

Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine

- ❖ *The Standing Committees of Parliament*
- ❖ *India's Growing Leadership 'Deficit'*
- ❖ *No Medals for Moral Courage*
- ❖ *World Population - 7 Billion*
- ❖ *National LARR Bill, 2011*
- ❖ *The Many Versions of Valmiki Ramayana*

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Between Ourselves...

Dr. Subhash Kashyap's note on Standing Committees finds pride of place in this edition of *Freedom First*. It reinforces our belief in the parliamentary system of democracy bequeathed to us, the people of India. Despite the mauling that our Constitution has received from the present leading partner of the coalition government in Delhi in 40+ years of its misrule (it was amended no less than 95 times) it has basically stood the test of time – though "defaced and defiled" as Nani Palkhivala famously described it. Anna Hazare has demanded the passing of the Lokpal Bill by parliament and not by yet another amendment to the Constitution. This implies that his quarrel is not with the system but those who misused the system for their own political ends. We shall now wait to read what the Standing Committee reports to parliament.

An event that has evoked nostalgia in some of us who are still alive to witness it is the recognition that *Quest* a sister publication of *Freedom First* has received thanks to the initiative of Layeeq Futehally its Reviews Editor, Achal Prabhala and Arshia Sattar all three based in Bangalore. Let's give them a vote of thanks. Please also see the inside back cover. For a more detailed and largely accurate account of this book, and about *Quest* (and our) publisher the ICCF, visit <http://www.livemint.com/2011/11/11205928/Publishing-Revolutionary-roa.html> for the story by Supriya Nair. Recommended reading!

Another event which needs to be reported here is the publication and its release at a seminar on Leadership on Saturday of a 17-year old manuscript by Minoo Masani entitled "Of Four *Real Leaders*" on the occasion of his 106th birth anniversary. See page 6 for details. Also recommended reading!

Finally, for the attention of all contributors (article and letter writers that is). To be kind to our typesetter, printer and the editor the last date for receipt of articles, comments, and letter for publication in the subsequent month will be the 10th each month. For instance if you wish your contribution to be published in January 2012 we must receive it on or before the 10th of December and so on for each month thereafter.

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From Our Readers

Spectrum Charges

Some of the licences for cellular mobile telephony will come for renewal from next year onwards. The TRAI seems to have recommended a very steep, five-fold increase in the spectrum charges for the 2G services when they come up for renewal. It is the low spectrum charges and migration from upfront fixed licence fee payment to revenue share that have unleashed the explosive growth of cell telephones in our country. Technology and competition have brought down prices to such levels as could be afforded by even the so called poor people who buy prepaid (within their affordable means) service, an innovation the private Telcos introduced. We have over 850 million cell phones, growing at over 10 million monthly.

An increase in the spectrum charges will add to the cost of the company. The profits of the cell phone companies have been coming down quarter after quarter. They may soon run into losses. If the spectrum charges are increased losses will increase. The companies would be forced to raise prices and their marginal subscribers mainly in rural areas may drop off. This outcome is undesirable.

It is understandable as to why the regulator and the department, both of which should plead for consumer welfare, are competing with one another to raise revenues for the government by enhancing costs like that of spectrum. The growing revenues to the government from this sector have not been spent for promotion of broad band for all educational institutions and public facilities like hospitals, rail and bus terminals. Nearly Rs.20,000 crore collected from the P-Telcos as Universal Service Fund is lying unutilized. Even if a quarter of this had been spent to promote R&D we would be having indigenous design, development and production for telecom & IT equipments instead of imports of about Rs.40,000 crore for this sector.

Raising revenue and adding it to the general budget to be spent on populist welfare measures is no virtue. Enhancement of spectrum charges can have a redeeming feature only if the additional revenues to be raised are utilized only in the telecom sector for R&D and for extension of broadband to all parts of India and making it within the reach of the affordable but not so high income people. Patriotic citizens must be concerned with the grievous neglect of internal security, defences of the country, and the pathetic state of the country's infrastructure like roads and educational institutions because the rise in revenues are wasted by distributing

much of them for questionable "welfare" like NREGA, old age pensions, Rs.1 kg rice, fee reimbursement, and waiver of loans, (no interest loans to women (written off before elections). 50% to 80% of the money spent as "welfare" is transformed into black money, shared between businessmen, government servants and politicians. Therefore patriotic people and institutions like the regulatory bodies should not be too eager to generate revenues for squandering by populist governments.

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Permit-License Raj

A Nehruvian-socialist re-visitation

A national daily carries a front-page report about a cabinet decision not to renew licenses of television channels which have violated the programme and advertisement code on five occasions or more.

The programme and advertising code mandates that programming should not be obscene, vulgar or denigrating for women and children, offensive to a particular community, against national interest or against friendly relations with countries. Channels operating in India and up-linked from India but meant only for foreign viewership are now required to ensure compliance of rules and regulations of the target country for which content is being produced and up-linked.

The call as to whether a particular channel has transgressed is to be taken by an inter-ministerial committee headed by the additional secretary in the I&B ministry that includes representatives from key ministries. The ministry has an electronic media monitoring centre that keeps tabs on television content.

There are many reasons why this report should be disturbing:

1. The prosecutor, judge and jury is a committee of bureaucrats. For the proclaimed object of prevention of obscene and vulgar output, there is no mention of representation of any social or media organizations. It is well known that there is a wide variation in opinions about what constitutes obscenity or vulgarity. This tool can be used selectively against channels which do not toe the government line.

(Cont'd. on page 17)



Sidney A. A. Pinto

02/09/1926 - 25/10/2011

Advocate, Labour Advisor, Company Secretary, Banker and Civil Liberty and Rights campaigner Sidney Pinto passed away in Mumbai on October 25.

“Sidney, as he would insist on being called,” wrote Yogesh Kamdar, a close friend and civil rights activist in a eulogy specially written for *Freedom First*, “was a well-known figure in the world of finance and banking. As part of a team, he introduced merchant banking in India for the first time in 1968. In 1982, he set up a financial services consultancy which later became Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd. where which he served as Director till 2003.

“For such a person to be also a passionate human rights crusader sounds a bit incongruous but it came naturally to Sidney. His sensitivity to human suffering and his innate sense of justice were the prime movers for his active involvement in human rights and civil liberties activities. He worked relentlessly against the tyranny of the infamous Emergency imposed by Mrs. Indira Gandhi. During the 1980s, which were the formative years of the People’s Union for Civil Liberties (PUC) Sidney was a source of strength to the movement. As Hon. General Secretary of PUCL Mumbai, he worked in the company of eminent persons such as Chief Justice (retd.) J. C. Shah, H. M. Seervai, Justice (retd.) N. P. Nathwani, Dr. Aloo Dastur, Dr. Usha Mehta, Adv. M. A. Rane and Prof. V. B. Kamath. He brought to the movement a wonderful blend of passionate involvement and professionalism. Be it in administrative matters, fund raising, petitioning or protest demonstrations, Sidney’s mark in PUCL’s activities was unmistakable. One recalls an incident when a small group of demonstrators including Sidney miraculously escaped being physically lynched.

“The early 1980s were also the years of Mrs. Gandhi’s second reign. Many of Sidney’s friends would advise him not to invite trouble on himself by playing such an active role in an organization like PUCL. Sidney’s pat reply to such ‘worldly-wise’ friends was: “I prefer to stand up and be counted for the values and cause I believe in.” In the documents that companies that he was a Director in were required to file and publish under the law, Sidney would unfailingly describe himself as Hon. General Secretary of PUCL, often to the discomfort of his corporate colleagues.

“Another gracious facet of Sidney’s personality was his anonymous generosity towards those in need – his staff, relatives, acquaintances and even strangers. One feels Sidney’s compassion stemmed from his deep religiosity and devotion to Jesus Christ. When he was jokingly asked: “Sidney, how can a completely secular person like you also be so devoutly religious?” his earnest reply was: “My secularism owes to my faith in Him who has created all beings in His image.”

In the course of a funeral address Navroz Seervai a leading lawyer, fellow civil rights activist and colleague on the PUCL described Sidney Pinto as “a man of many parts. His innate modesty and abhorrence of publicity, his culture and urbanity, prevented him from getting due public recognition” and went on to add: “It is impossible to speak of Sidney without mentioning his beloved wife Rosemary, who passed away in 2002. It would be difficult to find a more devoted couple. He spoke with great fondness and pride of her achievements, not least as a numismatist, and an absolute wizard on the Stock Exchange. Only a very few knew of what he went through during Rosemary’s prolonged and painful illness. And through it all, he never flagged, never once complained or indulged in self pity. Unfailing courtesy, cheerfulness and his hallmark laugh, never deserted him – not even in his darkest days.”

Sidney Pinto’s association with *Freedom First* goes back many years to the seventies when he decided to set himself up as a consultant in Merchant Banking and was looking for office space. A mutual friend introduced him to Minoo Masani who too was a management consultant by profession and founder of *Freedom First*. They got along famously because of their identical views on men and matters. Soon Sidney moved into the then office of the Democratic Research Service (DRS) and launched MBD Services Private Ltd.. He soon became its pillar of strength to the DRS and not only helped in its management but also, whenever the need arose, he lent a hand in “bailing” it out of financial difficulties! He went on with Masani and two or three others to found the Freedom First Foundation of which he was trustee till his passing. When the DRS wound up he too moved out but his standing offer to us was whenever we were in need of funds we should let him know.

Sidney was a member of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom and on the Advisory board of *Freedom First* for a number of years.

We shall miss his presence and sage advice from time to time whenever we approached him. May his soul rest in peace.

The Standing Committees of Parliament

Subhash C. Kashyap

Standing Committees are those which are constituted every year or from time to time, as the case may be and are permanent in nature in the sense that they examine different issues and present their reports from time to time during their term.

The Lok Pal Bill is under consideration with a Standing Committee of Parliament. This has evoked considerable public interest in such committees—what they are, how they function etc.

Parliamentary Committees are small bodies consisting of Members of Parliament which assist the Houses of Parliament in the efficient discharge of their functions and in giving close consideration to legislative and other matters that come up before them. A good deal of parliamentary business is transacted in the Committees as the time at the disposal of the Houses is limited and insufficient to make a thorough and detailed examination of the varied and voluminous legislative and other work to be transacted in Parliament.

There are two types of Parliamentary Committees in India viz. (i) Standing Committees and (ii) *Ad-hoc* Committees. Standing Committees are those which are constituted every year or from time to time, as the case may be and are permanent in nature in the sense that they examine different issues and present their reports from time to time during their term. *Ad hoc* Committees are appointed for a specific purpose and they become *functus officio* as soon as they have completed the task assigned to them and presented their report.

Select or Joint Committees appointed on particular Bills are also *ad hoc* Committees. Standing Committees include Financial Committees on Public Accounts, Estimates and Public Undertakings, Committees connected with the business of the Houses, Enquiry Committees like those on Petitions and Privileges, Scrutiny Committees on Government Assurances, Subordinate Legislation etc. and Service Committees on Library, Housing and Salaries of M.P.s etc. The latest *genre* of Standing Committees of Parliament is that of the Departmentally related Standing Joint Committees of the two Houses of Parliament.

Under Rule 331C of the Lok Sabha Rules of Procedure, these are, in short, called the Standing Committees. Beginning with three in 1989, their number has since risen to 24. Between them, these Standing Committees cover the entire gamut of Government Departments. The functions of these committees include:

(i) to consider the demands for grants of respective ministries/departments, (ii) to examine Bills referred by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha/Speaker, Lok Sabha, (iii) to consider annual reports of ministries, and (iv) to consider any policy documents referred by the Chairman/Speaker.

Each of these Standing Committees consists of not more than 45 members – 30 nominated by the speaker from the Lok Sabha and 15 by the Chairman from the Rajya Sabha. As is the usual practice, the effort always is to give representation to parties in the same proportion as their strength in the House warrants. There is no bar to an independent member being nominated but it depends on the Speaker/Chairman. There is, however, a clear bar on a Minister being a member of any of these Standing Committees. The Chairman of each Committee is appointed by the speaker Lok Sabha/Chairman Rajya Sabha.

The Lok Pal Bill is being examined by one of these committees, viz Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice. The committee is expected to consider the general principles and clauses of the Bill referred to it and make a report thereon. The Report shall be based on a broad consensus although a member can give a note of dissent. The committee may avail of expert opinion or public opinion to make the report. It is for the Houses of Parliament to consider the recommendations contained in the Report. The Report “shall have persuasive value and shall be treated as considered advice”.

DR. SUBASH C. KASHYAP formerly Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha, is an advocate and a Consultant on Constitutional Law and Political Management. He is President of Rashtriya Jagriti Sansthan and Citizenship Development Society and Editor of the monthly *South Asia Politics* published from Delhi. Email: sckashyap@rediffmail.com.

The Standing Committee of Parliament is likely to submit its report on the Lok Pal Bill during the winter session of parliament. We had, in our previous editions, taken the position that having discussed in great detail the issues involved in the context of the Anna Hazare movement we shall revert to this question only after the Standing Committee submits its report. Meanwhile, we are grateful to Dr. Subash Kashyap the former Secretary General of the Lok Sabha for educating us on what are Standing Committees and their role in a parliamentary democracy. – Ed.

India's Growing Leadership 'Deficit'

Sheryar Ookerjee

'Deficit' means a void and implies that it needs to be filled, which again implies that we have a goal that cannot be reached unless the deficiency is made good. The title of this paper means that in India today we lack leaders and that is why, at various levels, we are facing serious problems – inflation, corruption, poverty, disease, political unrest, *bandhs* – which make a happy life almost impossible for the common man.

If we don't have leaders, then we must produce them.¹ If we are deficient in medical relief, we must produce more doctors, if in education, then more teachers. These, of course, are specific needs, but when we feel, in a vague sort way, that, everywhere, things are going terribly wrong – particularly in the way we are being governed, we cry out for a leader, as the poet cries out for his dead hero:

Oh! raise us up, return to us again

And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.²

Assuming that if we had a leader, all would be well, let us ask the following questions:

1. CAN A LEADER BE PRODUCED?

A leader is a man or woman who knows, and is able to do, what we want or show us what to do. A leader might even show us what we ought to want, exhort us, if we are pessimistic or lazy, to bestir ourselves to try and get it, encourage us by himself joining us in the effort.

'Leader' implies followers, for without followers, a leader can do nothing. From entirely different spheres, I choose two examples to illustrate my point: Florence Nightingale and Gandhiji. They not only guided us about what should be done to achieve our goals, but, before that, aroused the conscience of the people to realise that these goals were worth achieving.

Qualities of Leadership

What are the qualities we believe such leaders should have? The *Arthashastra* writers, chiefly Kautilya, have supplied us readymade lists of such qualities, from which I select a few: courage, quickness, discipline, ability to take suitable actions in calamity, resolution and boldness, virtuousness, sense of shame, justness, equanimity, absence of passion (e.g. anger), fickleness, stiffness and arrogance, keenness for truth, knowledge and enthusiasm.

Supposedly with such qualities in mind, attempts

have been made to make leaders. A city college principal, some four decades ago, with funds from a German source, started a Training for Leadership centre at Satara. Some time later, it turned into an ordinary school. Currently, the Philosophy Department of the Mumbai University jointly with men from the Chanakya Institute of Public Leadership has been running a 'unique' programme to groom youngsters 'to become future leaders of the country. The programme is called Kautilya Arthashastra. Kautilya, with his philosophy of deceit, intrigue and treachery – a fine role-model for the leaders of our country.³

My contention is that none of the above qualities can be taught in any straightforward sense of 'teach'. You can teach a person an empirical science like chemistry or geography, or a skill like typing or driving, or a subject like mathematics or philosophy. You can teach a soldier how to handle arms, but you can't teach him to be brave; you can teach a student moral philosophy which is about different moral theories and an analysis of the virtues, but you cannot teach him to be moral. To display resoluteness or act justly is not to use a technique. Plato shows this clearly in the *Republic*. If at all you hope to inculcate qualities such as are set out in the above list, it may be possible by means other than instruction through a course or programme, by setting an example or some such means. Leaders cannot be made; they would grow or evolve.

2. DO WE REALLY WANT 'LEADERS'?

Would we refer to Nightingale or Gandhi as leaders? They led, of course, but if asked by some ingoramus who they were, would we answer, 'They were leaders'? They did not, I feel sure, set out to be leaders. They could not have said to themselves or their friends, 'I want to be a leader, so what should I do? Shall I take up nursing or go into politics?' or 'Suggest some suitable "cause" which I can take up that will make me a leader.' Contrast this with one who might say, 'I want to be rich. What shall I do?' Different courses can be suggested – go in for Law or try the stock market. A doctor, say, whose first concern

was to make money and not to heal the sick, would be called, by Ruskin, 'a fee-first' man. We would not refer to Nightingale or Gandhi as 'leadership-first' people. We think of them first according to what they set out to do, what results they sought to bring about. Their objective was other-regarding. The difference is a subtle one, but quite real.

But there is another kind of 'leader'. He (it is needless to keep on saying, 'He or she') is entirely and narrowly self-regarding. He might have set out with the aim of doing some good to others, but sooner or later (usually sooner) he is gripped by personal ambition to shine, to be somebody, more, perhaps, than even for material gain, to be a 'leader'.

This is a tragedy, for these leaders often have certain talents which could have been used for the benefit of humanity. Instead, he thinks of himself as a superman, a Fuhrer (leader) or Duce (chief/commander), believes himself to be not only omnipotent but also omniscient; he knows everything, knows what is good for others and how to bring it about. Italian schools had to display the portrait of their Duce with the words, 'Mussolini is always right.' He must, of course, have his followers, the sheep who must believe unquestioningly in their shepherd.⁴

In this fairy-tale, the prince becomes the toad, or, rather, the tiger. How this happens is for psychologists and sociologists to inquire into.

3. WHAT IS OUR DUTY?

This apparent natural tendency to transform oneself into a leader is encouraged to a considerable extent by the people who long for a leader. We, with out

propensity towards sycophancy and hero-worship, must be particularly watchful. We must try to thwart the tendency on the part of citizens to back or support anybody who aspires to become a leader. We must beware of surrendering our judgement and self-respect as human beings and of succumbing to a belief in our helplessness and taking the easy way out by handing over to another our difficulties, problems and responsibilities. If we get a king-stork to rule over us, we will have to thank ourselves. We must give up, therefore, all these notions about a 'leader' and think, instead, of the job to be done and the best person qualified to help us to get it done and, most importantly, a person with dedication and integrity, a person (to quote the same poet quoted earlier) 'wise, upright and valiant.' Leadership will come by and by. He will grow into the sort we want.

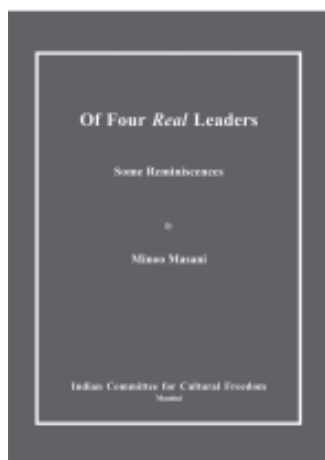
Notes and References:

1. Plato, in the *Republic*, wanted to make such leaders and worked out a recipe for making them. By the time he wrote the *Statesman*, he had lost his optimism and was less antagonistic to democracy than he had been earlier. By the time of the *Laws*, nearing 80, he had a kind of democracy and, in poorfil (?) words, declared faith in the rule of law.
2. William Wordsworth, Sonnet IX.
3. See Sheryar Ookerjee, 'Do We Want 'Leaders'?', *Freedom First*, No.520, October 2010.
4. The idea of the shepherd is often found in the New Testament and the *Arthasastra* of Kautilya.
5. William Wordsworth, Sonnet XVI.

The Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom in association with the Adult Education Institute organised a half day seminar on "India's Growing Leadership Deficit" on 19th November, 2011.

This is the keynote address by Professor Sheryar Ookerjee, retired head of the Department of Philosophy, Wilson College, Mumbai.

Just released!



"Of Four Real Leaders" By Minoo Masani

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

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

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

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

Payment by cheque (cheque to be drawn in favour of ICCF) or money order to Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom, 3rd floor, Army & Navy Bldg. 148 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400001. If payment by cheque please ensure that it is payable at par in Mumbai.

No Medals for Moral Courage

Furdoon S. B. Mehta

Although implicit obedience of orders is the very crux of military discipline, for a military commander the dilemma to obey an order against his better military judgment, if insisted upon, to resign is very great and calls upon the highest form of moral courage.

War is basically the domain of danger, exertion and suffering. To weather these, untarnished courage is the prime and time honoured requisite for a warrior leader. Indeed courage is the most admired of human virtues in all societies and walks of life – to be a man, is to be courageous. Courage is no less in the higher than in the lower levels of command, but greater the responsibility and higher the rank, the emphasis shifts from physical to moral courage – a much rarer, but essential to higher leadership.

Moral courage implies quiet resolution, hardihood to take risks, the will to take full responsibility for decisions, readiness to share its rewards with subordinates and equal readiness to take the blame when things go wrong and the nerve to survive storms and disappointments and to face each new day with the score sheet wiped clean, neither dwelling on one's success nor accepting discouragement from one's failures.

The three wars with Pakistan, Operation Blue Star in the Punjab, Operation Pawan in Sri Lanka and another against China in 1962, have amply demonstrated the superb physical courage of the Indian Officer, especially at the junior and mid level – there has never been any doubt on this score. The moral courage side contiguously in higher leadership has not, however, been demonstrated – at least visibly. In this respect, perhaps, a clearer definition of the Indian Officer's credo would be more meaningful. This credo as inscribed at the Indian Military Academy's (IMA's) Chetwood Hall reads as follows: "The safety, honour, and welfare of your country comes first, always and every time. The honour welfare and comfort of the men you command come next. Your own ease, comfort and safety come last always and every time."

The main ingredient of the above credo is courage and self sacrifice. However what Field Marshal Chetwood had in mind when he wrote these lines, was not just the physical aspect of safety, ease and comfort as is normally expected of the junior and the mid level officer in the combat zone, but more so the moral significance in the decision making zone, whereby higher level leadership

places the larger emphasis on – "the safety and honour of the country before his own mental, ease and career interest". Whereas the former, physical courage is easy to see and the officer concerned is rewarded with a medal or an award, in the case of the latter, namely moral courage, where the officer has to at times sacrifice not only his command but also his entire career, seldom comes to public notice, and is never awarded a medal. I think Chetwood was also referring to training to be imparted at the IMA, wherein leadership would not be allowed to reach a mental and moral state, whereby the officer will not be willing to stick his neck out to safeguard cherished principles and values in the interest of the country's safety and in the honour of the Indian Army.

Perhaps the moral courage interpretation of Chetwood's inscription could be better understood by illustration of this with an example from his own country, Britain. During the initial stages of World War II, an instance that comes to mind is the controversy and bitterness which prevailed during the last stages of the German Blitzkrieg on France in May 1940 when Churchill was of the view that Britain must send the Royal Air Force to France to stop the German onslaught. Air Chief Marshal Dowding the then Air Officer, Commanding-in-Chief, the Fighter Command was, however, of the opinion that whereas the battle of France was a foregone conclusion, the Battle of Britain was about to begin and as such all it's air forces should be concentrated within the home country. He expressed his views to the Air Secretary who told him that if he felt so strongly, he would have to speak to Churchill himself. When the case went before the Prime Minister, Churchill told Dowding that he had committed himself to the French Government and as such the RAF would have to go to their assistance. The Air Marshal thereupon told him in the now famous words – "Mr. Prime Minister, either the RAF stays at home, or I go home." The RAF did stay at home and under the leadership of Dowding won the Battle of Britain. Field Marshal Manekshaw when asked to release the book – "Indian Peace Keeping Forces in Sri Lanka", blamed the Indian Government for launching a military operation on the Island in a hurry without a clear mandate, adequate

intelligence or necessary resources, which ended in a military fiasco. Our then Army Chief did not have the moral courage to oppose this Operation. What the Field Marshal said may be cent per cent correct, however no general can vindicate his loss in battle claiming that he was compelled to do so against his better military judgment. *If he has to execute a lawful but stupid order that leads to defeat and endangers his command, the only course open to him is to resign or even disobey, but for which he must be prepared to pay the price with his neck.*

It reminds me of the British Admiral Fisher, while reporting on Admiral Jellicoe's failure to destroy the German Naval Fleet at the Battle of Jutland in World War I, by saying that Jellicoe had all the qualities of a Nelson, save one: he does not know when to disobey.

In recent history at the time of the Bangladesh War in 1971, Major General JFR Jacob, as the Chief of Staff of the Eastern Command, despite written operation instructions by Army Headquarters had the moral courage to disobey those instructions but meticulously and brilliantly planned and boldly executed military operations in East Pakistan and presented General Manekshaw, the then Army Chief with a lightning victory and a public surrender by Lt. Gen. Niazi of Pakistan to Lt. Gen. Aurora of India at the Dacca Race Course on 16th December 1971, the only one such public surrender in military history. A

total of 93,000 Pakistani officers and men of East Pakistan surrendered to the Indian Army.

To conclude, although implicit obedience of orders, is the very crux of military discipline, for a military commander the dilemma to obey an order against his better military judgment, if insisted upon, to resign is very great and calls upon the highest form of moral courage. In any case it is mainly at the top that moral courage has played or failed to play such a dominant role in the course of a war, as physical courage has had its effect on the outcome of a battle.

While physical courage can be developed through sports, adventure, battle inoculation and other such means, moral courage is a reflection of the national character, the home environment and the value system of the Officer's family, his school and the society in which he grew up. It is difficult to inculcate this at the latter part of an officer's career and especially so today when most of the officers join the Indian Army solely for career reasons, and for the good salary and perks, unlike his predecessors of the pre-Independence era to whom military service was a calling, a mission.

This article by Brigadier (retd.) Furdoon S.B.Mehta is based on extracts from the Military Papers left behind by the late Brigadier Noshir Grant, an eminent Military Engineer, with the permission of his widow Mrs. Minnie Grant.

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The India Growth Story

From Resilience to Retreat

Sunil S. Bhandare

The challenge is to restart the long-stalled process of reforms. This requires high quality single minded political leadership and system of governance for initiation and implementation particularly the latter. But this is the weakest link of our present governments, both at the Centre and in most states

Around this time last year, most keen observers of the economic scene waxed eloquent about India's remarkable growth recovery. Doubtless, there were concerns even then about stubbornly high inflation. But far more inspiring was the story of how the country managed so well to overcome the setback caused by the global economic crisis of 2008. India achieved real GDP growth of 8.6% in 2010-11 as compared to 8% in 2009-10 and 6.8% in 2008-09. The economic recovery in 2010-11 also turned out to be more broad-based: agriculture rebounding, manufacturing regaining its momentum, and the services sector recharging its performance.

We also witnessed economic fundamentals emerging stronger with improvement in savings and investment, rising exports, and rebuilding of forex reserves. More importantly, there was a strong revival of consumer and investor confidence. Business and industry in particular showed buoyancy in their plans of expansion, modernization and growth. So also, foreign investors who started looking at their India entry strategy with promising long-term interest. There was a vote of confidence from stock markets, which reflected a significant enhancement of corporate valuations. The beneficial impact of economic performance was reflected in the fiscal management as well, and our usually worrisome scenario in this sphere held out hopes of sustainable improvement. Indeed, all was looking well!

Unacceptable Downward Drift

But what we are now witnessing over the last six months is a dramatic and distressing drift with inflation remaining intractably high hovering almost around double-digit level for the last two years. Normal monsoon and prospects of steady agricultural growth, including bumper foodgrains for the second year in succession, have been of no avail in easing pressures of food inflation. Secondly, industrial growth is sliding by the month - it was a meagre 1.9% in September 2011, the slowest pace in the past twenty four months. During the current financial year so far (April-September 2011), the industrial sector recorded just about

5% growth as compared to 8.2% in the corresponding period of the previous year. Secondly, several lead indicators of the services sector are very discouraging; financial services to construction, retail trade to hospitality and tourism are showing signs of retreat.

As a consequence, India is bound to witness its economic growth (real GDP growth) declining to just about 7% +/- 0.2% in 2011-12 as compared to 8.6% in the previous year. This is way behind our aspirations to achieve a long-term sustainable and inclusive 9% annual economic growth. Evidently, progressive scaling up of interest rates under the impetus of the Reserve Bank's monetary tightening policy have started impacting the real economy adversely without making even the slightest dent on the inflationary pressure. However, in the present milieu when a responsive and functioning government (or more appropriately, the governance system) is found wanting, and when the fiscal situation is gradually getting out of control, the Reserve Bank finds itself in a bind and has to deploy its limited armory of key policy rates to the hilt! Unfortunately, its impact is increasingly becoming counter-productive.

Thus, for the corporate sector, especially in the manufacturing sphere, there is now a deadly combination of (a) rising interest rates; (b) escalating fuel and input cost structure; (c) volatile exchange rate; (d) falling domestic demand; (e) an uncertain global economic scene; and (f) to top it all, a paralysis of policy making by the government. All these factors have enormously damaged the investor's confidence. Stock markets' behaviour reflects this predicament and rapidly falling corporate market capitalization is not only unnerving investors, but leading to postponement of capital-raising activities (both by the public and private sectors) for exploration of new capital formation opportunities in the economy. Also, it has caused the virtual stalling of PSUs disinvestment programme, thereby impairing the prospect of mopping up Rs.40,000 crores through this vital source, as budgeted for the current year.

The external sector performance till the first five

months of current financial year was remarkable, and in particular thanks to surging exports. But there was a major setback to export growth in September 2011 and huge widening of trade gap due to rising imports. Equally worrisome is the volatility in the exchange rate market with the rupee suddenly depreciating by over 12% in a span of just last three months and now piercing even the psychological barrier of US\$=Rs.50. If the recent trend in external trade continues, it will be difficult to manage the volatility in the exchange rate of the Indian rupee, unless the Reserve Bank actively intervenes in the market. This will call for deployment of some of our accumulated forex reserves (currently valued at US\$315 bn), making the external sector somewhat more vulnerable.

Recharging the Agenda of Reforms

How then to turn around the prevailing tide of gloom in our country? Obviously, this can only be accomplished by re-vitalising long-pending economic reforms. Who will trigger this process? Obviously, the Central and State governments together have to do it. How will they do it? This can only be done by a determined effort combining political will and coordinated action. What if they fail to do so? The prevailing economic drift will gather further downward momentum. What will be its outcome? Obviously, the India story of a resilient and promising economic growth will suffer a huge setback. Who will be the victims? The many stakeholders in the economy will suffer the pain with divergent degrees of intensity.

Politicians in general and governments in particular, have also much at stake; but many of them seem to be completely oblivious of the current economic predicament; they are engaged (rather destructively than constructively!) in settling scores sub-serving their myopic political vested interests.

But the rest of India is becoming increasingly restless. The future of millions of Indians is endangered. Politicians may have strong survival instincts irrespective of the nature and intensity of current and impending economic crises. But this is not the case with ordinary citizens – farmers, workers, middle-class professionals and investors. The frustrations are, thus, writ large on their faces and in the minds of every one concerned, including businessmen and, industrialists!

We believe that within the UPA II coalition the economic malaise has not only been diagnosed but various relevant policy prescriptions are ready. Many official studies and reports either by high powered official committees or by the Planning Commission or by the

various Groups of Ministers are awaiting discussion in Parliament. These cover a number of key economic policy issues, such as (a) tax reforms (e.g. Direct Tax Code, General Sales Tax Bill), (b) The Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill; (c) New Manufacturing Policy; (d) revision of Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act; (e) Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Bill, paving the way for 26% cent foreign investment and encouraging private sector participation in the pension sector; (f) raising of FDI limits in the insurance sector and in single brand retail sector as well as permitting FDI in multi-brand retail and aviation sectors. Also pending for parliamentary enactment are other pending economic legislation, including those relating to the social sector for instance food security, and education reforms.

Obviously, the challenge is to restart the long-stalled process of reforms. This requires high quality single minded political leadership and system of governance for initiation and implementation particularly the latter. But this is the weakest link of our present governments, both at the Centre and in most states.

At the same time the global scenario is becoming extremely challenging. Indeed, the underlying sentiment emerging from the recently held G20 Summit in France is quite depressing. Most advanced countries in the European Union as well as the US are in the grip of a sovereign debt crisis and the prospects of escalating meltdown and another recession are painfully evident. Given the fact that each of the major economies has so many tough fiscal and financial challenges to resolve (some of them are already in the midst of political turmoil and leadership changes), uncertainty is writ large with respect to global economic growth, trade, capital flows and employment creation.

We hope our political leadership cutting across party lines at least now realize the urgency of shedding their complacency and political brinkmanship. All of them need to wake up and work in cohesion to rebuild confidence in the future of our economy or face the consequences of further economic drift leading to further social tensions!

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...Joseph Schumpeter, the great Austrian economist, once wrote: "The monetary system of a people reflects everything that the nation wants, does, suffers, is."

In the same way, the crisis that has engulfed the European Union is about much more than the Euro.

The Economist November 12-18.

World Population – 7 Billion

A Challenge and Opportunity

J. S. Apte

India is the first country in the World to implement a family planning programme on an official basis.

On October 31, 2011, humans on our planet numbered 7 Billion. On this day, Mal, a village near Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh welcomed the arrival of Nargis, a baby girl. Uttar Pradesh has a population of 19.5 crores equal to the population of Brazil, the 5th largest country in the world.

The 20th century will go down in history as revolutionary and path-breaking. In addition to two world wars, two atomic explosions, scientific discoveries and inventions that changed the way we live, the 20th century witnessed a doubling of population. In 1850, the World population was only a billion. It took 77 years to double the population to 2 billion in 1927, in 1959 it was 3 billion, 4 billion in 1974, 5 billion in 1987 and now 7 billion as on 31st October 2011. Since 1987, 11th July is observed as World Population Day.

Population Control from 1951

India is the first country in the World to implement a family planning programme on an official basis. In a letter to Gulzarilal Nanda, Pandit Nehru wrote: "I do not want the population to grow and would like this growth to be restricted." Pandit Nehru's approach to development was holistic. Population Control was one of the means but not the only means of development, he urged development to be pursued in all areas of human activity.

Family Planning Programme

Started in 1951, the programme made fairly good progress in various states in general and in Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Haryana and Gujarat in particular. The compulsive sterilisation approach adopted during the emergency period gave a rude setback to the family planning programme. The Congress party had to pay a heavy price in the General Election held in March 1977. People in general and men in particularly practically withdrew from the programme seriously affecting the programme's performance. The tolerant liberal minded Indian did not accept coercion because family planning is essentially a delicate, personal and sensitive matter. No government in the future will ever dare to pursue this policy.

Census 2011

Census 2011 shows India's population as 1.21 billion. Eight states Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh and Orissa have a total percentage of 46% of India's population and the remaining 27 States 54%. The success of India's family planning programme depends mainly on the total performance of the above mentioned eight States. Kerala, which is part of the 27, is a shining example of excellent family planning performance because of high literacy, education and health standards.

The 2011 census has shown a silver lining in the otherwise cloudy demographic situation of the country. The percentage growth of the six most populous states have declined during the decade 2001-2011 compared to the previous one. Uttar Pradesh from 26 to 23, Maharashtra from 23 to 16, Bihar from 29 to 26, West Bengal from 18 to 14, Andhra Pradesh from 15 to 11, Madhya Pradesh from 24 to 20. The highest percentage decline is in Maharashtra 7%. These figures speak for the progress achieved in the implementation of the family planning programme. Among the most populous countries, India's rank is second, next to China. Child Sex ratio has declined in 431 districts but has improved in 149 districts. A vigorous educational campaign emphasising the need of the girl child, discouraging son preference and implementation of legal measures to prevent female foeticide will go a long way in enhancing the child sex ratio. Integration of maternal and child health programme alongside family planning has to be strengthened. Increase in girls education and growth in female literacy will supplement reproductive and child health programmes. A major thrust on developmental programmes is the need of the hour. Additional contraceptive population control and population stabilisation are a challenge to policy and decision makers. Administrators and service providers play a crucial role in development which will benefit the common people.

If we don't halt population growth with justice and compassion, it will be done for us by nature, brutally and without pity – and will leave a ravaged world.

Nobel Laureate Dr. Henry W. Kendall

**Different Countries' Share
in World Population (Percentage)**

Sr.No.	Country	Percentage
1.	China	19.4
2.	India	17.5
3.	America	4.5
4.	Indonesia	3.4
5.	Pakistan	2.7
6.	Bangladesh	2.4
7.	Brazil	2.8
8.	Nigeria	2.3
9.	Russian Federation	2.0
10.	Japan	1.9
11.	Other Countries	41.2

**States's Share
in India's Population (Percentage)**

Sr.No.	State	Percentage
1.	Andhra Pradesh	7
2.	Assam	3
3.	Bengal	8
4.	Bihar	9
5.	Chattisgarh	2
6.	Delhi	1
7.	Gujarat	5
8.	Haryana	2
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	1
10.	Jharkhand	3
11.	Karnataka	5
12.	Kerala	3
13.	Madhya Pradesh	6
14.	Maharashtra	9
15.	Orissa	3
16.	Punjab	2
17.	Rajasthan	6
18.	Tamilnadu	6
19.	Uttarkhand	1
20.	Uttar Pradesh	16
21.	Other States	2

**Ten Most Populous Countries
in the World**

Sr. No.	1998	Popula- tion	2010	Popula- tion
1.	China	125.5	China	135.4
2.	India	97.6	India	121.4
3.	America	27.6	America	31.7
4.	Indonesia	20.7	Indonesia	23.2
5.	Brazil	16.5	Brazil	19.5
6.	Pakistan	14.8	Pakistan	18.4
7.	Russia	14.7	Bangladesh	16.4
8.	Japan	12.6	Nigeria	15.8
9.	Bangladesh	12.4	Russia	14.04
10.	Nigeria	12.2	Japan	12.7

J. S. APTE, formerly with Family Planning Association of India as Field Programme Officer Director (Training / Branch Management), currently a freelance writer on development issues.

Road to Valhalla

For Kolkata to get to London or for London to get to Kolkata, the road to the airport would have to be traversed. But if evidence of the state of roads leading to and from the airport of West Bengal's capital published in this and other newspapers is an indication, the path to good intentions may have to overcome a few thousand potholes of incompetence. Thus the occasional visitor must be excused if he believes that the heart of the city must be as beautiful as the mythical mountain abode of Hindu gods, if only because each route to that heart is as difficult...as the pilgrimage attempted by the devout because the roads – under assault of construction and weather – have been reduced to strips of inequity. In other words, road widths have been halved; what is left is dotted with potholes.

Excerpted and abridged from an editorial in *The Statesman* September 15.

Running Away from Reality

H. R. Bapu Satyanarayana

When the RTI has proved its effectiveness over the past six years why should the Prime Minister raise the issue now?

The Right to Information Act passed in 2005 has been a landmark legislation for which the UPA government can rightly appropriate credit. For the first time we citizens were presented with a powerful tool to obtain information that helped challenge any decision of the government which we considered was against the public interest. Thus, it helped to bring in a measure of transparency and kept in check any extraneous considerations in the decision-making process. Till now it has yielded positive results and the very fact that several whistle blowers have paid with their life in the process is an indication of its effectiveness.

Therefore, instead of enabling effective legislation to protect whistle blowers, it is deeply disappointing that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh should be asking for a critical re-look at the RTI Act. Addressing the annual convention of the Central Information Commission on October 14, 2011 the Prime Minister said that 'Right to Information should not adversely affect the deliberative processes in the government' He added that there are concerns that need to be discussed. It does not need much imagination to know whose concerns the PM is talking about.

When the RTI has proved its effectiveness over the past six years why should the PM raise the issue now? Commenting on the PM's observation, BJP spokesperson Rajiv Pratap Rudi took strong exception observing "We never expected that the Prime Minister, through his words, will tell the country that money is wasted on RTI and the time of officials is being wasted. We think it a big indication that there are attempts to dilute the Act." The country knows too well now that but for RTI and Janata Party president Subramanian Swamy's indefatigable efforts, and with the media joining in the fight, the murky dealings in the 2G spectrum scam and Commonwealth Games, politicians like Raja, Suresh Kalmadi, Kanimozhi and other corporate bigwigs would not be cooling their heels in Tihar Jail.

Now it appears, it is the turn of the former minister Maran to get 'Tihared' It is obvious that it has stemmed from the fact that the 2G spectrum scam in its latest revelation may point the finger of suspicion at home

minister Chidambaram in whom the PM places implicit faith and the implication if it turns out to be true is too grim to imagine. Its effect on the Congress party will be catastrophic. This is the compelling reason for the 'sudden interest to strike a balance between disclosure of information and the limited time and resources available with the public authorities.' The Congress General Secretary Digvijay Singh who is normally loquacious is eloquently silent or, intelligent as he is, he knows he will be skating on thin ice if he were to comment on this issue. The suave law minister Salman Kurshid known for his measured and articulate manner of expressing his views is now exhibiting a different streak in his line of argument that defies logic which only shows how desperate the situation is. During his recent interviews Salman Kurshid said that the misuse of RTI Act was affecting institutional efficiency and that the judiciary does not understand political economy.

Read this this gem falling from his lips: "What will affect the functioning of the government is if other institutions do not understand the kind of political economy we are faced with today. If you lock up top businessmen, will investment come?" It is mystifying that as a law minister he should be indulging in kite flying suggesting by implication to the judiciary to go soft on the issue of bail to corporate honchos. Shorn of rhetoric it is a throw back to the regime of Indira Gandhi who never camouflaged her views on the need for a committed judiciary. Unfortunately for the Congress, a new mood of assertiveness is sweeping through the corridors of judiciary under the present Chief Justice of India Kapadia who is made of sterner stuff.

The best bet for the Congress is to try its luck after September 2012 when Kapadia retires. The hopeful sign is that RTI activist and member of the National Advisory Council Aruna Roy says that Act is not being misused. She adds "But yes, the government has to get used to a new transparent system of functioning". It is to be hoped that the PM will keep his own counsel and refrain from proceeding further in the matter and is not serious about diluting the RTI.

H. R. BAPU SATYANARAYANA is a freelance writer based in Mysore. Email: what_options@yahoo.com

Point Counter Point

Ashok Karnik

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

The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act

1. The Armed Forces Special Powers Act is in dispute permanently. Critics hold that the Armed Forces get draconian powers for use against hapless civilians in areas declared as 'disturbed'; such areas are at present J&K and the North East. It is argued that the Government is wrong in using the Armed Forces within the country and then give them powers which can be and are misused. However, the Government finds that secessionist activities cannot be controlled through use of police or para-military forces alone and the Army is needed for the job. Since the Army has no powers to arrest, detain, search or interrogate, it has to be equipped to do so. Hence the AFSPA! The Armed Forces are in double jeopardy as they are used against their own countrymen and are accused of misusing power. Omar Abdullah, Chief Minister of J&K, therefore, announced a plan to withdraw AFSPA from selected areas of the state where the situation has manifestly improved. This raised a furore as the Army opposed the move. Omar Abdullah believed that withdrawal of the AFSPA and lower visibility of the army would help placate the populace. He softened the blow by clarifying that he did not mean to demonize the Armed Forces.

1. A critical point is that if the might of the Army is not needed to quell militancy or insurgency, why deploy the Army at all? The Army has strength and wherewithal that the police do not have and is therefore deployed when things get out of hand. It is true that all powers are likely to be misused. Even traffic rules are misused by the traffic police; no wonder if some elements in the Army get drunk with power. On the other hand, the Army brings things under control and is immediately found to be redundant and an embarrassment to boot. The best course is to withdraw the Army so that the AFSPA is not necessary; there would be no need to selectively lift the AFSPA. No Army and no AFSPA! The responsibility would lie with the State Government to ensure that the situation does not drift back to instability so that the Army would have to be called back in a situation worse than before, making it more difficult for the Army to restore the status quo. Those clamouring for withdrawal of the AFSPA or the Army itself should be aware of the consequences of their demand. Insurgency brought the Army to J&K and not the other way around.

The Indian Grand Prix

2. The Formula I Grand Prix in India (October 30) was a grand success but it was preceded by the usual skepticism and ideological objections. The arguments are by now well worn. Can a poor country like India afford an elitist, rich man's sport? The Sports Minister put the entire gamut of arguments together by asking if the same expenditure could not have helped other common man's sports. When very few Indians own a car, what is the propriety of organising a motor sports event? Such arguments were raised before the Commonwealth Games and are still raised about the Indian Premier League (IPL) of cricket. Then there is the problem with maintenance of these white elephants created for the mega events. The argument that developing countries should not fritter away their resources makes sense too. All arguments are right from one perspective but is there another side to it?

2. It is the poor countries that require the adrenaline boost of international appreciation while the rich countries have a lot other things to be proud of. China is not rich - though powerful - but it hosted the Olympics at great cost; the divide between its urban and rural population remains but the glory of organising the Games better than anybody else in the world increased its prestige as never before. It can also be argued that a poor country like India does not require 5-star hotels, fancy airports, sports stadiums, car factories, space exploration or motor sports; its requirements are schools and hospitals. Remember the ruckus over bringing colour TV to India in 1982? The problem is that even the poor need something to be proud of; their poverty is stifling enough and they need ways to live their dreams. They cannot live in the Taj Mahal but they are proud of having it. A healthy society has to make all round development; it can prioritize health and education but development cannot be uni-directional. Maintenance of the white elephants is a real problem as

*Those who can't laugh at themselves leave the
job to others.*

*A group of donkeys led by a lion can defeat
a group of lions led by a donkey*

- Socrates

there is no legacy planning in Government schemes; but be sure that the corporate house that built the Formula I circuit will use the facility to make money. That is another reason to leave these enterprises to private bodies as they will take good care of their investments.

Confused Signals

3. Digvijay Singh keeps on attacking the Anna team and his trump card is that it is all an RSS conspiracy. Digvijay Singh is by now known as a loose cannon and nobody takes him seriously. The mere fact of RSS support should not turn an otherwise valid agitation unacceptable. A nation-wide agitation will attract all kinds of people. Similarly, digging out dirt about Government's critics does not render the critics' fight against corruption invalid. The Congress is hitting out at anything that embarrasses it. It has chosen to denigrate team Anna, expressed doubts about the misuse of the RTI, objected to the overreach of the judiciary and cast doubts about the role of the CAG. UPA II seems to have developed a siege mentality and its reaction to criticism is becoming more and more paranoid.

The old order of Libya has been buried with Gaddafi. The new Libya is the new playground of CIA special operations officers, who can be seen in Tripoli hotels and Islamists of all hues. In between there are the lovely people of Libya who want to preserve their hard-earned freedom.

The Week, November 6

3. Simultaneously, the Government sends contradictory signals. The PM writes to Anna assuring him of his Government's intention of bringing in a strong Lokpal Bill; the PM also declares that it is time for decisive action against corruption. Even Sonia Gandhi declared that a strong Lokpal would be moved. The Law Minister assures that a strong Lokpal Bill and a Constitutional amendment to make the Lokpal a Constitutional body would be moved in the winter session (November-December 2011) of Parliament. What then is the confrontation for? The Finance Minister declared that the CAG was functioning well within its jurisdiction. Why is the Government talking with a forked tongue? Is it a diabolical strategy to strike from both ends or is it a matter of the left hand not knowing what the right is doing? The result is that the people do not know whom to trust and the Government loses credibility. The Hissar by-election showed that the Anna effect could damage the Congress electoral prospects, although as usual the party refuses to recognise the warning signals. The Government must make it clear where it stands.

Bail or Jail?

4. The fate of the VIPs lodged in Tihar Jail raised the debate whether they should not have got bail earlier as bail is the right of an accused and jail should be an exception. The issue never bothered anyone while thousands of under-trials languish in jails all over the country beyond the term they would have been penalized for, if found guilty. The doubt was whether courts were getting influenced by the anti-corruption mood in the country and were reluctant to be seen favouring the rich and the influential. The mighty had fallen and were denied bail even when there was nothing further to be gained by detaining them.

4. One good thing coming out of this changed climate is that the impression that the mighty get away with anything has been allayed. It is reassuring that even VIPs are answerable to the law and are perhaps being judged more harshly because they are mighty. The courts are not influenced by public anger but by the feeling that the VIP accused are more likely to use their clout to interfere with investigations and influence witnesses and, therefore, need to be kept out of mischief. Will the courts now bend the other way and automatically release all under-trials who have stayed in jail longer than their putative punishment?

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

Paraprosdokians

A paraprosdokian is a figure of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected in a way that causes the reader or listener to re-frame or re-interpret the first part. It is frequently used for humorous or dramatic effect. For this reason, it is extremely popular among comedians and satirists.

1. I asked God for a bike, but I know God doesn't work that way. So I stole a bike and asked for forgiveness.
2. Do not argue with an idiot. He will drag you down to his level and beat you with experience.

National Land Acquisition and Rehabilitation & Resettlement Bill 2011 (LARR)

Sharad Joshi



Jairam Ramesh, the new minister for Rural Development has put the draft of the National Land Acquisition and Rehabilitation & Resettlement Bill 2011 (LARR) on the website. It is a voluminous document consisting of some 70 pages. One can count on Jairam to produce a voluminous document on as petty a subject as the Bt brinjal. He is an ambitious minister on his way up.

According to the draft LARR Bill, land acquisition can be done for any Public Purpose including development of industry, development of infrastructure, Special Economic Zones etc.

The fact is that most of the problems relating to industrialization and development of infrastructure could have been resolved at the dawn of independence itself, had not Jawaharlal Nehru brought in his favourite hobby-horse of Soviet-brand socialism into independent India. Jawaharlal Nehru, with a marked animus towards agriculture, sought to demolish the rural leadership by proposing abolition of the *Zamindari* and money lenders. Money lenders were to be replaced by a network of cooperative institutions that permitted draining away of rural savings to an urban populace. At the same time, he deliberately followed a policy calculated to depress agricultural prices. Had it not been for these Soviet type policies, the problems listed by Jairam Ramesh in the draft would not have arisen in the first place.

Japan is an eloquent example. Japan followed, as early as 1921, a policy calculated to give the farmers a price for their paddy which was as high as four times the international price. This created the primary capital in the hands of the farmers which they promptly used for developing cottage industries for which Japan became justly famous. These little cottage industries, little by little,

developed assembly plants to put together the parts produced in the cottage industries. The consequence was that most of the Japanese major industries developed in the countryside with the capital owned mostly by the farmers, the primary producers. There was no question of any land being arbitrarily taken away from the farmers for development of industry, infrastructure and urbanization. There would have been no problem of R & R either.

The legislation for abolition of *zamindari* brought in by Jawaharlal Nehru was rejected by most courts in the country as being violative of the fundamental right to property including its acquisition, maintenance and disposal. Not to be daunted by such early setbacks, Nehru moved in by the very first amendment to the Constitution of India to abridge the fundamental right to property. It was left to his daughter Indira Gandhi to give the fundamental right to property a final burial. This established in the Indian constitutional system the principle of '*eminence juris*' copied from the British system which meant that the land belongs to the monarch and can be taken away only through due legal processes. This was unknown in the Indian system where the land was considered to be the property of the village.

Jairam Ramesh, had he done his homework properly, would have found that he is now grappling with

the problem that was created by Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, both near deities to him. Jairam Ramesh, in the LARR draft, proposes creation of a comprehensive and wide network that would do pleasure to any bureaucrat who finds that his opportunities for greasing of palms so largely expanded.

Had Jawaharlal Nehru not sought to put the control of industries in the hands of upper castes Hindus and allowed the rural *balutedars* (artisans) to get their legitimate share in the control of industries, he could have been spared the horrendous error of Soviet type industrialization. Fortunately, this error was corrected by Dr. Manmohan Singh, Jairam's present boss, in 1991.

Jairam Ramesh has played the tunes that would coddle the hearts of the civil society organizations. He has offered a package which is in no way better than the package that was offered to the Narmada Project displacees. The payment of initial lump sum calculated in terms of the stamp value of the land to be acquired, a cash payment for transport cost, built house to each family displaced and establishment of community organizations like schools, hospitals etc. are all there. To these Jairam has added the offer of a share in equity, offer of a job in the acquiring company, subsistence allowance for 12 months and annuity for 20 years for each family – landholder or landless and offer of 20% of the developed land in case of acquisition for urbanization.

The stipulations of distribution of these benefits by treating family as one unit will only result in further fragmentation of holdings and break up of the family as an institution and create a large number of disputes which the present judicial system cannot even begin to cope with.

It is lucky that Jairam Ramesh has not committed the mistake that tempted Mrs. Medha Patkar who at one stage proposed and accepted 'a land for land' formula. This had permitted the bureaucracy to make money at both the purchasing and the disposal ends. The new draft does not even seek to give land for land. Fortunately, Jairam appears to have realised that agriculture is a losing

proposition and that most farmers want to leave agriculture in any case.

There is no remedy in Jairam's draft to the problem of Food Security. If the land acquisition proceeds at anything like the present rate and the government continues to create hurdles in the path of the farmers like cutting off of electricity, non-availability of credit, allowing fuel prices to go up all the time and measures that will further encourage fragmentation of land, Food Security would become a pipe dream.

Problems of industrial and infrastructure development as also the problems relating to Food Security would have been easily resolved by following the Japanese model and allowing Indian farmers a price for their produce that would be attractive. The ideal solution to the problems enunciated by Jairam lie in allowing farmers to continue unhindered in agricultural cultivation if they so wish and permitting them full liberty to dispose off their land on the analogy of the freedom that was given to the textile mill owners of Mumbai after the textile mills went bankrupt permitting them to dispose off their land to any person at any time and at a price that suited them.

Jairam's magnanimity in stipulating that multi-cropped irrigated lands will not be acquired under any circumstances is a inadequate salve to the injury caused to the farmers. The stipulation is like saying that the invading marauders should not take away the prettier and the more beautiful daughters but can have their pleasure with the less gainly ones.

Jairam Ramesh has honestly admitted that, so far, in most cases R&R had not kept pace with acquisition. In many cases the time gap has exceeded several decades. He would do well to start with a scratch and examine the genesis of the problem caused by the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 and the tinkering that was done to the Act, particularly at the time of introduction of Schedule IX to the Constitution.

SHARAD JOSHI, founder of the Shetkari Sanghatana and until recently, a member of the Rajya Sabha,

From Our Readers (cont'd. from page 2)

2. Communal organizations are usually quick to take offence. Agitation may be more for political reasons rather than religious. Decision of the committee may be based on political compulsions.
3. There are many neighbouring countries, which are non-democratic, or have a poor record of human rights. Powerful countries, like China, may even have political objectives. Must our channels be restrained from

reporting on such matters?

Recently, we have read about government decisions which seem to be aimed at making the media more compliant with government objectives. This latest decision seems to be one more in the same direction.

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Indo-Pak Wars of 1965 and 1971

Suresh C. Sharma

1965 : *The two belligerents drifted into a war step by step and not as a deliberate plan. Air Marshal Asghar Khan, former Air Chief of Pakistan, termed it as a war fought for no purpose.*

1971 : *For Pakistan it was a complete and humiliating defeat, Pakistan feared that the two-nation theory was disproved and that the Islamic ideology had proved insufficient to keep Bengalis part of Pakistan.*

The 1965 War

The controversy about the border with Pakistan in Kutch was a legacy of the dispute between the Princely State of Kutch and Sind province of British India. Pakistan's attempt to establish a post in Chad Bet in 1956 was foiled by the 7th Grenadiers. Frequent clashes started occurring from January 1965 onwards. The choice of this sector was a ploy to draw the India Army to Kutch before attacking Jammu and Kashmir. India decided on a holding action and moved the main force close to the Punjab border. On 29 April, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri issued a warning to Pakistan. The issue was settled through arbitration by British Prime Minister Harold Wilson in July 65.

The next step by Pakistan was to send 7000 military and para-military personnel in civil dress in August. This was a replica of the 1947 invasion by tribals led by Pakistani Army officers. They planned a coup on 8 August to coincide with the anniversary of the Hazratbal incident and expected the local people to stage a revolt. The presence of Pakistani personnel was reported by a shepherd. India rushed additional forces and crossed the Cease Fire Line on 15 August to strike at the safe bases. Haji Pir Pass and Feature 13620 were captured. The local population did not support the infiltrators and the infiltrators started going back.

Pakistan had been preparing for a war. India's decision not to move major forces into Kutch had been misunderstood as weakness. Pakistan dictator Field Marshal Ayub Khan believed that India had not yet recovered from the 1962 debacle and US aid to India after 1962 was tilting the balance in favour of India. He denigrated the quality of Indian soldiers. In his directive, he had said that one hard knock would demoralize the Hindus. When the Defence Secretary conveyed the decision to attack India, Pakistan's Army Chief General Musa pointed out lack of resources. The Defence Secretary repeated the prevailing Pakistani view that one Pakistani soldier was equal to ten Indian soldiers. General Musa retorted "I know that but what should I do when

the eleventh soldier comes up." Pakistan felt confident of the superior weapons received through US aid. It had made the cardinal mistake of underestimating the enemy.

On the diplomatic front, Pakistan was overconfident of Chinese support having signed an agreement on frontier rectification in 1963. Bhutto declared that attack on Pakistan would involve the territorial integrity of the largest state in Asia. It had attempted rapprochement with USSR. In 1964, USSR did not show the usual staunch support for India on the Kashmir issue. Ayub Khan thought Shastri to be a weak Prime Minister. During the discussions, the Nawab of Kalabagh who was Governor of Punjab had advised against war. He warned "Do not listen to Bhutto. If you attack India, you will face a reverse." He was removed from the post of governor and was later shot, his son being the prime suspect. The hawks carried the day and Pakistan launched Operation Grand Slam on 1 September by an attack in the Akhnur sector. It believed that India will keep the response confined to J&K. The UN observers had reported about the concentration of tanks by Pakistan opposite Akhnur a few days before 1 September. It has not been clarified why this report was ignored.

Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Chaudhuri was in Srinagar that day waiting for the weather to clear to visit Baramulla. It took some time to get a clear picture. Meanwhile, Shastri gave the go ahead to the Air Chief to strike at the advancing Pakistani tanks. The COAS was apprised of the attack by Pakistan and he flew back. At the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA), the Director Military Intelligence gave the current situation. Representative External Affairs Ministry objected to Army's proposal for an offensive in Punjab as detrimental to India's image. Shastri approved the Army plan and orders were issued for an offensive in Punjab.

The formations that had been recently de-inducted raced back. The people gave unflinching support. The four lanes of the Grand Truck Road became one-way traffic to the West and two more lanes were opened. Civil transport was commandeered to overcome shortage. The

response of civil transport operators was heartening. Not even one truck driver declined to carry troops or supplies forward. Blackouts for precaution against air raids were observed meticulously on their own. Villagers brought hot food for soldiers. India opened the offensive in the early hours of 6 September on a wide front. Ichogil Canal was crossed in the initial thrust and Lahore was in sight. The opportunity was not exploited due to lack of coordination and they had to fall back. India's attack drew Pakistan formations away from Akhnur and the situation stabilized there.

Pakistan dropped paratroopers on 7 September near airfields to carry out sabotage. A few were rounded up by the villagers. Out of a total of 135 paratroopers dropped, 20 were killed, 93 captured and 22 went back. After probing attacks from 9 September onwards, Pakistan launched its main offensive in the Khem Karan sector on 10 September. The defenders held on to their position and Pakistan fell back, leaving 97 tanks behind, 32 of them in running condition. Village Asal Uttar became the graveyard of Patton tanks of Pakistan. Company Quartermaster Havaldar Abdul Hamid and Colonel Tarapore were awarded Param Vir Chakra posthumously in this action.

On 17 September, China gave an ultimatum to India to remove the posts from Chinese territory. Shastri replied that China was at liberty to remove any posts from their territory, if any. On 14 September, US Ambassador John Cabot told China's representative in Warsaw to keep out of the Indo Pak conflict. The war was coming to a stalemate. On the advice of the COAS that we were running low on ammunition, Shastri agreed to a UN sponsored ceasefire on 23 September. The USA had imposed sanctions on arms supply to both the parties which hurt Pakistan more, but who did manage to get spares and aircraft from friendly countries like Jordan and Iran. USA tried to remain neutral and USSR stepped in to host talks between the two parties in Tashkent. It was agreed to revert to the pre-war status. Hajipir was handed back even though Shastri had committed in the Parliament not to return it. He died of a heart attack in Tashkent. Ripples of the agreement resulted in the ouster of Ayub in 1969. Feature 13620 was also handed back. In 1971, it was again captured by us, to be retained this time.

It is difficult to say whether we could have achieved a major victory by not accepting the cease fire. India fought this war under the shadow of 1962 defeat. The Army redeemed their honour, officers always leading from the front. Ten commanding officers were killed in this short campaign. The war dented the myth that Pakistan Army could defeat "Hindu" India.

After the Kutch affair fizzled out in 1965, aircraft

Carrier Vikrant was put in dry dock for long overdue maintenance. Other ships also needed repairs and routine maintenance. The fleet was concentrated in the Andamans and East coast. There was threat from Pakistani submarine Ghazi and Indian Navy [IN] had neither submarines nor any practical experience in handling submarine threat except for occasional exercises with Commonwealth navies. On 1 September, the fleet rushed back to the West coast. Orders were issued to get Vikrant ready for operations. Surprisingly, the Government directed the navy not to seek action at sea and only defend themselves if attacked by Pakistani naval units. Admiral Soman, the Navy Chief, protested to the Defence Minister, Chavan, but in vain. Prime Minister Shastri expressed the same view that it was more crucial to defend Andamans against a possible attack by Indonesia. He was annoyed when Soman reminded him as to what happened to Germany by keeping their navy bottled up and told Soman that he had no choice. Soman asked for permission to see the Supreme Commander and Shastri said "No, you do not have to see him." Indian Navy did not take part in the conflict. Navy pilots were seconded to the IAF and they won gallantry awards. Pakistan Navy bombed Dwarka radar station in a sneak raid. The radar station was not damaged and it had no strategic significance. Pakistan carried out this raid perhaps with knowledge of embargo on IN operations.

The seeds of discontent in East Pakistan were sown in this war as East Pakistan lay at the mercy of India, if they so chose. Pakistan followed the policy pronounced by the former Army Chief, General Gracy that "Battle for East Pakistan will be fought in West Pakistan" It was good as a strategic rationale but political dynamite. USA and USSR were involved in a fierce cold war but no shots were fired because each side made it clear how far the adversary can go. Then the road to Berlin was closed but the air corridor was kept open. USSR abandoned the arming of Cuba to avoid a hot war. This appreciation and understanding has been missing in the relations between India and Pakistan. Pakistan sent infiltrators hoping that India would not cross the Cease Fire Line. India crossed it without preparing for a possible attack in Akhnur sector and Pakistan did not realize that with the prospect of Jammu being cut off India had no option but to go for a general war. The two belligerents drifted into a war step by step and not as a deliberate plan. Air Marshal Asghar Khan, former Air Chief of Pakistan, termed it as a war fought for no purpose.

The 1971 War and the Birth of Bangladesh

Forty years ago Mujibur Rahman, the leader of the Awami Party, based in Dacca then in East Pakistan had

won the general elections of 1970 to the Pakistan Assembly (equivalent to India's Lok Sabha) and emerged as the single largest party and thus earned the right to be the elected Prime Minister of all Pakistan. But Yahya Khan the then military dictator of Pakistan declined to invite the majority leader to form the government; instead he ordered a military crackdown on 25 March 1971 and had Mujibur Rahman arrested.

On 27 March 1971, Major Ziaur Rahman an officer in the Pakistan Army declared the independence of Bangladesh. East Pakistan Rifles, a paramilitary force, defected. Mukti Bahini, comprising of these paramilitary personnel and young students was formed to liberate Bangladesh. The Pakistan army conducted a widespread genocide against the Bengali population of East Pakistan and in particular against Hindus, leading to approximately 10 million people taking refuge in India. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi expressed full support to the struggle for independence by the people of East Pakistan.

Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi accepted the advice of General [later Field Marshal] Manekshaw to launch army action in winter, when the Himalayan passes would be closed by snow, preventing any Chinese intervention. This decision gave us time to build up logistics base in the East and make up the deficiencies in weapons. The Indo-USSR Treaty of August 1971 was a further safeguard against military intervention by USA or China. There were firefights on the border and a major incident occurred on 23 November at Hilli after which Pakistan declared an Emergency. On 3 December at about 5:40 PM, Pakistani Air Force [PAF] launched a pre-emptive strike on eight airfields in India. The Indian Air Force [IAF] responded with initial air strikes that very night and next morning and followed it up with a massive coordinated air, sea, and land assault.

Pakistan's Dispositions

Pakistan had to guard against widespread insurgency, threat from India and attempt by the Mukti Bahini to secure an area to announce an independent state. The Pakistan Army was dispersed to fight insurgency, deny border intrusions and firmly hold on its communication centres. The resources available were not adequate for these multiple requirements. The net result was that Pakistan was not strong anywhere. Air space over India was not available after the hijacking of an Indian Airlines flight on 30 January 1971. All supplies by air had to follow a route via Sri Lanka. Incidentally, Pakistani officers were convinced that the hijacking was an operation executed by RAW. In spite of an adverse military situation Pakistan followed a path of bluff hoping for intervention by China and USA. It is believed that

two senior defence officers gave a wrong report after visit to China in May- June of Chinese assurance of military intervention. No wonder that in June, General Niazi, Commander of Pakistan Forces in East Pakistan, in his presentation to his Central Government in Islamabad talked of carving a corridor between East and West Pakistan.

The war cry was that the Bengalis were not good Muslims. According to an officer of Military Engineering Service, a Baluch battalion had declined to open fire as the demonstrators were Muslims and not Kaffirs. They were rushed back to West Pakistan. In their regimental magazines, the term used for Hindus was Kaffirs.

Air Operations

The Indian Air Force flew 4,000 sorties. PAF had incurred huge losses in the conflict. USA could not replace their planes due to sanctions having been imposed. Jordan sent four Sabre aircraft and promised to send another 18. Iran declined to send any reinforcements apprehending USSR's reaction. China too did not oblige. Pakistan Air Force's 14th Squadron was destroyed, putting the Dhaka airfield out of commission and resulting in complete Indian air superiority in the east. On 14 December, an air strike on the Governor's residence during a conference unnerved the Governor and he moved to the International Red Cross office. On the same day six Pakistani Sabre [F86] aircraft attacked Srinagar Airfield. Flying Officer Sekhon on stand by duty took off while under attack and hit two of the Sabres who limped back to Pakistan. Three Sabres got behind his tail. He turned the tables by executing a tight circle and menacing the Sabres. The Pakistani pilots were astonished at his manouvre but one against four is a difficult situation. The escort Sabre dived and shot Sekhon's plane which crashed. Even the Pakistani pilot praised the skill and determination of Sekhon. He was awarded the Param Vir Chakra, the sole recipient of this honour in the IAF.

Naval Operations

In the 1965 war, the Indian Navy was directed not to seek action. In 1971, in the meetings of three Indian Service Chiefs with the Prime Minister [PM], the discussions were mostly about army and air force plans. Admiral Nanda, the Navy Chief was determined that the navy should play its due role in the war. The pride of the Indian Navy, Vikrant, had serious problems of leaks and cracks and other ships had also developed some faults after patrolling in the Bay of Bengal. Four new boilers for Vikrant were acquired from UK and sea trials conducted in March to June established that it could run at reduced speed. It was allotted to Eastern Command. There were many officers in the navy who considered Vikrant to be

a liability due to threat from the Pakistani submarine, Ghazi. Ghazi entered the Bay of Bengal on 20 November with a mission to attack Vikrant. Aware of the threat from this submarine, Vice Admiral Krishnan Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet implemented a deception plan. Vikrant sailed to the Andamans and Ghazi was led to believe that INS Rajput at the Vizag port was Vikrant. It was achieved by sending heavy radio traffic and placing orders for large quantity of supplies. On 3 December, Ghazi which was shadowing Rajput was blown up by a depth charge from the Rajput and sank with 93 men on board. Pakistan claimed that it was blown up by a mine which it was laying. Krishnan sent a message to the fleet: "I have a dead Pakistani submarine, Ghazi, lying at my feet. This is the time to do and dare. Motto for the Eastern Fleet is Attack, Attack, and Attack."

On the Western Coast, Admiral Nanda planned a strike by missile boats which were towed close to Karachi. Vice Admiral Kohli, Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet thought it to be too audacious and wanted to resign. A meeting with all the commanding officers restored all round confidence and the strike was carried out on the night of 4/5 December. The Pakistani destroyer Khaibar intercepted a radio conversation but could not understand the language, as the Indian crew was talking in Russian! Pakistani ship Khaibar was sunk. Khaibar took it to be an air attack. The port anti-aircraft guns also opened up and the C- in-C PAF conveyed to the Navy Chief - "Well, old boy, this happens in war. I am sorry, your ships were sunk." Merchant ship Challenger carrying ammunition for the Pakistan armed forces sank within eight minutes of the strike. PNS Shahjehan and a minesweeper PNS Muhafiz met the same fate. In another attack on the night of 8-9 December reserve fuel tanks were destroyed. On 9 December, the Indian Navy suffered its biggest wartime loss when the Pakistani submarine PNS Hangor sank the frigate INS Khukri in the Arabian Sea resulting in the loss of 18 officers and 176 sailors. Captain Mulla, the captain of Khukri, supervised the rescue of his men without any regard for his safety. Hanging on to the rail, he went down with the ship, in the highest traditions of the Indian Navy.

Ground Operations

In the East, the strategy adopted was a swift, three-pronged assault by nine infantry divisions with attached armored units with close air support that rapidly converged on Dhaka. Lieutenant General Sagat Singh, GOC IV Corps led the Indian thrust to Dacca, while XXXIII Corps cut the East Pakistan territory along Hilli-Gaibanda axis. This operation severed connection between Dacca and the administrative headquarters at Rangpur. Pakistan had built up strong points and called them forts. The Indian

campaign employed "blitzkrieg" techniques, exploiting weaknesses in the enemy's positions and bypassing opposition. Niazi wanted to surrender on 14 December but was asked to wait as help was expected from China and USA. Niazi asked the Chinese Consul and got no firm news of help. On 16 December, the Pakistani forces stationed in East Pakistan surrendered. The Instrument of Surrender was signed at Ramna Race Course in Dhaka at 16.31 IST. Indira Gandhi announced in the Lok Sabha the birth of the new nation of Bangladesh.

American and Soviet Involvement

When Pakistan's defeat in the eastern sector seemed certain, Nixon ordered the USS Enterprise into the Bay of Bengal. The Enterprise arrived in the Bay of Bengal on 11 December. The Soviet Navy dispatched two groups of ships armed with nuclear missiles, from Vladivostok; they trailed U.S. Task Force 74 into the Indian Ocean from 18 December 1971 until 7 January 1972. The Soviets also had a nuclear submarine to ward off the threat posed by USS Enterprise in the Indian Ocean. China did not accede to the suggestion from Nixon to intervene, due to likely reaction from the USSR.

Nixon was concerned about the break up of West Pakistan. It is of interest that we understood such a task to be beyond the capability of Indian Armed Forces. Why then was USA worried about it? The destruction of the reserve fuel tanks at Karachi had left Pakistan with fuel barely for a month. With Karachi port blocked by India, Pakistan was in no position to continue the war after a month. With no fuel for Pakistani forces and with movement of army divisions from the East Pakistan to the west disabled, Pakistan Armed Forces could have been destroyed and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir could have been liberated. We had failed to appreciate the strategic fall out of our success.

The Aftermath

For Pakistan it was a complete and humiliating defeat, Pakistan feared that the two-nation theory was disproved and that the Islamic ideology had proved insufficient to keep Bengalis part of Pakistan. Their main criticism was not of India's role but of the "betrayal" by Bangladesh. Spontaneous demonstrations and mass protests erupted on the streets of major cities in West Pakistan. Demoralized and unable to control the situation, General Yahya Khan surrendered power to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

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Vijay Mallya – Good Times Are Out

Firoze Hirjikaka

He began to believe his own advertising slogans.

It looks like the king of good times is tottering on his throne. He recently had to close down the low-cost arm of his airline and there is news that a majority of Kingfisher flights are going to be cancelled. It is feasible that Kingfisher airlines may be facing bankruptcy. Quite a fall from grace for the golden boy with the Midas touch; the wunderkind who could do no wrong. So what did go wrong?

My reading is that Vijay Mallya tried to live life a bit too king-sized – especially since he didn't have the financial wherewithal to sustain it. Mallya inherited a thriving liquor business from his father and to his credit, he expanded it to dizzy heights. So much so that his trademark Kingfisher beer became the preferred brew even in some Western countries. But then he succumbed to the disease that afflicts many over-achievers – an overriding ego and infinite belief in his own infallibility. He began to believe his own advertising slogans.

Perhaps in his desire to be included in the highest echelons of society, he decided that the liquor business, however lucrative, was not respectable enough. Taking his reputation as a high flyer literally, he started a luxury airline. Kingfisher Air was touted as the *crème de la crème* of Indian airlines and, in the beginning, it lived up to its hype. The airhostesses were svelte and chic, meals were elaborate and served on elegant crockery with matching cutlery; and it even had a valet service. Not surprisingly, maintaining that standard required a large amount of working capital; and soon Kingfisher required to be cross-subsidized by Mallya's liquor business. Still wanting to expand his horizons, Mallya next started a low-cost airline. However, he could not quite rid himself of kingly aspirations and the economics of scale required for such a venture were not implemented efficiently. After all, Kingfisher's good-time image could not be tarnished, even if it did not make for a workable business model. Kingfisher Lite began haemorrhaging money almost from the start and inevitably, it had to be shut down.

Mallya's biggest and most foolhardy venture was getting into Formula One racing. This was a sheer ego trip, perhaps guided by Mallya's desire to gain entry into the international jet set. It did not matter that motor racing was an alien sport in this country, or that India did not

have a single driver of international stature – even Narayan Karthikeyan does not quite make the cut. Mallya wanted to be one of the big boys; a certified member of the international glamour set. If he was aware that most Formula 1 teams are sponsored by giant automakers, more as a status symbol for their car brands rather than any expectation of profit, he chose to ignore it. He was finally the true king of good times and to drive the point home, he organized the recent F-1 extravaganza at Gurgaon. The event may have dazzled India's A-listers, but I doubt if it made any money. In fact, in a humiliating climb down, Mallya was forced to divest a substantial share of his racing venture to Sahara.

The bottom line is that Vijay Mallya has bitten off more than he can chew. He has his fingers in too many pies which are draining his resources. His son may be romancing Deepika Padukone, but the father's flirtation with all things glamorous is losing its sheen. He can still cut his losses and go back to the beginning. Kingfisher beer and its ancillary liquors have been consistent money spinners for him; and that's where he should concentrate his energies. However, giving up on the airline and F-1 would be a tacit admission of failure; and I doubt if Mallya can stomach that. He may have to though. The king of good times may soon be demoted to a mere lord.

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How Much Oxygen Does A Man Require?

- In one day a human being breathes oxygen equivalent to three cylinders.
- Each oxygen cylinder on an average costs Rs.700, so in a day one uses Oxygen worth Rs.2100 and for a full year it is Rs.7,66,500.
- If we consider an average life span of 65 years; the costs of oxygen we use becomes a staggering sum of Rs.500,00,000.
- All this oxygen is derived free of cost from the surrounding trees.
- Very few people look at trees as a resource and there is rampant tree cutting** going on everywhere which should stop.

K. Venkatachari, Chennai.

Courtesy: Karmayog@yahoogroups.com



Cornucopia

Firoze Hirjika

The Mayawati Phenomenon

So what accounts for her air of invulnerability?

Mayawati is a megalomaniac who has no compunctions about splurging crores of public funds in building monuments and statues to herself - an act of self aggrandizement worthy of Caesar himself. Mayawati has reportedly amassed crores in personal wealth, by means that only the most gullible would believe to be above board. And yet, this handbag-toting virago continues to win election after election in her native state of Uttar Pradesh. In the eyes of the Dalits, her core constituency, she can do no wrong? In short, Mayawati is a phenomenon in Indian politics.

By any standards of propriety, integrity and just plain class, Mayawati is the epitome of shamelessness. And she makes no apologies for it. Rather, she seems to take a positive delight in flaunting her brazenness and her Dalit origins in the face of more "refined" leaders like Sonia Gandhi, Advani and the like. They may express contempt for her, but they cannot get rid of her. She remains an ever present thorn in their sides.

So what accounts for her air of invulnerability? Why is it that in spite of her excesses and blatant lack of scruples, her core constituencies of Dalits and Scheduled Castes continue to adore her? It is certainly not because they are stupid. As they have proved in election after national election, they are very smart in seeing through the empty promises our politicians are so good at disseminating. And yet, in their eyes, she

remains almost a goddess who can do no wrong. Who is responsible for this strange state of affairs? Ironically, it is you and me; the people who write letters to the editor and send their children to English-medium schools; the so called upper and middle class of India.

Ever since the civilization of Bharat evolved, its people have divided themselves into upper and lower castes. And the lower castes are never allowed to forget their position in society. They are the servant class, almost by a natural order of selection; the *mochis* and *bais* and others without which the "superior" classes cannot survive, but remain invisible to them. And it does not matter if a Dalit, through dint of effort and hard work, has achieved a high level of education or corporate position. With few exceptions, they are always reminded of their inferior status. If your boss happens to be a Dalit, you may call him sir in the office, but it is unlikely that you will invite him home for dinner.

We Indians may have achieved our independence from British rule, but the Dalits continue to remain second class citizens in their own country. And so, when one of them, like Mayawati, achieves a position of national prominence and cocks a snook at their historical oppressors, they are delighted. They love her for it; and they are loath to grudge her any extravagance. Yes, Mayawati is here to stay; and the rest of us better get used to it.

What Price the Marathi Manos?

An increasing number of Marathi children - and their parents - are showing a reluctance to pursue their education in their native tongue.

At the Shiv Sena Dussera rally, Bal Thackeray asked a pertinent question viz: What is going to change in your life if Dadar is renamed Chaitanyabhoomi. I totally agree with him. By the same token, however, I would like to ask him to place his hand on his heart and declare if the quality of life has changed in any way for the better since the name of "his" city has changed from Bombay to Mumbai. On the contrary, it has deteriorated. And yet, his party is so bereft of any original or constructive ideas that they keep reviving this hoary slogan at every opportunity. The latest manifestation was when Sena goons defaced legitimate hoardings of Bombay Dyeing

company, for which the BMC - controlled by their own party - had given all necessary permissions. It is about time Thackeray's party woke up and realized that the average Mumbaikar has become too astute to be fooled by these empty cosmetic gestures which have absolutely no relevance to his daily life.

The revealing statistic that the number of students opting for the Marathi medium in BMC schools has reduced drastically should give food for thought to parochial political outfits like the Shiv Sena and the MNS. These parties lose no opportunity to tom-tom the

supposed virtues of the Marathi *manoos*, while conveniently turning a blind eye towards the ground reality. The painful reality is that an increasing number of Marathi children - and their parents - are showing a reluctance to pursue their education in their native tongue. On the other hand, an increasing number of youngsters are choosing to study in English. A majority of these students belong to the very Marathi *manoos* whose cause the Sena/MNS is purportedly championing. The Sena/MNS's core constituency, the majority of who belong to

the working class, are waking up to the realization that to get ahead in today's world, they need English rather than Marathi. Perhaps the Sena/MNS will bear that in mind when they indulge in empty gestures like naming everything after Shivaji, or bullying shopkeepers and commercial establishments to change their signboards to Marathi. But it is a vain hope.

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Save Academic Freedom

Ramanujan's "Three Hundred Ramayana: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translations"

The All India Forum for the Right to Education (AIFRTE) is alarmed and shocked by the recent case of an erudite, well-researched essay by A. K. Ramanujan being removed from the reading list of the concurrent course offered by the History Department for under-graduate students at the prestigious Delhi University. The essay, entitled "Three Hundred Ramayanas: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translation", has been withdrawn on the grounds that it has "hurt the sentiments of Hindus". The academic merit of the essay has never been in question as it has been widely recognised by historians and other academicians. This makes it even more atrocious that it should have been removed through a resolution of the University's Academic Council and that only nine members of the Council opposed the resolution. The abolition of the essay from the history curriculum amounts to negation of the very idea of cohesive India with diversity that emerged from our freedom struggle and was enshrined in the Constitution.

The Supreme Court took up the case and in its ruling asserted that academic issues should be settled within the University and an expert committee should go into the matter. Accordingly, a four-member committee took up the matter and submitted a report to the Vice-Chancellor. Three of the four members dismissed the argument of hurting sentiments as frivolous and with no evidence to support. In fact they emphasised the fact that the demand for dropping the text from the reading list was contrary to academic concerns and, if acceded to, would be damaging to the University's character and functioning as an academic institution.

[Extracted from a press release by the All India Forum for the Right to Education (AIFRTE) and published in the *Janata*, October 30, 2011.]

"To insist that one version of the Ramayana is the only authorised narrative is an insult to the Tradition of Rama.

"The ridiculous decision by Delhi University to remove A. K. Ramanujan's sublime essay on different tellings of the Ramayana is tragic on several levels. Once again, we are seeing the sterile debate of the deaf between the Left and the Right, of the kind that first developed during the Ayodhya

movement. Proponents of the progressive Left rightly see this as a free speech and academic freedom issue, the Right sees this as a question of defence of tradition, as defined by it.

"The great irony is that any right thinking person who actually reads Ramanujan's essay can only come away with his abiding love for the story of Rama, his complete immersion in its many traditions, and a wonderfully nuanced understanding of its meanings."

Excerpted from the article by Nalin Mehta, *Mumbai Mirror*, October 31, 2011.



(Triptych of A. K. Ramanujan by his daughter Kritika Ramanujan.)

Pioneering translator of ancient Tamil poetry into English and perhaps modern India's finest English-language poet, A. K. Ramanujan (1929-93) has also been recognised as one of the world's most profound scholars of South Asian language and culture. Over a period of four decades, Ramanujan wrote a series of essays on literature and culture that embody a wide range of experience and creative reflections.

A. K. Ramanujan taught at the University of Chicago and at various other institutions for forty years. His books include *The Striders* (1966), *The Interior Landscape* (1967), *Relations* (1971), *Speaking of Siva* (1973), *Second Sight* (1985) and *Poems of Love and War* (1986).

C. Rajagopalachari



(10/12/1878 – 25/12/1972)

C. Rajagopalachari, CR or Rajaji as he was affectionately called in his time, was, like Mahatma Gandhi, one of the founding fathers of India's freedom, and who, in the words of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, "laid the foundations of India's Parliamentary Life from Madras as prime minister of the then Madras Presidency (1937-'39)"

How many of our present-day politicians, leave alone today's young generation, know anything about him? Not many know that it was he, as India's last Governor-General (1948-'50)

who was requested to proclaim Bharat as the Sovereign Democratic Republic of India and its newly drafted Constitution, on January 26, 1950. Here is an interesting quote from Rajmohan Gandhi's biography of Rajaji: "In the copy someone gave C.R. of Johnson's life of Alexander Pope, a little vertical stroke in Rajaji's entry on the margin stands against a short sentence: "But let no man dream of influence beyond his life".

"In twenty-five years' time," he (Rajaji) once said to the British author and writer, Monica Felton, "people would ask 'who was Rajagopalachari? We have never heard of him'. The possibility that frightens most amused him".

W. R. Crocker, Australia's Ambassador to India, has said in his memoirs that he found in Rajaji 'an utter lack of vanity'.

C.R. born on December 10, 1878 in Thorappalli village in the then Salem District of Tamilnadu had his higher education in Bangalore; after which he took his Law Degree from the Madras Law College, and set up practice in Salem town in 1901. Then on, he took a keen interest in the struggle for India's freedom, attending the annual conferences of the Indian National Congress of those days. Though Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak was his first hero C.R. won the admiring affection of national leaders of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das's stature also by his enthusiastic involvement in their deliberations for drafting the Party's resolutions in the Surat Session of the Congress. Spreading awareness of Gandhiji's

Satyagraha in South Africa he was even then assisting him with monetary contributions from Salem, long before they met in Madras in March 1919. Gandhiji publicly acknowledged that nobody in India had understood the philosophy of his Non-violent Non-cooperation movement and followed it faithfully all through. Many in India and abroad were and are even now calling Gandhiji's Satyagraha movement as a 'technique'. Rajaji disagreed. "The very notion that what Gandhiji taught was a 'technique' has led to error and of course, disappointment...Mahatma Gandhi's 'technique' is no doubt the presentation of Love and Truth in any confrontation against Evil. But love and truth are not available in the market. We cannot procure them as we can procure rifles and pistols. They can issue only out of faith in God."

During his father's campaign against the Nuclear Arms Race, C. R. Narasimhan, Rajaji's youngest son recalls, "he appealed to Pandit Nehru to recruit him (an 80+ then!) as the first volunteer in an unarmed ship that may be sent to a Nuclear Test Area (in the Pacific Ocean, as mooted by Bertrand Russell) by way of protest! Gandhiji used Satyagraha in his fight against the British. When Rajaji appealed to Pandit Nehru to send on behalf of Official India an unarmed ship to the Test Area, he gave a new dimension to the use of Satyagraha by one government against another government."

What is perennially relevant in Rajaji's relentless fight against corruption in India during its 'Permit-Licence-Quota Raj' days was the uncompromising emphasis he laid on individual character and good conduct for every one of us if we really wanted good governance and a peaceful life. His is an unfinished fight- The only tribute a grateful citizen can pay to his sacred memory is to be ever vigilant to continue that fight, whatever the odds against it be!

K. VEDAMURTHY is a journalist and a family friend of late Shri C. Rajagopalchhari.

We have pleasure in publishing this appreciation of Rajaji on his 133rd birth anniversary. - Ed.

The Many Versions of Valmiki Ramayana

B. M. N. Murthy

The story of Ramayana has been so powerful and deep that quite a few other Ramayanas have come into existence in course of time, enriching the Ramayana literature.

I was prompted to write this article on ‘The many versions of Valmiki Ramayana’ with a desire to lend my own voice to the chorus disapproving of the Delhi University’s recent decision to withdraw the late Prof. A. K. Ramanujan’s essay on the “300 Versions of the Valmiki Ramayana”.

Although India was the birthplace of the Ramayana in the distant past, it now belongs to the whole world, as all our other scriptures do, in keeping with our dharmic motive “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”, meaning ‘the whole world is one family’. This was also the purpose with which Tagore, who founded the Vishwabharati University at Calcutta, defined the purpose of University education by having for its logo the Vedic Mantra “Yatra Vishvam Bhavati Eka needam” meaning ‘where the whole world can reside in a single nest’. But for the several versions of the Ramayana, people would not have understood why Gandhiji gave the word “Ramarajya” so much importance by repeatedly using it in all his lectures and writings. The quintessence story of the Ramayana which is now made accessible to the whole world through its several variations is verily a monument to the ideal of Hinduism with its high esteem on moral values.

It may be of interest for readers to note that an eminent Sanskrit scholar from Mysore Dr. N. Anantharangachar M.A; B.T.D. Litt has written as early as 1983 a book in Kannada by name “Ramayana Bharathi” dealing with the several versions of the Ramayana, after extensive research. In his book, Prof. Anantachar has enlisted 303 versions of the Vamiki Ramayana in several regional languages of India

The story of Ramayana is predominantly prevalent even today, in some form or the other, all over the world, even though it was written thousands of years ago. The story of Ramayana has been so powerful and deep that quite a few other Ramayanas have come into existence in course of time, enriching the Ramayana literature. All these versions, though they vary from the original in several ways, have, more or less kept the broad outline of the story the same. Some research scholars hold the

view that there are nearly 300 versions of the Valmiki Ramayana. A few notables are the following:

1. **Adhyatma Ramayana;** Written in Sanskrit, the Adhyatma Ramayana contains about 4,000 shlokas as against Valmiki Ramayana’s 24,000 shlokas. It forms part of the Brahmanda Purana and as such the authorship is attributed to Veda Vyasa. Cast in the form of a dialogue between Shiva and Parvathi, the work is highly devotional and is dedicated to the spread of Sri Rama’s virtues.
2. **Vasishtha Ramayana:** Also called ‘Yoga Vasishtha’, this is also in Sanskrit. According to legend, Maharshi Valmiki was instructed by Lord Brahma to compose a scriptural guide which would act as a beacon light to men and women to free themselves from the shackles of *Samsara* and enable them to qualify for *Moksha*. The format is in the form of a dialogue between the young prince Rama and his family preceptor Vasishta. Even as a young prince, at one stage Rama gets completely depressed and is unable to find out the meaning and purpose of human existence. It is at this stage Valmiki composes the Vasishtha Ramayana underscoring the meaning of life and how to aim at eternal happiness.

The original text is said to have contained about 32,000 shlokas. However, this text is now no longer available. The present text now available consists of about 28,000 shlokas. Yoga Vasishtha was one of the most favourite works on Advaita Vedanta which was often quoted by Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi as well as by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.
3. **Ananda Ramayana:** Written in Sanskrit, it consists of about 12,000 verses and is in the form of a dialogue, first between Shiva and Parvathi and later between a Guru by name Ramadasa and his disciple Vishnudasa. This work contains a number of stories popular even now, such as those pertaining to the pilgrimage centre Gokarna in Karnataka and of the Rakshasa brothers Airavana and Mailravana of the nether world who tried to help Ravana. The work is assigned to a period in the late 14th century.

4. **Gayatri Ramayana:** This is a rare piece of work. Maharshi Valmiki requests Sage Narada to teach him Ramayana. In response, Sage Narada initiated Valmiki into Sri Gayatri Ramayana, where the first syllable of each stanza is the root syllable or the *Beejakshara* of the Gayatri Mantram. Meditating on this, Valmiki comprehended the Ramayana in all its entirety and wrote the elaborate work now popular as the Valmiki Ramayana. The 24,000 shlokas in the Valmiki Ramayana make use of the 24 letters of the Gayatri Mantram. For example, the Ramayana starts from the first shloka "*Thapasvadhya niratam* etc" where the first letter 'tha' is the first letter of the Gayatri Mantram '*Thatsaviturvarenyam* etc'. Thus we see a close relation between Valmiki Ramayana and the Gayatri Mantram
5. **Tulasi Ramayana or the Sri Ramacharita Manasa:** This was composed by Saint Goswami Tulasidas in Avadhi, a dialect of Hindi, sometime in the latter half of the 16th century, under divine inspiration.
Saint Tulasidas was born in the Chitrakoot district of U.P. It is said that the Saint started writing the work in Ayodhya and completed it when he was in Kashi a few years later. When the work was completed it received instant and wide recognition. Today, arguably, Sri Ramacharita Manasam is one of the most popular versions of the Ramayana that has inspired the heart and stimulated the imagination of innumerable devotees, particularly in the North.
6. **Kamba Ramayanam in Tamil:** This was the first major Ramayanam composed in Tamil by Tamil poet Kambar sometime in 830 A.D. during the Chola regime. Kambar was a court poet in the Chola Kingdom. It is said that Kambar recited the whole Ramayanam to an audience of the literary elite, something like an Academy of Letters, before it was finally approved. The work consists of about 10,500 verses of 4 lines each. Kambar mostly follows Valmiki except for some changes to suit the then prevailing social needs.
7. **Ramavatara Charita in Kashmiri:** Dogra ruler Maharaja Singh [1845-1857], the ruler of Kashmir, was a descendant of the solar dynasty - the Raghu Vamsha, from which Lord Rama hailed. Naturally all Dogra rulers were great devotees of Lord Rama. In fact the State of Kashmir accepted Lord Rama as the chosen deity. During the Dogra regime, a large number of Rama and Raghunatha temples were built in the State of Kashmir. It was during the rule of Maharaja Singh that the first Ramayana in Kashmiri was written by a devotee-poet by name Praksh Rama in 1847.
8. **Ramayana in Oriya:** As Lord Rama with his consort

Seetha and brother Lakshmana spent a large part of his life in the Dandakaranya forest in Orissa, the Oriyas have a special affinity to Lord Rama. There have been several Ramayanas written in the Oriya language but the earliest is the one called "Jagamohan Ramayana" written by a poet called Balarama Dasa. This tells the full story of Sri Rama in the Oriya language. As per the findings of the Oriya Jnana Kosha, there are nearly 50 works on Ramayana in the Oriya language.

9. **Ramayana in Telugu:** The first exhaustive Ramayana in Telugu came out in the early 13th century. It is known as 'Ranganatha Ramayana' and was written by a poet called Ranganatha. It is not a direct narration of Valmiki Ramayana since it differs on several accounts from the original. However, it remains one of the most popular Ramayanas in Telugu.

This was followed by another Ramayana called 'Bhaskara Ramayana' which was written at the close of the 13th century and written by one Bhaskara Kavi. Bhaskara Ramayana is more or less based on Ranganatha Ramayana. Subsequently, several works have come out in Telugu, the latest one being the 'Srimad Ramayanam' written by one Vasudeva Swamy and better known by the name 'Mandaram'.

10. **Ramayana in other languages:** Other Indian languages have also been enriched by the Ramayana story based on Valmiki or its adaptations. The Ramayana of Krittivasa in Bengali, the Ramavatara of Guru Govind Singh in Punjabi, the Ramacharitha of Giridhar in Gujarathi, Ezhuthachan's Ramayana in Malayalam, Ramayana of Madhava Kandali in Marathi, The Torave Ramayana of Narahari in Kannada – these are some of the well known Ramayanas in other regional languages.

Ramayana outside India: The story of Rama, either in its original form as depicted by Valmiki or in a metamorphosed form, has traveled widely even outside India to Tibet, Eastern Turkestan, South East Asia, Japan and Mongolia.. The following list of works, as an illustration only, gives an idea about the movement of Ramayana outside India: Ramayana Kakawin (Javanese), Kikayat Seri Rama (Malaysian), Ramakien (Thai), Pha Lak Pha Lam and Khavy Thuaraphi (Laos), Hobutsushu (Japanese), Janakhiraja (Sinhalese).

B. M. N. MURTHY is a retired Chief Engineer with the Life Insurance Corporation of India. After retirement he has given himself the task of informing "the younger generation of the spiritual wisdom of India and reminding them of the great traditional lineage to which we Indians belong." Email: bmmurthy@vsnl.com



“A Stream of Correspondence”

with C. Rajagopalachari - 7

K. K. Pathak

The author is an educationist (since retired) with the Rajasthan College in Agra. He enjoyed a unique relationship with the late C. Rajagopalachari, CR or Rajaji as he was more popularly known. This resulted in a “stream of correspondence” between the two that lasted for over 15 years. Mr. Pathak decided to publish these letters and chose the Rajaji Foundation to be the publisher. He agreed to our suggestion to serialise in FF excerpts from the proposed publication. We began serialising in June 2011 (No. 528). Writes Mr. Pathak: “The first part of my story about CR’s letters comes to an end now. The second part of CR’s letters from 1966 to October 1972 would be placed in the hands of the reader soon. This then is the concluding part for now. – Ed.

Four days before this letter (in which Rajaji acknowledged receiving a new walking stick) he had written me an Inland on 14 January 1965:

“Your friend the Scout Commissioner brought and gave me the sweets and the stick. The stick is beautiful and suited specially for me and I like it greatly. Thank you for the affectionate thought.

CR gave up his old stick for the rest of his life and used the one I had sent him. It remained among his last belongings, placed on a table in the small room he used to live. I have no idea about it now as he shifted from 60 Bazlullah Road to Naoroji Road in Kilpauk. I quite remember at a public meeting in 1967 he had raised the stick with great emotion to emphasize a point he was making in his speech. The picture published in the newspapers gave me greatest delight ever.

Although I preferred to be a teacher to a staff journalist as sub-editor, I was not much satisfied on various counts and different reasons I need not enumerate. CR wrote me an Inland on 23 March 1965 after hearing from me about my final resolution of remaining a teacher for the rest of my life, which I assiduously adhered to:

“Your postcard of 22 March. I am glad you prefer to be a teacher. It is a noble thing to be teaching and you may rightly prefer it to staff-journalism.

“I read your long letter with interest and affection. God bless you.”

After receiving CR’s letter of 23 March 1965 I again vacillated and thought of journalism as a more suitable profession for me after serving as a teacher for some years.

In a letter to CR I made a request to explore possibilities of my joining the *Hindustan Times*. I had met S. Mulgaokar, the then editor, who was quite receptive. CR wrote a long hand-written letter on 31 March 1965:

“I am writing to you in spite of your interdiction. Your letter of March 29 came after I wrote to you my letter telling you that you won’t fit in, in the *Hindustan Times* office and that you should apply for a teacher’s place in Pilani where I believe I can request the Birlas to help you...

“Please do not tease yourself by doleful introspection. A householder is entitled and bound to seek a job and he is not doing anything wrong or humiliating himself seeking a friend’s assistance for that purpose.

“Don’t doubt my affection, degree or quality. Your beautiful walking stick is a constant reminder of your almost blind attachment. I am not sure I deserve it. But for God’s sake be cheerful. Life is God’s play and one ought not to spoil his entertainment by melancholy or revolt.”

The letter of CR needs a few words by way of an explanation as to why I ever troubled him with a personal request. The services in Uttar Pradesh were of very poor quality. There were no colleges run by the State Government and private colleges were becoming commercial centres with all sorts of malpractices entailing in making education a private affair. I changed jobs more frequently than CR liked it. Quite naturally, I must have unlocked my heart to him, making him sad by narrating the story of woes I was encountering those days. CR did write to K. K. Birla, who wrote back to me from Calcutta’s

Exchange office, assuring me a job at Pilani. Soon the offer came without calling me for interview. But I was not prepared to go to a distant place away from my hometown, Agra.

“I would not advise you to try for a job in the *Hindustan Times*. I fear you won’t fit in there. But if you feel like it, write to Sri K. K. Birla giving all your qualifications and particulars asking for a job in the teaching line in Pilani and send me a copy of your letter.”

I wrote as desired by CR to K. K. Birla, furnishing the necessary details. A copy of it was sent to CR as he had asked me to. CR wrote back on 10 April 1965:

“Your letter of April 9. ‘If and when’ should not either surprise or disturb you. The old days of recommendations hitting bull’s eye are gone. The Birla Institute has become partially Ford-trustized and there is a committee functioning with Sri K. K. Birla as Chairman. But keep cheerful.”

As I said earlier an offer was made, but I was not prepared to go as far away as Pilani from Agra, my hometown. When I did not accept the offer CR got a bit annoyed again and wrote me on 8 May 1965 the following letter:

“I have your distressing letter. Don’t bother about sending me any Morabba. It is not at all wanted.

“I am sorry your sensitiveness and sense of values prevent you from accepting a very friendly offer made to you which you could have accepted and tried out. Your talents and services could then find appreciation and broader scope. May Heaven guide you. My blessings always.”

P. S.

When Nehru passed away CR in his tribute used *than* as a preposition (eleven years younger than me). As a teacher I always asked my undergraduate and postgraduate students to use *younger than I* using *than* as a conjunction followed by a pronoun in the nominative case. When I showed the impertinence of pointing out this mistake, CR wrote back on a hand-written Inland, saying that usage displaces grammar and that English was a funny language which deceives the logician in us. Today I have examples of the best writers, including Shakespeare, who used *than* as a preposition and the usage is five hundred years old now. CR’s exposition was always terse and full of Biblical idioms.

Festive Greetings from



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

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Self-reliance is both a means and an end.

For Godrej it is the essence of independence.



N O T E S

The Welfare State and its Limitations

In a Welfare State there is always the tendency to concentrate more and more power into the hands of the executive government. The tendency is growing in the country and more and more laws are being passed ousting the jurisdiction of the courts. The President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, drew pointed attention to this tendency in the course of the speech that he delivered while laying the foundation stone of the Supreme Court building and advised against the legislature or executive usurping the function of the courts. It is to be hoped that the Government will keep in mind this sound advice of the Head of the State.

On another occasion the President warned against the danger of the State encroaching upon and monopolising the field of social welfare. He advised the first conference of the Chairmen of State Social Welfare Advisory Boards: "The idea of a Welfare State is good. But just as in the field of economics, more so in the field of welfare, it is necessary to pursue a mixed, welfare policy." Welfare services, pointed out the President, "require a human touch which voluntary social workers alone can bring to bear upon them." It was necessary therefore, he urged, "to demarcate the respective fields of operation for voluntary and state agencies."

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Who Rules Kashmir?

The cowardly attack on Mr. Asoka Mehta and his colleagues in Srinagar, while they were out for a walk in the town, throws a flood of light on the situation as it exists in the State of Kashmir and Jammu. Mr. Mehta was in the State to help the development of a socialist party in Kashmir. He went to Srinagar after visiting Jammu where he presided over a conference of socialist workers held to form a Kashmir State branch of the Praja Socialist Party. In Srinagar also it was his idea to hold a couple of meetings to popularise the aims and ideals of his party. These activities of Mr. Mehta were not to the liking of the National Conference, the ruling party in the State, and more particularly, of the communist elements who are entrenched in strong positions within it. The leaders of the National Conference and their communist supporters have established in the State a one-party rule which cannot tolerate opposition and will not permit any civil liberties to the people. At a public meeting in Delhi held to condemn the incident, Acharya J. B. Kripalani characterised

the National Conference rule as a reign of terror, where the people lived in fear of the ruling party. This is a thing which inevitably happens whenever communists get control over a government. Communist domination of the government of Bakshi Gulam Mohammed was evident since long to keen observers of the events that are taking place in that State. The treatment meted out to Mr. Asoka Mehta and his colleagues for daring to raise a voice of opposition should now open the eyes of even the purblind. It is not Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed who is ruling in Kashmir but others who have quietly occupied all positions of real power.

*

Book Review : Rama Retold by Aubrey Mennen, Chatto & Windus, London 1954, Price 12s.6d. Pp. 247.

The desire to be profane is a well-known psychological phenomenon; its most harmless form is the tendency to embellish a variety of walls and its most embarrassing form (from the point of view of the sufferer) is perhaps an irrepressible urge to utter profanities in solemn surroundings. Occasionally the malady takes the form of the written word masquerading as literature.

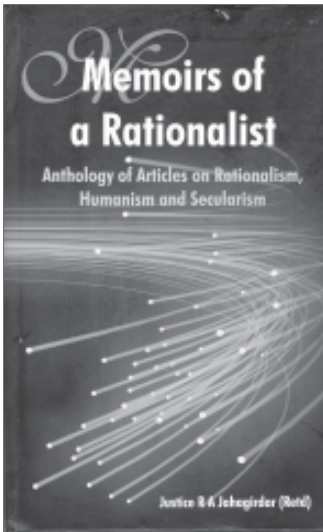
Mr. Aubrey Mennen wanted to write a book giving us the quintessence of his wisdom on politics, philosophy, history and morals. The literary effort could have taken one of the several forms, it could have been a serious novel, a series of essays or a number of short stories each with a moral to point out. Instead, he has produced a 'burlesque' version of the *Ramayan* interspersed with 'morsels of wisdom' called 'Tales of Valmiki' and ending with 'A note on the Indian Enlightenment' which attempts to encapsulate, in twelve pages, Indian thought from pre-history to Gandhiji – needless to say the effort is anything but successful.

The morals suggested by Mr. Mennen are that questions of right and wrong are purely academic – power is really what counts, that virtue is something quite comic and should not be taken seriously, and that a full stomach and low cunning are an adequate substitute for knowledge. To anyone who regards 'burlesque' as a serious art form these conclusions will no doubt seem like serious thinking.

Mr. Mennen (originally spelt Menon) is of Indo-Irish extraction and has been trying very hard to live down the Indian part – that alone could be the explanation for 'Rama Retold'. He has taken what he calls 'the bare bones of history' and given them a 'jolly good rattle'; let us hope that he at least finds the result edifying.

Faiz Noorani

BOOK REVIEW



MEMOIRS OF A RATIONALIST by Justice R. A. Jahagirdar (Retd)*. Rationalist Foundation, c/o T. B. Khilare RHS, Raj Vimal Terrace, Ramnagar Colony, Bavdhan, Pune 411021 ● 2009 ● pp192 ● Not for sale

Reviewed by Prabhakar Nanavaty, editor *Thought & Action*, an e-magazine, the official journal of the Maharashtra Andhashraddha Nirmoolan Samiti, Pune. Email: pkn.ans@gmail.com.

This effort by the Rationalist Foundation, for their publication of the *Anthology of articles on Rationalism, Humanism and Secularism* is praiseworthy. *Memoirs of a Rationalist*, puts together the rationalist views of Justice

Jahagirdar on issues like terrorism, Darwinism, judicial activism. These are issues that will be with us for a long time to come and it is the duty of rationalist thinkers to air their views to educate the people.

The book contains 34 articles covering judiciary aspects, science, superstitions, secularism, Indian policing, freedom of the press, national anthem, democracy in India, human right issues and United Nation's actions and religious conversions. Biographies form an important part of this volume.

Justice Jahagirdar's treatment of these topics is refreshingly different. For example, on the issue of judicial activism, the author writes: "The question must be properly understood by all the persons who extol and who criticize judicial activism. It is unfortunate that some people praise judicial activism while some say the judges are acting smart. This is partly because these persons have not understood the system of government envisaged by the constitution and prevalent in the country".

While reading his comments on Shias and Sunnis, the Caliphate, or the portrait of the prophet, the reader will appreciate his scholarship on Muslim history and, his interpretation of the Quran. The author points out: "Even now, after 1300 years, the Muslim community stands divided worldwide into two communities. Both the communities believe in one God; both believe in

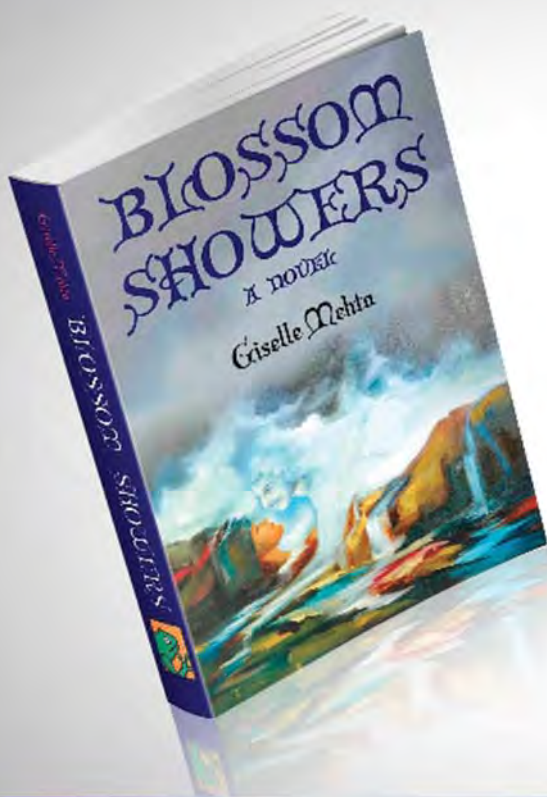
Muhammad as the last prophet. But the hatred between the two communities is deep and permanent". He comments that the effort to bring all Muslims and Muslim countries under Pan-Islam has not found a leader or organization. Apart from Osama bin laden, the world faces no danger or design from Islam. His opinion punctures the bogey raised by Western countries and the Christian community about the imaginary threat posed if all the Muslim communities joined together. In fact the author feels that Osama's efforts to bring about Islamic unity and his organization Al Queda has alienated the rest of humanity from Islam. A majority of Islamic countries are opposed to the type of terrorism Osama has indulged in'.

While commenting on the necessity of scientific attitude, the author comments "Science nurtures inquiry; superstition stifles it. The two are obviously incompatible. To suppress inquiry, freedom of thought, quest for truth is itself immoral and unethical. The supernatural is a foe of science; so also superstition. Every superstition has a shade of supernatural in it; every supernatural is a superstition. To a humanist who believes in the autonomy of man both are dangerous".

On Secularism, the author wonders that "more than 60 years have gone by, yet the meaning of secularism is neither understood nor clear in meaning to politicians and citizens". Like water which takes the colour of the thing it is mixed with, secularism takes the meaning of the political party which assigns it. Congress claims it is the secular party; Advani insists that Hinduism, being tolerant is the secular religion; communists say that communism being atheist is secular.

As mentioned in the introduction to the book, Justice R. A. Jahagirdar is a voracious reader and a prolific writer whose articles touch all aspects of life. Being a student of history and philosophy, in addition to law and economics and with an added ability for logical thinking Justice Jahagirdar puts every issue he deals with in its proper perspective by exposing and highlighting the facts hidden from the public by interested parties.

* Justice Jahagirdar passed away on 23rd February 2011. *Freedom First* paid tribute to this outstanding humanist in its issue of April 2011.



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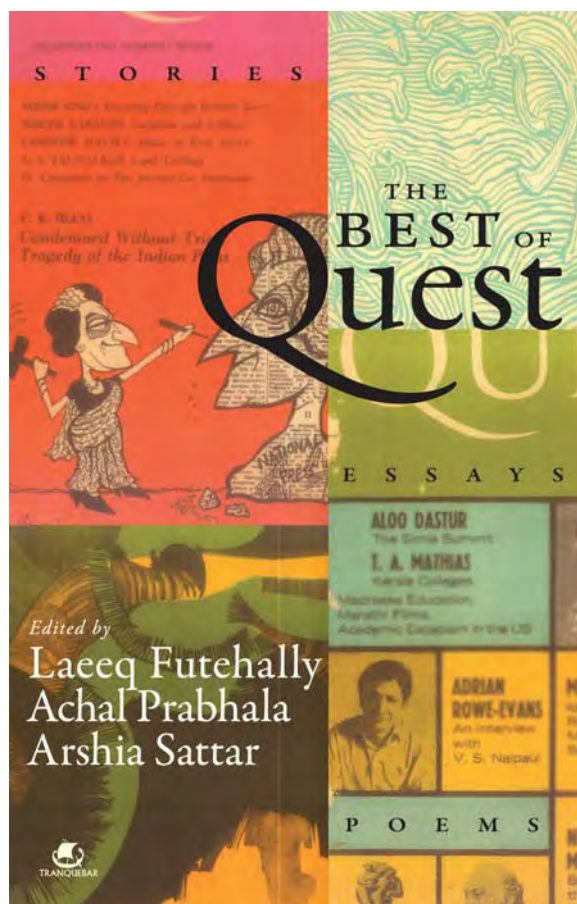
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