

Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine

INDIA 2012

Student Gang-raped in moving bus in Delhi...

Businessman steps out to jog, shot dead in Oshiwara, Mumbai...

Burglar rapes Spanish woman at knife point in a Bandra flat in Mumbai...

Shootout in Gurgaon hospital leaves two patients critically injured...

"I am scared of the day Jerri John (acid attacker) steps out of jail"

Man mistakes woman for wife, stabs her in Mumbai...

62-year-old widow raped by family friend in Mumbai...

Mumbai private school bus knocks down and kills 6-year old in city...

and the list goes on....

....**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

(based on text courtesy Vinay, www.karmayog.org)

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The Liberal Magazine

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Administration, Accounts,

Subscription, Circulation:

Ms. Kashmira Rao

Contact:

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

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Email: freedomfirst1952@gmail.com

Web: www.freedomfirst.in

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Between Ourselves...

As we go to press two entirely different events have provided round the clock TV 'spectacles' in between "breaks."

The gruesome gang-rape in a bus in Delhi of a medical student, and that too in Delhi, drew national anger. TV channels cashed in. Alongside expressions of shock and concern and the hysterical manner in which the privacy of the victim and her family was invaded, it lacked dignity and was in poor taste. Couldn't all this have waited till the doctors had done their bit? There is much deficiency in governance in this country; there is universal acceptance of the fact that the law is observed more in its breach and a million other issues that could be debated when emotions calm down. But the moment was seized by competing channels for gain - the all important TRP.

The other is the return of Narendra Modi. The fact is that he won convincingly and proved yet again that he continued to enjoy the confidence of a majority of the people of Gujarat. But one couldn't miss the sarcasm, innuendoes and the disdain regarding this man who trumped the Indira Congress thrice. It was mostly about how unsuitable Modi was to be Prime Minister, mocking his ambitions, even asking how he can even dare. Very grudgingly most channels admitted that he campaigned on governance and development and not on caste, religions or similar divisive issues more as asides. This was of little interest to the purveyors of visual news who had other axe to grind.

Editor

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From Our Readers

FDI in Retail

The FDI Issue (FF 546 Dec.2012) write up is very enlightening. I think *Freedom First* ,should get published in regional languages. It is very urgent to save Democracy.

Lalitha Subramaniam. lalitha155@yahoo.com

*

The Nov.1962 War

"A Forgotten Tale of Heroism" by Brig. Sharma (FF546,Dec.2012) was an outstanding piece; very crisply written and so informative. In fact I did not know much of this story that we had given a very strong resistance in the Western Sector.

Why is it that our military historians did not highlight this while we are all the while judging the entire 1962 operations only through the failure of the Eastern Sector?

V. Balachandran, Mumbai.
vappala.balachandran@gmail.com

*

I Had a Dream...

I dreamed last night that the whole of India has become honest overnight. This included not only the notoriously corrupt politicians, policemen and government servants but also the Mango man or the *aam admi* who has always grumbled that he has been at the receiving end of the stick without acknowledging his part in the system.

I woke up to the knock of the milkman who told me that from today, milk will cost only Rs. 10/- per litre instead of Rs. 35/- that he has been fleecing from me all these years by over-charging and contaminating the milk with sewage water. As the day progressed, I had to call the electrician to fix a bulb. He arrived within five minutes and did not charge anything for the bulb saying he too has been over charging me all these years and from on he, will not take any money for any repair work as compensation for past sins.

The regular vegetable vendor was equally generous as he offered 1 kg of free vegetables of my choice for every 200 gms that I bought. After all this shocking episodes since morning, I decided to hit the local bar. First the auto driver and then the bar owner, both of them did not allow me to even open my purse. All this, they said, was because of Team Anna which had instilled a sense of *Desh Bakhti* in them. They were also feeling bad for cheating the common man all these years.

On my return journey, a policeman stopped my auto and handed out a Rs.500/- note to the driver saying he is only returning a part of the ill gotten wealth he has

accumulated over the years. He even pleaded with the auto guy to visit him daily so that he can keep returning all his money. In utter shock and disbelief, I came home and switched on the TV wondering what Arnab Goswami had to say about the new India that I was witnessing.

The panelists for the evening included the usual suspects from all the political parties and the topic was corruption. Surprisingly, instead of trading charges at each other, they were falling over each other in accepting the blame. Manish Tiwari owned up the 2G, Coalgate and all other scams and promised to return the loot to the national exchequer. Ravi Shankar Prasad did not like this and was defending the Congress stating that BJP was the originator of all the scams and the Congress was merely being made a scapegoat. Manish Tiwari was furious and said the BJP's image has been tarnished by the Congress and apologized on behalf of Sonia Gandhi.

Friend, Arnab was a mute witness to the proceedings and for the first time, he could neither contribute nor contradict any of the claims or counter claims made by the panelists. Arnab, alluding to conspiracy theory, concluded that both the Congress and the BJP have joined hands to make him redundant.

He signed off by saying that he will soon start his own Dance Reality show along with Saroj Khan and Farah Khan. After this bitter experience he swore never to include any politician to judge his new show.

While all this wondrous things were happening I awoke to the ring of the alarm on my cell. It was about time for me to get up, dressed and goes to work in my office.

N. R. Balasubramanian. nrbala@hotmail.com

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Effective Governance in a Federal Polity

Manohar Parrikar

Basically, indecision and maladministration appear to be transgressing and trespassing each other's zone of work. It seems to be the highlight of governance these days. Federalism has its own impact; whatever the Centre does obviously has its impact on state governments.



On the occasion of the 134th birth anniversary of C. Rajagopalachari, which falls on December 10, 2012, *Freedom First* organised a lecture in Mumbai on December 4 on "Effective Governance in a Federal Polity." The lecture was delivered by Mr. Manohar Parrikar, the Chief Minister of Goa. Mr. Sharad Joshi Founder of the Shetkari Sanghatana and former member of parliament was the Chief Guest. The meeting was moderated by Mr. Sanjay Panse.

Seen in the photo: (l –r) Mr. Manohar Parrikar, Mr. S. V. Raju, Mr. Sharad Joshi, Mr. Sanjay Panse.

Goa is a very small state; normally national politics does not take cognizance of the state because we have only 2 Members of the Lok Sabha whose voice is virtually lost in the din of the Parliament, and 1 Rajya Sabha member. So with only 3 MPs who represent the State, we hardly have any voice. Obviously, though politically it is an insignificant number, it is also an advantage being a small state. In 2000, when I had the opportunity to rule the state, I decided that not only I will get the BJP elected with a majority of its own ultimately, but prove that small states can be better governed.

The Problem of Instability

There are obvious problems with smallness, and one of them was continuous instability. I was the 13th Chief Minister, in 12 years, when I took over; but broke the jinx by continuing for almost five years, without a majority and a BJP-led coalition that governed for most of the next five years. To have got a majority this time, is

a record for the first time. No single party has managed to get a majority of 21 in the state, after attaining statehood. When Goa was a Union Territory, there were governments which enjoyed a single party majority; perhaps that was because they didn't have much power.

Once you become a State, people realize that you have real powers. And when you have power, then corrupting power is not very difficult. So everyone thought when they have more power there is more loot one can make. And they started looting the state – left, right and centre. Often, you have to pay for the sins of your predecessors and I had to face the initial problems of paying for the sins of the last government. The first was mining.

The Bureaucracy

What I saw during the last ten years, as Chief Minister then and now, whether it is national or state, there is only one thing which is common, with the exception of some state governments, a total lack of any kind of governance even if there is no maladministration. When I took over, the biggest hurdle, which the earlier governments left me, besides a lot of liabilities, was corruption. But after the experience of nine months, it was not only corruption but a total collapse of the administration. Maharashtra too is facing an almost similar kind of situation. Whenever people asked me to comment on the bureaucracy I tell them that bureaucracy is like plain water. If you put it in a plain glass vessel, you would not be able to tell whether the glass is full or there is no water at all. Both conditions look alike. For its transparency and see-through situations, they are alike; that sometimes the bureaucracy is an empty glass. And I used to add – that ultimately the taste of that liquid in that glass, if it is water, is tasteless, odourless, shapeless, and virtually you cannot see any difference between that water and no water. In such circumstances, the bureaucracy takes the colour and the shape of the government of its time. If the government is good, just as if you pour sherbet

into the glass, it tastes sweet; if you pour some bitter medicine into it, it would taste bitter or smells bad.

So actually, it is the government that gives shape and colour to the bureaucracy. This time when I returned as chief minister I realized, just as in the Centre, there is virtually no bureaucracy to which colour can be given. There has to be something. And therefore, today in India, the deficit is not of bad governance or maladministration, but of no governance at all.

I believe, there are some leaders, who like some kinds of union leaders, listen to their followers and then present their case before the authorities. A union leader listens to his workers. If their demand is for a salary of Rs.1,000/- he knows that during negotiations, he has to demand Rs.3,000/- or Rs.5,000/-, and finally settle for Rs.500 or Rs.1,000 or even Rs.1,500 if he is lucky. He represents that group as their leader.

Real Leadership

That is not real leadership. I believe that leadership should be one which creates the path for the followers to take. And in the current circumstances, in a 120 crore population, it might not be easy for anyone to really be a leader at the national level. That is why there is continuous groupings of regional leadership coming up. The nation is too wide. How wide is it? There may be one state for example, where Health is a very serious parameter. Take the case of Goa. The parameter of national health often does not satisfy us. Our problems are completely different. In Goa, the health parameters are created by our lifestyle. You have diabetes problems or problems related to the heart, problems related to cancer, problems relating to life style diseases like blood pressure. So, if the Central government tells us to go ahead with a basic health parameter, probably Goa does not require that, because the people over there are sensitive enough and sensible enough to take care of all those with such preventives as vaccination, immunization etc. – it's part and parcel of the State's functions.

So the same formula does not work everywhere. What may be poverty in a particular remote village in Uttar Pradesh may not be so, say in some part of Mumbai or in a state like Goa. The habits of eating are different, the habits of living are different, and the parameters which are particularly taking Goa forward are comparable with the Western countries. But ultimately, even with all that, what I found very surprising was lack of governance. It is a common dilemma, a common problem of this nation; and our thinking seems to be very shallow.

Take the problem of Mining. Take the case of the

buffer zone concept relating to areas adjoining wild life. A person living in a wild life area came to me. He was totally disfigured. I ask him how? He replied '*aswal attack kia*' and he was seriously injured. He approached the forest department's wild life division asking for some compensation. They refused saying that he had entered their (the animal's) territory. Actually this person has been staying in that territory for over 50 or more. Before that area was declared a wild life area. So he has been pushed into the wild life area by an artificial notification issued in a city called Panaji, and not in the village where he lives. He was not getting compensation because he was in 'their' area. His question to me was very simple. 'I am punished, though that property belongs to me. I am not being given compensation because I am in living in a wild life area, and the animal that mauled me has not committed an offence as it attacked me in its country. But why are you punishing me if I shoot them when they are outside wild life territory? I could not answer his question. The wild life department will say because the animals don't understand; to which my answer is many humans also don't understand why they are being stopped from protecting themselves! This is a dilemma which has not been addressed.

Growth has its Problems

Many things originating from a city are imposed on the villages. Most of the NGOs related to the environment, I have seen, are located in the cities; they stay in their air-conditioned bungalows, and try to dictate to the villagers who live in the remote areas what they should do. I am an environmentalist, but sometimes the environmentalists behave like terrorists.

The Supreme Court is hearing the Buffer Zone matter for the last 471 hearings. They have not been able to decide. The Central government is paralysed, it should have ended the dilemma by passing a simple legislation. And the issue would have been solved. If there was a Bill passed in the Parliament, obviously the issue could not have stayed with the Supreme Court. But the funny part is that, after 471 hearings (I am counting all together) the issue of Buffer Zone is not getting solved. It was there when I was Chief Minister last time. It is still there in the Supreme Court when I returned as CM.

Basically, indecision and maladministration appear to be trespassing each other's zone of work. It seems to be the highlight of governance these days. Federalism obviously has its own impact; whatever the Centre does obviously has its impact on state governments. Sometimes actually they get more money out of it, than the state governments.

The Mining sector, is a very important sector in Goa. It involves almost 21% of the state's GDP, it has come to an almost 100% halt as of now. 25% of the revenue comes from the mining sector, still we have managed by improving our revenues in the other sectors, by about 15-20%, so we are almost back to normal. But what I realize is that when I was getting one rupee from it, the Central Government was getting Rs.10. The Income Tax Commissioner met me recently and he was worried, saying that his headquarters are pressing him to improve the very low TDS income. Last year, at this time, the TDS collected was something like Rs.400-500 crore. The advance tax was Rs.900 crore. This year's TDS has collapsed, to something like Rs.25-30 crore, and the advance tax has collapsed to something like Rs.50 crore. The headquarters was pressuring him to collect. No one realized that exports of the Mining industry produced these TDS and advance taxes. Once the mines stopped, obviously the money stopped. There is no income. There is no business, so no income as there is no need for anyone to pay any TDS. The Central Government is likely to lose to the tune of Rs.10,000 crore revenue income because the mining exports have stopped.

I am merely pointing out that they have not realized its impact. They have not understood what should be done about it. The country is losing about Rs.4 billion to Rs.5 billion dollars in foreign exchange. I am not supporting Mines *per se*, but I am just showing you how maladministration is taking place. There is no sense of urgency, there is no sense of seriousness. Mining might have been bad, there might have been irregularities, but there has been no effort to ensure that things are taken under control, there is no sense of urgency there. Therefore today, the problem is not of governance, the problem is no governance at all. I agree with what Rajaji when he said, that the less the government, the better it is. But at

the same time, with a country of over 120 crore of people, and many below the poverty line, I think there is some responsibility that the state has to shoulder.

Is a free economy really free? When you construct a big building, and manufacture automobiles, you are creating pollution, which is going to create a problem for the ordinary man staying on the footpath, or the house he lives. Just go to the villages and see the villager is free and stays in peace. So economic activity which creates wealth, can generate misery for others, by way of inflation. There was no inflation 500 years back in India. Economic activity also has an offshoot of inflation. So the common man needs to be protected to be able to cope with this kind of artificially created problem because of wealth generation by others. Therefore, I believe that the right way of economic growth in freedom is doing whatever you want to do, in the right way so long as it does not damage others. But this path appears to have taken a back seat, may be because of our corrupt ministers, and corrupt policy makers.

MR. MANOHAR PARRIKAR the Chief Minister of the Government of Goa is a graduate in metallurgical engineering of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT Bombay). He is the first IIT graduate (1978) to become the Chief Minister of an Indian state. He was awarded by IIT Bombay the Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2001.

A member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Mr. Parikkar was first elected to the Second Legislative Assembly of the State of Goa in 1994. He was the leader of the opposition from June to November 1999 and the Chief Minister of Goa for the first time from 24 October 2000 to 27 February 2002. In June 2002, he was re-elected to the State Assembly and took office again as Chief Minister. In the State elections held in 2007 the BJP lost to the Indian National Congress (INC). In the elections to the Goa Assembly held in March 2012, Mr. Parrikar led his Party to a convincing victory winning 24 seats as against the INC's 9.

India's Unique Advantage

At the time of independence, India was unique among the new nations in having a civil service manned by personnel fifty per cent of which was native. Thanks to the process of "Indianization" much valuable administrative experience had been acquired. Despite the centralization inherent in a colonial bureaucracy the system provided opportunities to the able administrator to use his imagination: delegation was the keynote of the district administration in British India. The administrative system... stood aloof from and above its many linguistic and ethnic divisions. The foreign bureaucracy treated everybody equally and underlined as far as possible, the notion of the rule of law...The "aloofness" and "caste-like" features of British Indian administration which the Congress nationalists condemned, were in fact its strong points. Good administration ...It must be insulated above all, from the whims and personal ambitions of individual political leaders.

Excerpted from the essay "Swatantra and India's Administrative Needs" by the late Dr. S. P. Aiyar, Reader, Department of Politics, University of Bombay in the souvenir of the Swatantra Party's Fifth National Convention, October 1968.

The Employment-Unemployment Conundrum

Sunil S. Bhandare

In the post-reforms period what has transpired is that economic growth per se has not yielded the desired results in terms of employment generation. The growth rate of employment has been found to be slower than the growth rate of the economy.

One of the ultimate goals of developmental planning in India is to ensure sustainable improvement in living standards and socio-economic welfare of its massive population. What facilitates the achievement of this goal? Obviously, it is through substantial generation of gainful employment for the existing and rising labour force; and that, indeed, is the only enduring way. Both absolute and relative poverty are the manifestations of widespread prevalence of unemployment or under-employment. In turn, this entails numerous social problems. Striving towards fuller employment is, therefore, the right strategy to ensure entitlement and empowerment for the citizens of the country. Thus, since the beginning of economic planning, providing employment to the vast labour force – and its corollary, mitigating unemployment – has been an area of central concern; and should remain so in a liberal and responsive democratic system.

Unemployment – A Global Phenomenon

No longer, are the challenges of employment generation (and unemployment reduction) confined to the less developed and/or developing and emerging economies like India. Ever since the global economic crisis of 2008-09, there has been continued deterioration of labour markets across the world, and in the advanced countries with much greater severity. Indeed, the ILO report, published in early 2012, had set out a very disturbing global perspective by pointing out that “after three years of continuous crisis conditions in global labour markets and against the prospect of a further deterioration of economic activity, there is a backlog of global unemployment of 200 million ... In addition, more than 400 million new jobs will be needed over the next decade to avoid a further increase in unemployment. Hence, to generate sustainable growth while maintaining social cohesion, *the world must rise to the urgent challenge of creating 600 million productive jobs over the next decade*, which would still leave 900 million workers living with their families below the US \$2 a day poverty line, largely in developing countries”.

The overall global unemployment rate is hovering around 6 per cent at present. But what is even more distressing is a growing phenomenon of global youth

(aged 15-24) unemployment, which was placed at 12.7% in the ILO report - a full percentage point higher than the pre-crisis level. Further, it stressed that “even those young people who are employed are increasingly likely to find themselves in part-time employment and often on temporary contracts ... on the present course, there is little hope for a substantial improvement in near-term employment prospects for young people”.

Thus, annually 60 million new jobs are required to be created globally. A herculean task. The political leadership across most countries has, therefore, to be extremely sensitive and even be prepared to combat the wrath of the youth. It is incumbent on them to strategize employment-intensive reforms to deal with persistent huge unemployment situation. The ILO report had also cautioned about “growing evidence of a *negative feedback loop* between the labour market and the macro-economy, particularly in developed economies: high unemployment and low wage growth are reducing demand for goods and services, which further damages business confidence and leaves firms hesitant to invest and hire”. A clear message is one of a formidable vicious circle of growing unemployment – reducing incomes causing demand contraction – decelerating investment – and hence depressing economic growth performance.

It is, therefore, imperative to break this negative feedback loop, if sustainable recovery is to take firm roots. *From the perspective of the developing world*, the report suggested that “sustainable increases in productivity will require accelerated structural transformation – shifting to higher value added activities ... Further gains in education and skills development, adequate social protection schemes that ensure a basic standard of living for the most vulnerable, and strengthened dialogue between workers, employers and governments are needed to *ensure broad-based development built on a fair and just distribution of economic gains*”. The ILO report highlighted several strategic policy issues with specific emphasis on (a) more firm coordination of global policies; (b) sustainable management of public finances and sovereign debt risks; (c) substantial repair and regulation of the financial system

by respective countries; (d) appropriate active and passive labour market policies for job creation and supporting incomes; (e) incentives for promoting private investment; and so on.

Has the employment-unemployment conundrum witnessed any sustainable turning point since then? No single country perhaps can provide any unequivocal positive evidence or response. The recent official data for the U.S. indicates that the unemployment rate has now edged to 7.7%, which is lower by almost 2 percentage points compared to the worst case scenario of 2010. Likewise, the unemployment rate has somewhat improved in a few other advanced countries; for example, according to the European Commission data, in Germany from 7.8% in 2009 to 5.4% now; and marginally in UK from 8% in 2011 to 7.7%. But the picture, however, remains grim in many Euro area economies and some of the emerging and developing countries. Thus, in the Euro area, the average unemployment rate is 11.6% currently and in countries like Spain and Greece, it is in the range of over 25 to 26%.

The worst is certainly not over in the global context. Even those countries, which have seen some improvement in the unemployment situation, are faced with a number of challenges, especially of calibrating the withdrawal of fiscal stimulus (and implementing instead rigorous fiscal austerity) and monetary easing in the course of the next year or so. Economic growth implications of such measures are suspect; and consequently its likely adverse impact on current high levels of unemployment.

The Indian Scene

Against this backdrop, let us reflect on the current employment-unemployment situation in India and what the challenges are in going forward. For many years, employment generation has been viewed by our planners as a part of the process of development and not as a goal to be pursued independently of economic growth. It was believed that employment growth would trickle down with the acceleration of economic growth. But in the post-reforms period what has transpired is that *economic growth per se has not yielded the desired results in terms of employment generation*. The growth rate of employment has been found to be slower than the growth rate of the economy. Accordingly, the absorption of working age population in gainful employment is lagging behind existing and new additions to labour-force.

While evaluating/estimating labour-force and work-force data, our official documents (whether of the National Sample Survey or of the Planning Commission) end up with complex definitional niceties, and may be for right

reasons. But for popular understanding of employment-unemployment issues, such conceptual precision is found to be unnecessary; indeed, it creates confusion rather than provide any clarity. Hence, we would prefer to state straightaway that India has a total labour-force of about 500 million at present, representing 41% of the total population. Of this, about 50% are engaged in agricultural operations, followed by about 22% in the industrial sector (including mining, quarrying and construction) and the balance 28% in the services sector.

As is to be expected, each of these sectors has divergent employment elasticity ratios, which suggests that one percentage point growth in output of that sector leads to different percentage point increase in employment in that sector. The average employment elasticity is found to be around 0.327, which means that *one percentage point increase in real GDP causes average employment growth of 0.327 percentage points*. Employment elasticity is highest at 1.028 in the construction sector followed by manufacturing 0.405 and trade 0.532. But it is the lowest in mining and quarrying at 0.266 and agriculture at 0.350. Such analysis of employment elasticity has considerable significance for the policy makers to strategize balanced and sustainable sector-specific growth policies and programs for the economy. However, it needs to be construed that employment elasticity ratio is never static; it will be governed by multiple factors such as changes in technology, capital intensity, labour productivity; methods of production; organizational and management systems; as well as broad-based contours of good (or bad) governance.

Going forward, India's current demography structure suggests that its labour-force would expand by about 120 million over the next ten years; it would reach 620 million or grow at an annual average rate of 2.4 per cent. So what is the toughest challenge before our policy makers? It is to create employment opportunities for so many millions over the period of next ten years or at an annual rate of 12 million. In addition, there is a huge backlog of unemployment, as is the case in many other countries.

There is no conclusive data about the extent of current overall unemployment or underemployment. This measure depends upon application of three different approaches set out in the National Sample Survey data, namely, the number of persons unemployed based on (a) 'usual status' (US); (b) current 'weekly status' (CWS); and (c) current 'daily status' (CDS) during the reference period of seven days preceding the Survey. These three different approaches obviously lead to three different outcomes – the unemployment rates varying between 2.6% under US to 3.4% under CWS to as high as 6.7% under CDS. In

absolute terms the figure is in the range of 25 mn., 36 mn and 66 mn, respectively under these three approaches. Taking an approximate mean, the absolute level of unemployment can be estimated at around 40 million.

In substance, for fuller employment that also ensures fair and just income levels (resolving the absolute poverty level problem) in a timeframe of next ten years, *India must create job opportunities of 160 million at an average of 15 to 16 million every year.* At the current level of average employment elasticity of 0.327, this would entail real GDP growth target of at least 9% per annum. Such growth performance was perceived to be achievable about four years ago, but not anymore. India's potential long-term annual real GDP growth rate is already downrated to around 7 to 7.5% now. Hence, the employment-unemployment conundrum is likely to become increasingly insurmountable.

Summing up

There are multiple dimensions to the challenges of employment generation; and this article has sought to highlight only some of them in the context of current and emerging global and domestic labour market situations. We have deliberately avoided reflections on the required policy strategy. So much work has already been done by various expert committees in this field from time to time, including by the Working Group on Employment, Planning and Policy for the Twelfth Plan. The report of this Working Group has covered vast ground and also set out meaningful sector-specific policy recommendations for faster growth and greater employment orientation.

Evidently, there are daunting issues of initiating and promoting productivity growth, flexible labour laws and labour regulations, technical training and skill formation, strengthening support services to informal sector, and

much more. The vexatious issue is also about resolving the imbalance caused by the higher share of agriculture labour in total employment and rapidly shrinking share of agricultural GDP in total GDP of the country. Further, the organized sector employment is just about 7% of the total labour-force, while the rest of the employment comes from unorganized and informal sectors. There is much discrimination and iniquitous treatment of workers. While the organized sector workers have the advantage of secured high wages and earnings, security of tenure, social insurance benefits like provident fund, pension, health insurance, etc., such benefits are conspicuously missing for agricultural workers and for those in the informal and unorganized sectors.

Equally importantly, the Working Group has suggested that the government needs to compile employment figures on an annual basis to enable development of effective employment planning and initiate several short-term supportive measures in response to growth fluctuations. Even the existing strategic state interventions through schemes like Integrated Rural Development Programme, NREGA, etc. will have to be recalibrated with changing rural-urban employment profile. Most of these suggestions would certainly be incorporated in the final Twelfth Plan document. But in the ultimate analysis, the responsibility would devolve on both the Central and State administrations for formalising the policy agenda and its effective implementation. How effectively they perform will decide the future of India's employment-unemployment conundrum!

Sources: (1) Global Employment Trends 2012 – Preventing a Deeper Job Crisis (ILO Report); (2) European Commission – the Latest Statistics Data Base; and (3) The Report of the Working Group on Employment, Planning and Policy for Twelfth Five Year Plan.

SUNIL BHANDARE is a senior Consulting Economist based in Mumbai. Email: sunil.bhandare@gmail.com

Another Falling Bric(k)?

Just two years ago, when Dilma Rousseff was elected Brazil's president, the country's economy was booming. It then ground to a halt and is now struggling to recover. Despite increasingly frantic official efforts at stimulation, the moribund creature grew by only 0.6% in the third quarter – half the number forecast by Guido Mantega, the finance minister. Most market analysts now expect GDP growth to be less than 1.5% this year and not much more than 3% next year. So much for the notion that the B in the BRICs is a speedy economy.

The motors of growth that powered Brazil in the past decade are sputtering. Prices of commodity exports, though still high, are no longer rising. Consumers are using more of their income to pay off the loans with which they had bought cars and televisions. Low unemployment means there are fewer idle hands to be put to work. Instead of relying on consumption, growth now has to come from higher productivity and investment. That means hacking away at the "Brazil cost": the combination of red tape, heavy taxes, expensive credit, creaking infrastructure and an overvalued currency that makes it a punishingly expensive country to do business in.

Excerpted from *The Economist*, December 8, 2012

Industrial Chaos

Labour - An Integral Part of Industry

Kashinath A. Divecha

*If Industry has been suffering because it is not carrying out its functions as it should,
is not Labour too suffering as a consequence?*

When the decision to restructure the Indian economy was taken by the then Congress Government under the leadership of Late Prime Minister, Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao way back in 1991, it was a full 180 degrees turn from the socialistic regime, but under inevitable and compelling circumstances. It was nothing but venturing into unknown realm. For those whom this change mattered, it was liberation from governmental controls that was the prime cause of joy, and liberalisation was only an offshoot. With the benefit of hindsight, it can be said without any fear of contradiction that Indian industries mingled and merged with the world economic activities with ease.

However, it was not as if all sections of the society accepted the change of direction with open arms. There was stiff resistance from the affected workers and employees, and their unions, except where there were established unions. The pragmatic unions understood the inevitability of the impact of liberalization of the economy, and the employers, therefore, were able to secure co-operation from them for mutually beneficial economic adjustments. In other words, it was the pragmatism of these unions, which were aware that for survival against competition in the outside world, the survival of the industry, establishment or the work unit itself was first priority. Further, along with survival, there was expectation of consequential progress and prosperity also.

We have to view the present situation against this background of total transformation in India in respect of the economy and industrial activity brought about two decades ago,

Chaos in the Industrial Sector

Apart from the stories and news that emanate from the political field these days in our newspapers, the other nagging news that has consistently been flashed is the chaos in the industrial and service sectors. Earlier it was uncontrolled mob violence and unimaginative handling at Maruti, Manesar. Then it was nothing but total mismanagement involving the once prestigious Air India,

its employees and also the Civil Aviation Ministry of the Central Government. Curiously, in a different context, one of our Chief Ministers had stressed, "Government has no business to be in business". Similarly, at present, the Kingfisher Airlines is earning headlines daily for 'unfathomable' reasons. For, instead of flying passengers from destination to destination, it is compelling not only its employees but their families as well to run helter-skelter from ministry to courts, seeking their intervention to secure payment of their earned and long overdue salaries. In one particular tragic instance, the employee must have had to visit the hospital as also to go the police station, and then to the crematorium. No wonder, Kingfisher employees have lost faith in their employer.

Take a closer look at the above instances. If industry has been suffering because it is not carrying out its functions as it should, is not labour too suffering as a consequence? If the answer is yes, then it is high time we accepted the truism that labour is an integral part of industry, or one can say, industry cannot function without labour. That is, both need each other. For this simple reason, it is wrong to refer to industrial chaos as "Labour Trouble", or pontificate, saying 'labour is holding the society and country to ransom'.

Stringent Measure

In the midst of all this, the government in Maharashtra in the month of August this year, ventured to bring in stringent measures within the Maharashtra Essential Services Maintenance Act, providing not only for arrest of striking workers but also banning strikes. The immediate provocation for this strong measure was the protest actions launched by workers in the service sectors such as health, education and particularly, transport, and again mainly taxis and auto-rickshaws in the city of Mumbai. Owing to strong opposition voiced by union leaders against the envisaged change, no further development has taken place in this regard at least so far.

Let us, for a moment, shift our attention from the industrial field to another recent scenario involving not

only the workers but also the general public, the so-called *aam aadmi* – not “mango people” as one highly placed arrogant individual had the temerity to coin the term. It was the sudden waking up of the Central Government from deep slumber to pick up the threads once again to follow up with impatiently awaited economic reforms in a sort of hurry.

Unfortunately, the very first “reform” to be announced was an increase in the price of household LPG as also the cost of diesel with immediate effect. May be this increase was necessary, but it threatened to impact the household budgets of those very sections of the society which struggle to make both ends meet every month. Further, the restriction in the supply of gas cylinders per household at subsidized price ignited fire, so to say, all over India without being lighted. The impact was immediate, and without any gestation period!

Lodging Protest

While one cannot deny the need for this unpalatable hike, it could still be said that the same need not have been the first step and could have been imposed at a later stage after providing enough and constant hints to people over a period so as to mentally prepare them to accept it reluctantly. In any case, the whole episode has exposed the total inability of the present government to read the pulse of the people, may be because it lacks down-to-earth leadership. The inevitable consequence was *Bharat Bandh*.

It needs no expertise to know which section of our society, or any society for that matter, is capable of lodging protest openly, fully knowing the consequences but willing to suffer nonetheless. Whatever the cause or purpose to be upheld or opposed, the success or otherwise of any protest action depends on the response of the working population only. That is, it is the workers, who always spearhead the protest everywhere and anywhere. Yes, anywhere. Even in China. In spite of being a closed and regimented society, the news has been leaking out that the workers there have been raising their voice for improvement in their conditions, mainly wages only. One recalls the uprising against the entrenched Communist regime in Poland years ago, which was led by a dock worker, Lech Walesa, who later rose to be the President of the country.

Fortunately, as an open and free society, we have the right of freedom of association and the freedom of speech and expression guaranteed by our Constitution. The right to protest being concomitant, the authorities – the government and the judiciary – have never denied

our workers and their unions as also the sponsors of *bandhs* their right to protest.

Union Activity

Broadly speaking, the legitimate activity of the unions is to protect the rights, promote the welfare and safeguard the interests of their members. The unions basically have to deal with the employers, either individuals or corporate entities or authorities in order to attend to issues, problems and grievances of their members. Apart from dealing with individual grievances, which form the bulk of the trade union work at the grass root levels, and which is a perennial process, there are also collective issues, which impact the entire establishment, factory, office, industrial plant or service industry. The unions have to perforce take up these issues forcefully because petition-mongering is ignored as a rule not only by the managements and employers but also by the government. For this reason, the unions have to be, and are, protest organizations, the protest being in their DNA, so to say.

The industrial process or collective activities at any workplace by nature are conflict generating activities simply because there are chains of work processes at every stage and every level, which are continuous and time-bound. That is, any slowing down or stoppage at one level affects the work process down the line. Therefore, there are continuous conflicts of interest at each stage and every work level. In order to accomplish the jobs and tasks at hand, one set of employees is required to work as instructed and the other set is called upon to get the work done. To use an appropriate management term, the work is required to be extracted by the management by issuing proper instructions, and providing constant guidance, supervision and leadership to attain desired production levels and ensuring better productivity. And this is normal.

Inevitable Confrontations

Considering the overall picture, in an overwhelming majority of established factories, establishments, offices, industrial plants or service industries, the employers have established relations with established unions over the years with both sides practicing sound and stable industrial relations, along with confrontations also being part of the relations, including work-stoppages, that is, strikes. For, employers as an entity understand and concede the inevitability of protests of their employees and workers through their union organizations. At the same time, if there are no unions, there could be greater turmoil and chaos. The proof, if required, is the news emanating from the closed society of China that there are sporadic instances of spontaneous labour unrest, which take place in various pockets, and the so-called big business, therefore, is

preparing to pack off in search of 'comfortable' zones elsewhere.

It would be interesting to note that unions while undertaking their main activity of securing better terms and conditions, including wages for their members, use the strike weapon only as a last resort, and definitely not for the purpose or with the intention of closing down the factory or establishment permanently. In fact, workers do not go on strike with any pleasure, but take this step as an inevitable and desperate measure. They are fully aware of two most compelling consequences when they resort to strike action. One, they have to go without wages for the period they are on strike. Two, if the establishment closes down, they could lose their employment itself. This is the selfish reason, or the best example of enlightened self-interest, whichever way one would want to look at it. In this context, it must be emphasized here that since the strike is a weapon and that too an important weapon, it is nothing but deplorable that it's frequent, casual and reckless use over the years has blunted its edge and sharpness and as a result, its effectiveness.

Recognition of Mutuality

The workers go on strike with the sole objective of bringing the unwilling employer to the bargaining table. Gone are the days when workers were subject to the exhortation that an employer is an enemy. Frankly, on

account of their working in an open and free society, even hardcore Marxists in the trade union field at least, seem to have learnt their lessons and given up that ideology. The collective bargaining process, if taken recourse to in good faith, ensures culmination of conflict and confrontation to the mutual satisfaction of both sides. In turn and with experience, the relations processed, maintained and established in this manner, bring about stability in the factory, establishment, industrial plant or whatever the work unit. Yet, it would not be out of place here to add that realistic bargaining can take place only between equals, otherwise it degenerates into dictation.

In any factory, office, establishment, industrial plant or any workplace for that matter, if there is lack of industrial relation skills on both sides, the situation goes out of control. Precisely for this purpose and reason, the unions need to have faith and dedication in the collective bargaining process on the one hand, and on the other, the managements and employers also must display their willingness to nurture industrial relations. It seems that that is exactly is not happening in the industrial sector at present.

KASHINATH A. DIVECHA, retired trade unionist and social activist, Mumbai. hansatel@mtnl.net.in

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Freedom First

3rd floor, Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400 001.

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“Isn’t it Dangerous?”

Ashish Chandola



Plaque at Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve
Photo courtesy and © Satyendra Tiwari

People ask me about the dangers of working in forests as a wildlife film cameraman where tigers, bears and elephants roam. “Isn’t it dangerous?” is the most common refrain which is more often than not followed by “...but animals are so unpredictable.”

Over the years, my answer to these has become uninspired and rather predictable. The fact is that I do believe that to cross a city road is more dangerous than all the animals in the forest, and that humans are the one ‘animal’ that I have found to be to be possessed with more guile and unpredictability than any animal, domestic or wild!

Though my audiences hear me out with as much sympathy as they can muster, there is skepticism in the air. Those who do not know the forest, fear it. For this they cannot be blamed.

It must have been over 20 years back – but I remember clearly picking up this old book on Singapore

written and published in the mid eighteen hundreds and being surprised when at the very start, the author enjoins his readers not to venture outdoors without a loaded gun in hand and pockets full of cartridges as the place was “infested” with man-eating tigers! Of course I cannot remember the title of the book nor do I remember the author’s name but a quick search on the Internet got me to a site called “Singapore Infopedia – An electronic encyclopedia on Singapore’s history, culture, people and events.” And from this site I have gleaned some interesting information:

Apparently tigers were known to swim across the Straits of Johore to hunt deer and wild boar that were found in abundance in the untouched virgin forests, which cover the island. By the 1840s and well into the 1850s, when forests were being cleared to make way for rubber and pepper plantations, we come across accounts of rampant man-eating. On an average one person a day was being “lifted” and villages were being abandoned due to tiger attacks. It was around then that the authorities concerned started to offer rewards for killing tigers in an effort to contain this “menace”. With forests being cleared and rewards offered, tigers were trapped and killed till their numbers dwindled and then none were left at all in Singapore.

I have related the above to illustrate one scenario that has resulted in tigers coming into ‘conflict’ with humans. The worst and maximum damage has occurred when humans have pressed into the tiger’s domain and cramped its living space. In Singapore, the loss of living space coupled with hunting deer and wild boar that are the tiger’s basic food, pushed the tiger to the brink so it is hardly surprising that tigers turned to man-eating.

What happened in Singapore happened in India

also – to a lesser extent for sure. Wildlife, including tigers, lost their home in varying degrees to forestry, industry, dams and agriculture. There, rewards were offered for killing tigers, here it became a manly pass time, indeed a “sport”, to hunt them. Our British rulers were very keen on this ‘sport’ and it became a fashion of that age. Some of our Maharajas following in the footsteps of the Colonialists, vied with each other to notch up higher scores as far as the number of tigers killed by them was concerned. An example of this is the photo that appears with this article.

But we must remember that hunting lions and tigers was not a British era invention, it had been part of the Indian scene for hundreds of years. I recently learnt that a theory doing the rounds suggests that the cheetah was not a native to India at all but had been brought to India as a ‘pet’, to hunt antelope across the open plains much like hawks and falcons are used in falconry.

In that age the land did not have to bear the intense pressure of population that it was subjected to within a few decades of our country’s independence. It was an era in which the rulers and the system they put into place

protected the forests and the grasslands. Much of this collapsed after 1947 and one of the results is to be seen in today’s interstate water wars. Forests and wildlife have been pushed against the wall. That tiger numbers are down to a frightening low has been in the headlines for quite some time now.

What amazes me is that our policy and decision makers seem to be ignorant of the basic fact - what is bad for wildlife is bad for people also. It seems to have gone unnoticed that grasslands are not ‘wastelands’ but precious wildlife habitat and absorbers of water that recharge the aquifers. These grasslands are also vital for our rural folks for grazing their cattle. It is the loss of forest cover, loss of grassland habitat that has resulted in landslides, floods and erosion. It is indeed a grim scene and to sit back and blame it all on the Americans or the West or on global warming, is an exercise in denying reality. But reality possesses the quality of not going away.

ASHISH CHANDOLA is a well known wildlife photographer and a director/cameraman with several highly regarded wildlife documentaries to his credit. He lives in Bangalore and can be contacted at chandola.ashish@gmail.com.

The Rape of Matheran

The Times of India (29 November 2012) reports: “The Maharashtra government now has grand plans to revive Matheran as an entertainment-cum-leisure hub” with “casinos, discotheques, music halls.” Does this unique hill station, this “Nature’s Basket” require such things and does it require people who require such things for their entertainment. The poet asks, “What is this life, if full of care / we have no time to stand and stare?” But if you ask those visitors, particularly the younger set, to stand or sit on a bench near Charlotte Lake and stare, they will stare at you in amazement. “You want us to stare? Stare at what – the trees and the water? We wouldn’t know how to. How we can “enjoy” without gaming at the casinos or jiving to hard rock? Come all the way to Matheran to look at Nature? “You’re crazy.”

More sinister is the news that there will be “swanky parking arenas” and “wide roads”.

For horses and rickshaws? For motor cars stupid. Paver blocks will replace the red soil, hundreds of trees will be cut down, the salubrious air of Matheran will be polluted with fuel fumes and noise from the music halls and car horns. And there will be with the wide roads, accidents and deaths every month. Has the government considered all this? Matheran will no longer be for old fogies like us. We would be quite happy if the government were just to improve the existing roads all over the hills which are at present in a scandalous state, where walkers have to watch every step to avoid falling, riding is impossible and rickshaws become bone-shakers.

Wake up genuine lovers of Matheran as you have known it; do something before it is too late to save “this blessed spot”

Sheryar Ookerjee, Professor of Philosophy (Retd.)
Wilson College, Mumbai.

Self-reliance : the keynote of our independence

Long before we won our freedom, self-reliance was the goal of those of our people who could think for themselves and shed the shackles of dependence: men of foresight and determination, like 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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ganisation but for the whole country. Progress can only be achieved in a milieu of progress.

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Self-reliance is both a means and an end.

For Godrej it is the essence of independence.



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.

Freedom of Speech

1. Following the heart-rending send-off to late Balasaheb Thackeray (November 18), a needless controversy was created over a facebook comment by a girl in Palghar (Thane district), opposing the 'bandh' observed on the day of the funeral. She felt that when thousands of people died every day, there was no reason to observe a bandh on November 18. She missed the point that millions of people were grieving over Balasaheb's demise. The practice of suspending work over a leader's death can be debated later, not when emotions are high. The timing and the nature of the comments were inappropriate to say the least. The trouble was that some Shiv Sainiks, as is there wont, objected to the comments and demanded action against the girl and her friend who supported her. The police recklessly used provisions of the IT Act to arrest the two girls. Everyone has the right to express his/her views even if others may not appreciate them. Ideally, the police could have just spoken to the girl about the trouble the comment could cause and the matter could have ended there. The girl should ask herself if freedom of speech entails freedom to injure others' sentiments.

1. The police fell for the emotional demand of the Sainiks and arrested the girls. The poor officers had a Hobson's choice: To act and be damned or not act and face the possibility of the Shiv Sainiks disturbing the funeral peace. The girl apologized later but by then the damage had been done. The Sainiks ransacked a hospital run by the girl's uncle. The ideal course would have been for the girl to realise that she had offended the sentiments of millions of people, irrespective of her personal opinion, and said sorry. The city was sitting on a volcano and any misadventure would have set off a chain of violence. The police had to show that they were aware of the Sainiks' anguish. There was a chorus of demand for action against the police officers and two officers were suspended. Section 66 A of the IT Act will now be used carefully under orders of senior officers, since the Section is too ill-defined and can be easily misused. A PIL in the Supreme Court has demanded repeal of the Section. A law that is vague is an invitation for misuse. The unfortunate incident has led to one good thing i.e. re-examination of a badly drafted law.

Kasab's Execution

2. The lone surviving invader of Mumbai (26/11) was hanged surreptitiously on November 21 after 4 years of trial, appeals, mercy petition, etc. This was deemed to be a closure to the 26/11 infamy; there was a sense of relief that India could handle the hanging efficiently and expeditiously. As usual anything that the Government does comes in for criticism: questions were raised about the need for secrecy, the decision to allow the Kasab case to jump the queue of those awaiting death penalty, suspected political gains; there were rumours that Kasab had actually died of dengue and the Government was trying to hide it. Can there be any limit to lunacy? Then there was the usual ethical question about the death penalty. An argument is that as death sentence is inhuman and uncivilized, life sentence without parole should be imposed. The paradox is that it is also claimed that life sentence without parole is harsher. This contradicts the inhumanness argument. Is it more humane to continue the punishment indefinitely or end it once for all? The irony is that civilization endows all benefits to its enemies and the State picks up all liabilities so as to become a soft target.

2. The Government needs to be congratulated on handling the hanging so professionally without allowing it to be made a 'tamasha' for the TV, supporters and opponents of the death penalty and international busy bodies who would have tried to pressurise the Government. There were immediate discussions whether this meant closure for the families of the 26/11 victims, whether Pakistan would learn a lesson from this, whether Kasab's 'martyrdom' would create more terrorists? There is no real closure to the loss of a dear one; Pakistan will act only when it sees danger to itself from the likes of Kasab. The only cogent question was whether the Government would bite the bullet and hang Afzal Guru who is waiting to be hanged much before Kasab. The ethics of death penalty is a separate issue. While we are fighting an undeclared war, it can be argued that those who wage war against this country should be hanged and those guilty of offences against individuals, howsoever gruesome, may be awarded life sentence without parole. The trouble with keeping the likes of Kasab alive is that there will be attempts to rescue him (*a la* Kandhar) or kill him in jail and the burden of protecting his ilk for the unforeseeable future will be ours.

(Cont'd. on page 23)

Bal Thackeray: The Only Thackeray!

Aroon Tikekar

The fact is that Thackeray gave Mumbaikar Marathis an identity that had eluded them for quite some time. Also, if at present Mumbai's Marathi community does not feel alien in Mumbai, the credit must go to Thackeray and his organization.

Even enmity ends on an opponent's death, goes a Sanskrit saying. It is not proper therefore to commence an obituary by picking up a blackball at the outset. However, as a person who has closely followed the Thackeray family's ups and downs for the last four decades, although from a reasonable distance, I have always felt that had Bal Thackeray not been obsessed with maintaining a lead on the popularity list, he would have made a more lasting contribution to the Marathi society and culture. For, means do matter when it comes to solving issues of socio-political importance. Intentions of social good, if attempted with improper means, give rise only to a personality cult. They leave a gap between promise and achievement and in the final analysis thwarts the very purpose. It has been proved again and again in the case of Anna Hazare and his 'India Against Corruption' movement. The 45 plus year old Shiv Sena has displayed the same weakness. If Bal Thackeray would have avoided that temptation, the sea of crowd that had gathered to have his last glimpse might perhaps have been smaller, but he would have been accorded a still bigger niche, and more comfortable too, in the hearts of the Marathi community.

There was a time when Bal Thackeray literally ruled over Mumbai and the Marathi mind and it appeared then that he was ageless. But, like other mortals, such men too are vulnerable. They too suffer old age, malady and subsequently meet their end. During the last four decades Bal Thackeray had established his pre-eminence as a cultural hero of the Marathi community in Mumbai. Even renowned and venerated artists and sportsmen touched his feet in public to show their respect to him. Thackeray's sharp wit and acidic diatribes, often amusing, were always relished by Marathi knowing Mumbaikars, as most of his assertions had a typical Marathi flavour like the Marathi *tamasha* songs. Shiv Sainiks and others who did not approve of the violent means of the Shiv Sena also thronged the Shivaji Park in Dadar, to listen to Thackeray as his address was akin to a solo performance full of entertainment, although at the cost his detractors. His public appearances were few and far between but every time he faced the audience he made their visit to Shiv Tirth

as he called the Shivaji Park memorable. Never did he disappoint them, invariably mimicking the foreign accent of Sonia Gandhi or mumbling of Sharad Pawar among others, often employing double entendres. In a sense, however, it was a sad tale for a leader who could have represented the entire Marathi community, but remained contented with entertaining the masses! I remember the early days of Shiv Sena when Thackeray fired salvoes against communists – *Lalbhai*s as he used to call them – in public. Literally lakhs of people used to gather at Shivaji Park. Writers, artists and journalists alike from all walks of life had a strange admiration for him. Once when the late Baburao Patel, editor of *FilmIndia*, was asked about what he thought of Thackeray, had written – "He knows only one speech...but knows it well". Even those victims of his fulmination who were ridiculed at a Shivaji Park rally or in the columns of his Party's publications: *Marmik* and *Saamana*, continued to call him "a personal friend, though a political foe" to save further damage to their image.

Thackeray the Cartoonist

Thackeray had begun his career as a cartoonist in a Mumbai newspaper. Greatly inspired by the celebrated British political cartoonist, Sir David Low, a brother of Sir Francis Low, Editor of the *Times of India* between 1932 and 1948, he even imbibed his style of drawing cartoons. Thackeray saw the entire world through the cartoonist's eyes. In fact that used to be his own reasoning about why he saw animals in people and always employed animal imagery for his detractors in his speeches. He or his followers could never, however, counter the question why other cartoonists including his friend and colleague R. K. Laxman did not see animals in place of people. Thackeray's repertoire of indecorous and indecent words was sizeable and such words always cropped up at his command. This perhaps was a legacy bequeathed by his father, Keshav Sitaram Thackeray, a social reformer. Thackeray, the father, was known as 'Prabodhan'kar. 'Prabodhan' was the name of his publication and it meant 'social awakening'. It was Thackeray, the father, who cultivated in the young Bal the idea of "Mumbai for Marathis". The senior Thackeray had a penchant for writing. Some of his writings are far

ahead of the times. He had a powerful and facile pen. He was an ardent advocate of social justice. He instilled in young Bal many of the attributes the junior later came to be known for. It was through his father that young Bal imbibed many of the socially progressive ideas and oratorical skill. When it came to hitting out at his detractors and opponents, the senior Thackeray was unbridled and he let the language flow unrestrained. So did his son. The pages of the weekly *Marmik* and the daily *Saamana* are full of eloquent and choicest indecorous invectives chosen for his detractors. In fact, the junior Thackeray invented invectives where there were none. He erroneously called this as 'tradition' of Marathi journalism. The hardcore Shiv Sainiks had become his supporters and admirers of the 'forceful' language he employed and proudly called it the "*Thakari Bhasha*". If "*Thakari Bhasha*" meant calling a spade a spade; it also meant arrogating a right to employ indecorous words in public.

But when it came to himself or the Thackerays or the Shiv Sena being criticized by others, he did not like a spade being called a spade. I did it and incurred his wrath. Threat, abuses were followed by eight nastily written editorials about me in the *Saamana*. I was also provided police protection by the Shivsena-BJP combine government for four and a half years. Among other comments, I had raised two simple questions: The first, whether the daily *Saamana* is the mouthpiece of his party or a professional newspaper. Were it a professional newspaper, the abusive language employed in it is objectionable. Were it a mouthpiece, the abusive "*Thakari Bhasha*" could be excused, but then Thackeray loses the right of reminding media men about the journalistic ethics. And secondly, if he wanted to enjoy the freedom of using "*Thakari Bhasha*", why would he be against me employing "*Tikekari Bhasha*"? If one did not go to play on his home-turf by reacting to his abuse by abuse and insisted on playing on one's own turf, he used to find the going difficult. Counter his tantrum and abuse by refined and logical argument and he was nonplussed and waved the white flag.

Media was his perennial target. Never did he hesitate to call names or dictate an attack on newspaper or electronic channel offices. Despite being a victim of his verbal and his followers' physical attacks, the media ever prized him. Whatever he spoke, wherever he spoke, whenever he spoke, he always made interesting 'copy'. Many times he spoke brazen and unrestrained truth without inhibition and his followers chuckled in approval. The late Prime Minister Morarji Desai during his short term as Chief Minister of the erstwhile Bombay State was particularly disliked by the Shiv Sainiks for his persistent opposition to Mumbai's inclusion in the Maharashtra State. Morarji lived almost 100 years and when he died, Thackeray's

acerbic remark was, "He lived hundred years. That's all!" On the strength of the "*Thakari bhasha*" he continued to create waves of emotionalism, and ride them, with the result that a highly emotional, almost irrational Marathi community followed him. Will history be kind to Thackeray and gloss over his indiscretions and malfeasances committed over forty and odd years?

Rise of Shiv Sena

Historically speaking, Thackeray himself would not have imagined then that his first public rally in 1966 would touch the emotional chord of a wide cross-section of Marathi *manoo*s in Mumbai. The rally's instant success guaranteed the future of the social organization he had mooted and named it the Shiv Sena. The success was so heady that Thackeray's language at public speeches thereafter grew more violent and his followers succumbed to translating his words into strong arm tactics. Having experienced that immigrants fear violent methods and threats create panic in them, Shiv Sainiks got used to the diet of that sort. And arrogance, threats, strong arm tactics became their hallmark. However, that alone would not be a fair valuation of the Shiv Sena over the years, for the fact is that he gave Mumbai Marathis an identity that had eluded them for quite some time. Also, if at present Mumbai's Marathi community does not feel alien in Mumbai, the credit must go to Thackeray and his organization. Truly he ran the party like a social organization.

Dissolution of the Left-led Samyukta Maharashtra movement after the main demands were met and a separate State of Maharashtra with Bombay, now called Mumbai, as the State capital was created, vacuum was felt which had to be filled. No political party or organization was left to speak for the Marathi *manoo*s in Mumbai. Shiv Sena fitted the bill with the tacit understanding of the then ruling Congress Party. The ruling Congress garnered the support of the Shiv Sena under Thackeray to contain the 'menace' of the Left Parties which agitated, led protests, resorted to *bandhs* which was their main headache. Shiv Sena-Left Parties clashes ultimately led to the murder of Comrade Krishna Desai, which perhaps was the first political murder in Mumbai in modern times. The event which shook the city also resulted in the waning power of the Left Parties. Their ideological arguments were of no avail to their new opponents as the Shiv Sena, under Thackeray, was openly opposed to any ideological content. The ruling Congress required Thackeray's tacit help, Thackeray, on the other hand, had his own agenda. Soon followed days when Shiv Sena led violent agitations in the airline sector, railways, telephones and the banking sector to press for its demand for 80 percent reservations in jobs for Marathis in government and private sector. The agitation had reached

its peak by mid-70s and it was this move of Thackeray that brought Marathi *manoos* in Mumbai together. Even those who disliked, even hated violence of any sort, were convinced of the raw deal the Marathi *manoos* was getting in the city.

Thackeray told his followers not to read. He pooh-poohed all social, political and economic theories and told his followers that all of those were bunkum. He kept the vision of his followers confined to the Marathi issue in which, no doubt, he admirably succeeded. In the ultimate analysis, however, the result has been the stunted intellectual and cultural growth of the Marathi community. While these followers were emotionally charged, they failed to grasp that respect can only be commanded. Respect cannot be had on demand at gun point. By many of his self-destructing policies, Thackeray achieved exactly the opposite of what he intended. The Marathi community became inward-looking. “Sons of the Soil” principle, excessively stretched, bred an inferiority complex in its practitioners. It killed the spirit of competition and insulated the community from other sections of society. Marathi *manoos* became a patient of persecution mania. By the time this realization came to Thackeray, it was too late in the day. Thackeray was quick to judge the fall in his popularity graph. He quickly jumped on to the bandwagon of the Hindutva ideology and started interacting with the BJP leaders whose aggressive posture of “India for Hindus” was yielding results. The new policy not only brought Thackeray on the national scene but it also took Shiv Sena to all parts of the State of Maharashtra. To his credit Thackeray made the top leadership in BJP play to his tune. For a regional leader who never visited Delhi on any mission, this was a rare political feat, but that was Thackeray and his uncanny political acumen.

Transformation into a Political Party

Seldom does a social movement catapult itself into a political party worthy of notice. Thackeray had pronounced his distaste for *realpolitik* from every available platform. That the Shiv Sena should all of a sudden transform itself into a political party and join hands with a national Party was not easy for the party followers to fathom. They were divided in their stand. At least the hardcore section felt that joining the political bandwagon would compel the Shiv Sena to dilute its original objectives. One substantial reason for this could be that a disgruntled and inward-looking Maharashtra that has historically sacrificed parochial interests at the altar of national concerns has of late begun to feel that the rest of the nation nurses some kind of misgiving and animosity towards it. That was the reason why this section had become his supporters. The other section was of blind

followers of Thackeray. Its loyalty to him was unquestionable.

The departure of Shiv Sena from its original position was masterminded by Bal Thackeray himself and being politically shrewd enough he rode on both the tiger and the chariot, though not simultaneously. But such a major change in the policy necessitated a change in many of Thackeray’s earlier policies and methods. In its new avatar the party had to bury many issues which were so dear to the Marathi-speaking population though Thackeray did not totally sideline them. Newer outfits like *Sthaniya Lokadhikar Samiti* and *Bharatiya Vidyarthi Sena* were allowed to tackle them. Having entered electoral politics Thackeray quickly learnt the lesson that attacking migrants in Mumbai was not politically correct. Shiv Sena was obliged to shed at least some of radicalism when it first tasted victory in the municipal elections. South-Indians who were earlier soft targets went out of focus. With the new Hindutva line, Sikhs became friends. Pakistanis continued to be the arch enemies and so were the Bangladeshis. “Close the gates of the city for migrants” had been a favourite rallying cry of Shiv Sena leaders under Thackeray. It comes in handy for them when the chips are down.

The Shiv Sena-BJP alliance worked and came to power in 1995 defeating the Congress under the leadership of mighty Sharad Pawar. Thackeray had an opportunity of becoming a benevolent dictator that he always wanted to be. But he preferred to remain only as a centre of power albeit without responsibility, ‘the remote control’ as he fondly called his position. The Shiv Sena-BJP alliance remained in power in Maharashtra between 1995 and 1999. That undoubtedly was the peak of Shiv Sena’s glory. With a defeat in 1999 Assembly elections, the alliance was out of power, a situation Thackeray could never come to terms with and ever dreamt of regaining power.

Thackeray Enigma

For a variety of reasons, his name invoked different responses in different people. He generated respect and fear at the same time. Bollywood befriended him for obvious reasons. Foreign dignitaries visiting Mumbai made it a point to visit Thackeray at his bungalow, *Matoshri*, to write in their diaries that they met a ‘benevolent dictator’, a phrase ridden with contradiction but made popular by Thackeray himself. Perhaps he would have liked to be one such ‘benevolent dictator’. He posed like one for his party. Dictator he was, and being so he promulgated indictments against people who, to him, opposed him or his Party. His numerous followers were ever ready to execute the orders of their leader. Little did they realize that the line dividing

awe and terror has always been wafer thin. Awe is lasting, but terror or intimidation is impermanent. But Thackeray appeared to love this privilege. No government however tried to contain him or his organization. Consequently, Bal Thackeray always escaped the clutches of the law of the land despite the fact that he and his followers flagrantly broke it time and again.

Will the muse of history that ever remains ambiguous about enigmatic personalities portray him only in bright colours as the 'Saviour of Marathi Manos in Mumbai', 'Protector of Maharashtra's pride' and/or 'Guardian of Hindu interests'? Or will it keep on record that he taught his lieutenants to find quick fix solutions?

In spite of the aura around him in public, Thackeray's life, like that of Shivaji, was a personal tragedy and was riddled with revolts and treacheries, and deaths of near and dear ones. Chatrapati Shivaji regenerated an entire Marathi culture with his broad vision and valiant efforts. Thackeray who imitated him in all possible ways showed scant respect for the existing law and did not hesitate to resort to violent means. He was bereft of a

broader vision of tomorrow's Maharashtra. His fight for the Marathi cause was understandable, but how would he escape the charge that he de-intellectualised the Marathi community and insulated it from other communities? In the 19th century Marathis were preferred for employment, even by Parsee and Gujarati employers. The Marathis were known to be hard-working, god-fearing, honest, sincere, and they had respect for scholarship. Thackeray united them alright, but also made them the opposite of what they were. They have tremendous pride in the glorious past, but they have developed distaste for accepting intellectual challenges like their dear departed leader. He promised much to Marathi speaking people, but in actuality delivered very little.

Will there be more family feuds? Will Shiv Sena head towards further splits? Will power struggles within the Party increase? Will the legacy lead itself to self-annihilation? Anybody else's guess will be as good as mine.

DR. AROON TIKEKAR is a well-known author and journalist. Email: tikekar@gmail.com

Bangladesh; A Remarkable Achievement

The leaders wisely decided that the key to any progress in welfare depended on population control.

Bangladesh suffered a famine, three military coups and four severe floods since independence. Kissinger called it a "basket case" and people considered it to be a country without a future, heading towards a failed state. The unique situation today is that the country has achieved a significant increase in social welfare even though there has been little economic growth or increase in income. The country has a high density of population and no part is isolated. The poverty reduction schemes, therefore, can easily reach all sections of the population. The leaders wisely decided that the key to any progress in welfare depended on population control. This view was prevalent in most of the developing countries.

The population is predominantly Muslim but shares culture and language with West Bengal. The religion does not strongly oppose social change. Due to lack of a strong central government, they could not implement the one-child policy of China or the forced sterilization method of India. They opted for voluntary family planning which has worked. The number of women using contraceptives has increased from 8% in 1975 to 60% in 2000. This has

become possible due to the economic freedom of women. Eighty percent of workers in the rapidly rising textile industry are women. They have acquired influence in management of household finance and give priority to health and education of children. Child mortality has declined and girls' education has soared. Good work by NGO Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee [BRAC] has helped in child welfare. The life expectancy of the population is four years more than that in India, even though India has higher economic growth. The most remarkable change has been in population control. Women's fertility has declined from 6.3 in 1975 to 2.3. It is an ideal condition for a stable population.

This achievement in social welfare has come about without significant economic growth or drastic measures and can be a model for developing countries. The key to women's empowerment is economic freedom and not reservations.

Suresh C. Sharma

Sokal Hoax and Shiv Sainiks

Dr. Rca Godbole

The Sokal phenomenon also spawned something called a 'Postmodernist generator' or PoMos: A computer program for generating completely meaningless and randomly generated text using recursive transition networks (RTN) based on a few phrases or keywords fed in.

A group of people, completely unconcerned about understanding or ascertaining facts in any field before opining and pontificating thereon, is a very common sight on Indian TV. An eerie reminiscence of the Sokal experiment was recently had, when Balasaheb Thackeray's death was announced in Mumbai on a Saturday afternoon.

Our TV News programmers put together a bunch of people to comment upon and elaborate on the news happenings, purportedly to get different perspectives, personal memories or considered comment on whatever was happening. In the case of English channels, perhaps the participants' familiarity with the English language is also stipulated. The News channel's anchor at such gatherings (normally described as 'panels') throws in a couple of questions generally in line with the thinking of the current benefactor of the show, and a loud and boisterous show is on. I suspect that people who can string sentences together in intelligible English, who are willing to participate in these telecasts are not obviously in oversupply where these telecasts are filmed, even if real expertise on the subject matter or a considered point of view are expendable if the above prerequisites are satisfied. The possibility of the show being slanted for a fixed price (?) negates any chance of an informative debate.

In the telecasts right after Balasaheb Thackeray's death, the gathered commentators spouted such phrases as "epidemiology of BJP", "matrix of terror unleashed" or "politics of hatred and terror" in connection with Balasaheb and his followers, the Shiv Sainiks, and dire predictions of putative damage that would be caused in Mumbai were made. Balasaheb was castigated as someone who traded on hatred and fear. No sign of the *Nil nisi bonum* (a Latin phrase which indicates that it is socially inappropriate to say anything negative about a [recently] deceased person) from members of political parties, social commentators, journalists from TOI or Tehelka, who numbered among the commentators. What is meant by "matrix" or "epidemiology" in these political or social contexts remained to be explained, but everyone present seemed to understand it nevertheless. The image of Shiv Sainiks that was projected was that of uneducated, uncivilized, uncouth baying mob, a pack of wild ferocious dogs waiting to pounce and tear into the flesh of the

society.

The Sokal phenomenon also spawned something called a 'Postmodernist generator' or PoMos: a computer program for generating completely meaningless and randomly generated text using recursive transition networks (RTN) based on a few phrases or keywords fed in. Irrespective of the broad area or context, a phrase input generates a complete text complete with footnotes by using

Alan Sokal

A prank was played by the NYU mathematical physicist Alan Sokal (a self-proclaimed 'Leftie,' when he submitted a sham article to the cultural studies journal *Social Text* late in 1994, in which he reviewed some current topics in physics and mathematics, and with tongue in cheek drew various cultural, philosophical and political morals that he felt would appeal to fashionable academic commentators on science who question the claims of science to objectivity.

The targets of Sokal's satire occupy a broad intellectual range. There are those "postmoderns" in the humanities who like to surf through *avant garde* fields like quantum mechanics or chaos theory to dress up their own arguments about the fragmentary and random nature of experience. There are those sociologists, historians, and philosophers who see the laws of nature as social constructions. There are cultural critics who find the taint of sexism, racism, colonialism, militarism, or capitalism not only in the practice of scientific research but even in its conclusions.

The editors of *Social Text* did not detect that Sokal's article was a hoax, and they published it in the journal's Spring/Summer 1996 issue. The hoax was revealed by Sokal in an article for another journal, *Lingua Franca* wherein he explained that his *Social Text* article had been "liberally salted with nonsense," and in his opinion was accepted only because "(a) it sounded good and (b) it flattered the editors' ideological preconceptions."

Steven Weinberg,
The New York Review of Books,
Volume XLIII, No.13, pp.11-15, August 8, 1996

this program. (dev.null.org/dadaengine/manual-1.0/dada.html). Much the same seems to be happening in the discourse witnessed in our TV shows: same phrases parsed and strewn across a wide field, irrespective of the context.

A knee jerk response of these TV people to the words <uneducated>, <youth>, <socially excluded> is that of assuming a serious/concerned look, and general sympathy. Shiv Sainiks, while ticking most of the boxes above, are excluded from these concerned looks - why might that be?

In recent history, from 1640 to the advent of British rule, Maharashtra has been a slightly better governed place compared to most of India. This was thanks to the reign of Shivaji whose kingdom though territorially small, was crucial in setting up working standards of governance for the rulers who followed him. Maharashtrians under his rule had a closer brush with the rule of law and respect for property compared to other Indians, and that has left a mark. Thriving and productive Mumbai is a result of this backdrop, combined with the zeal and contribution of Maharashtrians and non-Maharashtrians who settled here. Calcutta or Madras, the other British bases/ports would have attracted comparable sets of Gujarati, Marwari and Parsi entrepreneurs, but Mumbai is and remains Mumbai. There has always been a great reluctance to

acknowledge this fact, particularly by English speaking Indians. The word used as the evil opposite 'cosmopolitan' Mumbai is 'Maharashtrian'! This may be an attitude of the Brits to their last serious opponents on Indian soil, the Peshwas, and a continuous line of political adversaries subsequently, which has been inherited by the class of people Brits helped come up in the world, imprinted in their borrowed language.

After this projected Armageddon the previous night which was a Saturday, the very same news channels started projecting scenes of orderly crowds of the Shiv Sainiks, quietly weeping in a dignified bereavement on Sunday morning. As the crowds increased engulfing parts of Mumbai, the praises showered on the Shiv Sainiks rose to a pitch. This was now dubbed as a display of love and respect, the spirit of Mumbai in evidence, the inspiring devotion and affection for Balasaheb. Obviously civilized, normal behaviour can be appreciated even by those who do not practice it - with or without a set script. Or was it a change of benefactors for the News Channels? Perhaps a reality check for the commentators at last? Could one hope that the media types might consider re-evaluating their positions? Are they capable of going beyond their mental equivalents of PoMo generators?

DR. RCA GODBOLE is a scientific adviser and IP strategist.
Email: rcagodbole@gmail.com.

Point Counter Point (Cont'd. from page 17)

The Thackeray Memorial

3. The controversy over a memorial for Balasaheb Thackeray is unbecoming. There is no doubt that Balasaheb should have a befitting memorial in Mumbai. The dispute is over its location. Some Shiv Sena leaders are playing on emotions and insist that the memorial should be at the place of his last resting place at Shivaji Park (Mumbai). While Uddhav Thackeray has adopted a wise and thoughtful position in not raising the issue of the memorial location, Sanjay Raut and Manohar Joshi have needlessly heightened the tempo by asking for Shivaji Park as the site for a statue or a suitable marker to recognise the departed leader's last resting place. There is no doubt that Balasaheb, in spite of his controversial politics, deserves to be remembered suitably. Shiv Sainiks are guarding the funeral site to stop its demolition by the Government. There are better ways of remembering Balasaheb than creating a controversy over his *samadhi*.

3. The Government had graciously allowed the funeral to be held at Shivaji Park to accommodate the vast crowds gathered for the funeral, although it was against all norms. The Shiv Sena should express its gratitude and not stretch the issue too far. After all, Shivaji Park is meant for sports and any construction on it would impinge on its usage as a sports ground. Even Balasaheb would have opposed such a step. It would be more befitting if something grand and permanently usable is built. A Museum with Balasaheb's writings and cartoons, with an attached theatre, conference hall and committee rooms would be a useful addition to Mumbai's landscape. A memorial should enhance the grandeur of the location not diminish it. The Sena should not depend on the BMC or the State's largesse to do it but raise its own funds and build something to proudly associate Balasaheb's name with.

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

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

Sting Operations: An Abuse of Press Freedom?

Nitin G. Raut

Clandestine operations with a specific aim to 'expose' is not investigative journalism but paid journalism or a combination of myth and manipulation.

Two recent events caught the media headlines. First a Facebook post by a girl about her opinion on the shutdown of Mumbai following Bal Thackeray's death. An innocuous opinion, even otherwise legitimately entitled to, endorsed by another girl, invited the draconian provisions of Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, 2008. The arrest of the two girls that followed was a combination of an act of a politically controlled police force and an emotive reaction on the death of Thackeray – no doubt an icon to his followers. Either way it was using a sledgehammer to kill a gadfly.

In the second case a purported case of investigative journalism got muddled into sleazy exercise of charges and counter charges leading to the arrest of the editors of *Zee News* and *Zee Business* allegedly trying to extort money from the powerful industrial baron and Congress MP, Navin Jindal, in what the former labelled as an exercise to expose Jindal's benefits in coal block allocation and the latter accusing Zee of extorting money to spike the media expose about Jindal allegedly being a beneficiary of indiscriminate government favouritism.

In the first case the media rallied against the arrest of two girls as unwarranted police intrusion in press freedom and defending her right to express her opinion. In the second case, in spite of the arrest of two members of their fraternity, the media was cautious in taking sides unable to determine when journalistic sting operation degenerates into a extortion or when journalism becomes a cover for blackmail, if the slanging match between the two powerful actors is an indication.

Sometime back, the mercurial West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had Jadavapur University professor arrested for circulating a cartoon critical of Mamata and on another occasion had a person thrown out of a meeting for asking uncomfortable questions. Tolerating dissent or contrary view point has never been a strong point of our public policy.

Commercialisation of News

As it is, paid news has corroded the reputation of the media profession. When 'consideration' is involved

to say something positive or adversarial in the media, sting operations become motivated, which has made news a saleable commodity for a price like a commercial deal or a *quid pro quo*. According to Sorrel, however it is perfectly legitimate to have paid news provided the newspapers acknowledge the same and is called 'advertorial'.

The present trend of reporters in many newspapers is to enmesh facts with their personal opinions so as to blur facts, when comments and opinion ought to be the prerogative of editorials and op-ed page articles and features. Clandestine operation with a specific aim to 'expose' is not investigative journalism but paid journalism or a combination of myth and manipulation.

If the role of the police is questionable, it is equally true about the media, where values, journalistic ethics and morality are as easily spiked when an inconvenient piece of news is not to the liking of the powers that be or to the media managers. With many newspaper owners functioning under the nomenclatures of 'Managing Editor' and 'Editorial Advisor', the commercialization of news has become inevitable. Scarier is the control of politicians over sections of the media.

The role of the media is dissemination of information and mass communication by reporting events accurately and without tampering with facts. "News is sacred and comments are free" is an age old noble adage of the journalistic profession. But in today's age a sting operation is calibrated to make a story with premeditated and predetermined intentions to induce a person or a party into doing or saying something by a journalist or often outsourced to an undercover agent to do the hatchet job. It is an attempt to manipulate or mould a story to crucify certain person - a powerful politician or an industrial baron or a public figure. The *modus operandi* is to even offer a bribe and then to project the victim as 'corrupt' and flash the news as a 'scoop'. Many news portals and main line media have become factories of news by fabricating news and marketing it as 'investigative journalism'. It is difficult to resist concluding that sting operations have degenerated into shady commercial deals and done at the behest of rivals or interested parties wanting to settle scores.

The Dangerous Trend of Sting Operations

In 1973, when President Nixon was forced to quit following the infamous Watergate scandal, two cub reporters of *The Washington Post*, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, did not start the investigation with Nixon as their prime target. Nixon may not have even been on the radar. Rather they stumbled on to some leads and clues, on the basis of which they investigated, conducted interviews, tapped sources, and researched leading to the discovery of Nixon's involvement in using the Secret Service Agents to keep a tab on his political rivals. That was investigative journalism where a chain of events made a story. In a sting operation a premeditated plot is already in place and it is followed-up by an orchestrated chain of events to create a conclusion already determinant at the start. The sting operations are planted stories which trigger a media trial. This is a dangerous trend and has to be distinguished from an objective and dispassionate public debate without running a parallel media prosecution as the sting operator become an investigator, prosecutor and also a judge rolled into one.

In the 1960s and 1970s in India, there were tabloid journals indulging in 'yellow journalism' with impunity, but their capacity to influence the public was marginal and even regular readers could distinguish facts from fiction or serious from the frivolous. It had its fan readership but then it was for other features and photos

that were the main attraction and 'yellow journalism' was an aside. But in the age of electronic media, sting operations with its footages and visuals have a different and powerful impact.

The Big Q is can there be limits to press freedom? There cannot be and should not be. Each citizen is entitled to voice her or his opinion which freedom of speech is guaranteed under Article 19(a) of the Constitution with adequate safeguards from this freedom degenerating into a licence to say anything or being abused. Unlike the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution making press freedom sacrosanct, the Indian Constitution has no such express provision for press freedom. But over the years judicial pronouncements have interpreted the fundamental right of freedom of speech to include press freedom as a natural corollary to the free press. If this be so, how to safeguard press freedom from being abused or degenerating into a means of extortion? If such perception seems to exist, rightly or wrongly, it should be the responsibility of the Press itself. The social media has its role and is becoming an important means of mass communication. It is not a rival to mainline media but complements it in preserving press freedom.

NITIN G. RAUT is an advocate by profession and a member of the Editorial Board of *Freedom First*. Email: nitingraut@gmail.com



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Cornucopia

Firoze Hirjika

It is Time to Write Off Pakistan

Why do we continue to belittle ourselves by participating in Pakistan's games ?

Pakistan is obsessed with India. Evidence of this phobia is displayed daily in Pakistani newspapers and television channels. Indeed if it did not hate India, the very reason for its existence could be called into question. That is why the so-called confidence building measures and other peace initiatives are doomed to fail. In Pakistani eyes, India will always remain the big bad wolf just waiting to blow their house down. This reality should not evoke surprise from any section of Indian society. After all, the present and previous generations of Pakistanis have been force-fed an India-hating diet right from primary school onwards. Even a cursory reading of their "history" books will make that evident. India has always been a convenient scapegoat on which to hang their failure as a modern, progressive state. This notion has been reinforced by successive governments and the military establishment ever since Independence.

Unfortunately India usually expends valuable resources and lowers its international prestige by constantly responding to the pinpricks inflicting by its belligerent neighbour. I am writing this on the fourth anniversary of the Mumbai terror attacks. Predictably, the television channels are replaying the events of 26/11 *ad nauseum* and no doubt this will be followed by debates by a panel of "experts" who will regurgitate their played out views on what happened and who is to blame. For the past four years India has been whining about Pakistan's failure to bring the perpetrators of 26/11 to justice and in the process demeaning itself. Our leaders should be astute enough to face the reality that no amount of appeals or threats is going to compel the Pakistani establishment and military to lock up Hafeez Saeed, Zakir Lakhvi and company. These gentlemen are vital instruments of Pakistan's foreign policy and will never be sacrificed. In this matter, if Pakistan continues to cock a snook even at America on whom it is heavily dependent, do we honestly think they are going to address India's concerns? Why do we continue to belittle ourselves by participating in Pakistan's games, like the brouhaha over the visit of the Pakistan judicial commission who returned home without accomplishing anything, which was their intention right from the start?

India's foreign policy vis-à-vis Pakistan has always been ambiguous, confused and inconsistent. The

fundamental mistake our country makes is in dealing with Pakistan as an equal. It is not; and the contrast has never been more apparent than at present. Pakistan is a tinpot nation rapidly hurtling towards becoming a theocratic and bankrupt state. Even its main benefactor America will sooner or later get fed up with its ungrateful client; especially after US troops pull out of Afghanistan. Some would argue that it has nuclear weapons, but that is an empty threat. Pakistan will never use them unless it faces an existential threat; and why should India waste its resources attacking them? The country is already imploding from within, without any prodding from us. It follows therefore that the thousands of troops and thousands of crores that India expends along the Line of Control (LOC) is a bit of overkill. It is highly unlikely that the Pakistani misadventures of 1965 and 1971 will ever be repeated. Pakistan simply does not have the economy to sustain an all out war for more than a few weeks. And they know that America would rapidly pull the financial plug were they to embark on this foolish venture.

Equally impotent is India's constant complaint that Pakistan is not doing anything to dismantle the terrorist training camps proliferating in that benighted nation. These militants are the unofficial foot soldiers of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI); and which general will voluntarily dismantle his own forces? It is time the Indian army accepted these *jihadis* as an inescapable reality and concentrated on developing solid intelligence so that they can be eliminated as soon as they cross the border. It is only when our intransigent neighbour realizes that infiltration is a losing proposition that it will stop.

There is a further lacuna in India's perception of its strategic interests. The biggest potential foreign threat to this country is not Pakistan – or even China – but what could happen in Afghanistan. It has been Pakistan's constant endeavour to turn Afghanistan into a vassal state and that is why they keep nurturing the Taliban despite the local branch attacking the State. After the Americans leave in 2014, there is a strong plausibility that the Taliban will come roaring back and Pakistan will realize its long standing ambition. If that were to happen, India will be confronted with a theocratic Islamic super-state comprising Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan right along its border. It

is therefore vital that India props up the present Afghan government – corrupt and opportunistic as it is - covertly if not overtly. In foreign policy, one cannot always play on the side of the angels.

To sum up then, Pakistan is an irritant that has to be tolerated and preferably ignored. The provocations will

continue and probably increase, but India needs to develop a thick skin and concentrate its energies and resources where they will be most advantageous. India can get along fine without Pakistan. Allow them their fruitless fulminations. They have nothing to lose but their identity.

Mobocracy Rules! Jai Maharashtra!

If we allow those rights to be trampled upon with impunity by an uncaring and dictatorial officialdom, we are heading down a very slippery slope.

It started out as an insignificant, one-paragraph item in newspapers, the day after Bal Thackeray's funeral. It probably escaped the public's attention, but nonetheless has dire implications for the personal freedoms we take for granted. A 21-year old girl in Palghar posted the following message on Facebook, "People like Thackeray are born and die daily and one should not observe a bandh for that." She was arrested for this innocuous comment. Even worse, even her friend who had merely 'liked' the post was also picked up. They were initially arrested under Section 295 of the IPC, which relates to hurting religious sentiments. The charge was later watered down, but the two girls were forced to suffer the indignity and humiliation of being dragged to the police station during the night and held there for several hours.

This is the height of absurdity and high handedness. In the first place, there was nothing remotely defamatory or derogatory in the said post. Where does religious sentiment come in? More importantly, what business or right do the police have for monitoring or taking action on the personal Facebook accounts of private citizens? In a country plagued by endemic corruption and venal politicians, one of few things Indians can be grateful for are democracy and the Constitution that embodies personal liberty. If we allow those rights to be trampled upon with impunity by an uncaring and dictatorial officialdom, we are heading down a very slippery slope. It is time we common citizens took a stand and raised our voices.

At the same time as the girls were being treated like common criminals, a hospital belonging to the uncle of one of them was attacked and vandalized by a mob of hooligans instigated and led by a local Shiv Sena 'leader'. The police looked on tolerantly as the goons destroyed valuable medical equipment and dragged sick patients out into the street. I am sure the thought of arresting the thugs did not even enter their minds. It is a known fact that the majority of Mumbai's police force – especially among the lower ranks – is, if not Shiv Sainik themselves, sympathizers

of the Sena. So why should they interfere? This was just 'some of their boys' having a bit of fun.

A day later, as the Americans say, the shit hit the fan. The incident was picked up by the television news channels which went to town with it. Narcissistic 'experts' and publicity-seeking politicians salivated at the prospect of more than 15 minutes of fame. The policemen concerned found themselves in the centre of a firestorm. I am convinced that their primary emotion was total bewilderment. What had they done wrong? A political leader had "demanded" the arrest of some persons and they rushed to obey. What was the big deal? This was the way these things had always been handled. Were they supposed to waste their time considering the niceties of the charges they were about to levy? That's what magistrates were there for. Besides, no one should expect them to make a concerted effort to prevent the mob from committing mayhem. Some of them could get hurt that way. Honestly!

Anyway, bowing to public outrage, the cops arrested a handful of the rioters and stood them up before an indifferent magistrate, who fined them an embarrassingly token amount and promptly released them on bail. After an unseemly spat between the Maharashtra Chief Minister and his Home Minister, some of the policemen involved were suspended and the clueless magistrate was transferred. Amid all the drama, the authorities forgot that the girls still faced an arrest warrant. Belatedly and with poor grace, the charges were dropped.

In the middle of this hullabaloo, another 'vital' issue cropped up; that of where to locate a memorial to the departed Shiv Sena Supremo. We may delude ourselves that our country is an emerging superpower, but the reality is that most developed nations regard us with amused contempt; and why not? Take, for example, this mania about inaugurations and memorials. In no other country do completed public projects lie unused for weeks just because some VIP is not available to 'inaugurate' it. And now this

needless controversy about a memorial! The greatest memorial to Thackeray is that he lives on in the hearts and minds of thousands of his followers. This obsession to construct a physical memorial is typically Indian. Moreover, it does not stem from genuine concern for the departed leader, but a pathetic attempt by politicians to garner cheap publicity. Shiv Sena stalwarts like Manohar Joshi and Sanjay Raut made jingoistic and inflammatory pronouncements, which bordered on open insurrection. These leaders openly proclaimed the memorial would come up in Shivaji Park despite it being designated as a playground. On this issue there would be no compromise; and they would neither listen to the government, nor obey any court orders.

In any civilized State which professes to uphold the tenets of law and justice, this would be grounds for immediate and severe legal and judicial repercussions. This is Maharashtra, however, where the government in power has always displayed a lack of backbone, especially when it comes to taking on and disciplining belligerent parties like the Shiv Sena and the MNS. Even though the Maharashtra CM has publicly declared that he will not allow anyone to break the law, when it comes to the crunch, his party will come out with some artificial justification for acceding to the Sena's demands. One hopes that the police at least will hold firm and not give in to bullying, but past history does not support this. They will in all probability allow the Shiv Sena to have its way; taking shelter under the pathetic excuse that refusal would lead to potential violence. This would be a shameful abdication

Ji Hazoor!

It leads me to wonder if India is truly the democracy we liberals regularly parrot to assuage the country's myriad faults.

Sometimes a seemingly trivial and inconsequential incident inadvertently throws light on the cultural identity of a political party; and even the nation. In this case, a Maharashtra Nirman Seva (MNS) corporator repeatedly slapped a 60 year-old private contractor for delaying the drain work in his area. By itself, the incident was hardly unique. Many of our elected and appointed public officials, particularly those who have risen from the ranks, develop overweening egos that make each one believe he is a law unto himself. This particular corporator however, had the misfortune to be caught on camera and not surprisingly, the television channels picked it up, making him an unintentional celebrity.

The gentleman in question was invited to a television debate to explain and justify his action. In the true tradition of Indian public officials, he refused to

of duty. It is the job of the police to maintain law and order and allow law abiding citizens to go about their business. If they leave ordinary Mumbaikars to fend for themselves and limit their activities to tackling crime and *bandobast* duty, who can the common man turn to for protection?

Not to be outdone, the Republic Party of India (RPI) has got into the act by vociferously opposing a perfectly reasonable suggestion to install a Thackeray memorial inside the 12.5 acres allotted for the Ambedkar memorial. As it is, squandering such a huge area in a space-starved city like Mumbai is a needless extravagance. Is the RPI trying to emulate Mayawati and her elephant statue parks? Even more disturbing is the threat by RPI leader Ramdas Athavale that if the land for the Ambedkar memorial is not handed over by 5th December, his party 'activists' will forcibly take over the land. This open invitation to lawlessness has met with no concrete response from the state government and probably will not. If past history is a guide, the CM will tamely give in to the threat and more shamefully, the police top brass will encourage him to surrender. After all, the police demonstrated their 'backbone' last Sunday when instead of ensuring adequate protection for those citizens who wished to go about their business, advised them to stay indoors. Under the guise of 'communal sensitivity', the police routinely prefer to leave the streets to 'political' hooligans rather than serve their Constitutional function as protectors of law abiding citizens. Jai Maharashtra.

acknowledge that he had done anything wrong. When pressed, he grudgingly admitted that he regretted striking an elderly man, but he justified it nonetheless with some convoluted explanations. When the TV anchor pointed out that the MNS leader Raj Thackeray had expressed his disappointment over the incident, he looked nonplussed for a while and then came out with a statement that I found particularly chilling. He declared that Thackeray owned his unquestioning loyalty and he would apologize to the contractor if so ordered. He went on to proclaim that if Raj *Saheb* so asked, he was even prepared to commit suicide!

I believe that this kind of blind, brainwashed subservience to the leader is quite common in our politics, particularly in totalitarian outfits like the MNS and Shiv Sena. After all, Bal Thackeray made no secret of his disdain

for nonsensical notions like democracy and free debate. He tolerated no dissent from his party workers and they were happy to obey him. Witness the emotions expressed after his death. His cohorts are describing his cremation spot as “holy” and Thackeray himself as a god.

It leads me to wonder if India is truly the democracy we liberals regularly parrot to assuage the country’s myriad faults. When millions of our countrymen profess blind obedience to a present day ‘emperor’, can we really assert that we have escaped our feudal heritage? Can we even claim to be a modern nation? The subservient masses are not exclusively to blame, of course. The new ‘kings’ do their best to perpetuate the notion that the Maharajas and colonial overlords of centuries past have not gone away. They have merely adopted a different avatar. That is why many of the draconian laws formulated by our erstwhile British rulers to keep the natives in check remain on the statute books.

But why blame the “masses” when the so-called elite are equally culpable? Apart from fulminating in the press and participating in debates that only a microscopic percentage of the country’s population listens to, what have they done to affect, or even attempt to affect a

change? A case in point is the long pending Police Reform Act. The present arrangement, whereby politicians hold the formidable power of appointments and transfers, is heavily loaded in their favour. Naturally they have no incentive to pass any reforms which would diminish that power. So they allow the matter to drag on interminably; and the rest of us docilely allow them to do so.

The elite, which include major corporations, claim helplessness, but they are not. Politicians depend on the substantial funds provided by these entities to get elected. Withholding this money would give the elite considerable leverage against the politicians. They choose not to exercise that power however, because the other side can retaliate by causing impediments to hamper their money-making potential. We Indians are a very self-centred lot and are content to envelop ourselves in a cocoon where only what matters is our personal well-being. As long we can maintain the sanctity of our private islands, we don’t really care what happens outside its confines. So we let things drift and if in the process, our constitutional rights are eroded or ignored, it’s somebody else’s problem. In the final analysis, we get the government we deserve.

Too Many People Have Died

This abomination has become so routine in America

Yet another senseless school massacre in the USA leaving 20 young children dead; and another shooting at a mall just a few days before. Mentally disturbed young men who can lay their hands on assault rifles as easily as one can pick up groceries. Who hears the cries of the dying victims? This abomination has become so routine in America; I’m surprised it even makes news anymore. And yet the National Rifle Association (NRA) and gun lobby continue to swagger under their misguided misinterpretation of the Second Amendment – and the public looks on, powerless and bewildered. Television debates bring forth some bizarre arguments. One group suggests that the answer to the out-of-control gun violence is to arm even more of the public. It argues that even school teachers should be armed to “protect”

themselves and their students. Can you imagine the mayhem that would issue from indiscriminate firing by untrained civilians? Another startling development is that gun sales in America have *increased* since the massacre. It appears that the world’s most powerful country has a screw loose somewhere in its psyche. When will they ever wake up and smell the corpses? When will it end?

I think Bob Dylan expressed it most poignantly:

*How many deaths will it take till they know
That too many people have died?*

The answer may be blowing in the wind, but the lawmakers choose not to catch it. Wake up America!

It’s so easy to fool Indians

The policy that emanated from London after the mutiny in 1857 (was) that there is only one way to control this country and that is to make Hindus and Muslims fight each other,” said Justice Markendaya Katju

He said that then there was a propaganda that Hindi was the language of Hindus and Urdu of Muslims. “Our ancestors also studied Urdu, but it is so easy to fool you. You are idiots so how difficult is it to make an idiot of you,” Katju said.

Courtesy: <http://The Times of India>

Obama-2 : Second Term Activism Abroad

B. Ramesh Babu

Since Japan is the immediate target of the escalation of conflict by China, Japan has launched a vigorous campaign to strengthen her relations with India and to expand the bi-lateral equation to encompass new and more sensitive areas.

President Barak Obama's second term is most likely to be in line with the historic tradition of activism abroad in the context of stalemate on the domestic front. Under the American Constitutional dispensation the President's enjoy more leeway in the realm of foreign affairs than at home where stakeholders are many more. When an American President wins a second term, he naturally wants to leave his mark in the history books. Such a felt compulsion assumes extra salience especially when he is unable to do much at home, which seems most likely in case of Obama at this juncture. Separation of powers and Republican control of Congress indicate prolonged stalemate between the White House and the Capitol Hill on the most crucial issue of economic recovery. Obama and the Republican rightwing are at loggerheads on the ideal policies and best strategies needed to revive the sluggish economy and put the nation back on track. Such clashes are a complex and confusing mix of myths and realities in all countries. America is no exception. Its 'holy cows' are different from ours. However, when 'holy cows' cross horns, the clashes on the ground are real and deepen the political divisions further!

In this brief essay on the foreign policy orientation of President Obama during the next four years, it is not possible to discuss the looming epic clash between the President and Congressional majority over taxes, budget deficits, incentives for business and industry, defence spending etc. The nature and the contours of the resolution or non-resolution of the impending conflict over the built in tax increase for "middle class" families earning less than \$250,000 per annum will give us a clue to what is in store for the future. If the stalemate continues the taxes will go up automatically on January 1, 2013, an outcome which the President is determined to fight with all the tools at his command (including a compromise on deficit reduction.)

Be that as it may, let us indulge in some informed speculation on the contours of American foreign policy strategy under Obama's leadership in the next four years. For the first time in American history, the nation's President is not a "white man" with an inherited Eurocentric world

view. Considering Obama's Afro-American origins and his early life experience in Asia, is it unreasonable to expect his second term activism abroad could hew a different path? Obviously, "nation state" interests are the ultimate determinants of the country's foreign policy. In the light of the widely different background and personal legacy of President Obama, he may perceive the nation state interests differently. In this context, it may be recalled that in the fall of 2008 while addressing a huge crowd in Berlin Presidential Candidate Obama described himself as an American and also a citizen of the world. All American Presidents saw themselves as world leaders and captains of the Free World, not a lowly citizen of the world! I think Obama's opposition to the war in Iraq even as the junior Senator from Illinois reflected a different view of America's role in the world. As President he hastened the withdrawal of American troops from the beleaguered West Asian country as quickly as was possible in the circumstances. He is now more determined than before on the schedule of quitting Afghanistan in 2014.

Obama has already formally acknowledged what most IR scholars and security experts around the world have been saying for some time, i.e. the centre of gravity in world affairs has shifted from the Atlantic to the Asia-Pacific. Accordingly, he announced a "rebalancing" in the nation's strategic security policy of moving 60 per cent of the nation's unmatched naval resources and capabilities to the region. In fact, as we noted earlier, the Obama Administration's declaration that India is the lynchpin of the new strategy constrained China to come out instantaneously and declare that her bilateral equation with India was a "defining relationship" of the 21st century! It may be added that Obama's participation in the ASEAN and East Asia Summits subsequently had its impact on international relations in the region. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was among the key participants in the two Summits, which galvanized the countries in the region to wake up to the common threat of Chinese aggressive expansionism in the South China and East Asian Seas, which was the subject of our analysis in the earlier issues of *Freedom First*, as the readers know. It is in India's interest to sustain the regional and American pressure

against China. There is a noticeable mellowing down in the Chinese rhetoric on the border issue in recent weeks. Hopefully this is a sign of moderation in regional ambition in the interests of China's self declared long term goal of becoming a global super power rivaling the US. But, as far as the border issue is concerned our policy should be steady enhancement of our defence capabilities even as we continue to expand our growing trade and economic relations with China. We should also continue to work with China on climate change, the North-South divide and other issues of shared interests. But, eternal vigilance on the border is the watch word ultimately.

Getting back to President Obama activist avatar abroad in the second term, it is logical to expect his foreign policy to be less chauvinistic, more discrete and broadly internationalist. The focus has shifted to Asia-Pacific and greater attention will be paid to the economic and trade relations with China, India, and other growing Asian economies, which are expected to come to the rescue of the recession oriented economies of the West. Moreover, the US is perceived as the Super Power on the retreat and its economy is yet to get back on track, which may take longer than the leadership hopes. In this context the economic and trade equation with China is of vital importance for the US. The reverse is equally true for China. The two will pursue the double edged policies as far and as long as possible and a bit more!

Now let us take a quick look at Obama's foreign policy challenges in West Asia. The unwinnable war in Afghanistan is certainly the most immediate task on hand. With the withdrawal of military forces on cards already,

the US will have to reconcile to leaving the play to the other stake holders in the region (Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and India). Russia and China will also be involved in the future dispensation of Afghanistan and the region as a whole. America is interested in pushing India to play a bigger and more active role in the region after its forces leave the scene. However, we should be clear in what we want and more importantly what all we can do on the ground. The worst thing that could happen in the foreign policy of a nation is the unwitting inheritance of the goals and policies of other nations (friendly or otherwise).

In this context, it is very crucial to recognize that the US is working hard to reduce its dependence on oil from West Asia. There are credible reports that by 2025 the shale oil production will make America self sufficient in hydrocarbons. Furthermore Obama is determined to go forward aggressively in developing non-conventional (solar, wind, etc) sources of energy. It is too early to speculate on how the freedom from dependence on West Asian oil will affect the US policy in the vast region including its special relationship with Israel.

All in all the next four years will see dramatic changes on the world scene. The US and the rest of the world will have to adjust and readjust to one another as best as they could. This includes China.

DR. B. RAMESH BABU is a specialist in International Relations, American Politics and Foreign Policy. He is currently associated with the Foundation for Democratic Reforms led by Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan. Dr. Babu was formerly the Sir Pherozeshah Mehta Professor of Civics & Politics at the University of Mumbai.
Email: brameshbabu08@gmail.com

Is the Growing Indiscipline in Our Country Bothering You?

The last few days, weeks and months seem to be filled with incidents of the most horrific kind, where young women, children, senior citizens, people in hospitals and even those taking a jog have been assaulted and often killed.

A sample of some incidents in the last few weeks:

- Student gang-raped in moving bus in Delhi
- Businessman steps out to jog, shot dead in Oshiwara
- Burglar rapes Spanish woman at knifepoint in a Bandra flat
- Shootout in Gurgaon hospital leaves two patients critically injured
- Man mistakes woman for wife, stabs her in Mumbai
- I am scared of the day Jerri John (acid attacker) steps out of jail
- 62-year-old widow raped by family friend in Mumbai
- Mumbai Pvt school bus knocks down and kills 6-yr-old in city.

And many more such similar incidents from all parts of the country, most of which do not even reach the media.

One of the main reasons for the increase in such happenings is the belief amongst the perpetrators that they can't get away scotfree. Indeed, this is the situation in most cases, as the dismal lack of serious convictions for similar cases in the past has shown.

If you are an individual or part of a group who is sufficiently agitated about this, and you have a plan contact us at info@karmayog.org

What we will do is to provide support to people who are going to take up specific instances and see that justice is done. in each case.

Regards,

Vinay

Courtesy: www.karmayog.org

Georgia : A Dream Becomes a Reality:

Dr. R. G. Gidadhubli

Josef Stalin who ruled the former USSR for about four decades hailed from this region

Georgia, one of the fifteen sovereign and independent States which was part of the former Soviet Union made history in October 2012 by bringing about a peaceful transfer of power when the opposition parties under a coalition called 'Georgia Dream' (GD) swept to victory under the leadership of Bidzina Ivanishvili thus ending the nine year rule of Mikhail Sakashvili. It is interesting to note that in the post-Soviet era, three former republics (in reality Soviet satellites) namely Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan experienced Color Revolutions in 2003 and 2004 to bring about a more effective multi-party system, greater degree of political democracy and changes in regimes unlike some other former republics such as Russia, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan which have continued with autocratic rule of the same party leaders even as the declared objective of all the newly independent States has been to bring about transition from the former single party Communist rule to political democracy and market economy.

Georgia is a part of the Caucasian region situated in the south-eastern part of the former Soviet Union bordering Russia, Azerbaijan and the Black Sea. Historically Georgia is unique in many respects in so far as its relation with Moscow is concerned. Josef Stalin who ruled the former USSR for about four decades hailed from this region and so also Eduard Shevarnadze who was the foreign minister of the former USSR under Mikhail Gorbachev. Georgia is the only former Soviet republic which fought a miserable five-day war with Russia in August 2008 and lost. It is also in conflict with two of its regions namely South Ossetia and Abkhazia bordering Russia, which continues to be a sore point of contention in its foreign relations. It is interesting to know that the new leader Ivanishvili who has become

the Prime Minister of Georgia has a unique relationship with Russia. He was living in Moscow in the 1990's even after the Soviet breakup holding Russian citizenship till 2004 and became a billionaire during Yeltsin's policy of hasty privatization and economic liberalisation. He later held a French citizenship before returning to his homeland Georgia.

Factors leading to Sakashvili's defeat

There are several reasons for the electoral defeat of Sakashvili and his government:

1. Georgia has strained relations with Russia which got aggravated after a 5-day war in 2008 over the issue of breakaway republics of Abkhazia and Ossetia and Georgia lost the war. Sakashvili accused Russia for the war which occurred due to highly complex socio-political and ethnic issues.
2. The impact of the strained relations with Russia worsened as Sakashvili tried to prevent Russia's admission into the World Trade Organization (WTO).
3. Georgian economic conditions worsened resulting in declining growth of national income, high inflation and rising unemployment.
4. Despite Sakashvili's concerted pro-western foreign policies pursued for over a decade, Georgia is still not a member of NATO and the European Union.
5. Sakashvilis coalition government under United National Movement (UNM) had a very poor record on human rights issues and the latest cases of horrific abuse of prisoners by guards and prison officials led to widespread demonstrations indicating resentment among voters.



6. Georgia has been a victim of high level of corruption and the appalling state of the judicial system.

The prevailing post-election political scenario in Georgia is highly complex. On the basis of the initial strong reaction of Sakashvili to his defeat, many analysts were concerned about the likely adverse impact on the political conditions.

Policy Priorities of GD

Having taken over power, policy priorities of the new government of the GD seems to be:

1. A pledge to reduce the level of confrontation with Moscow and improve trade and economic relations with Russia. This strategy might help the economy of Georgia since Russia has for the last several years imposed a boycott on key Georgian exports such as wine and mineral water.
2. Realizing the mistakes committed by the previous government against opposition political parties, Ivanishvili has instructed the ministers of the new government to refrain from political witch-hunting. This is a right step to win the confidence of the people for the new government. Reconfirming this policy the new US educated young interior minister Garibashvili has assured that “there will be no political persecutions in Georgia” and that the Interior Ministry will be “as transparent as possible”. If implemented, this might bring about a major change in the country.
3. Ivanishvili, while making efforts to reduce the level of confrontation with Moscow, has promised to continue the policy of the previous government of forging close relations with the West and the US without sacrificing Georgia’s overall path toward integration with the European Union and eventual NATO membership.
4. The new government proposes to implement, on a priority basis, freedom of press and reforms in judicial system which assumes importance considering large scale violations of human rights and growing corruption in the country. The lack of a truly

independent press since the country’s 2003 Rose Revolution has been one of the key disappointments of Sakashvili’s rule among a large section of the population. There was a raid by the authorities of the Sakashvili government in November 2007 on a private TV channel with which Giorgi Targamadze, a politician and journalist, was associated. He has expressed hope that the situation will improve under the new administration.

Challenges Ahead for GD

Firstly, resolving the issue of the status of breakaway Georgian provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia could be very difficult and tough for the new government. For Georgia the issue is quite crucial since both these breakaway regions account for about 20 percent of its territory and Georgia wants to regain control of this region.

Secondly, Ivanishvili’s new government might face challenges and problems in dealing with local governments which are controlled by parties of the ENM and which have virtual monopoly over the district level administration and local governments close to Sakashvili. This factor has the potential of making matters worse for the new government since some leaders of ENM have declared that they will come back to power, meaning thereby that they might not allow smooth implementation of the policies of the GD government.

Hence, with the electoral success of GD, Ivanishvili has won only half the battle. How the new government will implement its policies and sustain its popularity under his leadership is to be seen. It is opined by some analysts that peaceful transfer of power in Georgia was evidence of a matured democracy. But it may be too early and premature to come to any conclusions since the struggle for power might persist even as the new coalition government of GD has to record its achievements and fulfil its objectives.

Dr. R.G. Gidadhubli, Professor and former Director, Centre for Central Eurasian Studies, University of Mumbai, Mumbai 400098. Email: rgidadhubli@hotmail.com

Support the Ongoing Struggle for the Freedom of Tibet

The world has one more reason to remember and stand up for Human Rights every December 10 when we remember the Tibetans who die so that their country may live. Self-immolation in Tibet has now reached an alarming 94.

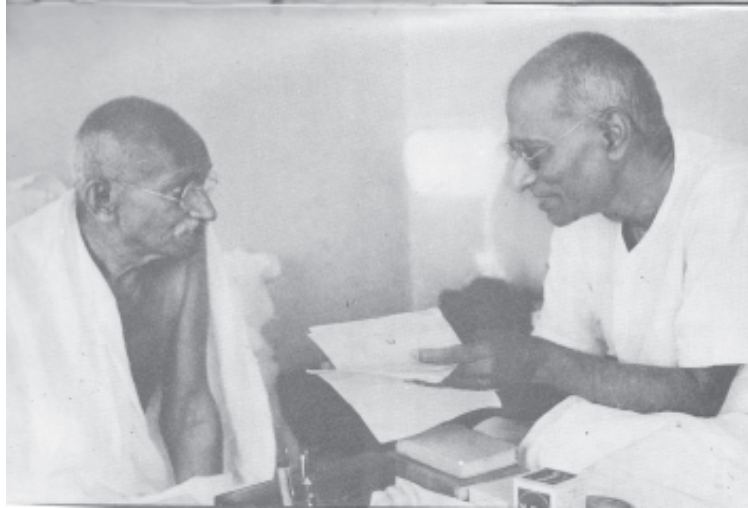
Tibetans and Tibet supporters around the world commemorate December 10 each year as Human Rights Day by holding global solidarity rallies, protests, and vigils to call on the world leaders to team up to save Tibetan lives. Joint international government action will help resolve the crisis in Tibet.

Students for a Free Tibet, India (SFT India) is the India National Network of Students for a Free Tibet International, which has over 650 chapters in more than 35 countries.

For more information visit www.sftindia.org, www.studentsforafreetibet.org.

Folk Genius

The books of Moses, following the first five chapters of the Old Testament, are believed by scholars to have been reduced to writing long after the matter had been preserved only by oral tradition. The view prevails that although writing may have come into existence already, in the culture of the ancients writing was mostly used for practical purposes of commerce and living speech played a much more dominating role than writing in the handing down of such material as go to form these five books of the Old Testament - historical traditions, epics, cult legends and laws. In these fields 'oral tradition is primary and creative, written tradition is secondary and derivative'



Rajaji in conversation with Gandhiji

difficulties only to be tackling them with unsatisfactory explanations.

Folk genius has its own way and perhaps understands the mind of the people even better than poets

whose main aim is instruction rather than depicting the truth. The creations of folk genius are not the less interesting for running counter to our present notions. Sita's case specially is striking in this respect.

The unjust trials to which she is condemned by Rama may offend all our ideas of justice. Yet the women of India will not give up the

story. It holds in its sad features so much of what woman has to suffer in India. Sita's travails have an appeal to Indian womanhood that cannot be ignored as if they were inartistic defects in the *Ramayana*.

If a supreme illustration of the vanity of human wishes were wanted, we have it in the *Ramayana* where at the end of the great search and the fierce battle ending in complete victory for Rama, Sita found herself free, only to be prized as a symbol of Kshatriya honour and not as the beloved found again. Her long penance ended to hear Rama's chilling words: "I have destroyed the wrong-doer and freed you from duress and so my work is done. Not for you but for my honour did I all this." No wonder that Sita entered the fire for warmth! This represents woman's life in India more truly than any artistically conceived modern story. Can there be any more impressive illustration for the vanity of all human wishes than this demonstration of the vanity of even Sita's love?

Swarajya, December 1, 1956

From the Memoirs of Minoo Masani

In the last issue, we saw Minoo Masani's meeting with Jawaharlal Nehru regarding the Chinese invasion and the conversation that took place. Nehru's narration of his meeting with Mao Tse Tung and Nehru's disappointment.



“As I left the Prime Minister, I told him that I would be at his disposal; in any way in which I could be of use to him insofar as the defence of the country against the Chinese communists was concerned.

“Some time in 1963 or the beginning of 1964, I was in Delhi attending a session of Parliament when I was called on the phone to be told that ‘His Majesty would very much like to meet you and wonders whether you can have a cup

of tea with him this afternoon.’ I did not know from where the man at the other end of the line was speaking. When I asked him which Majesty it was who wished to see me, I was told that it was the Nepalese Embassy speaking on behalf of the King of Nepal.

“Though somewhat taken aback at the invitation, I accepted it as I thought it might be interesting to meet the King about whom I had heard some odd things from Jawaharlal a year or so earlier. When I was ushered into the royal presence, I asked King Mahendra to what I owed the honour of this invitation which, of course, I was very glad to accept. He explained that he was the brother-in-law of the Raja saheb of Poonch, who was a member of the Swatantra Party and who had made him promise to meet his ‘leader’ when the King was next in Delhi. The King said he was fulfilling his promise.

“We had a friendly and relaxed chat for about half-an-hour and one without any set purpose or direction. As we were about to break up, I told the King I would take the liberty of making a request to him. I said I had heard that the relationship between him and Prime Minister Nehru was not of the happiest. I told him that there was great regard and respect for the Nepalese Crown in India. For one thing it was the only Hindu kingdom left in the world. I therefore suggested that he should not be affected by any personal considerations. If it would cheer him up, it might interest him to know that he was by no means the only Head of State whom our Prime Minister might have unintentionally offended.

“There were other distinguished personalities who fell into that category, including President Truman of the USA and President Ayub Khan of Pakistan. I told the King that when Norman Thomas, the American socialist leader, came to Bombay to attend a meeting of the Congress for Cultural Freedom in 1951, he had told me of the conversation between President Truman and himself before he left Washington for Bombay. Truman said to him: ‘Norman, Nehru was sitting in the chair that you are now occupying. I tried to make friends with him. I tried very hard. But he is no friend of ours. He suffers from racialism in reverse.’

“Similarly, on at least two occasions, one private and the other in public, Nehru had high-hatted President Ayub Khan. There was an occasion when Ayub was travelling from East Pakistan back westwards home. He offered to break his journey in Delhi and wanted to be invited to do so. Our Prime Minister turned his request down. Ayub then stooped to conquer and asked whether, if his plane should stop at Palam Airport for refuelling for an hour or so, will the Prime Minister be good enough to meet him at the airport. I was told by someone in the Ministry of External Affairs who was then attending on Nehru that Nehru availed himself of this courtesy in a most reluctant manner. Unfortunately, when the two met at Palam a few days later, Prime Minister Nehru behaved in an extremely churlish manner and took on a rather abstracted and distant look that he had the habit of doing when he wished to debunk the man who was talking to him. The result was that, when Ayub resumed his flight, he told the Indian High Commissioner in Karachi, who was in the plane: ‘I respect your Prime Minister as a *buzurg* (an older man) but must he insult me? After all, I too, am the Head of a State.’

“The public affront to Ayub came when the Pakistani President publicly made an offer of a defence pact between the two countries in the subcontinent which would ensure that if one country was attacked from outside, the other country would come to its help as a measure of common defence. Pandit Nehru mockingly asked soon after, when asked to comment on the Pakistan President's offer ‘Common defence against whom?’ He got his answer when the Chinese Communist hordes advanced down the slopes of the Himalayas in October 1962.

A Soldier's Tale

What a Rest Day!

A World War II anecdote - in Burma

Brig. Furdoon S. Mehta (Retd.)

I was the only Indian Artillery officer to have volunteered for Air Operations (AOP) and served with 656 RAF Squadron of SE Asia operations of the war in Burma and Malaya in World War II.

It was February 1945 and we were victoriously battling on from north and south in Burma in support of the XIV Army and we were approaching the mighty Irrawaddy river which we crossed a few weeks later. This was the period when the AOP in Burma was at its busiest and was very stretched as we had a lot of area to cover. Whereas, the normal allotment would be one Squadron per Corps, our squadron covered the XIV Army area of operations stretched over hundreds of miles.

We had just captured Schwebo, a strategic town in North Burma and my flight was supporting XXXIII Corps in which I served from our own Advanced Landing Ground (ALG). There was also an RAF fighter strip not far from us.

My Flight Commander was a very serious looking man called George Deacon, a very good hearted man., who one morning in February 1945, told me "Duck (that was my nickname, as I came from Bombay, famous for its delicious eel like fish, called Bombay Duck). I am pinching your aircraft for the day as mine has developed serious compass problems. It's at least 35-40 degrees out. I have called some RAF technicians from Group HQ to put it right. You take it easy today and hold the fort as you've got a very busy day tomorrow".

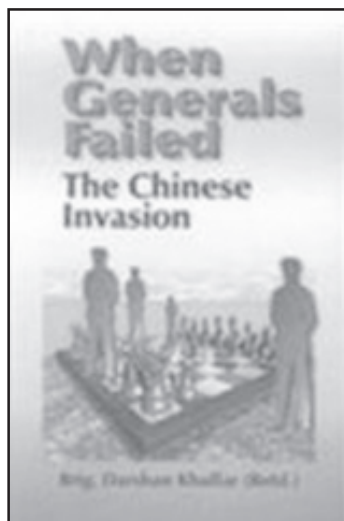
After a leisurely breakfast, I was about to settle down and catch up with my mail, when the telephone rang. It was our Corps Commander Royal Artillery (CCRA) Brig. "Hair" Trigger Stevens, who said 'I want an aircraft to drop me to an ALG (name sounded like Timbuktu) about 45 minutes away'. I explained that I had an aircraft, but it was waiting to get its compass fixed. He said 'Damn the compass, you can map read your way. I am coming in 15 minutes.' I had the aircraft fuelled and had just started the engine, when he dashed over, on the dot, in a cloud of dust and said 'Let's go' and came and sat in the passenger seat. I had a ¼ inch map sheet and he pointed to an ALG at one corner of the map and said 'there'. Our Armies have a knack of fighting a war at four corners of

maps. So off we went and landed at the ALG where I saw a group of officers with black berets, gathered to meet the CCRA, who got down and said to me 'Don't switch off.' He had a brief meeting with them and came back to me and said 'Take this Colonel, CO of the Corps Armoured Regiment on a low level recce and bring him back alive. The Colonel came and sat in the passenger seat and belted up. He then showed me on his one inch to the mile map some track he had to recce and asked me to fly at treetop height'. That was the first mistake I made. Never let anyone else navigate.

As I passed over them after another twenty minutes or so, I spotted a mass of water. I said to myself, "That's the mighty Irrawaddy river – we were at least 6 miles into Jap territory by then. I looked at the Colonel and he looked agitated, looking at his map (which we had long overshot). I asked him 'Where are we now?' And he replied 'I am honestly lost'. I said 'Not to worry Sir, I will now navigate' and pulled up to about 1000 feet to see what I could identify. I turned 'homewards' and flew for about ten minutes, when I spotted a rail and road running parallel and altered course to follow the rail homeward. The Colonel insisted that we go in the opposite direction, so I had to be firm and said 'Sir, you are a passenger who has lost is way, I am going to put matters right, so please relax and view the scenery.' He didn't like that at all and muttered something. He was doing what was commonly called 'Bradshawing' looking for a railway station to fly over to read its name but I had no such luck. I look up at the petrol guage and saw it had half a gallon of petrol left. I started looking around for somewhere to force land, nearer the road the better. After going a few minutes more, at last as luck would have it. I spotted an ALG and as I got nearer, I saw white crosses marked on it which meant mines located but not lifted. I flew over the strip a couple of times to memorise the location of the mines and determined my landing plan. The Japs were stupid – they had placed most of the mines at the centre of the strip and left just about enough space

(Cont'd. on page 39)

BOOK REVIEWS



WHEN GENERALS FAILED-THE CHINESE INVASION by Brig Darshan Khullar (Retired) ● Manas Publications, 26, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110002 ● 1999 ● Pages 267 ● Rs 495.

Reviewed by Brig. Suresh C. Sharma (Retd.) adviser to the telecom industry, a freelance writer and a member of the Advisory Board of *Freedom First*. Email: brigscs@gmail.com

The author has narrated his experiences of the 1962 War in which he participated as a young officer. He interviewed a number of officers and used Chinese sources as well. He acknowledges the

from Chinese sources, the author has narrated that on 7 October, the Chinese Foreign Minister; Chen Yi had told Indian Ambassador Bannerjee that India had the support of USA and UK. He continued "I have fought more than twenty wars. I have rested for some ten years and my arms are itching again. We will now meet on the battlefield." Instructions for war were issued on 18 October after a conference of military commanders. It is clear from the deliberations of the conference that the Chinese had not underestimated the Indian Army but were not aware of our logistics difficulties. What stands out is their vast military experience and desire to bring India to the negotiating table. This is contrary to the account given by Farquar, again from Chinese sources that the Chinese military commanders had decided to give a hard knock to the Indian Army.

benefit of hindsight. The Indian Army was not inferior to the Chinese Army and fought with pluck in Ladakh and Walong. The debacle in the Kameng sector occurred due to the blunder and inaction by senior commanders. The soldiers had given a good account of themselves. The author has given an account of the historical background of the Indo-Tibetan border and has described the topography of NEFA. This helps to understand the conduct of operations. For all practical purpose, Tibet had remained an independent theocracy under the Dalai Lama. Tibet could have been annexed to the British Empire after the successful expedition of Younghusband in 1903. Instead, the British signed a treaty assuring China not to annex Tibet. This was part of the Great Game to build a buffer state adjacent to Russia. In the Shimla Conference in 1913, the McMahon Line along the high peaks, often confused with the watershed, was accepted as the boundary in NEFA. This treaty was not ratified by China.

In August 1969, the responsibility for NEFA was transferred from Assam Rifles, which surprisingly reported to the External Affairs Ministry, to the Army. In 1959, General Thorat, the then Army Commander, had prepared a plan that the forward posts should fall back to the main defences since these would not be able to withstand a major attack. This was not approved as Nehru, briefed by Mullick, believed that China would not launch a major attack. He brushed aside any recommendation contrary to this view. General Kaul was appointed commander of the newly raised 4 Corps for NEFA. 7 Infantry Brigade was rushed to Namka Chu Valley in total disregard of military wisdom with the task to dislodge the Chinese from Thagla ridge. It was done on the advice of Mullick. The COAS and the Army Commander did not raise any objections. General Niranjan Prasad, GOC 4 Infantry Division, did object and was replaced by General AS Pathania MVC, MC.

China had made a road through Aksai Chin in Ladakh and an Indian Border patrol was ambushed there on 20 October 1959. In 1961, India embarked on a forward policy to establish India's claims. This included Dhaula post on Thagla Ridge which the Chinese claimed to be north of the McMahon Line. Nehru was guided by Mullick, Director IB, who claimed it to be in our territory. On 8 September 1962, about 60 Chinese soldiers surrounded the Dhaula post. The very people who had held the view that China would not attack openly talked of a limited war. China on the contrary talked of negotiations. Nehru's views had hardened. According to Noorani, this change in his views was due to the advice of Dr Gopal, Head of the Historical Division of the External Affairs Ministry. Quoting

A detailed account has been given of the conduct of operations. Subedar Joginder Singh of 1 Sikh unit put up a stiff fight. He was wounded and taken prisoner. He succumbed to injuries while in captivity and was awarded PVC. Only four soldiers survived from his platoon and made way to the company. One company of 4 Garhwal Rifles had panicked but the Engineer detachment with them managed to blow up the bridge. The troops were ordered

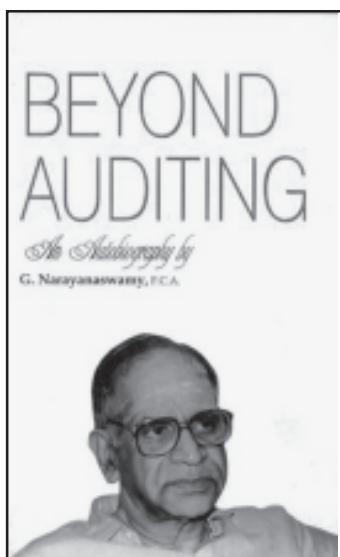
to fall back to Sela feature which could withstand major attacks. 4 Garhwal were ordered to hold Nuranong, 8 kms ahead of Sela. Colonel Bhattacharjee of 4 Garhwal had shaved off his head to observe penance for the poor show at Tawang. His adjutant followed suit. All ranks of the battalion showed rare resilience in subsequent operations. The unit lost 3 officers, 5 JCOs and 153 soldiers. 5 officers including the Colonel, 8 JCOs and 231 soldiers were taken prisoners. This was the only unit to get a Battle Honour, Nuranomg, in the NEFA campaign.

In one of his trips, Darshan traveling in a one ton vehicle saw a dog barking and guarding a hut. He entered the hut and found a wounded soldier who had lived for a week on food brought by the dog. Darshan carried him out and ran into a patrol of Dogra battalion. They agreed to look after him till he brought his vehicle. On reaching his vehicle he forgot about the casualty in trying to escape from the shelling by the Chinese. He recalled and went back. The Dogra JCO and men taunted him. Peace was restored after a few hot exchanges. After a few days, he came across a military driver injured in a minefield. Darshan and Sepoy Ram Singh of 1 Sikh unit walked into the minefield and brought the injured soldier to safety. The Dogra patrol happened to be there. They warmly shook hands and raised him in the air. He was a hero. He observed philosophically that bravery and cowardice are not permanent attributes. A hero of yester-year may be a coward today. It did happen in 1962. Some of the commanders who had won gallantry awards in earlier wars left the battlefield without engaging the enemy.

Kaul fell sick and was evacuated to New Delhi. The

arrival of Lt.Gen. Harbaksh Singh Vr C as the corps commander and that of Brig Hoshiar Singh as Commander 62 Infantry Brigade brought a ray of hope. Brig Hoshiar Singh was moved from NDA where he was deputy commandant. The Commandant, staff and cadets gave him a farewell at the Pashan Gate, befitting the hero who would stop the enemy. Harbaksh and Hoshiar were determined to hold Sela. Hoshiar called it Shila [Rock]. One more brigade was rushed to NEFA. The hope was short lived as Kaul was sent back to command 4 Corps as Nehru desired not to damage his reputation. *Nehru still talked of commitment to non-violence (emphasise reviewers)*. There was a lull for two weeks which was misinterpreted by India and not utilized for strengthening the defences. Brig Palit, Director Military Operations, was shocked to note that Pathania had located his HQ in the Drang Djong valley and not on the heights. He was concerned about the security of his HQ and ordered 4 Garhwal to withdraw. On 17 November, Generals Thapar and Sen were in Tezpur and declined to intervene when Palit protested against the withdrawal from Sela. Soon a rout precipitated. General Menezes has termed the withdrawal from Sela as “betrayal of trust” Brig Hoshiar Singh was killed. It is believed that the soldier who shot Hoshiar Singh was punished for they desired to capture him alive. The story of the brave fight put up by 4 Rajput and 3 J & K LI was well covered.

On 21 November, China declared cease-fire in order to promote peaceful resolution of the border problem. Thus ended the saddest chapter in the history of Independent India. The book is a must to understand the conduct of the war in NEFA, its causes for defeat.



BEYOND AUDITING, An Autobiography by G. Narayanaswamy F.C.A. ● Published by D. Rangaswamy Academy for Fiscal Research and S. V. Research Foundation 218, T.T.K Road, Chennai, 600018 ● 2012 ● Pages 312 ● Rs.300.

Reviewed by Dr. R. Srinivasan, retired professor of Political Science, Mumbai University.

This is different from the usual run of books reviewed by *Freedom First*, for this is an autobiography of a Chartered Accountant. The career of the author will interest readers of this journal for its few but revealing pages on C. Rajagopalachari and his

opinion with the Income Tax officials on his tax dues etc. The writer is also closely associated with the Rajaji Institute of Public Affairs. Apart from Rajaji, the author recalls his association with Nani Palkhivala and M. R. Pai.

The author's professional interests brought him into close contact with public figures of the south in Madras in the field of business and commerce as well as lawyers mainly in their official capacity. He recounts them with a sense of detachment and humour. He has interesting and educative reminiscences of colleagues who built up extremely successful careers with no exceptional talents but their unremitting toil and grit.

meticulous attention to paperwork, for his difference of

The early chapters will be of particular interest and education for the younger generation. It recapitulates life's struggles of the average Tamil families who, schooled in adversity, disciplined themselves to labour hard and to gradually rise in their fields of endeavour. For most, privation was an invaluable teacher educating them in perseverance and in a sense of optimism, despite Spartan living. Schooled in difficult times many young people had no time or inclination to be attracted to leftist ideologies. The imperatives of carving a career took precedence over everything else. The struggle for immediate employment and the uncertain future made them earnest and assiduous; political and social ideologies seemed irrelevant. What was important was the now, rather than a distant future.

The author's career has been one which has been steeped in the world of commerce and the discipline that

it entails. Interestingly this in subtle ways permeates the inner consciousness of the practitioners. The author shares this as do people belonging to this profession and he recounts some of these with a sense of detachment and tolerant humour particularly in Chapter 11.

Many of us who are by training social scientists are far from familiar with those whose lives are in the world of commerce and business. They generally and temperamentally tend to emphasize the foundations of a stable society and are not comfortable in radical prescriptions but are at home with the social culture of doctors and the general run of lawyers who are sceptical of radical ideologies and prescriptions. By contrast social scientists and creative writers tend to adopt a radical stance. For a social scientist like the present reviewer this approach is a corrective and therefore valuable.

What a Rest Day! *(Cont'd. from page 36)*

to make an AOP-type soft landing with nose up and bags of engine. I also noticed friendly activity around the strip and was hoping they would be engineers. The Colonel asked me what the white crosses meant, so I said they were only mines and said I was going in for a landing. You should have seen his face!

My plan was to make the shortest possible landing at one end then navigate the mined area like a car, using brakes to steer at slow speed. I made a super shot landing safely and asked the Colonel to get down and help me steer through the mined area. Just then a captain wearing 'IND ENGRS' shoulder title came running to the aircraft and said he would help in navigating, which he did, and we came, through safely. I said 'Thank God for the Engineers' and requested for two jerry cans of 73 Octane MC fuel and also requested him to lift three or four mines to give me sufficient space for a takeoff run, which he said he would do. In the meantime some hot sweet tea and omelettes and 'parathas' were produced for us. We refuelled with my funnel and chamois leather, which I always carried for refuelling. The engineers got down to lift the mines. They lifted three of them and I said that was sufficient. I also asked them to give me a map sheet, either 1 inch to the mile or a ¼ inch sheet and asked them to show me the way back to the Colonel's ALG. After I thanked them profusely, I took off. I dropped the Colonel at his ALG, by which time, the sun had just set, in winter the twilight is very short and it gets dark quickly. To this day I don't know what the Colonel received.

It was a toss up whether I should continue to fly back to my ALG at Schwebo, or stay the night at this ALG.

I decided to battle on and navigate following the dusty track to our ALG. Brown dusty tracks at night show up fairly clearly against the green jungle and I followed it. Besides that, my flight commander would be most worried and might send out signals for 'Lost Aircraft' call covering the Corps area. I had decided that if I couldn't locate our strip, I would go and land at the fighter strip which was much longer, risking anti-aircraft fire at night. I know they had had no search lights. As I approached our strip, lights started coming up on both sides of the strip, making it easy for me to land, which I did - a real daisy cutter, amidst cheers from the gunners and airmen who lit up the strip as soon as they heard my engine.

George Deacon had an ingenious idea, he got loose earth piled up on both sides of the strip every 30 yards or so, then soaked them in kerosene with orders to light them as soon as they heard an Auster engine approaching. George came to me as I got down and said - 'Duck, never again, never again'. He was very angry with me and didn't speak a word at dinner till I broke the ice and said what had happened that day. Then a smile came to his face and he said 'Well done Duck' and served me a peg of his precious Scotch. The next day I flew the same aircraft the whole day without a compass.

Brig. Furdoon S. Mehta (Retd.) is a freelance writer on defence matters.

Educating Adults

The Right to Education Act (7)

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

No Detention

Suresh C. Sharma

A survey by the NGO Pratham in 2011 revealed that as a result of 'no tests', 51% students could not read, 73% could not divide and 2.8% could not recognize numbers.

The RTE Act stipulates that students should not be detained upto class 8 and be promoted to the next class. At the end of class 8, some of the students may drop out while those who opt for higher class may find it difficult to cope with the studies. In a school in Mumbai, 150 students failed in class 9. The parents have alleged the school has adopted this policy to ensure a high success in class 10. They demanded a revaluation of the answer books. Principals of other schools have also commented that ten percent students failed to make the grade. In a college in South Mumbai, only 45% students passed in class 11. The pass percentage increased to 70 when the minister granted grace marks. Is this a prerogative of the minister? The parents may be happy but would these students be able to qualify for any competitions or jobs? In a survey only 50 of the 5000 students were found employable. A survey by the NGO Pratham in 2011 revealed that as a result of 'no tests', 51% students could not read, 73% could not divide and 2.8% could not recognize numbers. The teachers and students have developed a casual attitude. Students' attendance was 89% and that of teachers was 90%. Why have examinations at all?

The examinations are a tool to judge the students' ability to understand what he has been taught and be in a position to assimilate subjects of the next class. This is particularly true of science and mathematics subjects. A student who has not grasped the syllabus of a class would find it difficult to understand the subjects in the next class.

He may try to drop out or keep on harassing the teacher to keep on explaining what has been already covered. This is a drag on other students. It has been noticed that ten to twelve students in each class do not prepare well due to the 'no detention policy'. They are reluctant to write essays and long answers and have developed an unhealthy attitude for tests and are not serious about studies. The teachers had to bring down the examinations to an extremely simple level so that all the students could pass. This is not desirable.

Concerned with the deteriorating standards, the education authorities are advising special coaching for weak students who fail. This step misses the essential point that 'no detention' policy weakens the desire of a student to study and do well. It is desirable that this policy should be revoked to ensure a high standard of education which is essential for the knowledge based economy of today.

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

Pakistan's National Assembly unanimously passed "The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Bill, 2012"

The bill provides for free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years and ten percent quota in all the private educational institutions has been reserved for poor children.



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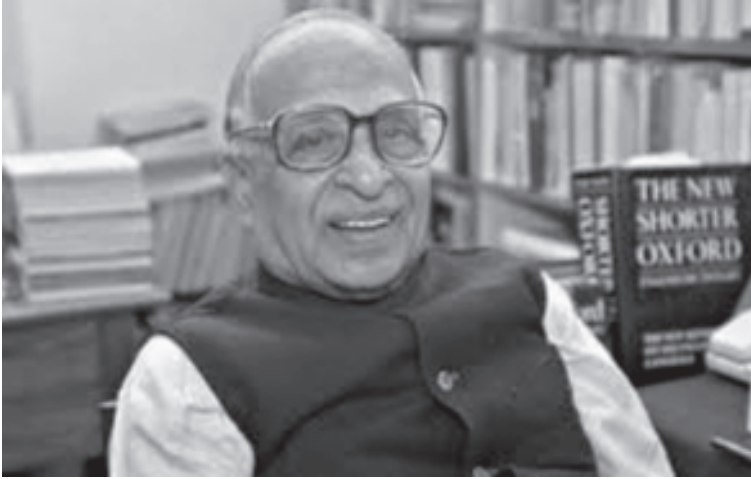
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Prof. G. Venkatasubbiah: The Legendary Lexicographer

B. M. N. Murthy

On his entering the 100th year of his birth on 23rd August 2013, the Literary Associations and Cultural Institutions all over Karnataka celebrated the birthday of Prof. G. Venkatasubbiah [popularly known as GV in his close circles].



Professor G. V. Venkatasubbiah is a Kannada lexicographer par excellence embodying literary knowledge, scholarship and creative talent. As a linguist, he is one of the very few lexicographers in the country who can speak with authority on words and their etymology. To understand and appreciate the enormity and depth of his scholarship, it is necessary to have a background about the role of a dictionary and the several preliminary preparations which are required before the compilation of a dictionary.

Simply defined, a dictionary lists and gives the meanings of words in a language. It helps one to understand and learn that language better. For facility, the words are arranged in an alphabetical order. The following are some of the major issues that require the careful attention of the lexicographer before the compilation of a dictionary:

1. The lexicographer should first decide the size of the dictionary which, in turn, depends on the number of words chosen, which again depends on the target audience.
2. He should identify the level of readers to whom it is essentially meant – whether it is for the elementary

level or for the advanced level.

3. He must be conversant with the several meanings of the same word under different contexts.

4. As all the words existing in the language cannot be included, it poses a great challenge to the lexicographer regarding the selection of words as it is decided by the limitations of space. Moreover, there will be so many new words which will have come into circulation. It certainly tries the patience and skill of the lexicographer in making the choice. A lexicographer cannot simply sweep away the old established words, the trusted and the true, to accommodate the new ones. He has to keep a balance between the old and the new words.

Lexicography is grueling, labour-intensive and expensive. It needs quality labour. Moreover, academicians who can contribute time and labour are hard to find unless they are totally devoted to the subject and are prepared to sacrifice all the other comforts like popularity, instant monetary gains etc which an ordinary author or writer can command. In fact it is a bottomless pit which will take even a decade or more to fill up. For example, it took nearly 28 years of preparation before the First Oxford English Dictionary was published in 1878. It is therefore only one in a thousand or so who can become a successful lexicographer. Prof. G. Venkatasubbiah belongs to this rare class of *Shabdabrahmans*.

Prof. Venkatasubbiah [GV] was born on 23rd August 1913 in a small village in the district of Mandya, Mysore. His father was one Sri. Ganjam Thimmanniah, a Vedic scholar of repute attached to the Mysore Palace as a Palace Vidwan who has written several works in Sanskrit. His erudition in Sanskrit and his desire to spread our Sanathana Dharma was so great that out of his own funds he used to publish a monthly spiritual journal called '*Purana Kathavali*'. The domestic environment in the family was

quite conducive for the inmates of the house to pick up and learn Sanskrit without much effort. No wonder, GV used the opportunity to its best and by the time he was 11 years old, he was able to join the chorus of a band of Sanskrit Pandits and recite ‘Sri Rudram and Chamakam’ [which is a true test for one’s knowledge of Sanskrit].

Apart from learning Sanskrit, GV had his school and college education in several places and finally secured an M.A. in Kannada from the Maharaja’s College, Mysore, securing a Gold Medal and standing first in 1937. Thereafter he obtained the B.T. Degree in 1939 and joined the Maharaja’s college as a lecturer in Kannada. In 1943, he shifted to Bangalore and joined the Vijaya College as Professor of Kannada and served the institution for a period of 30 years from 1943 to 1973. Thereafter, he became a Visiting Professor to several institutions. He served as Member, Academic Council, Mysore University from 1960 to 1964 and became Chairman, Board of Studies for Kannada, Bangalore University, from 1964 to 1967.

GV’s father was so proud of the academic achievements of his son that when GV became the Hon. Secretary of the Kannada Sahitya Parishad, Bangalore in 1954, he used to openly say with pride “My son has now become The Secretary to the Temple of Saraswathi”.

On his completing 60 years, GV’s students and admirers wanted to celebrate his 60th Birthday by presenting him with a purse and collected a sizable amount. When GV was informed about this, he flatly refused accepting the purse saying, “I will not touch any money from the public”. The fund was then utilized for awarding Gold Medals to two outstanding students of the Mysore University every year.

GV is a many sided personality even though he is better recognized as a lexicographer. He has several books of repute to his credit and he is one of the few literary figures in Kannada who has enriched Kannada language in recent years to a considerable extent. He has won several Awards and Titles. His sterling contribution to modern Kannada literature exhibits his rare scholarship not only in Kannada but even in the other Dravidian languages.

In a recent interview, GV said that his interest in lexicography started when he was touring several villages in Karnataka. The villagers there were using several local Kannada words which could not be deciphered by an ordinary Kannadiga. Till such time, the only Kannada dictionary available was one written by a foreign Christian

missionary by name Ferdinand Kittel in the latter half of the 18th century. He compiled a Kannada dictionary with a view to helping spreading the teachings of Christ. It contained just about 6,000 words. GV felt that this would not fill the much needed desire of Kannadigas who desired a larger and broader based dictionary. Hence, he started working on a new Kannada Dictionary. After struggling hard for more than 20 years, today GV has produced a Kannada Dictionary with 8 volumes, running to about 9,000 pages. Probably this is a record in language dictionaries and no regional language can lay claim to such a magnificent achievement in a single individual’s life time.

When GV was recently asked about the secret behind his long, happy and healthy life, he said that it was a genealogical divine gift bestowed on his whole family. His father lived up to 90 years, mother up to 107 years and his maternal uncle [mother’s brother] is going strong with 102 years.

In recent days when I see GV either in a lecture hall or a seminar or a literary gathering or any social function and look at his short stature, my mind immediately goes back to William Wordsworth and in particular to his immortal poem ‘Deserted Village’ wherein, describing the Village School Master, he says,

**“And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew
That one small head could carry all he knew”**

MR. B. M. N. MURTHY is a retired Chief Engineer, Life Insurance Corporation of India. After his retirement Mr. Murthy has devoted his time to inform “the younger generation of the spiritual wisdom of India, reminding them of the great traditional lineage to which we all belong”. On the 14th of July he completed 700 weekly articles spread over twelve and half years. He has just published “*Harshini*” a collection of 101 articles written by him which he describes as “A Rosary of Wisdom with 101 Beads of Knowledge.” Email: bmmurthy@gmail.com

Headlines in 2035!

1. Rajnikanth in DHOOM-22 with Katrina's daughter.
2. Petrol Rs.984/Litre.
3. CNG Rs.950/Kg.
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5. CID completed 1 crore episodes.
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Bhagwan Nile

Courtesy: Global Marathi Newsletter, December 3

How to Learn Politics from Children

Sharu Rangnekar

*In every house the child is often the most powerful person since as soon as he starts crying everybody in the house gets worked up and insists that the child should get immediate attention...
The success of each child should be analysed how the child uses this process to get power.*

The Concept of Politics

I have been writing on How to Learn Management – (including learning Management from your wife), but some of my friends complain that their career has been affected not by deficiencies in their management skill but due to lack of skill in dealing with office politics. There are two problems they consider endemic in every organization: *Chamchagiri* (sycophancy) and leg-pulling. These are the most visible aspects of office politics.

Since it is considered a serious problem it is necessary to do a thorough analysis.

The first aspect is what politics is. The politics they are complaining about is not what is practiced in state capitals or in Delhi but the politics which is practiced within their own organization. The first step is to understand that this politics is inevitable. In Physics, flame is defined as a region where two or more gases meet to emit heat and / or light. Similarly an organization can be defined as a place where two or more persons meet to create positive or negative results. Where the results are negative, the person feels that *Chamchagiri* and leg-pulling are the reasons.

In fact, when people get together they start influencing others. In the good old days (or bad old days) of joint families, family politics was very prevalent. The conflicts between Mothers-in-law and Daughters-in-law and the jealousies between Sisters-in-law (which are the fodder for most of today's TV serials) demonstrate this. Even when the families have become nuclear – with husband, wife and two children, politics come in. When the children quarrel you can hear words like, "You are Daddy's *chamchi*" or "You are Mummy's *chamcha*". Thus, as soon as two people get together politics comes up because they compete to influence others.

The influencing process involves resources, affinity and linkage. Finance is an obvious resource, but every other attribute a person has can be used as a resource. Through intelligent use of these resources he can create relationships which develop into affinity groups. Even if the person does not have resources of his own, the linkage with a person having resources itself can become an

important resource.

The Concept of Resources

The resources are not constant and their fluctuation gives more scope for politics. The resources need not be essentially positive. The biggest resource of a child is that it has no resource – that itself become a resource. In fact the total 'resourcelessness', creates a strong motivation for powerful linkage. In every house the child is often the most powerful person since as soon as he starts crying everybody in the house gets worked up and insists that the child should get immediate attention. As the child grows up, this linkage through total helplessness gets reduced gradually and he has to develop his affinity group and create and maintain linkages. The success of each child should be analysed how the child uses this process to get power.

Even if there are no children in the house and the family has a dog, one can learn politics from the way the dog develops resources, relationships and linkages to get power. A dog is normally considered a family dog but the dog quickly creates linkage with a specific individual and is considered his special dog. If that individual is attacked even by the family members the dog is immediately excited against the other family members.

To learn about the political process one has to study

1. How the resources are identified and utilized to create the affinity group and linkage.
2. How that is used to obtain power.

Every attribute that a person has can be used as resource. Even the lack of resources under the label the "Poverty Group" becomes a resource and can form a "*Mantra*" which can create an affinity group. Mayawati is using "Anti-Manuwadi" as her mantra. The "Telugu Gauravam" was used by N.T.Rama Rao to create an affinity group that overthrew Congress Rule. "Tamil Culture" and the "Marathi Pride" have been used by various DMKs and Senas to make affinity groups to challenge the formidable Congress Rule.

Leading the Affinity Groups

Linkage is essential to focus the affinity groups to generate power. A child realizes this and focuses on the mother as the first linkage point. Even before the child recognizes the mother by her face, it recognizes her by smell and keeps attached to her mother. The physical bonding between the child and the mother is a very important process for their influencing each other. The child accepting the mother creates a relationship of loyalty and very soon the power of the mother becomes the power of the child. The child uses this power very cleverly e.g, if you are working with a ball point pen kept on your desk, a two year old child will come and first touch the ball point pen. If you do not react it will grasp the pen. If you still do not react it takes the pen and moves away. If you protest at this stage “why is it taking away the pen?”. It replies, “This is *my* pen, I have found it”. That is the child’s idea of ownership. So you move to take the pen from the child. It rushes to the mother. Taking up its cause, the mother tells you, “Let the child have the pen for a little while. You will get it back later”. Generally you agree to this proposal and the child has acquired the pen by using the power of the mother.

This political process is to be followed in organizations. The first step is to understand the power equation within the organisation. Many organizations issue “organisation charts” which are supposed to define the distribution of power - but these organization charts never represent the actual power hierarchy. Consequently understanding the power hierarchy cannot come from reading organisation charts but by observing the organizational processes which demonstrate the power each person wields in the organisation. Many times the situation is fluid and it changes from time to time. This is something that can be learnt through close observation at the interaction between people. This is what develops the political sense of each individual in an organisation.

The famous psychologist Dr. Eric Berne remarked “On my best day, I am barely half as good as a four year old child in manipulating people”. The child manipulates grandparents against parents, father against mother, various assorted uncles and aunties to acquire power and whenever the power is changed it understand it almost by osmosis.

Similarly, a new person entering in an organisation has to acquire relationships with various people already there, those who have entered with him and the new people coming in. Those who are able to build a good relationship find that their influence in the organisation grows. In the popular film “*Bawarchi*” Rajesh Khanna plays the role

of *bawarchi* (cook) by demonstrating how relationships are based on common memories and common interests and how he as a new comer in the household, is able to influence the relationship.

Establishing the role of the mentor and creating the loyalty role with him

Generally the immediate boss is the candidate for the position of the mentor but in various situations other people may have to be selected to play this role. When the mentor is identified the new entrant should make his loyalty evident whenever he talks about the mentor. This is automatically conveyed through the grapevine to the mentor and induces him to be loyal to the new entrant. Many people consider this process as “*Chamchagiri*”. *Chamchagiri* has essentially two aspects one is accepting the ideas of the mentor and secondly to give him information about the political process prevalent in the organization. The new entrant is tempted to use this aspect to convey to the mentor some adverse information about his colleagues. This can create difficulties because he may get the affinity of the mentor but hostility from the colleagues. If colleagues are hostile, the newcomer can be rarely successful since he cannot get the co-operation, collaboration and co-ordination with others in the organisation.

It is a skill to be “loyal” to the mentor without being labeled as “*chamcha*”. This can be done if the person keeps the system transparent and does not make adverse comments about colleagues in their absence. If he has any difficulties he takes them directly with the the colleagues and does not bring the boss into the picture. Once people are aware of this they accept the individual without considering him as an “informer”. This is an important image to develop.

Conclusion

Thus learning politics involve the following steps:

- Identifying resources and utilizing them to create affinity groups,
- Creating linkage to focus on the affinity groups,
- Using linkage to create power

Children get onto this process and continue with increasing expertise and success till they enter school. Then school education interrupts their instinctive learning process; that is how education interferes with learning.

SHARU S. RANGNEKAR is a well known Management Consultant. For more information visit www.sharurangnekar.com

Bhimsen Joshi and the Kaisarbagh Bar - An Anecdote

Sharad Bailur



As everyone knows Joshi loved two things: His drink and his cars... The audience went home at 2.30 a.m. lost in the last strains of 'Jo Bhaje Hari Ko Sada' in Raag Bhairavi.

number of admirers and friends in Lucknow, a city he knew intimately. He could be anywhere.

"No" I said.

"Come with me" he said. I followed him into the Green Room behind the stage.

Mohanrao, a friend of Bhimsen's, started on the long round of dialing up all his friends who were also Joshi's friends to ask if he was with any of them. The reply, in each case, was a puzzled "No" from everyone, without exception. Many of them did not even know that he was in town, and that was odd.

"There is going to be hell to pay for the organisers, if he does not turn up.", said Mohanrao. "And where do I look for him?"

"Mohan mama, when did Bhimsenji last come to Lucknow?" I asked.

"Six years ago", said Mohanrao with a puzzled frown. "In 1960. I was a school student in Hyderabad then".

"Where was the programme held?" I asked. The Ravindralaya had not been built in 1960.

"At the Kaisarbagh Baradaari" said Mohanrao and asked "Why?"

"Did something similar happen – you know, like his getting delayed?" I asked.

"Yes. Bhimsen was found in the Kaisarbagh Bar by the organisers and brought to the venue for his performance."

"Maybe he has gone to the Kaisarbagh Bar this time too." I said.

"Let us wait for another five minutes. Then we shall

It was the November of 1966 and the weather was ideal for music concerts in Lucknow. We first got to know that Bhimsen Joshi was performing at the Ravindralaya opposite the Charbagh Railway Station from Mr. Mohanrao Kalyanpurkar, then the Director of the Bhatkhande Sangeet Mahavidyalaya around a week before it was due to happen. He rang me especially to tell me because in me he saw the go getting, running around errand boy; a role I happily accepted, because in return I could attend all such concerts free.

That evening the concert was to start at 6 pm (winters in Lucknow mean that the Sun sets early) and the large auditorium filled rapidly. Lucknow audiences have no great expectations about punctuality from their performing idols. It was accepted that Joshi might appear on the stage half an hour late. A factotum appropriately dressed in a white kurta and pyjama brought in a *tanpura* and laid it reverently on the low table-like structure covered with a thick rug covered in turn by a white sheet. Another appeared with another *tanpura* and went through the same motions. A third appeared with a harmonium. And then came the two *tablas*. The stage was brightly lit as though the performance could begin any moment.

Half an hour became 45 minutes. The audience started shifting in their seats. At this point Mohanrao signaled to me. I went up to him.

"Any idea where Bhimsen is?" Joshi had a large

know what to do.”

Five minutes went by and no Bhimsen.

Mohanrao caught hold of one of the organisers and said, “I know where Joshi is. I will bring him at once. But I need a car.”

“No problem. Take mine.” Mr. Tandon said cordially.

“Come” ordered Mohanrao to me and we rushed out to get into the car.

The car took the long road and went around till it approached Kaisarbagh Circle from the Legislative Assembly side. I knew Kaisarbagh well enough. On one side was my Dad’s office, the *National Herald*. Half way round the Circle up the stairs was Kaisarbagh Bar. As we trooped up the stairs we could hear the sonorous voice of Bhimsen Joshi, in full form, singing to an audience, oddly enough without tablas or accompaniment. When we entered the bar he was sitting at the bar, glass in hand, regaling an audience of waiters and staff and sundry customers with Raag Durga. They all stood there in respectful silence as his singing continued.

Mohanrao went up to him and whispered something. The singing came to an abrupt halt. With an elaborate apology, he told his audience he could not perform for them anymore as he was wanted at the Ravindralaya. We left at once down the stairs to the waiting car. Joshi must by then have had at least four large drinks by then. He was, if anything, more than slightly high. As everyone knows Joshi loved two things: His drink and his cars.

He turned to the driver and ordered: “Get in the back”

“But sir” began the driver.

I said, “Get in the back.”

“What are you doing?” asked Mohanrao

“I am going to drive directly to Ravindralaya”, said Bhimsen, “through Aminabad. I will show you how to reach there quickly.”

Looking at me and patting the seat next to him, “You sit here” said Bhimsen.

Now as everyone who has been to Lucknow knows, Aminabad is the main market of Lucknow and it is crowded

with traffic to the point of suffocating congestion. A drunk driver, even if he is Bhimsen and the crowd of Aminabad are a recipe for disaster, especially if he decided to drive fast, something that was inevitable.

“But” pleaded Mohanrao.

“But nothing. I’m driving. I will show you what real driving should be like.” said Bhimsen as he started the car.

Joshiji’s driving through Aminabad that evening was my most frightful nightmare come true. Instead of the sedate 21 minutes we had taken to come to Kaisarbagh he did the journey back in ten. And we arrived at Ravindralaya in one piece without accident. It was a miracle.

Having abandoned the car we made our way quickly backstage and Joshi peeped through the curtains. Some of the audience had petered away meanwhile, but more than three fourths of the hall was still full. And we could hear the grumbling. Joshiji decided to take the bull by the horns. He went on stage and with a Namaste greeted the audience.

“I am deeply sorry I have kept you waiting.”

There was a low roar of approval.

“But” said Joshi, “I must ask you to wait for another fifteen minutes. You see I have come here after a long journey (we knew what the long journey was). And I need a bath before I start my performance!”

A low murmur from the audience. Having waited for so long they decided another fifteen minutes was all right. We then hurriedly found another admirer living nearby in Motinagar, who took him home and Joshiji had his bath. Joshiji returned to Ravindralaya in another half an hour. By then it was some two hours beyond the appointed hour. And the patience of the audience was beginning to wear thin.

And without any more time wasted Bhimsen Joshi started his performance at 8.30 pm. It continued into the night and got over only at 2.30 am in the dead of night. The audience went home lost in the last strains of ‘*Jo Bhaje Hari Ko Sada*’ in Raag Bhairavi.

MR. SHARAD BAILUR author, freelance journalist and a member of the Advisory Board of *Freedom First* was Senior General Manager, National Dairy Development Board . Email: sharad.bailur@gmail.com

N O T E S

Need For National Unity

Shri SRI PRAKASA, Governor of Madras, in his Convocation Address to Bihar University rightly stated that "the biggest problem facing the country at present is how to ensure the permanence of national unity."

With the publication of the Report of the States Reorganisation Commission provincial feeling in many parts of India have taken an ugly turn and are threatening to disrupt the national unity. Most vocal in the field are the communists who desire to exploit every situation to create chaos and render practice of democracy and the rule of the law impossible. Unless better counsels prevail, and reason rather than emotion is relied upon in the solution of the linguistic problem, we are afraid the situation will go out of control. Language is important no doubt but to raise linguism to the position of first principle in the dynamics of social change will, indeed, be a folly. Wherever there are disputes, the best course for the disputants would be to sit around a table and resolve their disputes in a spirit of give and take rather than allow them to be settled in the streets of cities and towns.

At the present juncture, national interests must precede sectional interests, and national unity must be considered a need of paramount importance. At a time of when India is embarking upon a programme of social and economic reconstruction such fissiparous tendencies as we are witnessing today will only lead to disaster.

An Unhelpful Decision

The decision of the High Court of Bombay holding that a party did not have an inherent right to demand a passport and that it was not a justiciable right will be regretted by all those who stand for the expansion of civil liberties. The constitution has specifically guaranteed the right of free travel within the country. The Declaration of Human Rights to which India has subscribed, includes the right to travel abroad. And to travel abroad is not possible without a passport a citizen who should have been entitled to get a passport. The right is of course not absolute and is subject to reasonable restrictions. But the reasonableness of those restrictions or the grounds on which those restrictions were imposed in any particular

instance should be open to examination of a court of law.

Mr. Justice Coyajee of the Bombay High Court however adopted a narrow point of view and decided that the right rested entirely with the government and that they were the sole judge of the conditions and the circumstances under which a passport should or should not be granted to an applicant. This decision is in sharp contrast with a recent decision of a Federal District Court in the United States which held that the Department of State could not deny a passport to an American citizen without submitting the basis of its denial to judicial decision. The *raison d'être* of the decision was that the freedom of movement is part of a person's liberty and that he cannot be deprived of it without due process of law.

The same reasoning should hold good here. Passport officers should not be allowed to act arbitrarily or capriciously, which will be possible only if a right to a passport is regarded as a justiciable right. It is to be hoped that an appeal will be filed against Mr. Justice Coyajee's decision and that it will be reversed by a higher tribunal.



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