances is hardly going to add to the crime prevention potential of the policemen. As a matter of fact, the reason why women travel safely on Mumbai locals is not those benighted police guards with their outdated and legally hampered weapons. It is the sheer number of random working men who take the same trains, or are present on train stations.

The sooner we stop looking to legal solutions for our manifold shortcomings as a society, the better chance we have of calling upon the inner reserves of normality or common sense most of us possess to overcome our problems.

Dr. Rca Godbolé, Scientific Adviser and IP Strategist. Email: rcagodbole@gmail.com

CONCERN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT



A unique feature of the Industrial Garden Township, Pirojshanagar, is a large expanse of swamp, one of the very few such areas existing in the city under original mangrove forests.

At a time when mangroves are being destroyed at an alarming rate in the process of excessive and damaging reclamation..., Godrej has taken steps, at considerable care and expense.

to preserve and protect this Nature's gift in the awareness that mangrove destruction leads generally to loss of food, breeding grounds and shelter for numerous forms of life.

It is almost unbelievable that, like the Sanjay Gandhi National Park in Borivli, such a mangrove still exists in the excessively congested and polluted megapolis that Mumbai is

HELP BRING OUR INDIA UP - QUICKLY!

Godrej INDUSTRIES

WELFARE : ENVIRONMENT / POPULATION NEXUS...

On The Occasion Of Our Country's 64th Republic Day *Freedom First* Pays Tribute to Some Unsung Heroes of the Indian National Movement.

In this age of globalization the heroes who gave us our freedom are hardly remembered. Of course there are the occasional Indian movie blockbusters like *Rang de Basanti* and *Lage Raho Munnabhai* that instil a sense of pop-patriotism. Gandhi and Nehru continue to be cool, but for the Gen-next, with nano second attention spans, free India's freedom fighters are mere academic pages. However, each freedom fighter has his and her own story to tell. The following is a very small selection of some of them less eulogized, from a long list. - *B. N. Mehrish*

1. Bhikaji Cama (1861-1936)



In 1907, in the third week of August, when India's independence was still 40 years away, and the world was not fully aware of the burning patriotism of young Indians, Madame Bhikaji Cama unfurled the first National Flag at the international Socialist Conference in Stuttgart (Germany) in the presence of representatives from many countries. An Indian woman in a colourful sari was a rare phenomenon in those days, so her majestic appearance, brave demeanour and clear diction led everybody to believe that she was a Maharani.

Born to rich Parsi parents, settled in London/Paris, she fought for freedom in her own way, helping innumerable revolutionaries with money and materials across the sea. Cama was one of the members of the group which had planned to help Veer Savarkar escape when he was to swim to the French shores after jumping off the ship in which he was being taken prisoner to India. The plan failed and she was greatly saddened that she could not help Savarkar. But being optimistic she started planning other efforts she could make to help him. Initially opposed to violent means, she became a revolutionary after observing the torture and suffering of her countrymen. She even parted with her husband who did not approve of her fight for freedom as he was in total awe of Englishmen and had great faith in British rule. Madame Cama called on the Indians not to take part in the First World War. She was in France at that time. The government of the day imposed restrictions on her activities as they were allies of the British. She had to report to the police once a week during the period of the war.

At great risk to her life, she worked tirelessly, cared for the sick during the great plague of Bombay. She was infected but fortunately recovered after which her friends forced her to go to Europe in 1902. Madame Cama also fought for the cause of women. "Where is the other half of Egypt? I see only men who represent half the country!" she asked at a National Conference in Cairo, Egypt, in 1910.

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2. Veer Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883-1966)

An extraordinary Hindu scholar who evoked controversy, Savarkar was a great orator, prolific writer, historian, poet, philosopher and social worker. He coined several new technical terms of parliamentary usage for Indian parlance, such as *Chhayachitra* (photograph) and *Sansad* (parliament). Born in a village near Nashik in 1883, he had his early schooling in the village school. As a schoolboy he used the occasions of Ganesh and Shivaji festivals to put up plays on nationalistic themes. After his marriage in 1901, he joined Fergusson College in Pune. He founded the "Abhinav Bharat Society", got involved in the swadeshi movement and later joined Tilak's Swaraj Party. Because of his highly charged patriotic speeches, the British Government withdrew his



B.A. degree. On 1906 he left for England to qualify as a barrister. In London he founded the Free India Society and harangued the Indian students there against British rule. In 1908 he produced authentic research on the 1857 revolt described by British historians as the 'Sepoy mutiny'. He titled his book "The Indian War of Independence 1857" which was immediately banned by the British government. Later Madame Cama got it published in Holland and had it smuggled into India.

He was a social reformer. He launched a scathing attack on the severe shackles that undermined Hindu society. He appealed to the society to eradicate untouchability. He held no profession to be lowly and championed the cause of untouchables the right to draw water from the village well and allow their entry into temples. He said: "When I refuse to touch someone because he was born in a particular community but play with cats and dogs, I am committing a most heinous crime against humanity. Untouchability should be eradicated not only because it is incumbent on us but because it is impossible to justify this inhuman custom when we consider any aspect of dharma."

Savarkar was arrested in March 1910 and sent to India. During a brief halt at Marseilles while being deported from London on the ship *Morena*, Savarkar entered a toilet, broke open a window, somehow wriggled out, and jumped into the ocean, to swim his way to the port of Marseilles. Alas the French police captured him and handed him over to the British. Savarkar was deported to the dreaded Andaman Cellular Jail, where in the absence of pen and paper, he scribbled with the help of a nail, his epic *Kamala*, consisting thousands of lines. No wonder, he is now revered in India as "Veer Savarkar" (Brave Savarkar). In 1920, many prominent freedom fighters including Vithalbhai Patel, Mahatma Gandhi and Bal Gangadhar Tilak demanded Savarkar's release. On May 2, 1921, Savarkar was moved to Ratnagiri jail. He was freed in January 1924 under the condition that he would not leave Ratnagiri district and abstain from political activity for the next five years.

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3. Ram Prasad Bismil (1897–1927)



Responding to a call by Lala Lajpat Rai to the nation's youth to join the freedom struggle against the British, Bismil, with his associates, printed literature, provided shelter to revolutionaries, made hand bombs and was a constant source of headache to the British Government. He was born in Shahjahanpur, U.P. At the age of 18 he was stirred by the death sentence meted out to Bhai Parmanand. The following year he left school and immersed himself in the freedom movement. He was a poet who wrote patriotic poetry in Hindi and Urdu under the pen names Ram, Agyat, and Bismil. The famous poem '*Sarforshi ki Tamanda*' is attributed to him. Some say that it was written by "Bismil" Azimabadi but immortalized by Ram Prasad. He also translated books from English and Bengali to Hindi and wrote extensively inspiring the youth to join the freedom struggle. Not surprisingly, his books and literature were proscribed by the British. He was inspired by the Arya Samaj movement. He was a founder member of Hindustan Republican Association. He formed a revolutionary organization called Maitrivedi. He and his group looted a British treasury in 1918 to collect funds. While selling his books at the Delhi Congress that year, Bismil absconded when the police raided the area around Manipuri. When

planning another loot between Delhi and Agra, there was firing between them and the police. Bismil jumped into the Yamuna, swam underwater and reached Delhi where he lived underground. The police thought he was dead. His companions were arrested and tried. This came to be known as the Manipuri Conspiracy of 1918.

The most daring and well-known of his acts was the daredevil treasury train robbery at Kokori on 9 August 1925 with the help of 10 other revolutionaries of the Hindustan Revolutionary Association which became known as the Kokori Conspiracy Case. More than 40 persons were arrested and tried. Bismil received the

death sentence and was hanged at the Gorkhpur jail on 19 December 1927.

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4. Bhagat Singh (1907-1931)



Born in 1907 into a Sikh family of farmers, Bhagat Singh was brought up in the politically charged State of Punjab, which was left with the searing memory of the Jalianwala massacre. When he was fourteen, he went to Jalianwala Bagh to collect its soil in his lunch box, and kept it as a memento for life. To avoid an early marriage, he ran away from home and became a member of the youth organization, Noujawan Bharat Sabha. During a protest march in Lahore, Singh watched in horror as Lala Lajpat Rai was beaten up with a lathi by Scott, the chief of police. Lajpat Rai succumbed to his injuries. It was then that Singh vowed to take revenge and plotted to kill Scott. Unfortunately, he killed Mr. Saunders, a junior officer, in a case of mistaken identity. He fled from Lahore to escape the death penalty. However, he was betrayed by his friends, who became "approvers." He wanted to die like a soldier, and not at the gallows. But his mercy plea was rejected, and he was hanged on March 23, 1931 in Lahore prison. He was 24. Bhagat Singh and his comrades Rajguru, Sukhdev and equally illustrious comrade-in-comrade-in-arms, Chandra Shekhar Azad fought British imperialism till the end.

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5. Chandrashekhar Azad (1906-1931)



Born on 23 July 1906 in Bhavra, Madhya Pradesh, Chandrashekhar, after his schooling in the village, studied at the Sanskrit Pathashala in Varanasi. He was drawn into the non-cooperation movement of 1920-21 under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. When arrested he gave his name as 'Azad', his father's name as 'Swatantra' and his residence as 'prison'. This annoyed the magistrate who sentenced him to fifteen lashes of flogging. The title of Azad stuck thereafter.

He later got involved in revolutionary activities and joined the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (HSRA) and was involved in the Kakori Conspiracy Case (1926) with Ram Prasad Bismil in 1925. He was also involved in the attempt to blow up the Viceroy's train (1926), the Assembly bomb incident, the Delhi Conspiracy and the Second Lahore conspiracy. He was one of the three who were involved in the shooting of Saunders at Lahore (1928). As a result of a friend's betrayal, he was encircled by the police at Alfred Park in Allahabad on 27 February 1931 where he had gone to meet his colleague Sukhdev Raj. Surrounded by the police, he put up a good fight which made it possible for Raj to escape. When he was left with only one bullet, he fired it at his own temple and lived up to his resolve that he would never be arrested and be dragged to the gallows to be hanged.

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6. Aurobindo Ghosh (1872-1950)

Born on August 15, 1872, in Calcutta, Aravinda Ghosh (later to be known as Aurobindo) received his education in the UK. He excelled in his studies and passed the India Civil Service exams. However, failing the horse riding test, he could not join the services. On his return from England in 1893, he accepted a position with Sayaji Rao Gaekwad of Baroda and often prepared Gaekwad's speeches, and wrote the communiqués between Baroda State and the Indian Government. Initially, Aravinda's political activities were limited to Baroda, but they soon extended to Maharashtra, Gujarat and Bengal. He learned Marathi and Gujarati and taught himself Sanskrit. Ghosh's goal was to capture public attention through his writings, urging the youth to work for the country. Ghosh formed secret revolutionary societies, members of which were asked to take a solemn oath



to “secure the freedom of Mother India at any cost.” The British prosecuted Aravinda Ghosh on the charge of propagating sedition through his writings in *Bande Mataram*, a paper which he edited. He was acquitted due to the defence put up by Babu Chittranjan Das. In 1908, he was tried for what came to be known as the Alipore bomb conspiracy. The bomb intended for Lord Kingsford landed in the carriage of two English ladies. Aurobindo later turned to spirituality, migrated to French Pondicherry where he set up an Ashram and became well known as Aurobindo, and the location of the Ashram as Auroville.

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7. Ashfaqulla Khan (1900-1927)



Born in 1900 in Uttar Pradesh, Ashfaq was known for his involvement in the famous Kakori Dacoity incident in 1925 under the leadership of Ram Prasad Bismil. He felt that the soft approach of non-violence could not win India its Independence and therefore used bombs, revolvers and other weapons to instil fear in the British. Ashfaq went into hiding after the train robbery and moved to Banaras, then to Bihar and then to Delhi, with the intention of going abroad in order to study engineering, which he thought would further help in the freedom struggle. But a Pathan friend betrayed him by informing the police about his whereabouts. Tasaduq Khan, the then Superintendent of Police tried to win him over by provoking him against Hinduism, but Ashfaq surprised Khan by saying “Khan Sahib, I am quite sure that Hindu India will be much better than British India”. For his involvement in the Kakori dacoity case he was sentenced to death. Ashfaqulla Khan was proud to be the first Muslim to embrace death on the gallows for his country.

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8. Dr. Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi (1887-1971)



The versatility of Munshiji is seen in his roles as lawyer, creative writer, constitution-maker, freedom-fighter, administrator, organization-builder and champion of Indian culture. Dr. Munshi looked upon himself as a “sea shell thrown up by the mighty flood of Indian Renaissance.” Born in Bharuch and educated in Vadodara, he excelled in academics. Aurobindo Ghosh, his teacher at the Baroda College, made a profound impression on him. He acquired a law degree from Bombay and enrolled himself as an advocate in 1913 to practice at the Bombay High Court. During this time, his first novel was being serialized in a Gujarati weekly. Under the influence of Aurobindo, he was attracted to armed rebellion against the British and even learnt to make bombs. Influenced by the Home Rule Movement, he participated in the activities of the Social Reform Association advocating the cause of widow marriage. He set an example by marrying a widow in 1926. While studying at Baroda College, he took part in Sardar Patel’s Bardoli Satyagraha and the Salt Satyagraha in 1930 along with his wife. He was imprisoned for six months. He started the movement

for a parliamentary wing of the Congress, and became Secretary of the Congress Parliamentary Board in 1938 and later appointed Home Minister in the first Congress Government. The same year he founded the well-known Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and the Institute of Agriculture at Anand, Gujarat.

Post-independence he served the government in various capacities. He resigned from the Congress and became Vice President of the newly formed Swatantra Party founded by C. Rajagopalachari in 1959.. Till his death in 1971, he devoted all his energies to the building-up of the Bhavan as the premier cultural and educational organization of the country.

9. Capt Lakshmi Sehgal of the INA (1914-2012)



"The most glorious period in my life was between 1943 and 1945, when I served in the Indian National Army under Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose," Lakshmi Sehgal, the captain of the all women Rani of Jhansi regiment of the INA, would say with pride. She was one of the bright lights of a generation of Indians who were inspired by Gandhi's call to 'Do or Die' and Bose's radicalism. Committed to winning freedom, they threw themselves wholeheartedly into the freedom struggle. They distributed literature, bombed strategic structures, fought in the jungles of Southeast Asia and endured the hardship of jail. They recall those heady days and the disappointments of independent India. (As Reported in *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi August 05, 2012).

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10. Gouranga Sundar Mitra (89)



Born in Khulna district in present-day Bangladesh, Gauranga S Mitra responded to Mahatma Gandhi's Do or Die call given on August 8, 1942. 89-year-old Mitra who has been a resident of Kolkata since the Partition recalls how he and his friends who joined the Congress from the extremist Yugantar group, started bombing railway tracks and bridges at various places between Rupsa and Bagrahaat stations. "While on all earlier occasions Gandhi would withdraw the movement as soon as violence broke out, the Do or Die slogan gave us the liberty to take on the British. In October, 1942, we bombed one side of the boundary wall of Bagerhaat sub-divisional jail and freed 12 of our jailed friends," he said. Someone from within the group turned traitor and Mitra

was arrested on November 17, 1942 and stayed imprisoned until 1945. He joined the Dhaka University law department where he became involved in agitations over the INA trial. Even today, Mitra travels to the city every day and organizes meetings of the Bengal chapter of the Freedom Fighters' Association. (as narrated by Srigdhendru Bhattacharya, Kolkata).

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11. Lalti Ram (89)



Lalti Ram was 18 when he was recruited into the British army. He joined the Indian National Army (INA) in Singapore in February, 1942. He still wears his INA badge all the time. "The Azad Hind Fauj gave fresh hope to those who wanted to see India free," he says describing Netaji's speech to the Fauj in Singapore. "He appeared before us in uniform and stunned everyone with his speech," he says. Lalti Ram recalls that the Fauj began its march towards India, fighting all the way, but had to stop after the atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; the soldiers were captured and jailed in Thailand for nine months after which they were dispatched to Kolkata. The British asked them to say they were forced by the Japanese to form the Azad Hind Fauj. They refused. Lalti Ram returned to his village in what is now Haryana to a

rousing welcome. Inspired by him, all four of his sons joined the Indian Army. (as narrated by Sat Singh, Haryana).

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12. Rani Saroj Gaurihar (83)

The city of Agra cherishes this grey-haired veteran who had her first taste of prison as a six-month old when her mother Satyawati Rawat was imprisoned by the British Raj. The daughter of Jagan Prasad Rawat, a well known lawyer who fought cases of freedom fighters, Saroj, who graduated with a degree in law and a diploma in Public Administration, became part of the freedom struggle as a teenager in 1942. She and her mother were jailed the following year.

Of her own part in the struggle she says, "Being young, we had the benefit of not being identified as



freedom fighters and thus used to function as carriers of post between freedom fighters. Such was the enthusiasm that I along with others driven by national pride got our school closed on August 9, 1942 when Mahatma Gandhi gave the call for the Quit India movement," recalls Saroj Gaurihar. Driven by the words of leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, she participated in many agitations including those against foreign goods and liquor shops. Gaurihar moved to Madhya Pradesh after she got married and became an MLA there in the years after independence. At 83, she continues to be active in her native Agra where she heads various social and cultural organizations. "The devotion towards the nation has faded in the recent past but we do have hopes from the coming generation," she says. (narrated by Hemendra Chaturvedi, Agra).

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13. Ke Mammen (92)



On the midnight of August 14, 1947 when Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru gave his tryst with destiny speech, K. E. Mammen was in a dingy prison cell in Thiruvalla in Kerala. He heard the speech on a single-band radio and cried with joy. The next day when he was released he took the tricolour and ran through the streets. It was an encounter with Gandhi in 1936 when he came to Thiruvananthapuram that changed the life of 17-year-old Mammen. He was 19, and a student of Arts College, when he was first arrested. He was eventually forced to pursue his education in Madras where he was attracted to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's radical ideas. He worked underground for two years and later joined the Indian Socialist Party under Jayaprakash Narayan. His struggle did not end with India's freedom. The Princely State of Travancore was planning an independent state, which the Congress opposed. When Dewan Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar was attacked by KCS Mani he was arrested again and underwent days of torture. He was released after Travancore and Kochi became part of the Indian Union. Mammen, who is bedridden, is proud that he suffered, but is saddened by the poverty of independent India. Captain Lakshmi was his idol. He believes India's destiny would have been very different

with Netaji at the helm. (Narrated by Ramesh Babu, Thiruvananthapuram).

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14. Mewa Lal Gupt (97)



I was at home in Kydganj when I heard that Chandrashekhar Azad had shot himself after being surrounded by policemen..." says Mewa Lal Gupt (97), the tears flowing at the memory. Gupt, who jumped into the freedom struggle at 14, was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's jagran sabhas (awareness meetings) at Anand Bhavan in 1930. He recounts how boys lined up outside the Bhavan every morning when Gandhi set out on his morning walk to Saraswati Ghat. Then, on February 10, 1930, the Mahatma picked him out of the crowd. He touched Gandhiji's feet after he returned from his morning walk. Gandhi told Lal Bahadur Shastri, who was accompanying him, that he wanted to meet this young boy who went on to work closely with Gandhi. In prison, he took on the jailer, one Wilson, for his misbehaviour with freedom fighters and for kicking their plates during meals. This earned me lashings with a stick, a popular

punishment in the British era. Though he gets a freedom fighter's pension of Rs 20,000, Gupt has a hard life in his small dilapidated house that's embroiled in a court case. "Anna's Lokpal bill is the second freedom struggle. Before I breathe my last, I want to see the same patriotism in India," he says. He recently donated his one month's pension to Sultana Begum, the great granddaughter-in-law of Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last

Moghul emperor of India, after reading newspaper reports that she was living in extreme poverty. (Partly narrated by Kenneth John, Allahabad).

15. Ammembala Balappa (90)

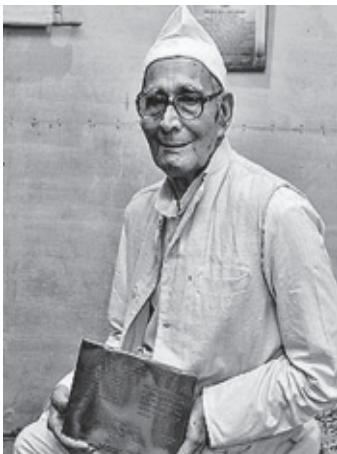


Former defence minister George Fernandes' guru Ammembala Balappa is a well known freedom fighter who later turned socialist. He was one of the main contributors to the Declaration of Land Policy (Land Reforms Act) by the Devraj Urs government during Indira Gandhi's tenure as Prime Minister. Born in 1922 in a remote village in Dakshina Kannada to a potter's family, casteism ensured that he attended school for just six months. Sent to live with his uncle in Mangalore, he became the helper of a British officer in the city administration. His work pleased the officer and helped him get a job in the sanitation department. He also learnt to speak and read English. When Gandhi called the Quit India movement, 20-year-old Balappa participated in the ensuing protests. With some friends, he planted a crude bomb that burnt down the office of the District Court Complex in Bavatagudda, Mangalore. He was arrested and imprisoned in Vellore Jail, where the former Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao was also imprisoned. From him, Balappa learnt to speak and read Hindi. He also came in contact with Jawaharlal Nehru and Jayaprakash Narayan. Later, he started a school in a remote village in southern Karnataka, got involved in the labour movement in Mangalore, started co-operative banks to help rural folk and made valuable contributions to the land reforms bill

draft. Bedridden and suffering from memory loss, he now lives with relatives in Bantwal in southern Karnataka. (Narrated by Naveen Ammembala, Bengaluru).

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16. Krishna Kanta Sarma (90)



"If independence means inefficiency and corruption, maybe we shouldn't have fought the British," he says adding, "I can't help comparing the administrative acumen of the British and their post 1947 successors," For two years, Krishna Kanta Sarma has been asking district authorities to repair the sewer outside his house. His letters have gone down the drain. Sarma expected this. He waited 10 years for a primary health centre to come up at his birthplace, Kendukona near Guwahati, despite facilitating land and funds. Rebellion ran in Sarma's family. His father Umanath Sarma ran volunteer camps from Kendukona and organised Gandhi's first visit to Assam in 1931. The peak of Sarma's rebellion was from 1939-1942 when he was in high school in Guwahati. That was when anti-WWII campaign coincided with the students' movement and culminated in the Quit India Movement. The British wouldn't allow sangrami students into colleges without an undertaking not to revolt. This made Gopinath Bardoloi, who became Assam's first chief minister, to establish Barooah College. He recalls how moderates like himself helped hardliners set fire to military camps, sabotage a planned British air force base at Sorbhog in west Assam,

blow up bridges and trains loaded with minerals and also imprisoned informers of the British. Sarma, who retired as a chief personnel officer of a state-run fertilizer plant, attributes his discipline to the freedom struggle, and to his wife Hemalata Devi, 80. "Strangely, where nothing moves without bribes, I have never had a problem with the freedom fighters' pension," he says. (Narrated by Rahul Kamakar, Guwahati).

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17. Keyur Bhushan (85)

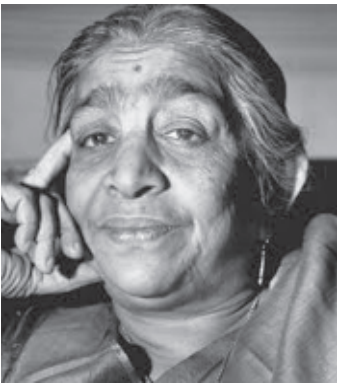
Keyur Bhushan recalls how the freedom movement touched even his primary school years. Inspired, he joined early morning processions (*prabhat pheris*) where he waved flags and chanted '*Bharat Mata ki Ja!*'. At 12,



he began giving speeches on the national movement in the village square. Initially, he was moved by the zeal of freedom fighter Maulana Abdul Rauf who was his first political mentor. At the time banned monthly magazines like '*Chand*' that carried stories on Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev secretly found their way to school children through their teachers. When the Quit India Movement was announced in 1942, he threw himself into the struggle. He gave anti-British speeches, secretly printed and distributed pamphlets and propagated the message of Gandhi. He was arrested and imprisoned in the jails of Raipur, Jabalpur and Nagpur. Though he was happy with things in the 1960s, he is saddened that politics is now about personal gain. "Things didn't improve on the lines we visualised," says the man who has served as an MP from Raipur constituency for a decade and insisted on moving about on a bicycle as long as he could. (Narrated by Ejaz Kaisar, Chhattisgarh).

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18. Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949)



A poet, author, social activist and freedom fighter, Sarojini Naidu was born on 13 February 1879 to a highly intellectual and academic Bengali family. Father Agorenath Chattopadhyay was a doctor of science from Edinburgh University. Her mother was an established poet and one of her brothers was a revolutionary and another a poet. She began writing at the tender age of 12 and her poems were widely appreciated, earning her the sobriquet Nightingale of India. At the age of 15, she met Dr. Govindarajulu Naidu - a non-brahmin and doctor by profession - and fell in love with him and married him at the age of 19 at a time when inter-caste marriages were not allowed. Her father, however, supported her decision.

As a social activist, she joined the Indian National Congress close on the heels of the partition of Bengal in 1905. She came in contact with all the freedom fighters of that time devoted her time to awakening the women of India, bringing them out of the kitchen. She travelled extensively in a campaign demanding women's rights. She became the second Indian woman president of the Indian National Congress, and after independence, the only female governor of UP. She was also part of the Constituent Assembly during the framing of the Indian Constitution. She died on March 2, 1949, following a short illness that she had contracted earlier that year.

Conclusion

All the freedom fighters mentioned in this article who were products of the Indian freedom struggle and heroes of the revolutionary stream of the struggle with virtues of the highest order seem to have been forgotten. The young generation is not aware of the visionary aspect of their personalities. The current events in the Indian political system are mainly of scandals and scams.

B. N. MEHRISH former Professor of Politics, University of Mumbai. He lives in Gurgaon, Haryana.
Email: brijesh.mehrish@gmail.com

A Man Who Cared for the Poor

Mr. Kalayanasundaram worked as a Librarian for 30 years. Every month in his 30 year experience (service), he donated his entire salary to help the needy. He worked as a server in a hotel to meet his needs. He donated even his pension amount of about Ten (10) Lakh rupees to the needy.

He is the first person in the world to spend the entire earnings for a social cause. In recognition to his service, the United Nations Organization(UNO) adjudged him as one of the Outstanding People of the 20th Century. An American organization honored him with the 'Man of the Millennium' award. He received a sum of Rs.30 cores as part of this award which he distributed entirely for the needy as usual.

From the Net. Contributed by Mr. Asrarul Haque. asrarulhaque@hotmail.com,

Social Transformation in Rural India

Sharad Joshi

Poverty was glorified and disdain for wealth and luxury was encouraged. Farmers were supposed to toil all day and enjoy the fruits of their toil only by singing bhajans to God almighty.

Rural India has undergone a social transformation. There is a revolutionary change in the mindset of Indian farmers – and this is a singular achievement of the Shetkari Sanghatana. The freedom movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi was based on ethical values such as Non-violence (*Ahimsa*), Truth (*Satya*) and honesty (*Asteya*). These principles or philosophy, enunciated by a *Yadav* (shepherd - Krishna) to a *Kshatriya* (warrior - Arjun), were prevalent in Indian society since the time of the Bhagavad Gita. The farmers in India were mostly shudras (the downtrodden class) who continued to believe in the philosophy of the *status quo* which meant an acceptance of their position as is. An attitude of contentment; one should be happy with what one has, as it is offered (by God) and everything one needs in life is within him. There is no need to make any extra effort to seek a better standard of life (by earning more money).

For generations this attitude towards life persisted. The Sanghatana worked very hard to change the mindsets of the *Shetkaris* – the farmers – to imbibe in them economic and commercial values; a new commercial outlook to demand remunerative prices (that too by agitation) for their agricultural produce and to give up their fatalistic principles. Under the hegemony of Gandhism, poverty was glorified and disdain for wealth and luxury was encouraged. Farmers were supposed to toil all day and enjoy the fruits of their toil only by singing bhajans to God almighty, along with their wives and children. The wealthy were supposed to use their wealth in a spirit of trusteeship and sacrifice. Amassing wealth and abundance of material goods per se were inconsistent with Gandhian principles. It was generally believed that poverty would make a person ‘stronger’ and

affluence would make a person ‘weak and dull’. It was a challenge for the Sanghatana to teach the farmers that there was nothing wrong in earning money and thereby improving the standard of their life. To achieve this it was imperative to stop glorifying “poverty”.

Another misconception prevailing was the belief that ‘tapping a water resource in the field was the gateway to prosperity. The idea of good agricultural land was confined to having a source of water (stream/ river/ canal) near the field which would guarantee perennial water supply. Indian agriculture is mainly rain fed, thus vulnerable to vicissitudes of monsoon. Therefore every Indian farmer wished for a source of water in the field and to have irrigated agricultural land. Secondly, from the experience over the years he had firmed up a view that having a permanent source of water would generate some amount of profit in agriculture. The Sanghatana made strenuous efforts to remove this perception.

The Sanghatana said that green fields did not guarantee green notes (Currency). Unfortunately many ‘leaders’ as well as the government advocated lift irrigation as a path to farmers’ prosperity. The ‘leaders’ tried to irrigate the land in their constituency by diverting or bringing water from long distances under various Lift Irrigation



schemes. Today, it has become necessary to review these schemes, take stock of how many are still working efficiently and to find out how many land holdings are left mortgaged with the banks because of them.

It is important we understand that nature has not divided the land between agricultural land and land for other use. It is Man who decided to put it to agricultural use taking into consideration the availability of water. In olden days he was quite practical. Where water was scarce, he started industries, mining etc. He did not try to bring water from one place to the other for agricultural purposes. However, our leaders did not understand this pragmatic approach.

Some years down the line, with the advent of technology, genetically modified (GM) seeds became available. These GM seeds could withstand droughts (drought-proof); thus with their usage, land having poor supply of water could be brought under cultivation. People realized that it did not make sense to get water from one area to another, that too, by illegal means e.g. stealing. Our political leaders did not realize that with the application of GM seeds any land could become arable. With the advent of technology old methods turn ineffective.

The Sanghatana has great belief in human intelligence and their ability to invent new technology and appreciates the versatility of human beings to carry out new experiments on a trial and error basis. It also emphasizes that the advancement of human societies can be achieved by innovating higher technology. It propounded the theory that adoption of new technology would reduce costs and by securing remunerative prices based on cost of production, agriculture could become

profitable. Unfortunately, our leaders always emphasized irrigation for improving agriculture production. Farmers followed their leaders' advice and brought their lands under irrigation instead of understanding the economics of agriculture and securing remunerative prices.

The abysmal poverty in the agricultural sector is caused by the fact that the proceeds of the crops do not cover even the bare minimum cost of production. The reason for poverty and indebtedness of the farmers does not lie in their laziness or their addictions as perceived by many. The poverty of farmers is directly attributable to governments' policies that depress agricultural prices. A single-point prescription for agriculture's malady and general poverty is remunerative prices for agricultural produce that can be obtained through elimination of all governmental interventions in the market. The Sanghatana demonstrated this theory with irrefutable evidence. It has sought to prove that the use of appropriate technology would facilitate agriculture and there is no need to steal water to irrigate land.

Once this is understood, water theft becomes irrelevant and farmers can have arable land through lawful and ethical means. They can secure remunerative prices for their agricultural produce and lead a prosperous life. This is how the Sanghatana has been performing its task of transforming the mindsets of farmers.

SHARAD JOSHI, National President, Swatantra Bharat Paksha and Founder of the powerful farmers' movement the Shetkari Sanghatana.

Email: sharadjoshi.mah@gmail.com. This article is based on his column in the popular Marathi daily *Loksatta* of 30 October 2013. English translation by Supriya Panse.



“Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice. Like Slavery and Apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. Sometimes it falls on a generation to be great. YOU can be that great generation. Let our greatness blossom.”

Nelson Mandela

Freedom First Salutes the memory of a Truly Great Man. He will be remembered as the man who prevented a bloody civil war in South Africa with his belief in reconciliation and not confrontation. Perhaps if we had had such a person at the helm we could have prevented or at least parted as friends instead of the holocaust caused by the Partition.

High Time to Abolish Governmental Awards

Kashinath A. Divecha

All demands were for Bharat Ratna, nothing less. Under such circumstances, the only consolation one could derive was that no one asked for the award for herself or himself!!

It is rather sad that the latest bestowal of the much coveted India's highest State Award award – Bharat Ratna – has created a controversy. For, questions are being raised by people, including a PIL in the Madras High Court against the conferment of the Bharat Ratna on Sachin Tendulkar, on the ground that though he was the most versatile and brilliant amongst our batsmen, it cannot be termed public service of the highest order, the prime criterion for the award of the Bharat Ratna, and that such conferment unfortunately amounts to devaluation, if not cheapening, the Bharat Ratna award itself.

Ignominious Precedent

Again, this is not for the first time that such a thing has happened. If one goes through the list of Bharat Ratna awardees over the years, one name that stands out is that of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Once upon a time she was the Prime Minister of India for eleven plus four, that is, 15 years. But she is still remembered for the imposition of a fake emergency to hold on to her Prime Ministership. No wonder, during that period, the press of the free world had labelled her as “Empress of India”; for, she had the temerity, if not arrogance, to maintain in an interview with one of the established and long standing British newspapers that she was destined to rule India. Yet, she was conferred the Bharat Ratna, ignoring the historical fact that she had trampled upon Indian democracy for selfish reasons.

Looking back, it can justifiably be stated that this conferment was nothing but devaluation of the Bharat Ratna award itself.

The Basic Issue

In this context, if one remembers, some five years ago, Lal Krishna Advani had raised the basic issue about the granting of Padma awards as also the Bharat Ratna by the government. It is true that these awards have been used by governments of the day to distribute petty patronage eagerly, confer condescending recognition grudgingly and bestow honour rarely.

It will be recalled that immediately after his letter “recommending” the Bharat Ratna for ex-Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, came to light, there was an unseemly

and unending scramble for the awards from all quarters, projecting the names of persons, long gone or fortunately still with us, who have had their innings in public service. Looking at the recommendations then made, it was observed that everyone wanted “The Best”. All demands were for Bharat Ratna, nothing less. Under such circumstances, the only consolation one could derive was that no one asked for the award for herself or himself!

In short, this mad rush in itself clearly indicated two things. One, the sponsors obviously did not attach much sanctity to the awards, and two, precisely for this reason, the recommendations kept coming with a sort of abandoned glee.

Need to Consider Seriously

Therefore, it is high time – we as a nation are nearly 66 years old now – to be wise and mature and seriously consider the desirability of this convention, practice, system, scheme, or whatever you might call it, where the government grants awards, in spite of the fact that our Constitution prohibits such conferment or bestowal.

Let us be realistic. Any person, who reaches the pinnacle in his own field of activity is invariably and inevitably eulogized by the people in the same field of activity in the best possible manner they can as they know the value of the contribution made by that person in that field. She or he is the Leading Light there – without the patronage of the government and sometimes in spite of the government. Look around and you will observe that each and every field of activity and all groups in society have their own way of honouring the best individual among them.

Only one example should suffice. One leader, who was otherwise known as Vallabhbhai Patel, was given the title, award, honour or whatever you may call it, of Sardar out of spontaneous love years ago. He was neither in need of any award by the then government, nor was he dependent on any Ratna by subsequent governments. He is still honoured by Indians as Sardar Patel. In other words,

Continued on page 32

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting - 2013 (CHOGM)

Suresh C. Sharma

Foreign affairs are the prerogative of the Centre and the Government of India should act in the interests of national security and economy.

Fifty four members of the Commonwealth were scheduled to meet in Colombo on 15-17 November 2013. The meeting took place under the shadow of allegations of war crimes by the Sri Lankan armed forces. Out of 53 members, only 27 heads of the government attended and 22 countries were represented by ambassadors or ministers. Three countries did not participate.

David Cameron, Prime Minister of UK, attended and visited the Tamil area in the North. About 300 families told him of the missing family members. They are unable to go to their homes from the present camps. Cameron called for independent investigation of the alleged war crimes. If the investigation was not completed by March 2014, he would push for a UN led enquiry. The Defence Secretary of Sri Lanka said that Russia, China and Cuba would not support an enquiry. He accused the UK Government of behaving as if Sri Lanka was still a British colony. India should take note of Sri Lanka's reliance on China.

A resolution was passed in the Legislative Assembly of Tamil Nadu calling on the Government of India to boycott CHOGM. The Central Government is ever ready to follow the advice of state governments. Earlier, the West Bengal Government had vetoed any agreement with Dacca on sharing river waters. India did not boycott the summit but the Foreign Minister attended in place of

the Prime Minister. We are in dark about his efforts to help the Tamil population. Foreign affairs are the prerogative of the Centre and the Government of India should act in the interests of national security and economy. The vote bank policy clouds the process of clarity. In due course, Arunachal may object to any deal with China due to China's claim of sovereignty over Arunachal and Punjab may revive memories of 1947 to boycott Pakistan. India could be completely isolated in South Asia.

On one hand, India has given considerable aid to Sri Lanka to build railways, hospitals and refugee camps and on the other hand, India did not respond to Sri Lanka's approach for building up Hambantota port. China stepped in to build it. This is part of the string of pearls around India. China is now building another container port terminal at Colombo. Two officers from Sri Lanka were not allowed to continue their studies at Staff College and the Tamil Nadu Government is objecting to provide training to Sri Lanka naval officers. Sri Lanka's natural choice would be to obtain training help from Pakistan. Closer relations of Sri Lanka with China and Pakistan will hurt India's strategic interests.

BRIG. SURESH C. SHARMA (retd) is adviser to the telecom industry, and a member of the Advisory Board of *Freedom First*. Email: brigscs@gmail.com.

High Time to Abolish Governmental Awards *(Continued from page 31)*

for Sardar Patel the Bharat Ratna is superfluous, if not meaningless.

Abolish the Awards

Basically, in an open, free and democratic society, the business of honouring individuals should best be left to the people themselves, instead of the government jumping into the circuit, mainly to provide patronage. Moreover, as citizens of a republic we should under no circumstances be supplicants or servile, and definitely not before the government. In any case, the basic fact remains that the government as such has no competence to independently judge on its own, the quality and importance of the contributions made by individuals in their respective fields. What happens is that it gathers the

recommendations from all and sundry, and then picks and chooses names. We should, therefore, consider whether it is prudent to subscribe to such national – rather, governmental – game of non-musical chairs. Obviously, this “Lucky Draw” system needs to be abolished.

Since governments go by precedents, it is recommended that the authorities concerned look back to late the 1970s when Morarji Desai and his government during its short tenure did the right thing by refusing to distribute these devalued awards.

It was a sagacious decision.

KASHINATH A. DIVECHA, retired trade unionist and social activist, Mumbai.

Need to Move from *Dvaita* to *Advaita*

G. R. S. Rao

It is astonishing to find some Chief Ministers observing, if not arguing, that their states are “islands of peace” as if by implication, national security would not bother them.

Terrorism in all its myriad manifestations has been discussed *ad-nauseum*, at different levels in various forums. The issue of setting up of a National Centre for Counter Terrorism (NCTC) as proposed by the Union Home Ministry created a flare of centre-state relations. Several Chief Ministers expressed their concerns that NCTC would be an attack on the federal character of the nation and that it will undermine the functions of the states. The objections raised by Odisha, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and Karnataka lend a partisan flavour of a political alignment to the issues of national security management.

The Union Government asserts that it doesn't “believe” that the setting up of the NCTC violates any “federal principles” or the “rights of the states”. The Prime Minister himself had reiterated that NCTC would not take away the “powers/authority” of states.

All this flare only brings out the continuing partisan political debate expressed and manifested in terms such as : ‘ruling versus opposition’, powers of “centre versus that of states”; and federal character of the polity. If we expand the time frame a little earlier to POTA times, the predominant focus of political debate was the fear of potential misuse and abuse of powers but not on the need for a law to fight terrorism. All those “fears” were shattered by the menacing 26/11 cake walk of terrorists on Mumbai. The nation had to go through a trauma for a government to act, nay, to react, and then enact an anti-terror legislation and setting up of the National Investigative Agency (NIA), in order to strengthen national security.

India seeks and secures cooperation from other countries and international organizations such as the Interpol, to tight terrorism. The differentiation between the ‘internal’ and the ‘external’ dimensions of national security has long been lost, as the two dimensions have fused into a continuum.

Yet in our public policy debates we continue to be driven by the rights and powers of the centre via a vis. the states, fears of misuse and abuse of powers, and

concerns for the federal character. It is astonishing to find some Chief Ministers observing, if not arguing, that their states are “islands of peace” as if by implication, national security would not bother them. Also, does it imply that “a state of peace” repels terrorists'? Partisan political factors cloud the vital issues of national security and integrity. National security policy debate is characterized by the fault-lines of partisan politics. The fact that all the regional political parties have joined hands to oppose the initiative from the “centre” is accentuated by the twin adjunct facts viz. (a) some of them are members of the ruling UPA alliance at the Centre, and (b) none of the states where the Indian National Congress is in power had expressed any opinion on the issue. It is not as though the INC had discussed the issue in any of its party forums leading to a consensus at the national level within the party.

It is equally significant that the only other national party, the BJP, that had led a National Democratic Alliance (NDA) earlier, and experienced partisan political turbulence in regard to POTA, was muted on the issue of NCTC, while the state governments governed by the BJP expressed reservations on the issue. Should not the national level political parties make up their mind and seek to promote a unified vision of ‘national security’ bringing on board, the regional parties'?

The cardinal feature of consensualism that emerged as the hallmark of Indian democracy, set in motion by the mainstream of Indian National Congress seems to have faded out due to the contemporary character of an all pervasive dualism – *Dvaita*, thanks to the politics of power.

The contemporary scenario reminds us of the childhood game of ‘cops and robbers’. For those who may have forgotten, it can be encapsulated that children divide themselves into two groups, one group assumes the role of cops, another that of robbers. The group that plays the cops demonstrate authoritarianism, high degree of morality, and look down upon the group that plays robbers who dramatize submissiveness, guilt feeling and pray for lenience. When the two groups change their role in the second round, they exchange and demonstrate, with

dramatic effect, the role play. But children can be childish in a childhood game. Indian democracy demands mature performance from all parties not to play the game of 'Ruling' versus 'Opposition' like the children play the cops and robbers, especially when it comes to national security and integrity.

Partisan dispositions of 'Ruling' versus 'Opposition' especially in the management of national security can endanger democracy. Distortions of dualism - 'Dvaita' - must be corrected quickly, corrected in order to promote a unified policy of *Advaita*, inspired by the shared vision of India, a pride of nationalism and citizenship. National and nationalist political parties have a challenge and an opportunity to formulate a national policy to fulfil national responsibilities of governance.

Power and authority obtaining both at the national and the state levels are complementary, aimed at fulfilling one common national responsibility of the government. Centre and the states together have to co-opt in managing and promoting national security. There is only one National Integration Council at work; thank God the states are not proposing their own respective national integration councils. Here again, there is a lot to redefine and redesign the National Integration Council, to make it functional, from being or ornamental.

The Prime Minister has rightly, and repeatedly emphasized that extremism and terrorism together constitute the greatest threat to national security. And the whole world knows that there is a tremendous cooperation among all

extremist and terrorist outfits not only within but across the national boundaries. Should not all political parties, all the states and the centre interact like one nation and act in unison to contain and eliminate terrorism? Time to evolve a unified *Advaita* policy for national security management.

The creation of Special Police Officers (SPOs) in Chhattisgarh has only accentuated the conflict between the police, the extremists and cadres of Salwa Judum. A PIL before the Supreme Court has brought out the policy distortions that had exasperated the management of security. The State Government pleaded before the Supreme Court that the institution of SPOs was in vogue during the British regime when the Court observed "don't divide the society into pro and anti naxalite supporters". Paradoxically, the counsel for the Union Government argued (during the year 2011) that the state has only 40 battalions as against the need for 70 battalions and hence the need for SPOs. The logical questions raised by the court as to (a) whether any rules had been framed under the Police Act, the counsel said: "no, the matter is pending before the Police Reforms Commission". When the Court asked whether the issue of SPOs was referred to the Commission there was no answer. Dualism in national security management could lead to distortions and national disasters. Let not our states act like 29 countries but as 29 states of the Indian Republic.

Dr. G. R. S. RAO, formerly Chair Professor in Public Policy at the Administrative Staff College of India. E-mail: dr.grs.rao@gmail.com

A Sad Story of Corruption in the Armed Forces

Nineteen-year-old Ranvir (name changed) has a heartfelt ambition: he wants to join the Indian Army as a jawan and serve his country. Regrettably, his ambition is unlikely to be fulfilled. Because though the young man, who comes from a town near the foot of the Garhwal hills, has passed the required physical tests not just once but three times with flying colours, the official selectors refuse to recruit him unless he pays up Rs.1.5 lakh as an enlistment 'fee'. Ranvir's father, a hill taxi driver, doesn't have that kind of money at his disposal. So Ranvir's dream of becoming a soldier and helping to protect the country that he loves will probably never be fulfilled.

Ranvir's case is just one of the numerous instances of corruption and graft at various levels that increasingly are staining the once unblemished honour of India's armed forces. In an overall national climate of corrupt practices, the defence services have long stood out as being an exception to the general rule of rapacious greed and rampant indiscipline that has become an inbuilt feature of Indian life.

The stark contrast between the codes of conduct of life in uniform and the chaos of civilian India is obvious in the well-ordered cleanliness of cantonment areas as compared with the filth and mess of other neighbourhoods in any of our cities

and towns. In what has been called the functioning anarchy of India, the armed forces have always been an exceptional example of not just outwardly manifest spit-and-polish discipline but, more importantly, of the unswerving dedication to duty that underlies the clockwork precision of parade ground drills.

What with its power-hungry, money-grabbing politicians and rent-seeking babus, the country might seem to be sinking into the quagmire of despair, but the armed forces have been there as a solid rock of integrity we could depend on. Of recent times, however, that unshakable faith that the country has had in its defence services has been called into question by various scams and scandals.

Like our doctors, to whom we entrust our physical health, and our priests, to whom we entrust our spiritual well-being, we expect those to whom we entrust the security of the nation to be somehow different from us, better than us. And when they turn out to be just like us, we feel they have no defence. Like the country itself. For who is to guard the country if it has to guard itself against its guards?

**Jug Suraiya, excerpted from
The Times of India, 3 December, 2013.**

Elections to Parliament

Participation of Veterans

Ravindra Waman Pathak

While an average Indian is used since independence to this stereotyping ceaselessly within India by our media and 'intellectuals', what is galling to note is that of late a substantial portion of this 'idea' has come to be exported to other parts of the world, notably the US.

Historically the armed forces have remained apolitical and that has been our positive point. Traditionally politics was taboo in the mess (canteen) and so should it be always. As a result, a mindset has set in amongst the retired that post retirement too we should not participate in politics. Even those serving, by law are not excluded from the election process and now they have a choice better than the old postal ballot system.

Let me clarify, indulging in politics and being politically aware are two different issues. One must be aware of the implications of one's actions if remaining aloof from the election process is the choice. Politics is the art or science of influencing people on a civic or individual level, when there are more than two people contesting. Being politically aware means knowing who is fooling you more. The attitude of the large middle class, of which most ex-servicemen (ESM) form a part, to not vote has led to the current political environment and the despicable level to which governance has fallen in the country. This seems to have finally initiated a change in the frustrated mindset of a large majority of people. Across the board, they are now looking for an alternative at the national level. The single root cause for their frustration is predominance of party politics at the cost of national interests which has brought the nation to the brink of economic and social ruin.

To quote Winston Churchill,

"Power will go to rascals, rogues, freebooters. . .
All leaders will be of low caliber & men of straw. . .
They'll have sweet tongues & silly hearts. . .
They will fight amongst themselves for power and
the two countries will be lost in political squabbles.
. . . A day would come when even air and water
will be taxed."

Well, our present lot is showing just how far-sighted Churchill was and how in a few words he truly expressed what our leaders would be. Nay, they have out-done him.

This greed of political parties to retain power at any cost has led to criminals entering, both the legislative and parliament houses. Today the situation has come to a stage when all laws are being enacted with the support of criminals for the criminals. If the situation is not arrested now, I am afraid it might lead to gun fights inside the assembly and parliament house and the worse will be that these elements will be protected by the Constitution. (Just see what happened in the Maharashtra Assembly to the poor policeman). I dread to imagine the situation a few years on. The prime example is of the UP politician who has been a minister in every government for the last so many years and who has been recently charged with murder and continues to roam free. Though he has been sentenced to jail for criminal activities in the past, he becomes the Minister for prisons! What a cruel joke on democracy! Is it not comedy of the worst kind, and one cannot imagine what would have been the fate of those jail officials who did not treat him like a VIP while he was in jail. And look at the two classes among the prisoners. One Super First Class and the other like what Ram Singh went through. Look at the behaviour of our Chief Minister in J&K who has no time to visit the family of martyrs, who orders paramilitary forces to fight the enemy with lathis. The Home Minister defends him. Would any politician accept a lathi-wielding security rather than the gun toting Black Cats?

Seeking an Alternative from the Defence Fraternity

Some powerful groups think that a federation of like-minded small parties/groups could be formed as a national level alternative to bring a change in the country's politics. One such group believes that defence veterans could be ideal and suitable candidates. Many such persons / NGOs have approached ESM organizations to come together and identify potential candidates with a clean military background for contesting the next national elections under a unified banner.

Available data indicates that winning margins in a

multi-party/multi-pronged election contest are roughly 2 to 3% of the votes polled. Defence services community vote bank (including the ESM and those still in service and now allowed to vote from their place of posting) number around 10 crore across country. This could provide a vote swing of up to 7 to 9%. Add to this the youth population (below 26 yrs) which forms 26% of the country's population. With this kind of voting strength we have the potential to bring about a paradigm change that the nation is seeking. I am of the opinion that veterans, soldier in uniform and the youth can influence the result of at least 80 Members of Parliament and about 400 MLA's all over India and be able to influence or nay force a clean Government.

The defence fraternity would whole heartedly support suitable defence fraternity candidates to take part in the governance of the country and also be our voice in State Assemblies and Parliament to get us due justice which has been denied to us by various governments for the past 65 years besides bringing in a change in politics. I would like to caution here that power corrupts every one and that we would have to make sure that we select only those candidates who have a reasonably clean image and also mandate that an individual would not be permitted to contest more than two terms from any platform and the next candidate would not be a relative of the incumbent member. We must understand that even a clean ESM, once

elected, could turn out to be corrupt of which we have some examples but let us hope some of them would remain clean.

Even though the defence fraternity is unfortunately fractured, we should make it a point to project the candidate as a defence candidate instead of looking at the caste/ creed/political party he belongs to as long as he declares his intention of being with the ESM. I am told that some ESM organisations are willing to discuss this within the community and work jointly for the success of a good candidate. Let us jointly use the power of our vote for nation-building. Let us create a government by the people, for the people, and of the people.

Those who wish to participate in this change would necessarily have to first register themselves in electoral rolls, exercise their voting right and cast their vote for the right ESM candidate. This time around YOU have to make your vote count. Come out en-masse and pledge YOUR VOTE at the next national elections for a candidate who has the nation at heart and not himself or his/her Party as the center of his schemes.

CDR RAVINDRA WAMAN PATHAK I.N. (Retd.), Member Governing Body and Pension Cell, Pune. Email: raviwarsha@gmail.com.

So, Who Are the Robbers Here!

During a robbery in Guangzhou, China , the bank robber shouted to everyone in the bank: "Don't move. The money belongs to the State. Your life belongs to you." Everyone in the bank laid down quietly. This is called "Mind Changing Concept" Changing the conventional way of thinking.

When the bank robbers returned home, the younger robber (MBA-trained) told the older robber (who has only completed Year 6 in primary school): "Big brother, let's count how much we got." The older robber rebutted and said: "You are very stupid. There is so much money it will take us a long time to count. Tonight, the TV news will tell us how much we robbed from the bank!" This is called "Experience." Nowadays, experience is more important than paper qualifications!

After the robbers had left, the bank manager told the bank supervisor to call the police quickly. But the supervisor said to him: "Wait! Let us take out \$10 million from the bank for ourselves and add it to the \$70 million that we have previously embezzled from the bank". This is called "Swim with the tide." Converting an unfavorable situation to your advantage!

The supervisor says: "It will be good if there is a robbery every month." This is called "Killing Boredom." Personal Happiness is more important than your job.

The next day, the TV news reported that \$100 million was taken from the bank. The robbers counted and counted and counted, but they could only count \$20 million. The robbers were very angry and complained: "We risked our lives and only took \$20 million. The bank manager took \$80 million with a snap of his fingers. It looks like it is better to be educated than to be a thief!" This is called "Knowledge is worth as much as gold!"

The bank manager was smiling and happy because his losses in the share market are now covered by this robbery. This is called "Seizing the opportunity." Daring to take risks!

So who are the real robbers here.

**From the Net.
Courtesy: R. N. Bhasker. bhaskar.rn@gmail.com**

Poverty and Humble Beginnings

– No Impediments to Success

B. M. N. Murthy

‘For a great person, success in life depends on one’s inherent character and ability and not on external factors’.

In an excellent poetic composition in Sanskrit called ‘Bhoja Prabandha’ written by poet Ballala Pandita in the 11th century A.D., the poet makes a significant statement when he says “Kriyasiddhihi satve bhavati mahatam nopakarane” which means ‘for a great person, success in life depends on one’s inherent character and ability and not on external factors’. What the poet means is that external causes like poverty, poor lineage, poor surroundings etc. do not act as impediments for a really great person determined to climb the ladder of success and reach its top rung. The following few illustrations from the pages of history bear testimony to this statement.

Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri [1869-1946] was one of the greatest sons of India – a legislator and an orator par-excellence and considered one of the five best speakers in English in the whole world. He was born in a poor family in Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu in 1869. His stature later in public life was such that when Gandhiji went to London in 1930 for the Round Table Conference, Sastri was asked to accompany Gandhiji. The family was so poor that his mother could not even purchase common salt at times. Nostalgically recollecting his boyhood, Sastri says “For many years when I was a little boy the prospects of starvation was a familiar companion and among my sharpest and bitterest recollections today is this circumstance that one year, when money was scarce and among daily necessities of life salt was dear, my poor mother was obliged to decline a gift of mangoes because she could not purchase the salt necessary to pickle it”.

While studying in a college in Kumbakonam, Sastri once went to the class without a shirt since the only shirt he had was drenched in a sudden downpour. He was fined eight annas [now called 50 paise] for indecent dressing. When he was thus fined, he went to the Principal, Prof. Bildeneck, an Englishman, and said “Sir, if I had eight annas with me, I would buy myself a shirt” Moved by the appalling poverty of the boy who was a favourite of the Principal, the Principal himself paid the fine and got a new shirt for Sastri.

Srinivasa Ramanujan [1887-1920] was the mathematical genius of the 20th century. Born in Erode in Tamil Nadu in 1887, he was the eldest son in a poor family of six members. His father was a clerk in a firm earning Rs. 20 a month. Ramanujan was extremely brilliant and by sheer dint of merit he joined a college. As purchasing books for their son was beyond the capacity of the family, his mother took in a few college students as boarders who brought him the necessary books on Mathematics. Loney’s Trigonometry was one such book which Ramanujan mastered.

Abraham Lincoln [1809-1865] was the 16th President of the United States of America between 1861-1865. He was born in a poor family and they lived in an ordinary hut. His father sometimes worked as a carpenter and sometimes as a cobbler. From a cobbler’s son he rose to the position of the President of America. The famous phrase “from log cabin to White House” sums up the career of Abraham Lincoln.

On his first day in office as President, when Lincoln entered to deliver his inaugural address, one haughty and rich aristocratic senator got up and said “Mr. Lincoln, you should not forget that your father used to make shoes for my family”. And the whole senate laughed, thinking that the nobleman had made a fool of Lincoln. However, Lincoln looked at the man directly and said “Sir, I know that my father was a cobbler to your family. I am sure there are many others in this august house to whom he made shoes the way nobody else can, with total devotion and dignity of labour. He was a creator. His shoes were not just shoes; he poured his whole heart into them. I want to ask you, sir, have you any complaint? If so, I can make another set of shoes for you myself since I know cobbling. So far nobody has complained. My father was a genius, a great creator and I am proud of my father”. The whole senate was struck dumb.

Charlie Chaplin [1889-1977] was one of the greatest British actors and film directors of the 20th century. He was one of the outstanding figures of early cinema whose

career began in the days of the silent movies as early as 1915. Even today he is remembered as a comical figure with baggy trousers and moustache.

Charlie's grandfather was an immigrant to London and an unskilled cobbler by profession. His father was an ordinary vaudeville artist [stage singer] and his mother Hannah was also another ordinary stage singer. Sometime later, his father took to heavy drinking and deserted the mother and the child. Hannah found it extremely difficult to run the household with her meagre income from the theatre. She used to take little Charlie when she went to the theatre, unable to arrange for babysitting. The little child used to watch her mother, with curiosity, on the stage singing. When Charlie grew up, Hannah put him up in a poor orphanage where he was ridiculed as a poor singer's son.

Sometime later, Charlie left the orphanage and started selling newspapers and earn a few coins. With all these earnings, the family had to starve occasionally unable to afford food.

Yehudi Menuhin [1916-1999], one of the greatest violinists of the 20th century was born in 1916 to parents who were Russian Jews settled in America. His father was a school teacher in New York. As the father's income was too meagre to maintain the family, his mother was also compelled to work. Unable to bear the cost of living in New York and having no money to buy warm clothing for New York's winter, the family shifted to California. To meet the expenditure of travel from the East coast to the West Coast, they had to sell all their belongings with the

result that they landed in California practically penniless.

It may be of interest to note that Yehudi Menuhin had a great liking for Yoga. His interest in Yoga started when he was staying with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru as his guest at Delhi and observed Nehru doing Yoga regularly. He learnt Yoga under the famous Yoga Guru Prof. B. K. S. Iyengar from Bangalore.

S. H. Kapadia, Retd. Chief Justice, Supreme Court of India who retired as recently as September 2012 was born on 20th September 1947 to a poor Parsi family. He served the country as a Judge for a period spanning more than 25 years. At a farewell party organized by the Supreme Court Bar Association in Delhi on the eve of his retirement on 28th September 2012, the Jurist nostalgically went down memory lane, sharing his experience of having worked as a bearer in Bombay where, by chance, his love for law was revealed to his employers who were in the legal profession. Recalling his poor circumstances, the Jurist informed the gathering how, in the early stages of his service, he used to sustain himself on roasted chana [groundnut] at Bombay's Flora Fountain near the Bombay High Court. He was one of the few Judges of the country who tread the path of justice with integrity, inflexible rectitude and judicial reticence.

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. Email: bmmurthy@gmail.com.

Chinese Imperialism in Tibet *(Continued from page 15)*

Tokyo on December 4th. Liu Xiaobo and Tibet may have been among his talking-points, but a long way below China's declaration last month of an Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) over islands disputed with Japan, and the economic issues on which he had hoped to concentrate.

A third factor is China's tactic of linking foreign criticism to economic and strategic issues. *Global Times*, not satisfied with Mr Cameron's contrition, used his visit to chide Britain for the support it has shown Japan over the ADIZ, and for its alleged fomenting of trouble in Hong Kong. China might argue that linkage is something it learned from the West, and the days when its normal trading ties with America were hostage to human-rights concerns. But now China itself seems happy to use commercial pressure to bully Japan or Britain, for example.

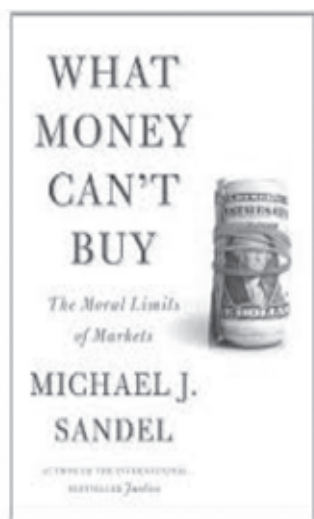
That democracy thing

It is also an advantage for China that the country is not much of an issue in the internal politics of its Western partners. No Western government faces a threat from an anti-government Chinese diaspora, let alone a Tibet lobby. By contrast, Sri Lankan politicians like to point out that their fiercest foreign critics are in countries, such as Britain and Canada, where governments seek the votes of ethnic-Tamil Sri Lankan émigrés, some of whom sympathise with the Tamil Tiger rebels routed in 2009. Canada's prime minister, Stephen Harper, boycotted the Commonwealth summit. So did Manmohan Singh, prime minister of India, where the Tamil vote is of even greater importance. Neither Mr Singh nor Mr Harper has any qualms about courting China's leaders.

Courtesy: *The Economist*.

Excerpted from their issue of 7 December 2013.

BOOK REVIEW



WHAT MONEY CAN'T BUY: THE MORAL LIMITS OF MARKETS by Michael J. Sandel, ● Published by Penguin Books, London ● 2013 ● Pages 244 ● Paperback. Rs.499/-.

Reviewed by Ritvik M. Kulkarni a student at the ILS Law College Pune. He has previously published an article on Electoral Reform in *The Radical Humanist* (October 2013). Email: rmkulkarni.ils@gmail.com

There is a widespread feeling among economists and policy-makers that market mechanisms are the best means to allocate goods among people. Today markets have penetrated deep

into areas of social life which were previously untouched by economic influence. Moreover, market reasoning has been widely used to study various aspects of human behavior. In his latest book *What Money Can't Buy*, Michael Sandel expresses concern for the growing tendency of allowing market principles to govern non-market goods/services at the cost of moral values. He believes that instead of having a market economy, the world is becoming a market society.

that markets do not honor and money cannot buy?" (p. 203).

In 1998, AIDS-affected Kendall Morrison had very little sand left in the hourglass, and death seemed imminent. An investor bought his life insurance policies for half the amount; hoping to reap the benefits after the short time which Kenneth had left to live. But the investor lost heavily against the high odds when the new drugs revived the dying patient. The investor was so angry that he sued the broker for fraud and breach of contract. "I've never felt like anybody wanted me dead before", said Morrison after he periodically received FedExes and calls to check if he was still alive (p.138).

Such an arrangement involving trade in a dying person's life insurance policy is called a viatical transaction. The economist looks at such a deal as a win-win scenario; the dying patient gets ready money in hand and the buyer has an obvious chance of profit. But despite the economic efficiency and simplicity of the arrangement, there is something morally wrong about it. Sandel responds to this dilemma by invoking two arguments that he has used throughout the book to explain the morbidity of similar cases of market infiltration.

Michael J. Sandel is the Anne T. and Robert M. Bass Professor of Government at the Harvard University. He is widely known for his course on 'Justice', which received a huge response and became one of the most attended lecture series in the history of the institution. His previous books include *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Cambridge University Press, 1982; 2nd edition, 1998) and *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009). Although Sandel does not like to be labeled in this manner, he is also known as an advocate of 'communitarianism'—an ideology that upholds the primacy of the common good.

He believes that in the first place, even though it may seem like a mutually beneficial arrangement, it is unfair and coercive against the person who is on his deathbed. His consent is influenced by his disadvantageous position where there is a dire need of money and very little or no bargaining power whatsoever. On the contrary, a buyer can simply move to the next terminally ill person if he does not agree to the conditions of the previous one.

The opening chapter of *What Money Can't Buy* offers several examples of the worrisome, larger-than-life role acquired by the market. This is followed by a detailed discussion of the increasing importance and impact of monetary incentives in both market and non-market spheres. The next two chapters form the crux of Sandel's argument against the incursion of market reasoning into the moral domain. He then concludes with an open question to all his readers: "Do we want a society where everything is up for sale? Or are there certain moral and civic goods

The second and the most important argument that is applied to all the examples the author cites, is that of 'corruption'. By corruption he means the devaluation of a norm resulting from its treatment with a lower respect than it deserves. If parents start having children for the purpose of selling them to the highest bidder, it would be a gross devaluation of the norm of parenthood. When

you treat the death of a fellow human being as a tradable commodity, the value of human life and the gravity of death decrease in the eyes of every other human being. In simple words, it is like placing a dollar value on the life and death of a person.

This argument can also be applied to incentive-driven behavior as for example when an addict is paid to quit smoking or an obese person is paid to lose weight. Apart from the fact that the healthy behavior may end once the supply of incentives is stalled, there is something intrinsically objectionable in such behavior. The objection stems from the moral expectation that people should care for their own health without any additional monetary incentive. As Sandel puts it, “Good health is not just about the right cholesterol levels, but to develop the right kind of attitude towards our physical well-being and treating our bodies with respect. Paying people to take their meds hardly does anything to develop this attitude” (p. 59).

The two main concerns that Sandel articulates point to real defects in today’s society. It is particularly worrisome that many people have chosen to live with the unsavory sway of market values in the public sphere. Sandel’s book aims to put an end to such capitulation and provoke the public to conduct a critical discussion on this crucial issue. It seeks to question the extent of power money has come to exercise and to demarcate the boundaries in which

markets should exercise their supremacy. It is not just about what money cannot buy; more importantly, it is about what money can, but should not be permitted to buy.

There are only two minor drawbacks in this work. The first of these stems from the book’s almost exclusive focus on the Western countries. The social values and practices prevailing there often greatly differ from those followed elsewhere in the world. While Sandel’s arguments have universal application, there are still some domains in the East that are safe from market invasion. Secondly, throughout the book (especially in the concluding chapter), there are references to the functioning and principles of baseball. People who do not understand the technicalities of the rules and procedure of this game may have difficulty in understanding the point that the author wants to make.

On the whole, the book is very readable. It demands no prior or technical knowledge either of economic concepts or of moral philosophy. All the reader needs to have is the ability to understand the arguments which Sandel puts across lucidly and persuasively with the help of humor and sound reasoning. The book is structured in such a way that the reader remains curious and engaged throughout its nearly two hundred and fifty pages. Armed with a strong thesis, Michael Sandel has succeeded in his objective of provoking and aiding his readers to ponder over the importance of morals and the limitations of markets.

Marshal Zhukov on Alexander’s Failed Invasion of India

In 1957, while addressing the cadets of the Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun, Zhukov said Alexander’s actions after the Battle of Hydaspes suggest he had suffered an outright defeat. In Zhukov’s view, Alexander had suffered a greater setback in India than Napoleon in Russia. Napoleon had invaded Russia with 600,000 troops; of these only 30,000 survived, and of that number fewer than 1,000 were ever able to return to duty.

So if Zhukov was comparing Alexander’s campaign in India to Napoleon’s disaster, the Macedonians and Greeks must have retreated in an equally ignominious fashion. Zhukov would know a fleeing force if he saw one; he had chased the German Army over 2000 km from Stalingrad to Berlin.

Alexander’s troubles began as soon as he crossed the Indian border. He first faced resistance in the Kunar, Swat, Buner and Peshawar valleys where the Aspasioi and Assakenoi, known in Hindu texts as Ashvayana and Ashvakayana, stopped his advance. Although small by Indian standards they did not submit before Alexander’s killing machine.

Realising that his plans to storm India were going down at its very gates, Alexander called for a truce. The Assakenoi agreed; the old queen was too trusting. That night when the citizens of Massaga had gone off to sleep after their celebrations, Alexander’s troops entered the city and massacred the entire citizenry. A similar slaughter then followed at Ora.

However, the fierce resistance put up by the Indian defenders had reduced the strength – and perhaps the confidence – of the until then all-conquering Macedonian army.

Faceoff at the river

In his entire conquering career Alexander’s hardest encounter was the Battle of Hydaspes, in which he faced king Porus of Paurava, a small but prosperous Indian kingdom on the river Jhelum. Porus is described in Greek accounts as standing seven feet tall.

To be continued

**From the Net. Contributed by Col. T.S.Tanwar, Pune.
ts.tanwar@gmail.com**

Educating Adults

The Right to Education Act (19)

This is nineteenth in a series, examining the various aspects of the Right to Education Act (RTE).

Implementation – Finance

Suresh C. Sharma

A pilot study by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights [NCPCR] has revealed that 95% of the private schools have not complied with the provision of admitting EWS students

Adequate funds and judicious utilization are essential for the success of a project. The Central Government is to meet 70% of the cost of RTE Act and the remaining cost is to be borne by the States. Some of the state governments have expressed difficulty in meeting their share. The HRD Ministry had projected a demand for Rs.2,31,233 crores over five years. The amount sanctioned for one year was only Rs.34,000 crores based on an estimate of Rs.1,71,000 crores and the amount allotted was Rs.15,000 crores. This is probably based on the failure of state governments to absorb the allotment as Rs.10,000 crore had been left unspent from the previous year. That brings the amount available to Rs. 25,000 crore, still short of the estimate.

be Rs 1,500 crores at Rs 10,000 per student. Some schools have experienced delay in receipt of reimbursement funds for EWS students. School Management Committees are required to monitor utilization of funds. Inspection by an NGO 'Forum for Fairness in Education', revealed that only one out of seventeen hostels sanctioned was functioning properly. In one case, students from the neighbourhood were brought in for inspection. Similar malpractice has been observed in claims for reimbursement or grants. In one State, the government has sent notice to 1500 schools for claiming funds by falsely showing a larger number of students. In some cases, the number of students was 50% of the claimed figure. Similar malpractices have been observed in claims for mid-day meals.

The major deficiency in the utilization of funds is in the provision of class rooms and recruitment of teachers. No allowance has been made for population growth. There is need to consider whether free education should be limited only to two children per family. 25% students from Economically Weak Sections [EWS] have to be given free education. Expenses for their education will be reimbursed by the state governments. This does not include expenses for capital expenses. Substantial amount will be required for major repairs or expansion of infrastructure. The shortfall in allotment of funds may not be a major roadblock since only 18 crore children are likely to enrol themselves in schools out of a children's population of 25 crores.

The Bihar Government has obtained Rs. 1,400 crores aid from World Bank for 70% costs of teachers training programme and school buildings. One thousand high school buildings are planned to be constructed in village Panchayats. The scheme aims at 100% enrolment up to class XII. The surprising point is that aid is being obtained from the World Bank while allotment from own resources remain unutilized.

Assuming admission of ten EWS students per school per year in 1.5 schools, the reimbursement would

The Mumbai Municipal Corporation [BMC] wants to provide books, notebooks, shoes, uniforms and umbrellas to students up to Class X. A proposal to transfer money based on Aadhaar Cards fell through since data was not available with the BMC. Doubts were also raised whether the money would be diverted for other use. In UP, the Chief Minister gave away laptops costing Rs. 19,000



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each free to students. No amount was left for notebooks. Students were told to buy their own notebooks and teachers were advised to write questions on the board. On both counts of funding and utilization, the performance has been far from satisfactory. We can appreciate that we cannot suddenly move away from the malaise of bad governance and ineffective management. The attempt is there and participation of parents in the Management Committees may be of help to improve the system.

EWS Category

A pilot study by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights [NCPCR] has revealed that 95% of the private schools have not complied with the provision of admitting EWS students. The reasons are delay in government orders defining EWS category, lack of awareness amongst the entitled students, lack of schools near their residence and apprehension of parents about discrimination in elite schools. In some states, a child can claim admission in private schools only if no seats are available in government schools. The fees are free but the cost of books, uniform and transport is to be paid by the students. If the government forces the schools to provide these facilities free to the EWS students, the schools may well opt out of this responsibility. The principal of a reputed school in South Mumbai commented that some people are making use of seats for EWS students by obtaining false certificates of income. There have also been allegations of schools offering money to parents in lieu of admissions. These aberrations may decline as the scheme progresses and people become aware of their rights. A few schools may try to reclassify themselves as minority schools. The middle rung schools are quite comfortable regarding finance as their fee structure is about the same as in government schools and sometimes even lower. It is for this reason that schools in small towns and rural areas have fared better in admission of EWS children. Their genuine worry is that the EWS children may not do well in studies due to lack of proper environment at home. A large number of children take private tuitions after school hours and would certainly perform better.

A study group had recommended to the Central Government that EWS quota be further divided on caste basis. This may cause discrimination against SC/ST and economic considerations would be a better criteria. Reservation starts from post nursery classes. Schools with nursery classes will have difficulty in sparing seats for fresh students in primary classes since in fairness they

have to accommodate their own students. They may have to commence one more section.

The annual income criteria decided by the various states for EWS category is as under:-

State	Rs. lacs
Andhra Pradesh	0.6
Rajasthan	2.5
Delhi	0.6
Tamilnadu	2.0
Gujarat	BPL
Uttar Pradesh	BPL
Karnataka	3.5
West Bengal	BPL
Maharashtra	1.0

The figures above 1 lac are unrealistic and may be challenged in court. This is perhaps an attempt by the education bureaucracy to ensure benefits for themselves.

Social activists are agitating against denial of reservation in convents and minority schools. Allotment of land at concessional rates and relief in taxation amounts to aid. These schools should be subject to reservation for EWS, all the more so since they believe in charity for the poor. It is certain that good schools would be under pressure from the parents of EWS children.

Teachers

The two most important requirements for good education are committed teachers and willing students. Rightly, government has introduced Common Eligibility Test [CET] in addition to the existing Teaching Ability Test. The results of these tests are shocking. Only 11% teachers could qualify in these tests. 631 posts of teachers are vacant in Mumbai alone. Some schools do not have even a principal. Children of one school demonstrated after taking off their shirts "You have given us books but no teachers."

The NMMC came up with a good initiative to extend classes till Class VIII in the primary section, but qualified teachers have not been recruited due to bureaucratic delay. The Maharashtra Government tried to solve the problem by appointing ad hoc teachers who had to go on strike due to non-payment of salaries. The appointment of ad hoc teachers has been criticized by the courts. Government schools continue to suffer due to a single teacher taking classes for students of different grades in one class room.

The example of students in a school in Mumbai illustrates the problems vividly. A social activist helped 21 children to get admission in a government school. They walk a few kms daily to the school. Earlier they were begging or picking rags. They sit in a corner without books or teacher. The RTE Act directs admission to class

according to age. Since they have not attended nursery classes, they are unable to cope with studies. They will drop out soon.

BRIG. SURESH C. SHARMA (retd) is adviser to the telecom industry, and a member of the Advisory Board of *Freedom First*. Email: brigscs@gmail.com

A Triangle of Deceit: Onions, Gold and Black Gold

Jyoti Marwah

Do not be surprised if investors approach you for buying share for something like 'Onion Authority of India'.

The wise believe 'from dust to dust, you shall return'; the not-so-wise falter to believe 'from dust to gold, you shall grow'. So it is all underground, literally and figuratively, – onions, gold and black gold, to make them grow. Hey wait a little, let us spare the onions, tomatoes and eggs as they are the common mans staple diet. Our politicians like the Chinese can make anything happen to achieve their end. How appreciable can that be? They purposefully make faulty statements that send prices shooting up, onions and vegetables continue to be out of reach, milk and sugar prices spiral several times as eggs become dearer. What a mess are we in!!!

Chinese can make it all happen, you name it and it is there, to add on to the list of fake medicines, pirated movies and low quality electronics fake gold and silver bars, coins and jewellery, both old and new. Indian politicians have mesmerised the masses with a long list of 'freebies' – free food, free medicines, free laptops, free bicycles for girls, free education and free homes and above all 'freedom to control freedom' by doctored tapes, snooping and stalking. Oh! What an irony!

With the downturn, gold and silver prices shot up, investors bought gold and silver as a safe investment. However, many did not realise that the gold and silver bought by them could amount to holding a pile of worthless metal. High quality tungsten fake gold bars are extremely difficult to detect as tungsten is the only lower value metal that has the density which is like gold and can be comfortably used to fabricate counterfeit gold coins, bars, and jewellery. Thus there is a high potential for deception. Some manufacturers are scrupulous enough to caution the buyers that they sell 'genuine solid tungsten fake gold coins' but the same may not be true in other cases as it is a multi-billion dollar industry in which criminals

may unscrupulously dupe innocent buyers in China and Asia. According to 'The Global Piracy And Counterfeiting Consultant', it has been estimated that nearly 10% of China's GDP flows in from counterfeit items amounting to \$588 billion annually. The group has reported claims by a manufacturer about his ability to produce hundred thousand counterfeit US silver dollars.

Gold demand in China surged very high putting it close to a striking distance of India's gold demand of 612 tonnes in 2009. Standard Bank of London has suggested that China's demand could shoot up by nearly 75%. Thus, gold has become precariously dearer.

As the precious yellow metal is underground and investing in fake gold is no viable option it could be wiser to invest in black gold. It is estimated that in the last 10 years the escalation in gold moved from nearly 300 dollars per ounce to approximately 1425 dollars per ounce. But returns on oil were extraordinarily high moving from less than 20 dollars per barrel in 2001 to the present value of 93-110 dollars per barrel. The rationale to invest in oil therefore strengthens. China, India and many other emerging economies indicate increasing demand for energy. This increased demand is difficult to meet as production of oil requires large capital investments in multiple projects. There are predictions that the world's oil supply has peaked resulting in high prices of oil. Hence, this investment may also not be without the risk factor.

Time has come to invest in the humble 'allyl propyl disulphide' – onions. So do not be surprised if investors approach you for buying share for something like 'Onion Authority of India'. This may soon become a reality with the unprecedented rise in the price of a commodity which is produced in such abundance and its consumption is

widespread. Of the 20 lakh hectares producing onions in the world, India cultivates 4 lakh hectares and China cultivates 3 lakh hectares. In India, of the 4 lakh hectares 95,000 hectares amounting to 24% of produce is cultivated in Maharashtra. However, China having higher productivity produces 48 lakh MT and India trails by 44 lakh MT.

Control and more control has become the way of life not in Communist China but in Democratic and 'socialist' India. Can we see the gradual loss of freedom even to consume food, as the high prices of onions and tomatoes have driven the popular food items underground. How fair is to create a shortage of food products widely used by all? The poor have been cheated of the 'onion tomato chutney', a major component in their daily meal, as prices continue to fluctuate between Rs. 70 to 100 per kg.

Onion Crisis Hits India

The onion crisis describes the dramatic rise in the cost of onions across markets in India. The crisis was caused by errant rainfall in the onion producing regions which led to a shortage of onion production. The crisis caused political tension in the country and was described as "a grave concern" by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The government blames the crisis on both bad weather and speculation by middlemen. K.V. Thomas, the Indian food minister, accused traders as "cheating consumers," urging them to sell onions at "affordable rates."

Onions are a primary ingredient in the making of the all important curry dish. Prices have more than doubled in the last few days. The sharp upswing in its prices - from under a Rs.____ per kg a few days back to almost Rs.____ now - has impacted everyone, especially the poor. People say they have cut down on dishes which require onions. With onions an essential part of the Indian diet, skyrocketing prices have also become a politically sensitive issue in the country, which is due to hold its general elections within the next few months. The Congress Party fears a backlash from its main support base. "The sky-high prices of onions has given the opposition a potent weapon to attack the government with," commented The Hindustan Times recently.

Costly onions have a history of political fallout; the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was ousted in the 1998 Delhi State polls after surging onion prices soured the

Is this also an election stunt amounting to corruption of an unprecedented nature? Is sugar next in line to follow! Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for the first time had felt the need to intervene while the Agriculture minister Sharad Pawar skipped the meeting as farmers in Karad and other parts of Western Maharashtra agitated in the last week of November demanding Rs 3000 per quintal. There is a common thread running through these travails of the common man which is responsible for this mess from 'Onion gate', 'Sugar gate', 'Egg gate' and every effort to throttle him. What a Diwali and what a New Year. It's all for the elections of 2014 The 'Aaprising' in Delhi may have some alternative for the common man.

Dr. JYOTI MARWAH, I/C Principal & Head, Department of History, ICLES' Motilal Jhunjhunwala College of Arts, Science & Commerce, Navi Mumbai 400703, Member, Board of Studies (History) & Faculty of Arts, University of Mumbai, Jmarwah01@yahoo.in

Dr. Rita P. Bhambi

voter mood. In January 1980, the late Congress leader Indira Gandhi rode back to power on the back of rising onion prices, waving huge strings of them at campaign rallies and saying that a government has no right to govern if it cannot control onion costs. The latest onion price rise has also come in the middle of India's most important religious festival season, an occasion for multi-day feasts and family dinners.

DR. RITA P. BHAMBI, Associate Professor and Head, Dept. of History, G. N. Khalsa College, Matunga-19. Rita_bhambi@yahoo.co.in

What is Freedom ?

The function of education, then, is to help you from childhood not to imitate anybody, but to be yourself all the time. And this is a most difficult thing to do: Whether you are ugly or beautiful, whether you are envious or jealous, always to be what you are, but understand it. To be yourself is very difficult, because you think that what you are is ignoble, and that if you could only change what you are into something noble it would be marvelous; but that never happens. Whereas, if you look at what you actually are and understand it, then in that very understanding there is a transformation. So freedom lies not in trying to become something different, nor in doing whatever you happen to feel like doing, nor in following the authority of tradition, of your parents, of your guru, but in understanding what you are from moment to moment.

**J. Krishnamurti, *Think On These Things*.
Contributed by Vivek Raju.
Email: vivek@canwelivedifferently.org**

Onion Crisis

Sarah Ratnani

India has become so desperate for fresh stocks of the onions it uses in spicy curries that it is trying to import them from neighbours, and is even considering airlifts to ease soaring prices. Indians consume 16.5 million tons of onions a year, using them as the base for traditional dishes such as biryani and bhaji. India is the second-largest onion grower in the world after China, and normally exports them. But retail prices have quadrupled in the past three months to as high as 100 rupees (\$1.62) per kilogram making the onions an unaffordable luxury for India's poor. The soaring prices could become an issue in elections scheduled for next month in five states, including the capital, New Delhi. To ease prices, the state-run farm cooperative issued a tender this week to purchase onions from abroad. As supplies from abroad may take weeks to arrive by sea transport, the Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar proposed air-lifting them.

The present onion crisis refuses to die down, even as Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMC) in the onion belt did see an increase in the quantity of onions hitting the market. However, the quality of the onions continues to be a major concern, with traders complaining about the inferior quality of the stock coming in. Some weeks back, at the Lasalgaon APMC, the biggest onion trading market in Asia, the highest price paid for a quintal was Rs 5,500, which was a drop from the Rs 6,000 that the crop had fetched earlier. Around 3,000 to 4,000 tonnes of the crop had come to the markets against the normal 15000 to 17,000 quintal during this time of the year. Pakistani exporters are eager to cash in on the Indian onion crisis in a big way with the new crop of Sindh province finding its way into the market.

**SARAH RATNANI, TYBA History,
G. N. Khalsa College, Matunga, Mumbai-19.**

Gold Hits a New High

Hanspal Amardeep Kaur

Gold rates in India have skyrocketed and broken all past records. The major reason for this drastic change was the collapse of the Indian currency against the US dollar. India's currency crisis has major implications on domestic gold demand thus affecting global gold prices. The recent recession in the world economy has caused heavy losses to major investors who depended more on securities and company shares.

Gold, used throughout history as money, has been a relative standard for currency equivalent specific to economic regions or countries until recent times. Rise in gold price has reinforced this fact and despite all the economic slowdown and job cuts, gold markets are surging ahead with great force. In the past couple of years, value of gold has risen from a mere 6,000 rupees to a mountainous amount of 30,000 rupees per 10 gm. Gold has also appreciated around 10% to 25% in different economies. Global gold markets have also raised the demand for used gold where people buy and sell scrap gold at attractive prices. As far as the trading world is concerned, gold rates fluctuate every minute.

Today's gold rate in India is about 30,000 rupees

for 24 karats. However, within a matter of an hour or two, it can either rise to 32,000 or dip below 30000. Because of the constant shift in gold rates, there is always uncertainty surrounding it. Rates in India are totally dependent the day's supply and demand whether it be in the domestic or the international market with newspaper headlines screaming.....GOLD HITS A NEW HIGH.

**HANSPAL AMANDEEP KAUR, TYBA (History),
G. N. Khalsa College, Matunga, Mumbai-19
amritakaur.kaur@gmail.com**



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Courtesy: Mumbai Mirror

Sachin – An Example to Emulate

Rahul S. Kumar

Sachin Tendulkar, one of cricket's greatest heroes, was conferred with the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award. On a day when the 'Master Blaster' bade an emotional adieu to his record-breaking career lasting 24 years, the Prime Minister's Office announced the Bharat Ratna for him. Sachin is the first sports-person chosen for the honour.

He's the true ambassador of India in the world of sports. The records set by him are unmatched, and the spirit of sportsmanship displayed by him is exemplary. That he has been honoured with several awards is testimony to his extraordinary brilliance as a sportsman.

Sachin Tendulkar is one of the finest examples of sportsmen we have ever had with love for the sport, humility, integrity, honesty and pure and unbridled talent. His sterling performance across all formats of the game over 24 years is a rare feat of exemplary elegance, earnest

application and commitment. Everyone described Sachin as a "national hero," whose achievements will be a source of inspiration for all sports lovers.

This is another example that makes India a dominant force not only in the political front but also in the field of sports. We can follow this example and establish our own personalities in such areas by making our nation and its nationals proud.

"A mal tempo, Buena cara - in bad times a face held high..! - A popular Spanish saying. Amidst the global tension, one person alone drew the entire world's attention towards him and for a moment we forgot the volatility that exists amongst us...!"

RAHUL S. KUMAR, SYBA, G. N. Khalsa College,
Matunga, Mumbai-19

C. N. R. Rao Conferred Bharat Ratna

He is the third scientist after C. V. Raman and A. P. J. Abdul Kalam to be given the honour.

The Government of India has conferred the Bharat Ratna 2013, the highest civilian award in India to Prof. Chintamani Nagesa Ramachandra Rao FRS. He is the third scientist after C. V. Raman and A. P. J. Abdul Kalam to be given the honour.

A National Research Professor and Linus Pauling Research Professor, C. N. R. Rao is the Head of the Scientific Advisory Council to the Prime Minister of India. He is also Director of the International Centre for Materials Science (ICMS), Bangalore, and founded the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR) to promote world-class research and training in science and engineering, ranging from materials to genetics.



An authority on solid state and structural chemistry, Dr. Rao's work on transition metal oxides led to the understanding of novel phenomena and the relationship between materials properties and their structural chemistry. He has also made immense contributions to nano-materials over the past two decades, besides working on hybrid materials. Dr. Rao has Honorary Doctorates from 60

Universities worldwide, and has authored about 1,500 research papers and 45 scientific books.

C. N. R. Rao has authored a number of books for NBT, India including *Understanding Chemistry and Learning Science* (4 vols.).

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