

Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine

- ❖ *Explosive Times*
- ❖ *The Writing on the Wall*
- ❖ *A Memorable Day in the Life
of the Lok Sabha*
- ❖ *When the River Jamuna
changed its course ...*
- ❖ *The Health of the Young*

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Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine – 59th Year of Publication
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Renewal of Subscriptions

The last four digits on the labels indicate the month and year of renewal.

Between Ourselves...

On March 19 we received an email from Kolhapur based Dr. Subhash Athale a respected Surgeon, a conscientious Liberal and a subscriber to *Freedom First*. He wrote *inter alia*: "The readers know how bad the situation is in India regarding corruption, negligence and mal-governance. What is the use of writing and publishing articles that only state what is obvious, but do not suggest any remedy? Please read the attachment, which suggests some remedies and then comment".

He was referring to the March 2012 edition of *Freedom First*. The attachment he refers to is a paper under the joint authorship of Dr. Athale and Dr. Harihar Khumbhojkar, a Kanpur IITian also a Kolhapurian. Quite comprehensive, the paper provides much food for thought. Titled: The Nation is in Peril, Combat Corruption, the first part dissects the problem viz. (a) National interest is secondary; (b) Degeneration of Governance, (c) Criminalisation of Politics and Bureaucracy, and (d) Threat to National Security;

These need to be "attacked" on four fronts: (a) Moral education; (b) Making corruption 'costly'; (c) Reducing the 'necessity' of corruption (by reforming the electoral system); and (d) Reducing the 'room' for corruption.

Some weeks later another Liberal this time an outstanding economist Mr. D. R. Pendse, shared his "post budget broodings" with his friends. He describes the 2012-13 Union Budget the "worst" in his memory with not a "single proposal that can be described as pro-reform On the other hand there are "several which are actually anti-reform"; that the "fiscal situation is in a mess". He expresses his horror at the proposal for "retrospective amendments" and warns that this could well sound the "death knell of the confidence of foreign as well as Indian investors" perhaps of economic reforms itself. He takes a swipe at another primordial proposal called GAAR reminding us of the horrible decades of the Licence Permit Quota Raj. GARR stands for General Anti Avoidance Rules which in "layman's language", explains Mr. Pendse, means that if I.T. officers feel that some transactions have been taken mainly to *avoid* taxes [different from *evading* taxes], then these transactions will attract taxes! And the "I.T officers will alone, as it was in the days of the LPQ Raj decide what is impermissible and what is genuine"!

Perhaps it is time once again for *Freedom First* to go back and re-examine some fundamentals. What....

We'll keep you informed. Meanwhile the "What..." is addressed to you dear reader! Tell us.

Editor

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From Our Readers

Knowledge by Weight

According to a report in *Mumbai Mirror* (March 23, 2012) a book shop in Mumbai was raided for selling shrink wrapped books*, without mention of weight.

The Legal Metrology Act is said to be “An Act to establish and enforce standards of weights and measures, regulate trade and commerce in weights, measures and other goods which are sold or distributed by weight, measure or number and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto”.

The Legal Metrology department has so much to do in the interests of consumer protection. Instead, they spend their time, energy and our money to raid a book shop selling books which are not sold on the basis of weight.

The officers concerned have obviously ignored the object of the Act, as stated in the official government notification. Many will be forced to conclude that they were trying to make a fast buck. This could only happen in India.

All like-minded persons and organizations should get together to see that the miscreants are suitably punished for misusing their powers; so that a clear signal is sent to those who are planning similar stunts.

Writer Naresh Fernandes, whose book ‘*Taj Mahal Foxtrot*’, was among those confiscated, said, “This is ridiculous. With no application of mind, they are arbitrarily interpreting a rule the way it is not meant to be. So should books now be bought as raddi based on their weight?” he asks in this *Mumbai Mirror* report. For further details ask Anand.Holla@Timesgroup.com

M. B. Damania, Mumbai. permin@vsnl.com

* *Shrink wrap is sometimes used to wrap up books, especially adult-oriented ones and certain comics and manga, mainly to prevent them from being read by minors. It would look like a pack of paper with tight plastic wrap wrapped around it. A book without any covers. – Ed.*

*

Reward for Patriotism

Frustrated by the delay in procurement of essential war equipment prior to 1962, Brigadier Y. B. Gulati, the then Director Weapons and Equipment, sent a letter direct to Nehru stressing the consequences in the event of a war and pleading for his personal intervention. Nehru passed it on to the then Defence Minister Krishna Menon who asked the Chief of Army Staff to take suitable action against

the officer. Gulati was admonished by his superiors and retired prematurely!

*

Vote Against Sri Lanka

India was the only country in Asia to vote against Sri Lanka on the American resolution indicting Sri Lanka for violation of Human Rights. USA and UK do not raise their voice about the repression of Kurds in Turkey, Iraq and Iran or about the treatment of minorities in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. It is logical for them as their first concern is their own national interests, but India must care for others at her own cost. India has provided a convenient opening for China and Pakistan to file petitions against India's counter-insurgency operations in Kashmir and the North East. Dr. Manmohan Singh has added insult to injury by writing to the President of Sri Lanka justifying India's vote. All this to ensure the survival of the UPA-II Government till the next elections. Our attempt should be towards reconciliation in Sri Lanka. Condemnation by the UN and any punitive action arising thereof may reopen the path of confrontation and violence.

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*

Migration of Workers

I fully agree with Dr T. H. Chowdary that the migration of village workers to cities is necessary for the removal of poverty (Is it desirable to stop migration of workers? FF March 2012). Living in a city itself gives education to a worker which he cannot get in villages. He may live in a dirty slum but the city develops in him a desire to remove poverty. He understands the importance of education, trade, family planning; learns new skills and slowly frees himself of hundreds of bondages of village culture based on class, caste and religion.

Only for a generation will he be in a slum and then move up with family to better housing. The second or third generation of his children are likely to be in foreign countries!

We must understand that the poverty in India's landlocked states (the cow belt) is mostly due to lack of exposure to the outside world. Industrialization in India, China, USA and in all other countries have been near coastal regions. Hence, policies should be adapted to bring as many people as possible to industrial centres near the coast.

B. P. Rastogi, Mumbai, ramitrastogi@gmail.com

Explosive Times

K. K. Pathak

These are really very very explosive times we are living in. All walks of life are so badly polluted and degenerated that it appears we are rapidly heading for a doomed country in all possible respects. It is not an extreme opinion, but a more factual account of the state of affairs than any impartial person could give with modesty at his command.

The rot began from the top, and it has percolated down to the bottom over the “lost” six decades. We have paid the heaviest price for all progress and prosperity we boast of. Moral degeneration is the prevailing note from top to bottom in a big way. No country can sustain the benefits of material prosperity with a moth-eaten backbone – its national character.

A crisis of leadership began showing its ugly face within a decade of our Independence from foreign rule. Politics has little or nothing to do with selfless social service with any kind of dedication, let alone any missionary zeal. Instead, it has become a lucrative profession for leaders right from the national level down to the panchayat stage. Unemployment has become a source of attraction for the youth to take to public life with no background of social life. Criminalization of social life has gone as far as to debase all aspects of national life, political, religious, and economic. The country is running on the path of ruin with a frightful speed. Neither the head of the family nor a leader of society has any moral impact. The creed of good and honest people is fast dwindling approaching a point of total extinction with a rapidity which is all the more frightening than the country could put up with. For everything we have short-cuts, and exploitation of caste, creed, community and class has come to stay as an established means to achieve nefarious purposes of leadership in all walks of life. Good people are cornered, becoming a passive spectator of nakedness in all walks of our national life. Such are the explosive times we are living in and putting up with without offering any resistance to evils we are so badly afflicted with these days. The head of the family is no longer an ideal for members of the family!

No Way Out?

The question arises: Is there no way out of the quagmire we are in today? How to remedy the ugly situation, seeking some kind of redemption to get rid of the unwholesome influences which are making matters worse day in and day out? It is a big question which must capture the attention of the smallest minority of thinking

people in the country. The indifference of this minority has already cost us more than we can cope with. This minority should come forward and set out to educate the countrymen, leading to a peaceful revolution of noble ideas which ultimately culminate in a kind of moral revolution in the country. The people who are holding the national stage in all spheres of our national life should be exposed and the people at large should be put wise not to pander to the cupidity of the villains holding the stage, beguiling and befooling people for purposes other than any general good. All talk of a fight against corruption has no validity in the present scenario for the simple reason that things have gone beyond such efforts to help the present state of affairs in the country. Education has miserably failed to provide good and enlightened citizenry to the country as there is no civic-orientation in the system of education from the University stage down to the primary level of schooling. Education is not at all instrumental in cultivating and fostering civic virtues at any rate. Loopholes in laws are discovered before they are enacted. Disobedience of civic laws is the order of the day. Neither the Legislature nor the Executive nor even the Judiciary is of any avail since they are a part and parcel of the sick society we have come to be. To expect these three mighty limbs of our democratic set up to be of any use in redeeming the situation is moonshine.

The Mother of All Evils

The Congress is the mother of all evils. All political parties in the country have learnt the tricks, mastered them much better than the mother of all evils. Mahatma Gandhi wanted the Congress to be disbanded after Independence. None among his colleagues accepted his suggestion. Had Gandhiji's advice been heeded to, things would have taken a different form what they are today. His philosophy of life was no longer the faith of the Congress. After the sad demise of Gandhiji, Pandit Nehru started throttling free-thinking and dissent in the Congress, becoming a benevolent dictator or rather an uncrowned monarch in the country. He was in a tearing hurry to do the stupendous task of national reconstruction. His stress on material prosperity, ignoring the sedantry aspect of national life

was the saddest thing under the nose of such a leader of towering structure and reputation the world over. In the beginning of his career as Prime Minister, he was heard with due respect here as well as abroad. Soon thinking people started finding a gap between his stated principles and expedient conduct. A sharp decline in his moral impact in his country coupled with lessening of his influence abroad made matters worse.

A civic-oriented system of education is the first and foremost requirement in a democratic set-up like ours. Unfortunately enough, his notion of secularism prevented him from letting education become instrumental in restructuring society. The net result was a crisis of leadership accompanied by its sequel, a crisis of national character. How can national health be sustained on a sense of national responsibility and a sense of civic virtues held in highest esteem? One worthless generation after another was produced with a progressive decline in the sense of morality and ethical standards to make the people rich in national conduct. Corruption started becoming a pervading canker, making for a kind of degeneration in all walks of our national life.

Although Nehru was reminded of his follies time and again by the most distinguished national leader like C. Rajagopalachari, all his sane advice fell on deaf ears. From 1955 to 1959, C. Rajagopalachari through his mighty pen wrote a lot on our degeneration in national life. His criticism of Nehru's wrong policies was not taken kindly by Nehru. Instead, he asked CR "to have a little charity in his (CR's) thinking towards him." Nehru's priorities were neither balanced nor commensurate with the needs of a nascent democracy which needed good citizenry first before anything else to march towards safeguarding our national institutions from the gross abuse to which the policies of the Congress under the leadership of Nehru

and his daughter, who succeeded him after a brief interlude of Lal Bahadur, subjected the nation in a highly detrimental way. Not that Nehru and Indira were not aware of the devastating trends getting upper hand, both cared a fig for what was expected of them and what they ought to have done for their country. Criminalization of politics was started around the 1969 split of the Congress. It was not all Indira's necessity. And yet she did not mind bad people flocking and flooding the Congress, gaining respectability and patronage they hardly deserved. Even in Nehru's days, caste considerations found an upper hand over good people taking to public life as candidates for legislatures were selected on caste equations in constituencies, either for parliamentary elections or the State legislatures.

These evils became so glaring that regional parties, purely on parochial grounds came up and making the evils their very plank to stand on, challenged the authority of Nehru and Indira. The DMK in the South together with the varieties of Akali Dal, a good number of regional outfits with a Samajwadi label came into existence. Reservations proved unproductive, creating more imbalances and letting administrative services fall a victim to the lowering of standards day in and day out. The Dalit card, though basically an off-shoot of casteism became a great headache. Nehru's left inclinations led Communism flourish in the country so much so that after the 1969 split, Indira had to bank on Communist support for her survival. She found this support so much demanding that she had to go to the polls one year earlier in 1971 with a fake slogan of "Garibi Hatao"! It is not difficult to give a detailed account of the unwholesome aspects of the policies of Nehru and his daughter, casting their shadows over our national life after them.

K. K. PATHAK is an educationist and a political commentator based in Bharatpur, Rajasthan.

Meeting Human Needs

It's clear that poverty is a problem in America. It causes tangible suffering in the lives of many people. And it most often leads to more government intervention to deal with the social consequences that follow in its wake.

Despite the challenges of the current political and economic climate, these times present a great opportunity to introduce meaningful reforms that address the needs of people without relying on bigger government and more taxpayer dollars to come to their rescue.

Contrary to how conservatives are often portrayed, most do not hold to their beliefs and values simply as a point of preference. Most do not think "I prefer my shirt lightly starched, my coffee black, and my government small." Instead they believe their viewpoint most accurately reflects the way the world actually works, while affording individuals the richest set of opportunities to achieve their potential.

These beliefs are often manifested in successfully articulated principles, ideas, and values, but not always in a manner that clearly connects them to human well-being. – to how these ideas can translate into greater opportunity and improved lives for the disadvantaged. As a result, the common narrative about conservatives is that they don't really care about the plight of people; they only care about morality big business, and the bottom line.

But this doesn't need to be the case. The message of less government can be coupled with an effort to find meaningful alternatives that are better suited to meet the real needs of people.

Excerpted from "Meeting Human Needs - Georgia Family Council looks to civil society for solutions to the state's most dire problems" by Randy Hicks and Eric Cochling, **THE INSIDER** Winter 2012 a publication of The Heritage Foundation.

(To be continued – Ed.)

The Writing On The Wall

Era Sezhiyan

The writing on the wall is clear. But Sonia Gandhi as Congress president and Manmohan Singh as Prime Minister are not able to decipher it.

The Congress should see the message that stands out in the form of the Assembly election results, on the portents it holds.

Addressing the media on March 7, a day after the results of the five Assembly elections were announced, Congress president Sonia Gandhi attributed the outcome against the party to “wrong candidates, organisational weaknesses, party members not taking serious responsibilities, and too many leaders in the party.”

Further, she observed that the electoral reverses would have no adverse impact on the United Progressive Alliance government. Asked about the possibility of early general elections, the Congress president declared: “We’re in 2012, and Manmohan Singh will continue to be the Prime Minister till 2014.”

Talking of “weak” candidates in the recent elections, the Congress president and the office-bearers authorised by her alone should be held responsible for their selection. Under the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, the party president and such office-bearers authorised by the president alone can issue Form B to notify a Returning Officer about a party’s candidate and the allotment of its election symbol to him or her. Without the forms duly signed on behalf of the party, nobody can enter a contest.

In the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, the Congress had an alliance with the RLD (Rashtriya Lok Dal). There were 355 Congress candidates in the field, of whom only 28 won.

In the 2002 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, there were 402 Congress candidates to win 25 seats. In 334 places they lost their security deposit. In the 2007 elections, the Congress contested in 393 seats, to succeed in 22; it lost the deposit in 323 constituencies.

All these three rounds of election took place in this largest state of India, in terms of population, under the same party president – Sonia Gandhi.

Sonia Beats Nehru’s Record

From its birth in 1885 till Independence in 1947, the Indian National Congress elected a president each year

to address its Annual Session. During that period, Jawaharlal Nehru was the only leader to become Congress president for four terms and in free India, in addition to being the Prime Minister, he held the post of Congress president for three terms. Thus, on the whole, Jawaharlal Nehru held the record of being president of the Congress for seven terms, till 1964.

After the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in May 1991, Sonia Gandhi withdrew from all political activity. After much persuasion by several Congress leaders, she enrolled herself as a primary member in the last week of December 1997. Thereafter, within 62 days, she was made president of the Congress on March 1, 1998. She continues to hold the post. Indeed, in the long history of the Indian National Congress, she has been the longest-serving president – over 14 years.

“Mahatma” Sonia Gandhi?!

During his lifetime, even Nehru – during the course of the freedom struggle and in independent India – had to contend with veterans such as Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Abul Kalam Azad and C. Rajagopalachari. Compared to those times, Sonia Gandhi has a highly subservient and docile party machine to reckon with. She has become the unassailable leader.

Apart from holding the post of party president, in 1999 she was appointed Leader of the Opposition. And since 2004, she has been the chairperson of the United Progressive Alliance in all its forms (first during 2004-2009 and then from 2009 till now).

No other president of the Congress party, or any party in India for that matter, has ever wielded such a level of control on all aspects of the party organisation, and on all crucial decisions of its governments at the Centre or in the States. In a recent historical narration of the latest phase of the Indian National Congress that has been published, there is extreme adulation. It terms Sonia Gandhi a ‘Mahatma.’

Sonia Gandhi and her son Rahul Gandhi are now Members of Parliament representing the constituencies of Rae Bareilly and Amethi that have been notable in the political history of the Nehru-Gandhi family.

Feroze Gandhi won the Rae Bareilly seat in 1952 and 1957, but died in 1960. Indira Gandhi, who became Prime Minister in 1966, contested successfully in Rae Bareilly first in 1967 and then in 1970. Though she was defeated in Rae Bareilly by Raj Narain in the tornado poll-sweep of the Janata Party in 1977, she contested there again in 1980 to win, and to go on to become Prime Minister.

Sanjay Gandhi won the 1980 election in Amethi; unfortunately, he died in an air crash a few months later in June 1980. His elder brother, Rajiv Gandhi, was drafted into politics and entered Parliament by means of a by-election in Amethi. In October 1984, Indira Gandhi was assassinated. Then Rajiv Gandhi again won from Amethi to become Prime Minister in 1984. In the wake of the Bofors howitzer deal scandal, the Congress was defeated in the 1989 elections, but Rajiv Gandhi himself won in Amethi to become Leader of the Opposition. After his death, in 1999, Sonia Gandhi contested successfully from Amethi. And over the next two elections, she contested successfully in Rae Bareilly, in 2004 and in 2009.

Washout for Congress

However, in the latest round of Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, all the Congress candidates fielded in the five Assembly segments in the Rae Bareilly parliamentary constituency were defeated. Though Sonia Gandhi had topped in terms of the number of votes polled in all these Assembly segments in the 2004 and 2009 general elections, it was a washout for the Congress candidates there. Within Rahul Gandhi's Amethi parliamentary constituency, only two candidates reached the winning post.

The Congress president has since asserted that the election outcomes in Uttar Pradesh and the other States would have no impact on the UPA government, but she has failed to assess the reverse impact of the misrule of UPA-II on the long-suffering people of disadvantaged sections throughout India, with scam after scam involving the loss of mind-boggling sums of money, widespread corruption percolating from the ruling authority in Delhi, astounding audit revelations, forthright judicial expositions, fall in the value of the rupee, spiralling prices of food articles and commodities of common consumption, and rising unemployment levels. The incompetence of the Union government is manifest. A tongue-tied Prime Minister appears to be helpless in taking action against any wrongdoing Minister, under the peculiar cult of "coalition dharma."

When the oppressed millions got the ballot under the scarce "democratic dharma," they have hit hard at the Rajas, the Rahuls, and their minions parading as MPs and

Ministers. It was the fury of the masses that crushed the ambitious targets fixed by Congress leaders.

The overall polling percentages in the five States have risen in 2012 compared to those recorded in 2007. Moreover, in every State concerned, the number of women voters coming to vote surpassed that of the men voters.

Impact on Alliance

The aftermath of the decisive downfall of the Congress in the Assembly election round has severely affected the coherence of the alliance; some of the partners seem to be even trying to distance themselves from the government. Manmohan Singh as Prime Minister is helpless and hopeless when it comes to tackling critical situations. Take, for instance, the removal of Dinesh Trivedi as Railway Minister. Let us not be concerned here with the merits or demerits of the budget proposals. The Cabinet had accepted his proposals and the Prime Minister also appreciated his work. The Prime Minister showed hesitation in the matter until the president of the alliance party in question vehemently insisted that the Minister should go.

It was after much deliberation that the Constituent Assembly decided to adopt the British model of Cabinet government. On the essence of the collective responsibility of the Cabinet, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had asserted: "One principle is that no person shall be nominated to the Cabinet except on the advice of the Prime Minister. Secondly, no person shall be retained as a member of the Cabinet, if the Prime Minister says he shall be dismissed ... As I said, collective responsibility can be achieved only through the instrumentality of the Prime Minister." (*Constituent Assembly Debates*, 30 December 1948)

The times have of course changed. The Prime Minister today has no authority as envisaged by Dr. Ambedkar. Whether it is Raja or Trivedi, he has to be instructed by the party president concerned. The Cabinet system of governance as devised and accepted by the Constitution is not being followed. *We have a Cabinet without a competent Prime Minister, and a Prime Minister without an effective government.* (ital ours).

The writing on the wall is clear. But Sonia Gandhi as Congress president and Manmohan Singh as Prime Minister are not able to decipher it. But some wise Daniel will come along to lead the people against this "Organised Hypocrisy" – as Disraeli called an incompetent government.

ERA SEZHIYAN is an eminent parliamentarian and author.
Courtesy: *The Hindu* March 21, 2012

Name of the Game: Power at any Cost

Nagesh Kini

It is this cliché, 'Policy Paralysis' that is so freely brandished to explain away the unprecedented political gridlock, which is sadly expected to continue unless some drastic measures are initiated here and now to turn round the country's stagnating economic status.

Nevertheless over all commercial and manufacturing economic activities continue to function normally – banks continue to lend and make handsome profits with the Public Sector State Bank of Bikaner & Jaipur declaring an interim dividend of 145%. Multinational FMCG companies' 2011 calendar year annual numbers report robust performance and growth. Given the uncertainties in the West, India continues to be the favourite investment destination for overseas investors.

The primary effects of this paralytic situation are that entrepreneurs as well as investors have put plans on hold. This indeed is a bad portent because of its adverse long term consequences. The rot stems at the very top, Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister of India, supposedly the godfather of our economic growth post 1990s. It was the then PM P. V. Narashima Rao, beleaguered by the foreign exchange crisis reportedly threw out the budget proposed by his then Finance Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, commanding him to come out with something more radical to pull out India out of the mire. And we got into the Globalization and Liberalization mode and there was no looking back thereafter. Dr. Y. V. Reddy the then Governor of the Reserve Bank of India needs to be thanked for stalling the full-fledged convertibility of the Indian rupee – this has prevented India going the Thai or Argentinean way to doom.

There are two Lokpal Bills hanging fire. But in place are the IPC, CrPC, Prevention of Corruption Act and a most effective Right to Information Act. Only when they are all properly implemented and enforced without fear or favour can they act as effective weapons to combat corruption.

Manmohan Singh's favourite chant when charged with the lack of action is that he is bound by the compulsions of *Coalition Dharma*! He has always blamed his unruly allies whom he doesn't take into confidence and they make a hue and cry *post facto* – the 2012 Rail Budget is a classic illustration in point. The TMC derails the Rail Budget in the face of opposition from the powerful

unions who favour the fare hike; the NCP holding the Agriculture portfolio is not convinced with the NAC sponsored Food Security Bill and is trying its best to stall it. The DMK's three slots in the Union Cabinet are vacant and one of its Ministers, who happens to be the son of the Party Chief, doesn't answer Parliamentary questions for the simple reason that he can't talk in English or Hindi.

Coalition politics has come to stay. It takes a strong willed leader to manage it. When Narasimha Rao and Vajpayee could so successfully steer coalition governments there is no reason why the present leadership can't manage.

The current Rajya Sabha nominations are evidence enough of political degradation. Both the BJP and the Congress face top leadership tussles basically questioning their credibility and loyalty; a rank outsider a non-party man gets nomination for a Rajya Sabha seat from Jharkhand and a Union Minister who has strictures against him passed by the Supreme Court and charged in the Adarsh scam at Mumbai gets elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha from Maharashtra. Even the opposition can be *managed* to ensure they do not put up effective candidates. Arun Jaitley residing at Delhi gets in from Gujarat, Rajiv Shukla from Maharashtra, also Gulab Nabi Azad a Kashmiri. They see nothing wrong when Manmohan Singh gets to be the first not directly elected PM of India to get into the Rajya Sabha from distant Assam – he didn't even exercise his franchise at the recent Assam assembly election by choosing to fly out to China instead!

The need of the hour is effective governance at the national level to initiate immediate long term measures by laying down credible policies for allocation of precious natural resources like spectrum, coal, oil and manage environmental issues, rural-urban divides and narrow the gap between rampant poverty and growing affluence of billionaires.

NAGESH KINI is a Mumbai based chartered accountant.



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Dinesh Trivedi's Unsavoury Drama

Keshav Rau

The ground reality in India today is that compulsions of coalition government has resulted in the Prime Minister no longer being able to exercise any prerogative in the matter of selection of Ministers.

Since Independence, the country has had more than 30 Railway Ministers. Some of them held the portfolio twice. Jagjivan Ram, who was a Member of the Interim Cabinet under Jawaharlal Nehru just prior to Independence and continued as a Cabinet Minister with some portfolio or the other not only right through Nehru's tenure, but for many more years even after his death, served as Railway Minister for the longest continuous period: 5 years and 4 months. Laloo Prasad Yadav – another product of Bihar – follows him closely with a 5 year-stint in UPA-I. The shortest period was that of Mohsina Kidwai – just four months.

Such record of tenures has never been a topic of much discussion. But Dinesh Trivedi, appointed as Railway Minister to succeed his Party [TMC] Chief, Mamata Banerjee, after the latter took over as Chief Minister of West Bengal in May 2011, will, perhaps, go down in history as having set a totally different sort of record: Exiting from the Cabinet within five days of presenting the Railway Budget for 2012, his first-ever. It may also be his last, if he chooses to remain within the TMC till the end of his political career. This record set by Trivedi will, perhaps, be talked about and discussed on several more occasions. As it is, the media, several former Railway bureaucrats, “experts” on matters concerning the finances of the Railways etc. have written several million words or spoken for hours together on the subject.

Trivedi could not even stand up in Parliament to defend the Budget presented by him. For, within a few hours, nay, minutes of his concluding his presentation and commending the Budget to the House, a tirade was let loose against him by none other than his own Party Chief and his predecessor, Mamata Banerjee. Promptly, she shot off a fax to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh demanding Trivedi's dismissal from the Cabinet and his replacement by another Party colleague, Mukul Roy, who had temporarily held charge as Minister of State for Railways as a stop gap measure following Mamata Banerjee taking over as West Bengal Chief Minister.

Ever since he took over as Railway Minister, Trivedi was making his presence felt in media circles by revealing

off and on what needs to be done for the Indian Railways to extricate it from its present financial difficulties, and one of the points that he was repeatedly hinting at was hike in Railway fares. But at the same time, he was fully conscious of the fact that his hands were tied; his Party leader would not tolerate increase in fares, particularly of the lower classes in which the *aam admi* travels.

More than a month before presenting the Budget, Trivedi, in one of his media interactions, was apprehensive whether he would be *even* allowed to present the Budget. It was also being widely circulated that he had indicated to his Party supremo that he was planning an across the board fare increase, but the latter had in unequivocal terms put her foot down. However, after presenting the Budget, he denied that he had discussed the Budget provisions in advance with Mamata Banerjee. He claimed to have taken the decision “on his own and in accordance with what his conscience dictated”. But almost simultaneously in an interview with *Business Standard*, this is what he said:

“Did Mamata Banerjee know about the fare hike?”

Yes, a senior bureaucrat close to her knew about it.”

“So, her claim that she had no knowledge of the proposed fare hike is not true?”

“I don't know”.

From his various utterances after presenting the Budget, it very clear that Dinesh Trivedi would have sounded his Party leader regarding introducing a fare hike, but the latter would have put her foot down firmly. Yet, he decided to go ahead without telling Mamta Banerjee that he had taken a final call in the matter – irrespective of the consequences that he may have to face.

The suave foreign-educated former businessman and pilot with varied interests in golf, cricket, swimming, horse riding and music is no new comer to politics. A Parliamentarian for nearly 22 years, he has watched from very close quarters the pulls and pressures which a coalition government is subjected to. As a matter of fact, as a member of the TMC for the past 14 years, he has

been a witness to and also a party to the manner in which the TMC has been successfully arm twisting the NDA as well as UPA governments on a variety of issues, the most recent one being when Trivedi himself was a Minister and blocking FDI in retail.

Given this background, it's odd that Trivedi should now be talking about acting according to his conscience, the interests of the country coming first, keen on bringing the Railways out of the ICU and saving it from financial collapse, preventing it from going the way of Air India. He should have realized that when Mamata Banerjee quit as Railway Minister to take over as Chief Minister of West Bengal, she ensured that the Railway portfolio remained with her party. She did not do this only to see her chosen successor introducing measures diametrically at variance with her own line of thinking and approach. While pulling up Trivedi for introducing a fare hike, she raised a pertinent question: Could Pranab Mukherjee present a Budget with provisions which were strongly opposed by Sonia Gandhi? It's all very well to advance the theoretical argument that a Cabinet Minister is answerable to the Prime Minister and not his party chief.

The ground reality in India today is that compulsions of coalition government has resulted in the Prime Minister no longer being able to exercise any prerogative in the matter of selection of Ministers or allocating portfolios to them. It is also very common for coalition partners, depending on their strength in Parliament,

to be choosy about the portfolios that should be assigned to them. When a coalition partner not only demands a particular portfolio, but also dictates which of its representative should be assigned the portfolio, it is very clear that the coalition partner's aim is to ensure that its agenda/objective – either hidden or spelt out explicitly in its manifesto/public pronouncements – is carried out by its representative during the period he/she holds charge of the portfolio.

Even during the one-party rule of the Congress, there were plenty of pressures on the Prime Minister from powerful leaders in the States or power groups within the Party, precluding the Prime Minister from having complete freedom.

Trivedi while accepting the Railway portfolio would have been fully aware of the state of affairs of the Railways. He would also have been aware of his Party chief's opposition to the introduction of any drastic measures. He had, in the circumstances, only two options before him: either convince her or decline to accept the assignment. Instead, he chose to enact a drama – clearly unsavoury in nature — and, in the process, place the Prime Minister in an embarrassing situation. The intention clearly was to project himself as a martyr. There is really no need to support him in this effort.

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Clearing the Streets of Delhi of Tibetans and North Easterners - For the visit of the Chinese 'Monarchs'

While Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was dining the BRIC leaders whose summit threw traffic out of gear for lakhs daily, hapless commuters in an already traffic snarled capital. The Delhi police raised the homes and offices of Tibetan exile activists, shutting down their rights, seeking to silence them and ensure that they stayed out of the Chinese gaze and the public eye.

If anything, the crackdown created more problems as young people from the North-east allege that they were targeted and harassed by police who demanded passports and identity papers to prove they were not Tibetan. [This kind of racial profiling has become the stereotypes for those from the region and has been for decades. It just goes to show how difficult it is to combat if not destroy prejudice. As one young professional from Manipur said to a reporter, "I have lived in Delhi for four years, why is my Indianness being questioned.

In seeking to ensure that Singh was not

embarrassed by another Tibetan human torch in Delhi, the local government as well as its mentor in the Central Ministry of Home Affairs has made a usual mess of targeting those who look different to the rest of India. But let's ask the same question differently – what does the "rest of India" or an "average Indian" (if there is such a person) look like to an average Northeasterner?

The Mizoram Chief Minister Lalthanhawla, asked with a rhetorical flourish some years ago, of a gathering of businessman from Delhi "What is an Indian supposed to look like? ...That's important to stress as it comes from someone who, along with two other Chief Ministers of the region, has been asked to present their passports at hotels in Delhi and Mumbai.

Excerpted from the column 'North by North East' by SANJOY HAZARIKA.

Courtesy *The Sunday Guardian*, 1 April 2012

Point Counter Point

Ashok Karnik

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

The Rot Spreads

1. One by one all institutions held in high esteem are getting debunked. The Parliament is viewed with contempt not only because of Team Anna's attacks but because of the unruly conduct of MPs. The judiciary is getting battered and now the venerable Army has come in for scrutiny. The whispered doubts about all not being well in the pristine precincts of the Army are proving disturbingly true; Gen. V. K. Singh's open warfare with the Government, notwithstanding the merits of either side, has brought the army into disrepute. Senior army officers are squabbling, eager to bring internecine quarrels to the public domain. Gen. Singh's case against the Government in the Supreme Court, 'Sukhna', 'Adarsh', alleged monitoring of Defence Ministry telecons and the alleged march of two units on Delhi are the recent scandals. As if Gen. V. K. Singh's DoB dispute had not created enough misgivings, the Chief charged that a retired officer (allegedly Lt. Gen. Tejinder Singh) had offered him a bribe for approving purchase of defective trucks for the Army; further, many ex-officers were a party to this sleaze since the 1980s. Gen. V. K. Singh then went further and wrote to the PM that the Indian army was ill-equipped to fight the enemy. The Chief's concerns could be genuine but the timing of the letter (March 12) just before his retirement and its leakage to the media are malodorous. Simultaneously, the Chief forwarded a complaint against a brother officer, Lt. Gen. Dalbir Singh Suhag, to the CBI for enquiry. Then there is a PIL claiming that the officer selected to take over from Gen. Singh is not fit and his selection is based on communal consideration. Will any senior appointment remain unchallenged hereafter? How low can we sink and drag the army down?

1. Many questions arise:

Why did General V.K. Singh go public about the bribe now while keeping silent for 17 months? If he found that the malaise of corruption had infected his predecessors too, was it not incumbent on him to root it out? In fact, he told the Defence Minister that he was not interested in pursuing the matter. Gen. Singh's supporters contend that having passed on the bribery information to the Defence Minister, the General had done his duty. As the Chief of the Army, does the General have no responsibility of his own towards the Army? Besides, the General's disclosures about the ills of our defence forces at this late date raise doubts about his intentions. Gen. Singh has not covered himself with glory in his battle against the establishment.

What did the Defence Minister do when he learnt that corruption had possibly spread so widely? The Army Chief as well as the Defence Minister have been found wanting. Both are reputed to be honest but the Chief suffers from inflated ego and the Minister from the malaise of inaction. He is rightly dubbed as DNA (Do Nothing Antony). The factionalism among the top army officers is shocking. More dangerous are the General's reservations about the preparedness of the armed forces. In all this, the great sacrifices that the soldiers make would be forgotten and what would stick is the mud being splattered by the army officers themselves. One more institution going the way of the others!

UPA II's Travails

2. The Railway Budget (March 14) was the defining attribute of the dysfunctional UPA II Government. The spectacle of the Railway Minister being disowned by his own party within minutes of presenting the budget was breathtaking in its absurdity. Mamata Banerjee is well known for her tantrums and populist postures but to hold the country's railway system to ransom is unprecedented. She has so far stopped an accord with Bangladesh, stopped the FDI in retail trade and threatens to push the Railways into its death throes. With such allies, the Congress is

2. As the displaced Railway Minister, Dinesh Trivedi, boldly stated, what is the price of a political chair? His job was to save the Railways from collapse and he did his best, Mamata or no Mamata! UPA II has to show similar gumption to rescue the country from non-governance even if it has to pay the price of losing power. Dr. Man Mohan Singh has so far shown no such determination and has preferred to leave the difficult job of placating the allies to Pranabda. Will the PM ever stand up and be counted? Even coalition parties cannot be allowed to act

stuck in a rut and has no courage to break out because of fear of losing power. As Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee explained, the Congress has only a limited mandate and cannot adopt policies it knows are good for the country; it has to carry its allies with it. Fair enough, as the desire to remain in power is universal but where does it take the country?

An ex-Congress CM confessed to me once on how a mere stern look by Sonia Gandhi could cause him nightmares for weeks.

Chetan Bhagat cited in *The Week* March 25

The Sri Lankan Dilemma

3. The US sponsored resolution in the UNHRC calling for review of the Sri Lankan army's alleged excesses (war crimes) against the LTTE placed India in a difficult position. India has always opposed outside interference in the internal affairs of any country and opposed country-specific resolutions in the UN. The hue and cry of US or European countries over alleged atrocities in the war against the LTTE was, therefore, unacceptable to India in principle. However, the demand of the Tamilian parties for a probe into brutalities of the Sri Lanka army forced the GOI to change its posture. It voted in favour of the US resolution against Sri Lanka. India argued that it always stood in favour of protecting human rights although it was opposed to infringement of Sri Lankan sovereignty. India did dilute the tone of the resolution but its vote against Sri Lanka offended our southern neighbour. Not that UN resolutions are ever implemented, but it is an obstacle in the way of India-Sri Lanka relations which China and Pakistan are sure to exploit. The UN is trying to universalize the human rights concept across countries and cultures but man being mostly an animal yet, the UN good intentions prove unproductive time and again.

irresponsibly; they too have a duty towards the country. If not, let the country know what damage they are causing. After the recent election set-backs, this was the time for UPA II to adopt bold policies but if the PM is going to be deterred by his coalition compulsions, the country is in serious trouble. In fact, it is the people who have to realise that a fractured mandate is a prescription for a weak government which in turn is bad for the people. It is easy to blame the PM but even if he chooses to quit, is there a guarantee that the next election would throw up a party with a decisive majority?

3. India's action is a double-edged weapon and the explanation is self-contradictory. It cannot join international censure of Sri Lanka and simultaneously plead for Sri Lankan sovereignty. It helped placate the Tamilian parties, including UPA II's partner DMK, but it will open the door for international interference in India's own domestic problems. India learnt a lesson from its unfortunate request to the UN in 1948 to intervene in the incursion by Pak raiders in Kashmir; since then India has resolutely opposed third party mediation in India's internal affairs. To claim that the world has the right to look into how the Sri Lankan Government handled its war against terror opens a Pandora's Box. For one, the UN Convention on conduct of war can hardly be applied to the war on terror; international law is inadequate to meet the new challenges of terrorism and who is better placed to know this than India? International conventions on human rights can hardly be applied in case of fratricidal civil wars where eye for an eye and revenge are the prime – although inhuman – motivations. The horrendous killing of Gaddafi is a case in point. Secondly and more relevantly, the Indian army's actions in the NE and J&K could also come in for scrutiny by not-so-friendly countries by the same token.

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

“The Handbag is Here”

“She bestrode the world like a colossus”, says Britain's chancellor of the exchequer, George Osborne. Thatcher's handbag, at first a symbol of weakness, had become a thing of unparalleled power. “The men I talked to about Thatcher,” says Meryl Streep (whose portrayal of Margaret Thatcher in the movie ‘The Iron Lady’ won her the Oscar) “claimed when she reached for the bag, you just never knew what was going to come out. Your heart went into your feet.” At one cabinet meeting the ministers arrived to find her absent but the iconic article sitting on the table. “Why don't we start,” suggested the environment secretary. “The

handbag is here.” The handbag became her *leitmotif*, marking her out as a prime minister who was part Lady Bracknell and part Winston Churchill. Politicians who fell foul of her were often described in the press as having been “handbagged” – a cross, in effect, between a mugging and an evisceration. In 1988 US Secretary of State George Shultz presented her with the Grand Order of the Handbag – an Asprey bag stuffed with her one-liners.

Excerpted from *The New Thatcher Era* by Amanda Foreman, *Newsweek* December 26, 2011

A Memorable Event in the Life of the Lok Sabha

The Draft Outline of the Third Five Year Plan was tabled on the floor of the Lok Sabha for its approval, by the then Union Planning Minister Mr. Gulzarilal Nanda (Congress) on August 1, 1960. By a coincidence that date was also the first birth anniversary of the Swatantra Party, which was inaugurated on 1 August, 1959. The one year old party fired its first salvo against statism on the floor of the Lok Sabha on 17 August 1960 by moving a substitute motion and forcing a division of the House. Unexpected support came from Acharya J. B. Kripalani who was then the leader of the Praja Socialist Party who opposed the Third Five Year Plan because it marked the Congress Party moving away from Gandhi and rural India.

The substitute motion bore the imprint of Prof. B. R. Shenoy and was moved on the floor of the House by Prof. N. G. Ranga, the leader of the Swatantra Party Group, Mr. Minoo Masani and 4 others. This is what it said:

“That the House, having considered the Third Five Year Plan - A Draft Outline - laid on the table of the House on 1st August, 1960, disapproves of it because:

- (a) it is unrealistic and misleading by reason of an over-estimate in the targets of production and of savings and other resources; it underestimates the required outlay mainly by ignoring the rising costs due to inflation inherent in the Plan; and is in the result improvident.
- (b) the huge uncovered gap between resources and outlay, the continued resort to deficit finance, the threat of additional taxation, will all lead to accentuation of inflation and a continuing erosion in the real income and savings of the people which will cumulatively encourage anti-social forces. This rise in prices will also lead to a higher cost economy which will make it impossible to compete in the world markets and develop exports. The Plan makes no attempt to work out a stable price and money policy.
- (c) while the desirability of encouraging equity capital coming into the country is neglected, there is too much dependence on foreign aid, which leads to mortgaging the future of the country.
- (d) the insistence on fostering collective farming under the name of joint cooperative farming to the neglect of family farming will be a disincentive to agricultural production and will retard the progress of genuine multi-purpose cooperative societies which, in the way they are planned, will be stepping stones to collectivisation. The imposition of ceilings on agricultural incomes will be both a disincentive to production and an injustice to the rural population, besides being an attack on fundamental rights and the freedom of the citizen.
- (e) the greater emphasis on heavy industry to the comparative neglect of consumer goods will inflict added hardship on the mass of the people; it will also lessen the scope for providing maximum facilities for

employment so badly required.

- (f) the emphasis laid on what is called the public sector results in the creation of monopolies distributed among favoured individuals at the cost of real public, free and competitive enterprise. There is an attempt based on doctrinal prejudice to tilt the scales against the development of peoples' enterprise and the economy of self-employed people in the interest of State monopolies. Savings in the peoples' sector are sought to be drained away to the State sector. This will discourage the spirit of enterprise, hard work and taking of risks by the people and retard the growth of the national product and national income. It will result in the concentration of political and economic power in a few hands and attenuate the autonomy of the States. It will also continue the process of proliferation of the bureaucracy.
- (g) the conception of compulsory labour in the Plan is contrary to the Constitution and to the principles of democracy and will prepare the ground for communism.
- (h) the provision of hundreds of crores of public money by way of distribution through grants-in-aid and otherwise by the Union to the States, and by the States to local organisations including panchayats, cooperatives and welfare societies will lead, in the absence of a non-partisan approach and suitable checks, to a continuance of waste and corruption through political influence being brought to bear on the administrative apparatus.
- (i) As a result of all this, the Plan would reduce the real income and the standard of life of the present generation and is therefore against the interests of the people.”

The 3rd Five Year Plan was approved because the Congress had a brutal majority. But it was not unanimous! – Ed.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Self-reliance is both a means and an end.

For Godrej it is the essence of independence.



The Kargil ‘War’

From the Other Side of the Hill

Suresh C. Sharma

A Pakistani plan for intrusion into the Kargil Sector was presented to General Zia as far back as 1987. Their then Foreign Minister, Lt. General Sahibzada Yakub Khan opposed the plan as he was convinced that it would be difficult to justify it internationally. Moreover, Zia was apprehensive that such an action could lead to a general war with India. A second attempt of a similar nature was shot down by Benazir Bhutto for the same reasons.

The third time on to ‘capture’ the Kargil heights was when Musharraf took over as Army Chief after the forced retirement of General Karamat as part of Prime Minister Sharif’s attempt to assert civilian control over the military. These two factors were resented by the military. On taking over as Chief, Musharraf wanted to prove to the public of Pakistan that Generals were better than politicians. The architects of the third Kargil plan were Musharraf, Lt. General Mohammad Aziz Khan, Chief of General Staff and Lt. General Mehmood Ahmed, GOC 10 Corps. Aziz was motivated by his Kashmiri ancestry and Mahmood Ahmed believed in the revival of Muslim rule. The person selected to implement the plan was Major General Javed Hassan, GOC Northern Area, who had, in his book, predicted the disintegration of India.

Musharraf and the three Generals had not played any significant role in the previous wars. They were ambitious and keen to achieve military glory. The plan was not conveyed to the Pakistan Navy [PN], the Pakistan Air Force [PAF] and other officers. If a general war had broken out, arising from the Kargil intrusion, the Pakistan Army would have found itself without armour-piercing ammunition for the tanks. Their diplomatic corps was not in any position to answer queries. The Director General Military Operations was informed later and Prime Minister Sharif briefed in February 1999. He was probably not told of the plan to induct regular troops in the Kargil adventure.

In December 1998, a large number of officers and men volunteered for operation in Kashmir in response to a call for volunteers. They were attached to four Northern Light Infantry [NLI] units in the 80 Brigade Sector. The plan was to occupy heights vacated by Indian troops during winter. There was no fighting envisaged while occupying these posts. The real problem was logistics support. Half the battalion occupied the posts and the other half worked as porters. Carrying supplies

across 15 to 35 kms over 13,000 to 18,000 feet high mountains exhausted the troops and they defied the orders to work as porters. In a durbar, General Hassan threw his cap on the ground and threatened to walk over it. The net result was that having occupied the unguarded posts their defence had not been organized strongly nor stocked up adequately.

In March 1999, Pakistan’s Director Military Operations [DMO] made some searching enquiries with the PAF regarding their capability in Skardu for a paper exercise. The PAF officer informed his superior officer who also got the same reply that only an exercise was planned. Even so, PAF Air Marshal Zahid detailed Gp Captain Ashraf to visit Skardu and obtain a first hand report. Ashraf noticed intense activity and the messes were rife with talks of war. He wondered why Indian Intelligence Agencies had failed to notice this build up.

It was only on 12 May that a PAF team headed by Air Commodore Abid Rao was invited to HQ 10 Corps. The Corps Commander Lt. General Mehmood broke the news that a limited operation had commenced two days earlier. Actually this claim was not correct because *two shepherds had reported to the Indian Army the presence of Pakistani soldiers on 3 May*. Pakistan had occupied the posts vacated by the Indian troops in winter. This was supposed to be a protective measure by the Pakistan Army to check the ‘nuisance’ by the Indian Army in the Neelam valley. On 7 May, Pakistan’s English daily *Nation* reported that a huge attack in Shyok (a river in Ladakh) had been repulsed. The report added that by occupying these posts the Pakistani Army would be able to direct accurate artillery fire to disrupt traffic on the Srinagar-Leh Road and, as a result, help in changing the Line of Control [LOC] and internationalize the Kashmir issue.

In his Blog Air Commodore Abid Rao wrote “He

was very hopeful that this stratagem could choke off the Indians in the vital sector for up to a month, after which the monsoons would prevent vehicular movement (due to landslides) and, also suspend airlift by the Indian Air Force (IAF). Come October, we shall walk into Siachen – to mop up the dead bodies of hundreds of Indians left hungry, out in the cold. The oft-heard strategic aim of ‘providing a fillip to the insurgency in Kashmir’ was never mentioned. “ concluded the Commodore in his blog.

No support from PAF was necessary. Stinger missiles at every hill top would take care of any attempts by the Indian Air Force [IAF] to carry out strikes on the posts. The terrain in the Kargil-Dras Sector did not permit Indians to deploy large numbers of guns. Nor could they denude other sectors of artillery. No reaction from India in other sectors was likely due to the nuclear environment. The Foreign Minister and Prime Minister did talk of using all resources but it did not materialize. Pakistan knew that a nuclear exchange would hurt them more.

All these deductions proved to be wrong. The IAF deployed 150 combat aircraft and used GPS assisted high altitude bombing. Quick modification was carried out on Mirage 2000 with the help of Israel for day/night bombing. IAF carried out strikes with the limitation of not crossing the LOC and massed artillery fire was employed. India moved a large force from other sectors and was ready for a general war if necessary.

Abid Rao also remarked in his blog that after the operations, there would either be martial law or court martial. Martial law did happen when Musharraf overthrew Prime Minister Sharif in a bloodless coup and there may be a court martial if Pakistan is able to get custody of Musharraf.

The PAF realized that any strike across the border or LOC would result in retaliation by IAF. This was conveyed to Prime Minister Sharif. An idea to lure IAF to air battle inside their own territory through a fighter sweep was also not considered safe and given up. PAF did provide Combat Air Patrols [CAP] from Sargodha as

no facilities had been built up in Skardu due to PAF not being included in the planning stage. Lack of information to the Air Force had resulted in low stocks of spares.

Pakistan faced diplomatic isolation and even China advised Pakistan to respect the LOC. Pakistan’s Ambassador to the USA tried to explain that the LOC was not clear in some areas. The US State Department representative placed the maps on the table and asked him to point out the unclear parts. The Ambassador had no answer. Moreover Pakistan failed to appreciate the reaction of a powerful enemy who could not let its soldiers starve and lose territory. Pakistan’s plan was not based on sound military reasoning but was a product of ambition and ego.

A major shortcoming in the Pakistan Army is the absence of open discussions. Five very senior PAF officers were superseded by Musharraf when he became President. He wanted a junior officer who would be keen to fall in line.

Disowning the presence of Pakistan’s regular troops and denial to accept dead bodies of the soldiers demoralized the Army and the relatives of the dead soldiers. The public in Pakistan were confused by early reports of victory and then dismayed by news of betrayal by the politicians.

Another blogger Major Amin commented “By promoting an intensely ambitious man to the rank of army chief, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif did a favour which could only be repaid by betrayal. The Kargil operation at the military level is a watershed. Idealism that propelled many hundred to die in those Himalayan wastes is buried for good! Now there is a new breed which dominates the army! The ones who aim at going on lush UN secondments or to KESC, WAPDA (PSUs in Pakistan) or as well paid consultants!”

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Louis Philippe was the head of the House of Orleans, the lateral branch of the Blood that claimed the throne after the mainline Bourbon branch died out in 1830. Because the Bourbons had believed in the divine right of kings, Louis Philippe set out to show the people what a nice egalitarian monarch an Orleanist could be. He removed the fleur-de-lis from the Palais Royale, styled himself the “Bourgeois King” and walked around Paris in his sturdy black business suit, carrying his own umbrella, pretending to be no different from anyone else.

Familiarity did what familiarity always does, except that it worked in slow motion. It took Louis Philippe 18 years to breed enough

contempt to get dethroned because he did not have modern media to speed things up. By contrast, our three one-term presidents of recent memory all got some help. The contempt directed at the physically clumsy Gerald Ford was mostly of the good-natured kind, the laughter of a vaudeville audience at literal pratfalls. Mewling, puking Jimmy Carter collected a lot of it but it was couched in the word “impotence”...As for the first George Bush, he seemed almost comfortable with contempt, as if he had been registered for it at birth.

**Florence King,
Courtesy The National Review, November 28 2011**

General V. K. Singh's 'War'

Suresh C. Sharma

The issues involved are due to absence of accountability and poor governance

Tatragate

Public Sector Unit BEML signed a contract with the Czech firm Omnipol in 1986 for the supply of all-terrain Tatra trucks for the Army. The agreement included transfer of technology. In 1997, the contract was fraudulently assigned to Tatra Sipox [UK] by showing it as a subsidiary of the Czech firm. This was a violation of the norm to place orders only with original manufacturers. In 2008, senior Army officers objected to orders on a single vendor basis. The Procurement Board presided over by the Defence Minister ignored these objections. The then Chief of Army Staff (COAS) expressed doubts on the dependability of Indian firms and it was decided not to consider Tata trucks as their books were full. No one thought of enquiring with TELCO (since renamed Tata Motors). Orders for more than 1000 Tatra vehicles for the infantry were cleared to meet operational needs inspite of the fact that these vehicles were not suitable for infantry and there was no pressing operational need in 2008. It would have been far more useful to the infantry to get clothing, ammunition and weapons.

General V. K. Singh did not approve placing any more orders for Tatra trucks. There were too many skeletons in the cupboard. No attempt had been made for technology transfer and the margin of profit by Tatra Sipox was high. The supplier insisted on providing engines of Euro 2 specifications while contemporary vehicles in Europe were being fitted with Euro 3 or Euro 4 engines. He was aware that these vehicles had developed cracks in the engine assembly in the high altitude area of Sikkim when he was Army Commander. About a year and half ago, the Chief turned down an offer of a bribe of Rs 14 crore conveyed by Lt.General Tejinder Singh to approve the order for Tatra vehicles. The Chief informed the Defence Minister but did not want to pursue the matter for disciplinary action. The bribe offer blocked Tejinder Singh's posting from Director Intelligence Agency [DIA] to Director National Technical Research Organization [NTRO] and he was not going to take it lightly. He floated the baseless rumour of bugging of the Finance Minister's office by the Army. As a reaction to this, the Army Chief conveyed the news of offer of bribe to the media.

The Defence Minister had ignored the objections

of the senior army officers about Tatra trucks. Dr. Hanumanthappa, President State Congress, also wrote to Sonia Gandhi about the excessive profits being made by Tatra Sipox with the connivance of officers of the Ministry of Defence [MOD] and BEML. Sonia Gandhi forwarded the letter to the Defence Minister. The investigation did not go beyond exchange of a few letters between MOD and BEML. Tejinder has filed a suit in the court against the Army Chief for defamation.

Mr. Rishi is the owner of Tatra Sipox [UK] and is also on the supervisory board of Tatra Czeck. Tatra Sipox was incorporated in 1994 and was classified as a small company eligible for total tax exemption. When the contract with BEML was signed in 1997, it was involved in providing "spiritual, religious, social and dating services." Its balance sheets show Rs 3 crores in accounts while business worth a few hundred crores has been conducted with BEML. Too many people rushed to the media who have done a commendable job in exposing the scam. Rishi stated that the Czech firm had declined to supply spares to India. It was contradicted by the Czech Embassy in India. He praised the quality of the vehicles, 7000 of which have been supplied and there had been no complaints. The DRDO too told the media that it was an excellent vehicle and he had not received any complaint. Instead of talking to the media, he could have contacted the Army HQ to enquire about the defects. Over a period, quality can suffer due to neglect or mischief. For example, Tata's 1210D model trucks have been in use in the army for decades. In 1979-80, some defects were reported. Instead of praising past performance, Tatas sent a team to investigate who confirmed the defects and took steps to rectify them. They thanked the officer who had complained since it helped them to restore the quality of their product. Rishi has tried to confuse the issue by commenting that the orders are issued by the MOD and the Chief does not figure in the process. He could not be ignorant of the procedure that MOD can issue orders only on receipt of indent from the Service HQ. A case has been filed against Rishi in Czech too by Vaclav Laska, former head of Transparency International for causing loss to the original manufacturers.

The Defence Minister has ordered a comprehensive enquiry by CBI. It is important to identify the mastermind

behind the offer of bribe and the individuals responsible for procurement through a single vendor enquiry.

Letter on Defence Preparedness

At about the same time, the Chief wrote a letter to the Prime Minister drawing his attention to serious shortages in arms and equipment. This letter was leaked to the media. A retired diplomat and sections of media have severely criticized this breach of protocol and exposure of shortfall in defence preparedness. In their view, the Chief should have written only to the Defence Minister. It is being alleged that the report of bribe and letter to the Prime Minister are the result of frustration due to losing the case for age revision. The objections to the Tatra trucks have been on the files since 2008. It is essential that the Prime Minister should be informed of shortfalls in defence preparedness. It is amusing that any event concerning defence brings out demands by retired defence officers and defence analysts for CDS. This is immediately countered by the principle of supremacy of civilian authority over defence services. A former civilian bureaucrat declared on a TV channel that we must find a structure to ensure a democratic system. None of these issues are relevant. It is better to bypass rigid protocol than to face disaster on the battlefield.

The issues involved are due to absence of accountability and poor governance. A CBI enquiry has been ordered to identify the source of leakage of the letter. It is likely that it was done to malign the Chief. Interestingly, the general public has realized that they should know about the Defence preparedness since they are paying for it and are concerned about their safety. A young journalist rightly retorted to a political leader during a

discussion on TV that security cannot be ensured by giving emotional lectures on patriotism. In other democratic countries like USA, White Papers are issued to educate the public. The hostile countries already were aware of the deficiencies as can be ascertained by reading various magazines. More important than fixing responsibility for leakage of the letter is to take action to remedy the deficiencies.

Movement of Military Units

The crowning crusade against General V K Singh came by way of accusation of attempting a coup. One unit each from Agra and Hissar had moved towards Delhi on the night of 16/17 January. This was reported by a newspaper as an attempt for a coup and it coincided with the submission of the petition by the Chief on his age. There are many times more troops already in Delhi and these units were on exercise. They did not carry any ammunition. A good result has been that the Prime Minister has broken his silence and rubbished the report. He has also done the right thing by stating that the COAS has an exalted position and nothing should be done to damage his reputation. The Army fights for pride in itself, its officers and its Chief. General V K Singh is held in high esteem by the soldiers for his professionalism and integrity. Any attempt to caste aspersions on him on false grounds will lower the morale of the army and encourage sycophants. He has unearthed the loot by the PSUs who have assumed the role of middlemen in defence equipment deals. It is time to analyze whether the investment in these units has been worth it.

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Central Information Commissioner Shailesh Gandhi's High Standards

In Decision No. CIC/SM/A/2011/000610/SG/18357, CIC Shailesh Gandhi ordered The Central Information Commission itself to give a compensation of Rs 3000 to an appellant for the harassment caused to him. The PIO was pulled up for misusing Section 11 ("information relating to third party") to reject the appellant's request for information without even calling the third party for their say in the matter. The Public Information Officer, Mr M. C. Sharma, was pulled up for not supplying complete information to the appellant.

"Harassment of a common man by public authorities is socially abhorring and legally impermissible. It may harm him personally but the injury to society is far more grievous. Crime and corruption thrive and prosper in the society due to lack of public resistance. Nothing is more damaging than the feeling of helplessness. An ordinary citizen instead of complaining and fighting

succumbs to the pressure of undesirable functioning in offices instead of standing against it. Therefore the award of compensation for harassment by public authorities not only compensates the individual, satisfies him personally but helps in curing social evil. It may result in improving the work culture and help in changing the outlook. The Commission in exercise of its power under Section 19(8)(b) of the RTI Act awards a compensation of Rs.3,000/- to the Appellant for the loss and detriment suffered by him in having to pursue the appeals and getting the information late. The Commission recommends that the Secretary, CIC may consider recovering this amount from the salary of the persons responsible for this."

Posted by: "Krishnaraj Rao" sahasipadyatri@gmail.com

‘Operation Roshan’

– The Command Aspect: A Reminiscence

Noshir Grant

When the River Jamuna Changed its Course ...

The years was 1958. I was doing SO I (Eqpt) in Engineer-in-Chief’s (E-in-C) branch. I had just finished lunch when I received a frantic phone call from the E-in-C Maj.Gen. Assarappa R. E. (he always liked to put his initials after his name), asking me to come immediately to the office of Gen. Thimmayya, the Chief of the Army Staff, from where he was ringing. Within 10 minutes I was in South Block and ushered into the Chief’s room, where a whole array of brass, to name a few, Gen. U. C. Dubey, Delhi Area Commander, Mr. H. R. Sarin, Jt. Secy.(O), the Director of MP Operations (DMO), Mr. Bhandari, Chief Engineer CPWD, and of course the E-in-C with his BES, Brig. Shiv Dayal Singh, were all waiting for me. I was sure that I had dropped a hefty brick somewhere and that this was to be the final *coup-de-grace* of my career.

Without any fuss or formalities, Gen. Thimmaya came straight to the point and just said to me “The River Jamuna has changed its course, with the result that Delhi will get no water supply. All effort to put this right by the Irrigation and Public Works Departments have failed to bring the erring river to its course. The government has decided to hand over the restoration process to the army. The E-in-C has recommended that you should handle this project, to which I have agreed. What is your answer?” I told the General, that I hadn’t the foggiest knowledge of the problem, however, I can only let him have my views after I had recce’d the site. I was given exactly two hours to do this, and asked to report back by 1700 hrs.

I reached the site with sirens blazing all the way. I saw there a host of Irrigation, PWD and other officials gesticulating with their hands and discussing amongst themselves, as to what should be done to lure the Jamuna back to its original channel. I had no time to consult them, or even to hear their story. In fact, I had no time to even carry out a recce of any sort. My watch was ticking away and so was my heart blot. I was getting panicky, when a remarkable thing happened, I saw a civilian Sikh PWD dozer operator a few yards from where I was standing staring at me, I don’t know why, but something made me

instinctively go to him for advice. I asked him, “Sardarji, *abhi kya karna chahiye?*” He replied “*Sahab, yeh PWD walle galat channel ko buldoze kar rahe hai; hamare khyalse bahine taraf ka channel khodna chahiye.*” I thanked him got into my jeep and reached South Block just in time for the big meeting,

The meeting had already started when I reached. Besides the people present at the afternoon meeting mentioned above, some more officers like Lt. Col. F. R. Jacob, G I Delhi Area, and some senior staff of the QMGs Branch were also in attendance. The Chief did not ask for my views or opinion, but just told me that Op Roshan (as this project was called), would be under the overall control of GOC Delhi Area, Maj. Gen. Dubey, with Engineers under me in technical support. He asked Maj. Gen. Dubey whether there were any questions (I presume that he was already given his task before I had come) to which the latter replied “Nil”. The Chief then turned to me. Without batting an eyelid, but, keeping my fingers crossed and praying like mad, I said “Sir, if you want water supply to be restored quickly then the entire operation must be under my command with GOC Delhi Area in my support. This being a purely technical show, in all matters the Engineer’s decision must prevail. Gen. Thimmaya merely winced, but Maj. Gen. Dubey nearly fell off his chair. This was sacrilegious – the biggest insult one could hurl at the Infantry dominated Indian Army – and that too coming from a Sapper was unpardonable.

It was only then that the Chief asked me for the findings of my recce. Again without shifting my eyes I told him, ‘Sir, they have all along been digging the wrong channel.’ He then turned around to Maj.Gen. Dubey and asked him to agree to consult me, and the Chief Engineer CPWD (he was the one digging the wrong channel) for advice, before taking any decisions. He asked me if this was OK with me. By this time I had developed sufficient ‘false’ courage and confidence, but with no technical or other facts to support them. I told the Chief, “Sir under the circumstances, I can only assure you that I will do my best and will carry out all orders given to me; but I

cannot guarantee any results. However, if the operation is placed under my over all command then I can assure you, Sir that, before the cock crows twice (apologies to the Biblical Last Supper), there will be water in the taps of Delhi by tomorrow morning.” For me this was the last straw – double or quits, more likely the latter. General Thimayya, the great man that he was, stood up and just said “I accept, the meeting is adjourned.” To the credit of Maj.Gen. Dubey he touched me on my shoulder and said “My Area is in your support, just tell Jakey (Lt.Col. Jacob) what is to be done, and it shall be complied with:”

Fortunately, the operation was a total success which was the biggest surprise to me, as the only orders I had given was to dig the left channel as recommended by the

old bulldozer driver. At 0440 hrs, I rang up the Chief’s house, Nina Thimmaya, his wife, was on the phone. She asked me whether it was something very urgent as her husband was in deep slumber. I told her, “Just tell the General that water supply to Delhi has been restored, but that the cock has not yet started crowing.”

This then is the story of Operation Roshan, a story of military command and technical decision. The command aspect was mine the technical decision was that of a simple civilian dozer operator.

This anecdotal episode by the late Brigadier Noshir Grant excerpted from the Military Papers he left behind, is brought to the notice of *Freedom First* readers by Brigadier Furdoon S. B. Mehta (retd.) with the permission of Brig. Grant’s widow Mrs. Minnie Grant.

The Media today can never be Fully Controlled

In the Islamic Republic of Iran’s fiercely controlled media there has been little room for political satire. The arrival of an animated monkey has changed that. As the eponymous star of Dr.Copy a smash-hit entertainment show, this iconoclastic simian has taken the nation by storm...

Broadcast by a London-based satellite station the weekly show combines references to popular culture with parodies of old Persian cinema... A recent episode commented on Tehran’s threat to close the Strait of Hormuz. It had the monkey suggesting that Hassan Firouzabadi, The corpulent head of Iran’s combined armed forces could be jammed into the narrow waterway at the mouth of the Gulf.

With state television churning out dreary censored fare, Iranian viewers have switched in their millions to satellite channels beamed from abroad.

Courtesy: *The Economist* March 2012



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Cornucopia

Firoze Hirjikaka

A General On the Warpath

In a country where most public institutions have an unsavoury reputation, the army was one rare source of pride.

Hell hath no fury like a General scorned. The Indian Chief of Army Staff, Gen. V. K. Singh, is on a rampage. With extreme politeness and an air of injured innocence, he is systematically sticking it to the establishment who refused to succumb to his machinations to get a year's extension. I haven't decided yet if his actions mimic those of a petulant child or a wronged martyr. One thing I am sure of: they are not those of a serving General in one of the most respected armies in the world.

With carefully orchestrated leaks and television interviews, the good General is firing his salvos in incremental phases, with the unstated but fairly apparent objective of embarrassing his *bête-noir*, the Defence Minister. The latter, after all, had the gall to question the General about when he was born. Unlike the proverbial old soldier, he is refusing to fade away. He is determined not to go down without causing as much collateral damage as he can. The fact that he is doing so with an air of inherent satisfaction and non-culpability does not enhance the reputation of the illustrious organization he represents.

It started off with the infamous – and probably unsolicited – interview to a television channel, where he claimed that another very senior officer had offered him a Rs. 14 crore bribe to approve a particular make of military vehicle. Watching the interview, I was struck by the general's demeanour. He displayed no sense of outrage. In fact, his tone resembled someone having a casual conversation. I must admit he played the game beautifully. By intimating that he had informed the Defence Minister about the bribe attempted, he goaded the latter into initiating a hasty CBI inquiry – as was his intention. By the time it

was revealed that Singh had declined to give a complaint in writing and was inclined to dismiss the incident, the damage had been done. The establishment had egg all over its face.

A more serious breach was the leakage of a letter purportedly written by the General to the Prime Minister, in which he outlined one of the army's worst kept secrets – that inordinate delay in procurement of vital military equipment was seriously hampering the army's capabilities. This hardly came as a surprise for those in the know, but nonetheless, it did give arch enemy Pakistan an opportunity to gloat at our expense. There is no evidence that the leak originated from Singh, but the timing was fortuitous. This time he did express outrage, going so far as to insist the leaker be identified and tried for treason.

In a country where most public institutions have an unsavoury reputation, the army was one rare source of pride. This stemmed largely from the fact that, unlike its cantankerous neighbour, the military kept aloof from politics. There is reason to believe that General Singh may have become an unwitting scapegoat in subtle machinations of arms dealers and defence contractors to bring down the Defence Minister, whom they regard as being too honest for their own good. Be that as it may, the good general has not exactly covered himself with glory by his recent pronouncements. Whatever he may have intended to achieve, he has only succeeded in sully the good name of the organization he commands. One would like to give him the benefit of the doubt, but perhaps it is just as well that he will be making an exit, not entirely dignified, in a few weeks.

An Outsider's View of the Republican Primaries

The American people are indeed faced with a bewildering choice.

I suspect that not many foreigners residing outside the United States follow the Republican Primaries and debates on CNN. As one of the exceptions, I, an Indian living in India, find the whole process intriguing and not a little perplexing. I may clarify that my interest is purely academic. Whoever becomes President next January, I don't believe there will be any significant change in his foreign policy initiatives towards India. Fortunately, my country

remains a faint blip on America's radar.

For starters, Primaries are intra party device where members of the party concerned choose who is their favoured candidate for the US Presidency. Their final choice is made at a Party convention but the front runner generally gets nominated.

Let me start with the also-rans. On a superficial level, it would appear that it was futile for Michelle Bachman, Herman Cain, Rick Perry *et al* to throw their hats in the ring. They could not seriously believe they had a chance of winning. So why did they bother? Before dismissing them as latter-day Don Quixotes, it would do well to reflect on their motives. Their run for Presidential office may have fizzled out, but they achieved their objective of becoming household names throughout America. Look at Sarah Palin.

The four remaining candidates in the Republican race label themselves as conservatives – only the degree varies. The one thing that unites them is their abhorrence of the “liberal” Barack Obama. Obama is accused of being a Socialist, which apparently is only a shade more acceptable than being Communist. Socialism appears to have become a dirty word in the US because it is associated with more government and consequently government interference in the private lives of individuals. I find this rather puzzling. As I recall, the one government ordinance that interferes most with the personal liberties of Americans is the Homeland Security Act; and that was promulgated by George Bush, a Conservative. Apparently, Obama’s cardinal sin is that he is mandating health insurance for all American citizens, a measure also derisively referred to as Obama-care. I cannot figure out why this is a bad thing; even though it is portrayed as an apocalyptic calamity by all the Republican candidates. Free (subsidized by taxes) health care is provided by governments all over Europe, including England. If this classifies them as Socialist, I don’t think the citizens of these nations are complaining.

Surprisingly, it’s not just the candidates who are expressing Obama-antipathy. Republican friends in the US that I correspond with seem to regard Obama as, if not exactly the spawn of the devil, something pretty close. I don’t get it. Granted Obama is far from perfect, but his predecessors were no paragons either. George Bush embroiled his nation in an unnecessary war that cost over 4000 American lives, for heaven’s sake. A lot of people criticized him, sure, but there was none of the visceral fury that Obama seems to elicit. I hesitate to impart motives of latent racism, but honestly I can’t think of another explanation.

Let’s now move on to the Four Horsemen of the Republican Apocalypse. Ironically, the one who seems the most sincere, Ron Paul, has been practically booted out of the race. Paul’s pronouncements about America wrapping itself in an isolationist cocoon may appear wildly impractical, even crackpot, but at least he doesn’t vacillate.

Newt Gingrich prefers to portray himself as a

maverick. He derides the same establishment he was a part of for years. He makes wild, unproven statements like billions of barrels of crude oil lying nestled below North Dakota. He sounds the trumpets about how his radical energy policy will ensure that “Americans will no longer have to bow before the Saudi king”. He is very much in-your-face, with the conviction that Americans will welcome a cowboy after the laid back Obama.

Mitt Romney lacks color to the point of near-invisibility. He is a billionaire displaying a woeful paucity of original ideas. His idea of running a meaningful campaign consists of promises to reverse every significant decision of Barack Obama. “The President introduced Obama-care; I will abolish it...blah...blah.” He is uncomfortable with the poor, since they belong to a species totally alien to him. He tries to balance his Capitalist and Conservative credentials and botches up both. He would prefer not to take a stand on contentious social issues like homosexuals and same-sex marriage, but is being forced to do so by the ultra-conservative Rick Santorum. If you observe his body language closely, you can almost see him squirm.

As for Rick Santorum....frankly I don’t know what to make of Rick Santorum. He gives a whole new meaning to the term “holier-than-thou.” His perpetual beatific expression is beginning to grate on me, but his constituency seems to be lapping it up – and I am amazed at how large his constituency is. I am amazed that he has emerged as a serious contender for the Republican nomination. He wears his Christian credentials brazenly on his sleeve, he denies evolution; and he panders shamelessly to the Bible-belt. And the Born-again and Evangelicals seem to regard him with awe, bordering on reverence.

The Republicans love to remind their fellow Americans that this will be the most important Presidential election in their lifetime. They may be right, though not quite the way they intended. The American people are indeed faced with a bewildering choice. If they are seduced by the Republican rallying cry of “Obama must go” – and they may well be – they are not sure about the quality and practicality of the alternative. Like the French say “*plus ça change, plus la meme chose*”. The more things change, the more they remain the same”.

PS. *As this column goes to press comes the news that Rick Santorum has bowed out of the race, leaving Romney the front runner.* Ed.

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Buy One Bomb, Get Two Free

D. B. Shekatkar

Terrorists can buy and sell a briefcase N-bomb against the US.

It is not intended to create panic, but the world is faced with a new challenge which is more dangerous than the terrorist threat of hijacking or holding hostages. The threat is due to clandestine transfer and proliferation of nuclear technology and material, despite the American clean chit to Pakistani rogue nuclear scientist A. Q. Khan. It is alleged that nuclear technology has been passed on to the so-called 'axis of evil', but the fact is that Pakistan had acquired it from a member of the axis, North Korea. This has been alleged by the US and other knowledgeable sources. The brain behind the Pakistani N-bomb had acquired the expertise from an European nation.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in *If I am Assassinated* had justified the case for making an 'Islamic Bomb' to counter the threat of a Christian, Jewish and Hindu Bomb. The financial support for the Pakistani nuclear programme came from Libya, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Iraq. In November 1986, at the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) meeting, General Zia-ul-Haq had stated that Pakistan was working with some Muslim nations on the use of nuclear technology and would welcome assistance from other countries. The world has come a long way since then. Advanced nuclear technology, Information Technology, clandestine transfer of money and expertise, funding and sustenance of low intensity conflicts, have all made the N-business easier in today's world.

Since Khan's disclosure that he has passed on N-technology to other countries, experts have been busy discussing ways of controlling weapons of mass destruction, controlling missile programmes, etc. However, we are missing a crucial issue. What about the misuse of technology which has already been passed on to other countries and may have reached the hands of terrorists? Is it only one scientist who has been instrumental in proliferation? Was the dubious mechanism confined to only one person?

There are at least 40 steps and processes in the production of a N-device. General Musharraf was the President of Pakistan when the 'operation' got exposed. It is a big question mark on his conduct. It's important to explore the possibility of many individuals and interests involved in nuclear proliferation. Musharraf was the first

head of Pakistan to acknowledge that he had suspected for at least three years that Pakistan's top scientists were sharing nuclear technology with other countries. What were the motivations and incentives to come out openly about the proliferation process?

It is reasonable to assume that Pakistan's entire nuclear programme has been subverted. Surely, there are more scientists and technical experts who are involved. Some may have left the job, migrated to other countries, perhaps working for other organisations. There is an urgent need to track all of them and ascertain where the technology has been passed. It is a difficult proposition.

If one examines the terrorist violence in Tel Aviv in May 1972, it reveals that an attack can be planned in Germany by Palestinians, executed in Israel by men recruited in Japan and trained in France with weapons acquired in Italy (but manufactured elsewhere), supplied by the Arab diplomatic corps with money, provided by yet another Islamic country. That was 1972. With the advances in technology, communication and transportation system, terrorist operations have become more refined. The connectivity, reach and synchronisation among the actors, directors, financiers of the 9/11 episode is a recent example we must refer to.

Nuclear proliferation from Pakistan started in Europe from where Khan stole the information and blue-prints. It was financed by some Middle East nations, technologically supported by North Korea and probably China, and ignored by the US when it suited them. This process will ultimately, one day, return to haunt the US and Europe.

President Bush's seven-point proposal to counter the threat of Weapons of Mass Destruction ignored the manufacture of centrifuge components in Malaysia. It did not elaborate from where Pakistan obtained the plant and equipment for making uranium hexafluoride, the powerful motors to rotate centrifuge, high-tech alloys and other items needed to make sophisticated items to complete the complex process of uranium enrichment. It is probably a deliberate ploy that the involvement of the industries of Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and other nations was not revealed, without which Pakistan, Libya and Iraq

could not have acquired nuclear technology.

In June 2002, I had categorically stated that both China and North Korea had the technology to miniaturise the N-device and Pakistan was in possession of a tactical nucleus. Now, we need to establish safeguards to ensure how we can make conventional deterrence effective against terrorist organisations. How should India protect its nuclear installations, laboratories and uranium mines? Has the world defined what all constitute proliferation? How to prevent transfer of technology from civilian programmes to terrorists?

The world, and particularly the US, must accept the fact that a “suitcase size nuclear bomb” is a clear possibility. The device may already be in the close proximity of America. How do we track and neutralise a suicide

bomber who is willing to kill thousands? Any terrorist outfit anywhere in the world is not deterred by conventional deterrence. Terrorists are concerned about “counter-terrorism”. It should not be misunderstood for ‘bullet versus bullet’. There are mechanisms to achieve counter-terrorism. Did any one seriously think before 9/11 as to what the terrorists were up to? Didn’t the US possess great technological supremacy, intelligence systems, the best communication mechanisms and one of the most modern and powerful “conventional response capability”? There were shortcomings at operational, tactical and field level. The 9/11 attackers were aware of the weaknesses and they exploited it. One must always remember that ‘the weak have one weapon: the errors of those who think they are strong’.

L.T. GEN. (DR.) D. B. SHEKATKAR (retired) is a strategic affairs expert.

Obama’s Poker Game

Liberals’ anger at Obama during the default debate was based on the fact that they actually seemed to think he had the power to do what they wanted him to do. In fact, he did not. The only card he had was the power of the veto and the Senate Democrats’ ability to reject any Republican legislative proposal. They were no better than a pair of deuces in the poker game he had to play. All he really had was bluff – because to avoid default he had to not merely defeat or veto a bill, but rather get one passed by both houses. The votes were never there for a bill liberals would like. The moderate Republicans needed to provide these votes simple do not exist. They are, alas, an extinct species.

Charles Peters in his column *Tilting at Windmills*, *Washington Monthly* September/October 2011.

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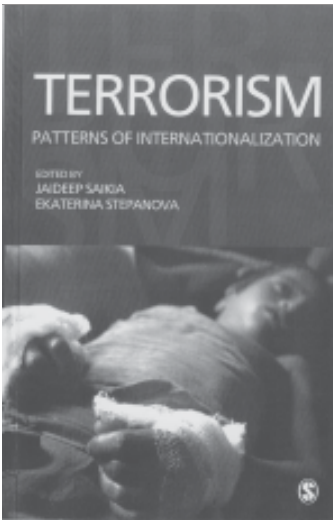
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BOOK REVIEW



TERRORISM - PATTERNS OF INTERNATIONALIZATION edited by Jaideep Saikia and Ekaterina Stepanova • Sage Publications, BI /I-I Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area, Mathura Road, New Delhi 110044 • Pages XL + 266 • 2009 • Rs. 695

Reviewed by V. Balachandran, former Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India who led Indian intelligence teams to USA for annual dialogues with their American counterparts on terrorism. He was also a member of the 2-man “High Level Committee” appointed by the Government of Maharashtra to enquire into the 26/11 terror attacks on Mumbai.

This collection of eleven essays by well known writers on different facets of terrorism is edited by Jaideep Saikia and Ekaterina Stepanova, two famous experts on

international terrorism. The editors have jointly unfolded the theory and theme of the book through a long introduction of 29 pages. The essays are presented in two sections: external links of home grown terrorist organizations and internationalization of terrorism: regional and global theatre. The first section deals with IRA, Latin American terrorism, LTTE, Maoist insurgency in Nepal and J&K insurgency, while the second is about the proxy wars in North East India, Middle East terrorism, regional terrorism in South East Asia, al-Qaeda inspired transnational terrorism and a projection on the future of transnational terrorism.

Any book which includes a chronicle of activities of contemporary terrorist organizations has an inherent weakness since the narrative gets dated by the time the book reaches the readers. However this collection overcomes this difficulty in presenting all such terrorist activities in such a way as to make further research easier. This is needed if such organizations resume their covert activities using the same *modus operandi* or by overt activities using the ‘human rights’ route for international legitimacy. The chapters on IRA, ETA or LTTE contain detailed activities in the past, their links with overseas constituencies and struggle for overt international backing. The chapter on external links of Nepali Maoist insurgency also deals with the much talked about links with Indian Maoists and their alleged connections with other insurgent groups in India’s North East but refuses, quite correctly, to make any judgment on such speculations often reflected in the Indian media. It is my experience that any judgment on this inter linking might be risky since there are so many imponderables in the South Asian Maoist movement.

I recall the late S. R. Sankaran who knew our Maoists more than anybody else in India and who had tried to mediate between them and Andhra Pradesh Government twice telling me in 2007 that there was no such link. He had categorically told me that Nepali Maoists were like the Indian CPM but who had taken up the “arms route” in view of the special situation in Nepal.

However I was surprised to see Baburam Bhattarai delivering the Third Anuradha Ghandy memorial lecture on January 14, 2011 in Mumbai which I attended. This was before he became Nepal’s Prime Minister in August. In fact the Indian Maoists had attacked the post 2008 Constituent Assembly Elections strategy of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) in forming a coalition with those who did not share their revolutionary ideology. However Bhattarai’s Mumbai speech, analyzed in the background of a report in the January 2011 issue of *Himal* (Kathmandu) might indicate that this equation would have changed. *Himal* had given a detailed analysis of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)’s Sixth Plenum at Palungtar in November 2010 where 3 warring groups had emerged within the CPN (Maoist): Chairman Dahal alias “Prachanda”, Senior Vice-Chairman Mohan Baidya and Vice-Chairman Bhattarai. It was said that the strategy of alliance with parliamentary political parties adopted in the “Chunwang” Plenum (2005) was on Bhattarai’s initiative when hardliner Baidya was in Indian custody. After the Sixth Plenum, the party adopted a tactical line on December 15, 2010 echoing Baidya’s hard line strategy of “Peoples’ Revolt” and “seizing State Power” after identifying India and “Domestic reactionaries” as the party’s principal enemies.

During his address in Mumbai, Bhattarai was at pains to respond to Indian Maoist ideologue Varavara Rao’s remarks referring to the problem of sharing revolutionary movement with bourgeois parties like the Nepali Congress. Rao, who spoke at this meeting, mentioned that “revolutionary activities were taking place in 20 Indian states” although their old experiment in Telengana had failed. Bhattarai categorically said that they would not fail

like in old Telengana. He admitted that their party was in a dilemma since repeated efforts during the last 16 rounds failed to elect a Prime Minister. However they were not in a hurry and they would try to set up a “new democracy” through the Constituent Assembly. He drew a distinction between the “Old way” of achieving revolution (armed struggle) and the “new path” which they called “New Democracy”. This was different from the “Bourgeois or Liberal Democracy” in India, but a genuine democracy of workers and peasants. He however warned that they might have to take up arms if the new path for a new democracy through peaceful means was obstructed by other forces. He ridiculed the propaganda of “Indian Capitalist Classes” who were controlling 80% of Nepal’s economic activities that China would get the upper hand jeopardizing relationship with India if CPN (Maoist) came to power. He said that the traditional relationship with the “*Indian People*” would be maintained. I have given this detailed assessment only to supplement the informative chapter by Bishnu Raj Upreti in this book.

I appreciate the editors’ observation in their Introduction that “the notion of ‘international terrorism’ is particularly misleading”. However I have some difficulty in accepting their view that a “sound way to begin the quest is to attempt to provide a definition” (of terrorism). My experience of handling some aspects of terrorism from the government’s end till 1995 and later as a student of international terrorism makes me believe that this could be a difficult and wasteful exercise. There are already over 100 definitions on terrorism depending on how we look at the developments. *Firstly* the strident Cold War polemics and the resultant polarization of the world on ideological considerations prevented any meaningful steps by the international community to define the menace in an acceptable way. Acts of terrorism were described as legitimate struggle for national aspirations depending on which side of the spectrum the affected persons or governments were in. Robert Gates, former CIA Chief devoted only 13 pages to terrorism in his 575- page memoirs (“From the Shadows”- 1996) and that too from “Rogue states” like Iraq, Soviet Union or Libya. He did not foresee al-Qaeda terrorism.

Secondly leading nations arrayed against each other in the Cold War lined up and lent help to such acts of terrorism by way of funds, training, equipment and even manpower. Other nations, not belonging to the Cold War camps paid no heed to terrorist killings even in their neighbourhood as long as it did not affect them. There is no guarantee that such situations will not rise again.

Thirdly the differences between freedom fighters, guerillas and terrorists had blurred on various ground factors. The dictionary meaning of “terrorism” is coercive

intimidation for political ends or a system that seeks to rule by instilling fear through terror. “Guerilla” is defined as irregular band of partisan soldiers while an “insurgent” aims to organize an uprising against an existing government. “Guerillas” were Spanish and Portuguese resistance fighters against French occupation in the Peninsular Wars (1808-14). Their violence was justified as a response to injustice. The word “terrorism” was used in the wake of the “anarchist” threat in the 19th century. “Urban Guerillas” of the 1960s, who evoked sympathy owing to their leftist leanings, were also called “terrorists”. In the 60s/80s guerillas, insurgents and terrorists claimed to be “freedom Fighters” to gain sympathy. In the classical parlance insurgency thrives on local support like the 1946 Telengana Uprising, later “Peoples’ War Group” (PWG), or like the insurgency in Nagaland or Manipur since a sizable section of locals did not accept the merger with the Indian Union at our Independence. Bad governance in some areas gave fillip to separatist movement like the All Assam Students’ Union (AASU) which gave birth to the terrorist group United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA). Unchecked migration from Bangladesh triggered insurgency in Tripura, Assam, and Meghalaya. However several of these so called insurgency movements undertook terrorist attacks to divide and provoke people when they started losing public support as in the case of ULFA. Insurgents also use armed pressure to keep the civil population under control to create an artificial impression that they have popular support as in the case of the LTTE or Kashmiri terrorists

Fourthly, history proves that efforts were always made to justify terrorist methodology in certain circumstances like how Prime Minister Ariel Sharon mentioned in his autobiography *Warrior* that he set an example for everyone in Qibya in 1953. The notorious “Qibya massacre” was perpetrated by his Unit 101 in which at least 69 Palestinian civilians, mostly women and children were slaughtered.

Fifthly even the same government has more than one definition of terrorism. The US State Department which compiles global data on terrorism gives a definition, basing itself on US Code title 22, Section 2656(F): “The term “terrorism” means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents usually intended to influence an audience. The term ‘international terrorism’ means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country.” If we accept this definition, armed attacks by Pak supported Kashmiri terrorists on the Indian Army or BSF posts will not be terrorism! On the other hand the U.S Department of Defense defines it in a simpler way: “Unlawful use of force or violence against individuals or property to coerce and intimidate governments or

societies, often to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives”.

Sixthly any attempt to define terrorism will lead to an intellectual dialectic or cause-effect analysis on the origins or causes of terrorism which will not lead us anywhere. Most of the UN debates on terrorism are unfortunately marked by such polemics. Every nation condemns terrorism but blames others for keeping it alive. Similarly branding some as “Rogue Nations” without trying to understand their compulsions will also lead us nowhere. It can always be stated that Palestinian terrorism would not have raised its head but for the Israeli occupation of their territories during the Six Day War of 1967 or that the Hezbollah would not have been encouraged but for the Israeli invasion of South Lebanon in 1978. Or for that matter Hamas, which till 1987 was only a social welfare organization for religious indoctrination, would not have been strengthened but for the deliberate Israeli policy of weakening Arafat. One could argue that the LTTE would not have resorted to terrorism but for the Sinhala chauvinism or IPKF intervention. Similarly it could be said that the Taliban or Osama Bin Laden would not have become such formidable public dangers but for the pumping in of millions of dollars by the US/Saudi/Pak Combine to train and equip the ever feuding “Mujahideen” to take on the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Perhaps such dialectics will only teach us the costly lessons of history and nothing else.

Seventhly, any student of international terrorism is faced with certain perennial dilemmas. First, when does a terrorist become a freedom fighter? For long, William Safire, eminent American journalist used to call the late Yasser Arafat, a terrorist. Second, do we call the struggle of certain groups, especially non-State actors as terrorism?

There are over 50 members of the “Un-represented Peoples’ Organization” (UNPO), popularly known as “Parallel UN”, some of whom like the Nagas, Karens, Kurds, and Shans were carrying on violent struggles against their governments. Do we call them terrorists? Third, do we call State repression as terrorism, example being the brutal suppression of Kurds by Saddam or the Palestinians by Israel? Finally, if we allow re-drawing of national boundaries for certain groups like East Timor, Eritrea *et al.* do we allow it for others? There is no ready answer.

The editors have also mentioned the need to evolve a counter-terrorist strategy by governments. In my opinion laying down a counter terrorist strategy like the nuclear doctrine binds us down to a needless inflexibility in dealing with terrorism especially when terrorists change their tactics. An example is our Maoist movement. Is there a national consensus that it is a terrorist movement and not a “Social reform” agitation? After 26/11, Mumbai was prepared to resist a 26/11 direct commando attack but terrorists came in stealthily from the flanks and ignited improvised explosive devices on 13/7. This reversion of tactics to stealth bomb attacks reminded us of the old IRA message to Prime Minister Mrs. Margaret Thatcher after the Brighton Hotel attack (October 12, 1984) which damaged her bedroom but failed to kill her: “Today we were unlucky. But remember, we have only to be lucky once. You have to be lucky always”. In my opinion it is better to consider each act of terrorism or insurgency as a law and order challenge and deal with it using justifiable violence to maintain public order. I know that this might create problems in our efforts in aligning our counter-terrorist methodology with some foreign governments but my experience in dealing with such governments has made me conclude that foreign governments seldom appreciate our problems unless they are also equally affected.

Today’s Atheists Take Themselves Too Seriously!

We get a poor quality of atheist these days – though they make up in noise what they lack in wit. In the ancient world most of the atheists were cheerful and entertaining. Lucretius told us there is God and no life after death but we’re not to be scared for ‘Where I am, death is not; and where death is, I am not’. David Hume was just about the most genial atheist there ever was: “I am dying fast as my enemies, if I have any, could wish, and as easily and cheerfully as my best friends could desire.’ The good old atheists urged us to enjoy life, or at least to be stoical in the face of misfortune and death. Moreover they attended the same dinner parties as the believers – imagine the sceptic Hume over a bottle of wine with the fervent Christian Sam Johnson.

Today’s atheists are a sorry bunch, because they

take themselves too seriously: blame their small mindedness, lack of imagination and dullness on their belief in Progress. Dawkins, de Bottom, Pullman and their friends accuse believers of swallowing whole chunks of myth. Who are they to talk? Contemporary atheists all share an enthusiasm for the most preposterous myth ever invented: the myth of Progress. The myth of Progress is the incorrigible presupposition underlying everything that is said. The mass media is sustained by it. You will hear several times a day on radio and TV: ‘It’s disgraceful that (insert some atrocity) is happening in the 21st century’ – as if our present times were guaranteed automatic moral superiority over all previous ages.

Excerpted from an editorial in *The Salisbury Review*, Spring 2012

Towards A Communist Pattern?

It is a strange irony of events that while India is pledged to follow a peaceful and democratic way to attain economic progress, the vital task of preparing the framework of her second Five Year Plan should be entrusted to a group of experts who have no regard for and no interest in the ideals and values of democracy. The fact, which was for a long time shrouded in mystery, has only recently become public thanks to Prof. Shenoy's warning at a meeting of the Indian Council of World Affairs in Ahmedabad and Prof. Ezekiel's article in the last issue of *Freedom First*.

The group of experts is that collected around him by Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis, Director of the Indian Statistical Institute and the Statistical Adviser to the Government of India. The group consists of seven experts from Iron Curtain countries and a couple of fellow-travellers from other European countries, with the single exception of one who hails from a democratic country.

Not long ago, Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan drew pointed attention to these facts. In an interview in Lucknow, he said: "The seven authors of Pandit Nehru's Second Five Year Plan are all men from behind the Iron Curtain." Jayaprakash is not in the habit of exaggerating, and indeed it is ascertained that the names of the members of this communist cell maintained by the Indian tax payer without his knowledge are Dr. M. I. Rubinstein (U.S.S.R.), Academician D. D. Degtyar (U.S.S.R.), Mr. Filiminov (U.S.S.R.), Mr. P. M. Moskvina (U.S.S.R.), Mr. Timchevko (U.S.S.R.), Prof. I. Y. Pisarev (U.S.S.R.), Prof. Oscar Lange (Poland), Prof. Charles Bettelheim (France), Dr. R. M. Goodwin (England; originally from the U.S.A.) and Prof. Ragnar Frisch (Norway).

Mr. Jayaprakash was naturally disturbed by these facts and expressed his deep concern over the "highly centralised totalitarian kind of planning which Prime Minister Nehru is getting done by the experts of communist countries in the name of a socialistic pattern of society."

The main characteristic of this modified plan is reported to be the primary importance accorded to the building up of heavy industries with a view to make the country self-sufficient in the matter of supply of producers' goods. This was the central feature of the first and

subsequent Five Year Plans of Soviet Russia and it was this which led to the merciless exploitation of the people and the rise of the police State.

Another significant pointer is the scheme adumbrated by Prof. V. K. R. V. Rao (a co-Vice-President, along with Prof. Mahalanobis, of the communist-inspired and controlled Indo-Soviet Cultural Society) of a National Labour Force. To begin with, it is to consist of one million persons. Its strength will be raised to two million during the period of the Second Plan. It will work, according to Prof. Rao, under 'semi-military discipline' and will be utilised for constructional activities of various kinds, such as road making, bridge building and irrigation. When there is plenty of available labour in the country for any amount of constructional activity there is no point in building up a Labour Force unless the idea is to conscript labour and make it work at any rate and at any place that may be decided by the State. Is this the shadow cast ahead of forced labour camps? The question is legitimate, for Prof. Rao's appreciation of communist China and its methods is not unknown.

NOTES

In Einstein's death, the world has lost not only a great scientist, but an inveterate fighter for peace, democracy and tolerance.

Had he not written to President Roosevelt in 1939, that the Germans were exploiting his theory to invent the atomic bomb, and that therefore America should step in and outlive Germany, the free world probably would never have embarked upon atomic projects. For, it is the atomic bomb in the possession of the free world which has been the real deterrent to the spread of communism.

"Einstein was a man imbued with a high sense of humour. When he first published his *General Theory of Relativity*, he wrote: "If my theory is proved correct, Germany will hail me as a great German, and the French will hail me as a citizen of the world. If it is proved wrong, the French will call me a German and Germans will call me a Jew."

Educating Adults

The Health of Our Young

Oh! For Those Healthy Youthful Days, But Alas!

Jyoti Marwah

Emerging India aping the west has much to fear from the phenomenal lifestyle changes in which educated women play a unique role

We celebrated World Health Day on April 7 and India rejoiced as WHO announced her exit from the list of polio endemic countries. Not a single new case of wild polio virus was reported in the country for the past one year. However that's not all to be euphoric about as the young today will increase the total population of above 60 from 7.4% to 17% by 2050, it is but imperative to ensure for them a healthy life. *But how?* A city's health is denoted by the life expectancy of its people and doctors feel that living in Mumbai could be injurious to health, for you will probably live 10 years less than your counterparts in Shanghai, New York or London. According to the Mumbai Human Development Report 2009 by BMC and UN Development Programme, life expectancy in Mumbai is 56.8 as opposed to 63.7 in India. The reasons are alarming pollution levels coupled with people's affinity for junk food and sedentary lifestyle. To overcome this they must be empowered through education.

However, it is unfortunate that health and education are of least concern to the government as these are not an electoral priority. For investment in these sectors are not evident over one electoral cycle and have no multiplier effect. Health and education are promised though may not be guaranteed in the Constitution. It remains a major concern as by 2050 India's aged population will become a phenomenal responsibility to be shouldered by the State. Also we understand and agree that the present and the coming generations cannot bear the burden of epidemics, chronic malnutrition, falling immunity levels and much more which result from the unhealthy lifestyles adopted by our young. Today, we must feed and teach our children.

Urban Health Mission and the Rural Health Mission may or may not achieve their targets but one thing is clear that all are wary of the declining standards coupled with mercenary tactics by private health providers in this sector. Investment in this sector as enumerated by WHO should be 6% of the GDP and the Government of India contributes only 1.1%. So where does redemption lie?

Emerging India aping the west has much to fear from the phenomenal lifestyle changes in which educated women play a unique role. Young women entering the professional arena amount to 38% of the total to outstrip men at 33%, accordingly the health care sector is investing in women's care. A recent survey projects earning women as a marvel that will make India 12% richer by 2015 and 25% by 2025 and also enrich life in many other ways. Then the question arises why India witnesses 250 in 100,000 maternal deaths at child birth and 48 in 1000 infant mortality. We need to find out where and what is wrong? There can be no acceptable and pardonable excuse for this.

Fast food consumption by the younger generation is largely responsible for altering the physiological and psychological balance and body metabolism. This has rendered incalculable harm in terms of TFR (Total Fertility Rate), obesity, early cardiac disorders, diabetes, mental disturbances and emotional waywardness.

The Registrar General of India by Sample Registration System reported a drop in the TFR which fell from 2.6 in 2008 and 2009 to 2.5 in 2010 and in Maharashtra it slipped to 1.9. Though in the states of Bihar, UP, MP and Rajasthan it has been as high as 6. The indicator being



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the higher the education the lower the TFR, for in illiterate women the TFR has been reported to be 6. Now India hopes to achieve the placement level fertility of 2.1 only by 2060 stabilizing at 165 crores as opposed to the earlier target of 145 crores in 2045.

Obesity has reached alarming proportions in the adolescent age group. 90% severely obese adolescents become extremely obese adults. This impacts health most critically for 93% suffer from abnormal insulin, 67% from sleep apnea, 36% from hypertension and 13% develop type II diabetes. Girls often have polycystic ovary syndrome and menstrual problems, 33% develop three or more cardiovascular risk factors such as abnormal HDL, LDL and high levels of insulin. Alarming 95% have two or more co-morbidities. Thus obesity can severely impair the quality of life (TOI April 2, 2012).

The findings of the *Public Health Nutrition Journal* revealed that consumers of fast food are 51% more likely to develop depression than the one who eats less or none at all. They are more likely to be single, less active with poor dietary habits and smoking is a specific characteristic of this group. Of the assessment done for 8,964 people 493 were diagnosed with depression and were on anti-depressants (PTI). Fears abound as suicides increase and the figures swell with problems of mental health.

Stress, poor hygiene, pollution and poor infrastructure add to the health risks in Mumbai. 5% of Mumbaikars are affected by stress related depression. Poor access to potable water, lack of toilets at public places, poor health practices due to uncovered food sold by vendors with unwashed hands increases the vulnerability to hepatitis A&E, leptospirosis and diarrhea. Suspended matter is about 200 units per cubic metre when the normal is 100 units and the cities congested colonies result in spread of diseases like Multi and Total Drug resistant TB, H1 N1 and Malaria.

Thus health is a serious cause for concern and needs urgent attention particularly at the grassroot level of Medical education. It takes the best brains but churns them into exhausted, disillusioned and unhappy youngsters wondering as to what to make of their lives without many options after MBBS.

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Mental Health Of Today's Youth

Rajni Bakshi

*"He has his Summer, when luxuriously
Spring's honied cud of youthful thought he loves
To ruminate, and by such dreaming high
Is nearest unto heaven."*

There was a time, not too long back, when the youth epitomised these words of Keats and one's childhood, adolescence and early twenties were years of glory, freedom, laughter and dreams. Unfortunately, even though youth still remains the better part of one's life even today, it has been marred by the struggles of a materialistic and competitive lifestyle. The youth today is no longer free of worries, stress and anxiety, but often finds itself chained by these. Stress levels are rising dramatically in the early stages of life, so much so, that the mental health of the youth today is at stake.

Statistics of various countries, including ours, indicate that contemporary youth is frequently a victim of depression, anxiety, addiction and related problems. Suicidal tendencies and deviant behaviour is found more than ever in children and adolescents today. It is not a rarity to see the young suffering from distress, anguish, emotional problems, loneliness, hopelessness, stress and various mental disorders.

How can we explain this degeneration in the mental health of the youth? The problems can be easily traced to the changing patterns of our social fabric. The family structure has been totally modified with nuclear families replacing the joint ones and both parents working. The child is often left neglected with the parents compensating for their lack of presence with gifts and things. Materialism over emotion thus enters life very early these days.

The next causal factor is the increasing competition in the early stages of life. Children today are pushed into excelling right from the beginning. Consequently, they have a hectic lifestyle from early on.

Third on the list is our changing pattern of social interaction. The invasion of technology has made social life quite complex. The youth spends more time today on social networks and cell-phones and the two have added a newer, complicated dimension to communication and social life. The youth today is exposed to more information than ever before, but unfortunately it often lacks a wise guide and warm advice.

The youth represents the future of the country and of the society. Along with being tender, this age is very crucial and often decides how a person will turn out to be later in life. Hence, it should go without saying that their health and well being should be of the utmost importance. It is not possible to arrest social change but we can always equip ourselves to deal with it better. We are at a crucial point today in our ever-changing society. It is essential that we start paying attention to the youth, caring for them and preparing them appropriately for the tougher times ahead.

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Shift in risk behaviour related to HIV/AIDS

Jayanta Kumar Basu

Slum Youth and Students of Maharashtra Time to Rephrase

It is unbelievable but true that worldwide the incidence of HIV is now seen to occur among the adolescents / youth in the age group of 14-24 years.

The urban youth and students particularly the college students have a significant presence in this age bracket. With increasing urbanization and popularity of western lifestyle pacing up, the youth especially in the urban set up have readily imbibed the new value system and unlike the Indian Traditional Culture 'Sex before Marriage' seems to be a taboo no more. The youth are increasingly experimenting with it and the propensity to indulge in risky sex is high as most of the encounters are unplanned.

HIV/AIDS interventions among the youth by Behavioural Surveillance Surveys in Maharashtra has revealed a decline in commercial sex (23% to 5%) but increase in non-commercial sex activities with friends and willing partners (11% to 15%). Around 17% are reported to be having multiple partners. Also, the mean age of sex debut among the urban youth ranges from 17 to 19 years which shows a phenomenal decline. The risks are significantly high although there is a significant increase in use of protective measures with commercial partners (69%-88% among the slum youth) the same is less in the case of their non-commercial partners(36% to 45%). It is unfortunate that the overall risk perception among the youth is still lacking.

It is suggested that the behavioural change strategy among all categories of youth should emphasize either to abstain or to use protective measures with every partner, so as to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS. The intervention programs for HIV/AIDS should encourage delaying their sexual debut.

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Youth, Health And Biotechnology

Devayani Kulkarni

WHO defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Most of all these aspects are dependent on the status of food availability. A sound body has a sound mind.

Youth are considered as the future but they are our present too. So better nourishment and living is vital to secure their present and in this respect biotechnology can be a boon. The application of modern biotechnology to food production presents new opportunities and challenges for human health and development. Recombinant gene technology, the most well-known modern biotechnology, enables plants, animals and micro-organisms to be genetically modified (GM) with novel traits. Genetic engineering is a process in which a DNA sequence is isolated, modified and inserted back into the same or in different species. In plant biotechnology it is done to improve crop quality or protein content, insect resistant (Bt cotton), drought resistant and much more. Tomatoes were the first GM food introduced with a delayed-ripening effect in the mid-1990s. Since then, GM strains of maize, soybean, rape and cotton have been adopted by a number of countries and marketed internationally. It is estimated that GM crops cover almost 4% of total global arable land.

The development of GM organisms (GMOs) offers increased agricultural productivity and improved nutritional value to feed large populations. It will result in enhancing human health and development. Not only this, indirectly it will reduce agrochemical usage and enhance farm income, and improve crop sustainability and food security, particularly in developing countries where the youth are a large group and need nutritional support for enhanced performance. It also gives them an additional area for professional and career options. Thus Biotechnology contributes in a unique manner the promotion of health

for the young population and also secure for them a regimen in disease prevention.

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Youth and Health

Fatema S. Vhora

In today's fast paced world of the youth the major killer is not disease but stress.

A large number of India's youth is deployed in IT and related sectors. Their jobs demand varied abilities including cross-national communication/mobility, understanding complex IT systems and numerous electronic devices which in turn impact their young lives. Workplaces are changing and with them the pressure, demands and tensions on a day-to-day basis. It is a well-known fact that a greater number of youth are exposed to high stress levels and over time may develop different stages of "burnout". Therefore there is a need for youth to recognize and guard against this syndrome.

This can be described as a state of mental and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress, the major causes of which are poor work

environment and overwork. Meeting tight deadlines, schedules is cited as the main justification for unhealthy work habits. However, the youth need to realise that hard work and schedules can be achieved with consistent pacing of the work with use of wellness techniques. The organization can promote this through worksite health promotion and wellness programmes.

This will focus on the prevention and intervention that reduce the health risk of the employees. It includes exercise, nutrition, laughter, relaxation, smoking cessation, decreasing drug dependency and stress management. There is a strong link between physical activity and individuals' health status thus increasing work ability and overall well being. Some of the generic approaches are: Enhancing self-esteem and self-assertiveness; time-management; conflict resolution; inculcating positive attitude; preventive negative thought build-up; change of environment/job variation; coping in the family – creating a low stress environment at home

The main point being, that in today's fast paced world of the youth the major killer is not any disease but stress. Therefore guarding against this is essential to lead a long life full of joy.

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"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."

Fredrick Douglass (1818-1895), famous American abolitionist, orator, author, statesman and social reformer, famously declared: "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."

What are the essential characteristics of effective early childhood education? What needs to be done to ensure that young children get the best possible start in life?

According to Prof. Hirokazu Yoshikawa of the Harvard School of Education, the formula is quite simple, as children don't require any special help or educational toys to develop their brainpower. Instead, they need loving care and new experiences, including talking, singing, playing and reading, all of which contribute to brain development. "It all boils down to relationships," says Yoshikawa. This is why a responsive adult or set of adults is so critical, specifically if socio-economic circumstances deprive children of formal preschooling.

Economics Nobel laureate Prof. James Heckman has long been a proponent of public investment in ECE. In

his research he has shown that the return on investment to society of a dollar invested in ECE is higher than equal investment in K-12 and tertiary education (and also the US stock market!) because it reduces juvenile delinquency and criminal activity, while increasing the prospects of improved scores in standardised tests and productive, high-income careers.

All these factors support the case for high quality ECE teacher education to bring about transformative change in societies. It's in the public interest to raise the status and profiles of ECE professionals, and to incentivise graduates to enroll in ECE teacher programmes.

In the words of Prof. Heckman, "skills beget skills". If we upgrade the professionalism of individuals who educate our youngest citizens, we upgrade society as a whole.

Dr. Jeremy Williams is chief academic officer of the Asian International College & Knowledge Universe)

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Murder of School Teacher in Chennai By Her Student

What Do School Students Think?

Nandini Voice for The Deprived, a Chennai based NGO organised an essay competition for school students in Tamil Nadu on the following subject “Violence In A School Class Room - Why Did This Happen?”

The recent murder of a school teacher by her student in a class room in Chennai has caused huge concern and raised alarm all over India. Obviously, there are serious issues concerning school education, which need to be clearly understood to evolve appropriate solutions.

Well meaning educationists and social activists have been suggesting a number of improvements in the educational system. In this context it is necessary to give an opportunity to school students to express their views and offer suggestions. Their feedback would be of considerable value.

With this purpose in view, Nandini Voice for the Deprived organized an

Essay Competition: Violence in School Classroom – Why did this Happen?

Participants

All school students studying in 9th standard to 12th standard in Tamil Nadu were eligible to participate in the competition. There was overwhelming response from school students from all over Tamil Nadu. Several students submitted their views with clarity and maturity, considering their age.

The following are the ten prize winners

Name	Class	School
K.Janani	XI	Smt. Ramkuwar Devi Swami Vivekananda Vidyalaya, Chennai
D. Grace	X	Zion Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Chennai
T. S. Anirudh	IX	DAV Senior Secondary School, Chennai
Meryl Mammen Kurien	XI	Sacred Heart Matriculation Higher Sec. School, Chennai
Adrija Subramanian	XI	Kola Perumal Chetty

		Vaishnav Sr. Sec.School, Chennai
Jyotirmoy Dash	IX	S.B.O.A School and Junior College, Chennai
A. Anisha	XII	Jaya Matriculation Higher Sec. School, Tiruninravur
C. S. Aparna	XI	San Jose Matric.Hr.Sec. School, Coimbatore
C. Parthasarathi	XI	St.John’s Matriculation Hr. Sec. School, Chennai
K. Krishnapriya	XII	Subbiah Vidyalayam, Thoothukudi

Some highlights from their essays

Competitive Pressure:

The students are made to think that ultimate success and growth in their fortunes would depend almost entirely on their academic performance. Huge pressure is exerted on the students by the parents and teachers to secure high grades and if they do not they are condemned sub standard.

Many parents seem to be obsessed with the thought that their wards should achieve what they could not achieve.

As a result, many students do not find time to play and are forced to run between the school and commercial tutorial classes in the process, they do not develop the capability to do original thinking and sometimes fall prey to temptations such as drinking and become violent in moments of pressure and frustration.

Having Pocket Money

Several students objected to the practice of parents giving pocket money to school going students, which is a primary reason for the students being tempted to indulge in bad and undesirable acts. There is absolutely no justification for such daily pocket money. This practice

is not confined to affluent families alone but economically poor families a well though r quantum is much less.

Bad Example Set by Parents

Particularly in the middle and upper income group, the lifestyle of parents is changing. Several parents take to drinking liquor at home in front of their children, without bothering about the impact on the minds of their children who are in the formative age group. One girl student said that she hated her father whenever he indulges in drinking at home in the company of his friends during weekends.

Often, parents take their children to cinemas or view at home TV showing scenes of violence and vulgarity; this gives an impression to the young mind that such violence and vulgarity are normal and part of life and has the approval of their parents.

Negative Influence of Media and Internet

With children having unhindered exposure to internet and practically unchecked by the parents, children inevitably get corrupted by seeing many undesirable writings and photographs. The parents think that working on a computer is modern and often do not care to check what the children are doing.

Further, these days' photographs appearing in several journals and newspapers are so disturbing that some students said that the media are becoming irresponsible about the impact of such content on the younger generation.

Some students said that when they return home in the evening from school, their parents who are employed are not at home to welcome them and they are left with only TV sets and internet.

The Role of Teachers

With both parents in many families working, they assume that the school and the teachers will take care of the progress and conduct of the students. The teachers, however committed and capable, cannot be a substitute for the parents in moulding the character of the students.

Therefore, the primary responsibility for bad behaviour is that of the parents and not the teachers.

On their part, it is necessary for the teachers to change and modify their approach in dealing with e students, since the students nowadays have great exposure

to many things and really are not "that innocent". Teachers should be discreet in attempting to correct the deficiencies of individual students by counselling them in private rather than in front of their class mates or during assembly time.

The teachers also to need much more training and orientation programmes, since they are also under tremendous pressure exerted by the school management to show good results in the examination. Some students said that the teachers seem to be tenser than students these days.

Importance of Value Based education:

Value based education has taken a back seat in schools. Students are growing up in a moral vacuum. The main focus of school education these days is to make the students score high grades; he task of character building has been practically ignored. There should be compulsory moral education classes at least two hours every week and scholars from outside must be invited to interact with the students on social values and personal morals behaviour.

Need for Role Models

Ultimately, the students are the victims of the prevailing moral and ethical climate in the country. The task of teachers and parents has become very challenging in the light of the many negative influences to which the young students are exposed.

The teachers and the parents have to be role models for the teenagers. If they do not, why blame students for their faults?

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A Shocking Fact

The degree to which Indian society and the State in particular have neglected the welfare and well-being of the country's vulnerable children is shocking beyond belief. Almost half (46 percent) of the world's largest child population (450 million) is malnourished which makes it difficult to absorb academic instruction. Although 220 million children enrol in primary school at the start of every academic year, 53 percent don't complete primary education, mainly because very little learning happens in classrooms, especially in the country's 1.25 million government primaries where multi-grade classes are common, teacher truancy is ubiquitous, learning outcomes pitiful and corporal punishment rife.

COURTESY: *Education World*, January 2012

Funding the Right to Education Act (2)

Suresh C. Sharma

Education is the foundation of success of individuals and leads to prosperity of society. The Right to Education (RTE) Act envisages compulsory and free education for all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years. It is a commendable thought.

The Infrastructure for Education

There is a general tendency to denigrate the three R's i.e. reading, writing and arithmetic of primary education. It is well accepted that education should aim at something more than mere literacy but the three R's are essential for every citizen irrespective of his or her profession. They are the keys to vast stores of knowledge and the building blocks for advanced training. Education is naturally associated with schools which have the advantage of safe environment and supervision. Children learn to socialize, play and improve communication skills. Formal education in schools is a must to build up self confidence.

All schools should have a proper building, library and facility for sports. Above all a school should have trained and committed teachers and students. In a report by an NGO, it was mentioned that in one school, children from the neighbourhood were asked to be present during inspection to complete the count.

For a population of 22 crore children in the age group of six to fourteen years, there is a requirement of one lac schools with eight rooms each. This is worked out on the scale of thirty students in a class. It is not an impossible target to achieve. The difficulty is proper work schedule and commitment. It is a sobering thought to take stock of the existing state of affairs. A survey by the NGO 'Child Rights and You' reveals that 46% of the civic schools do not have a play ground, 73% do not have a library and 50% do not have a proper toilet. There were no water purifiers in 50% of the schools and there was no proper furniture in 20% schools. In January 2011, hundreds of villagers and students staged a protest in the village of Madhopur in Orissa demanding appointment of teachers, free uniform and redress of grievances regarding mid-day meals. There were only two teachers taking several classes.

The Indian Express of 19 February 2012 carries the story of a typical rural school as stated by its principal: "Look at my school; it has no walls, no proper class rooms. There are 200 children who pay Rs 30 per month and some from farmers who do not pay even that much for months. I can barely afford to pay teachers. I have tried to get

help from the local MLA and failed."

A 12-year old girl, Durga, lives in a hut under a bridge and has to do her home work in the light from a lamp since the school has no library where students can do their home work. The result is that the teacher has stopped giving home work. It is a good idea not to give home work for the junior classes. A friend of ours admitted their children to the American Shool in New Delhi. They were surprised when the principal told them that the school did not give any home work. There should be adequate time for study in the school itself. I recall the advice given to us by an experienced teacher that a child should not be put to pressure and must be encouraged to like studies. We notice children of junior schools burdened with home work and the inevitable coaching classes. I may quote the example of military courses in UK. Our Junior Commissioned Officers [JCOs] invariably stood first in the technical courses in UK. One of them explained to me that the British students on the course would leave the précis and books in the class room and would not take them home for private studies. Their routine was "No studies at home. Queen's time is over."

A major difficulty foreseen in providing buildings for new schools or expanding the capacity of existing ones would be acquisition of buildings or land. Land or premises in urban areas are scarce, particularly within one to three kms of residential areas. Positioning of 80 lac trained teachers could be another challenge.

To ensure efficient working of the schools, funds should be made available in time. It has been observed by the NGO 'Pratham', that 70% of the schools surveyed by them did not receive grants in time.

The targets can be achieved and must be met. It requires good management and commitment by the administration, parents and teachers.

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At Parikrma, Learning is A Way of Life

Parikrma provides more than school education; it is a way of life that will hold the kids in good stead for the rest of their lives, providing them with a safe, protected environment.

‘Our children have attended the global youth leadership summit in San Diego, many have been chosen for the Duke University Talent Identification programme, three students represented India in Taekwondo in the South Asian rounds and are preparing for the global challenge now’. That may sound like something out of a brochure for a high-end private school. But the children referred to are all from the slums, first generation school-goers in their families, who go home to a wretched existence with alcoholic fathers, browbeaten mothers, where electricity and clean drinking water are luxuries they can scarcely imagine. The transformation in their lives is due to the Parikrma Humanity Foundation.

Founded by Shukla Bose, the principle that drives the Parikrma Humanity Foundation appears to be quality, quality and quality. “In India, we tend to get very caught up with numbers,” says Shukla Bose. “But we must remember it’s not just about dishing out charity to slum children.” It is the philosophy that has put the Parikrma Centres for Learning in a different league of charity work. Children who had nowhere to go find themselves getting an education and a way of life that only the affluent can usually hope to have.

“I was in corporate life for 26 years, running start-ups and a fairly profitable organisation in the hospitality business,” says Shukla. “After a while, though, I felt it was necessary to make some fundamental difference by doing something more long-term and meaningful.” She gave up her corporate successes, much to the surprise of people around her. “People leave corporate life when it’s time to retire or when they are dissatisfied, but not many leave it when they are on a high,” she says, adding, “But why start social work only when you’re too old to do any work? Why not do it when you actually do have the energy for it?” When Parikrma began, the original headquarters was organised around Shukla’s kitchen table!

As the nation is grappling with a situation as stupefying as 100 million children who cannot read or write, people do tend to get caught up with statistics, delving far too deep into how many children enrol in schools and how many attend. What actually happens in school is the question, Shukla argues. “Now and then, there is a bid

to revamp the curriculum, but there is nothing wrong with the curriculum itself, just how it is delivered.”

According to Shukla, her school can boast of a 96% attendance rate every day over the past nine years, and a dropout rate that is less than 1%, the lowest in the country. “I am no educationist, no wealthy funder,” she says. “But I want to do what I do so well that it will become a leadership model that can be replicated.”

High quality teachers are the bedrock of Parikrma. “We want people who are truly committed to what they do, are passionate about children and who believe that education is the only way to change,” she says. To see a child sitting on her teacher’s lap, being helped with her work is a common occurrence at Parikrma. “We have collaborated with children from high end schools in California; they do projects together on Skype,” she says. “These things are never, ever, thought of for children from slums and I’m not sure why.”

It doesn’t just end with providing the child education, either. The organisation helps put alcoholic parents into de-addiction centres, provides mothers with income generation programmes and even adult education programmes for interested mothers. “Our job doesn’t end with providing a happy school environment,” says Shukla. “Education isn’t effective unless the home environment is stable.” Parikrma provides more than school education; it is a way of life that will hold the kids in good stead for the rest of their lives, providing them with a safe, protected environment. “There is no room for abuse or ill-treatment of any kind because the system is so transparent,” says Shukla. The best measure of success is, beyond doubt, the happiness of the child.

So, on Saturdays, if you have the children following you around, with the plaintive little refrain, “Akka, why can’t we have school on Sunday,” then, one supposes it’s a job well done. The Parikrma Humanity Foundation is looking for teachers. Those interested can write to teacher@parikrmafoundation.org.

COURTESY: Darshana Ramdev, Deccan Chronicle, March 5, 2012

Parikrma's Final Leap

College opens up the world for these children from the slums.

When Santosh whipped up 20 exotic dishes in under 3 hours and won the cooking competition at an inter-college event for Hotel Management students, he made his teachers and friends at Parikrma very proud. Santosh's father came to Bangalore with his family as a daily wage construction labourer to try and eke out a living in India's Silicon Valley, where he eventually became a cook who went from house to house. Perhaps his father's vocation had an impression on young Santosh, who now dreams of being a chef. Besides being awarded Student of the Year at his college, he has completed his internship at The Leela Palace hotel, a seven-star luxury hotel in Bangalore.

Santosh is one of 42 Parikrma children who are all well on their way to earning college degrees. At Parikrma Humanity Foundation, a non-profit organisation that runs 4 Centres for Learning and a Junior College for 1300 children from 53 slum communities in Bangalore, the journey with a child does not end with school. It ends when every child has been placed in a job, and has finally broken out of the cycle of poverty. Parikrma's Final Leap is a program that supports children through their final steps of formal education, as they prepare to become earning, contributing members of society. While Parikrma manages the delivery of K-12 education, it continues to support children through scholarships for courses at mainstream universities and vocational training.

With career counseling and financial support, the first two batches of Parikrma students, are now pursuing a wide variety of courses at college. From Hotel

Management, Engineering and Nursing to Commerce, Visual Arts and Science, Parikrma children are exploring their opportunities and have integrated smoothly into their institutions. Some of those who are not academically inclined have completed diploma courses or vocational training and are already working to support themselves and their families. A few children, who stay in orphanages and needed to become quickly independent, are working part-time even as they attend college in the mornings.

Selva and Shalini, both Parikrma students, are among the few in a batch of over 50 students to have passed the First Year B.Sc Nursing exam and done well. They have just completed their internship at Manipal Hospital, one of

Bangalore's leading hospitals. They both describe the long hours they spent on their feet and the terrifying moments in the ER, but smile when they say that they love what they have chosen to do.

Given the backgrounds that Parikrma children come from, many face enormous pressure to give up academic pursuits in order to begin earning. The challenge, therefore, is to ensure that the children have the financial and other support they need to overcome the obstacles they face. It takes close to 18 years for every child to break the vicious circle of poverty once and for all. Parikrma has set up a Final Leap fund to make sure that all its children can follow their dreams to college. It costs Rs. 40,000 per year to send one Parikrma child to college and to change the course of one family's future. For more information, log onto www.parikrmafoundation.org



Santosh displaying his inter-school award for culinary skills.

Parikrma Humanity Foundation is a non-profit organization that manages 4 Centres for Learning and a Junior College for 1300 children from 53 slums and 5 orphanages in Bangalore. Parikrma not only provides these children best possible English language education from K-12 and beyond, but 3 meals a day, comprehensive healthcare and family care.



Freedom First

Digitisation Project

Freedom First, which began publication 59 years ago, was founded by the late Minoo Masani, author and MP, at a time when free India was just five years old, World War II had ended and the Cold War had begun. As a participant in India's freedom struggle he shared the vision of the leaders who had led us to freedom that, with independence, our country would launch towards the winning of a new world - the creation of a new society, secular in its foundation, ensuring liberty of thought, belief and action and the realization of economic and social justice for all the citizens of the free republic.

This vision ***Freedom First***, has steadfastly adhered to, even when it was politically incorrect or 'unpopular' to speak up for liberal values not to mention liberal economics. Our primary aim has been and continues to be to inform, analyse and educate our readers whether in the context of the not so recent past be it on the real nature of Soviet Communism, its inhuman treatment of dissent; of the fifth column that it created in the form of communist parties organised internationally including India; issues of governance; the onset of corruption as the licence-permit-quota-raj tightened its stranglehold on the economy; the Planning Commission which was patterned on the Soviet Gosplan and which inevitably led to wrong priorities e.g. the emphasis on heavy industry to the neglect of rural India in general and agriculture in particular; a lopsided foreign policy in the guise of non-alignment; and the growing trend towards too much government and too little citizenship. The list can go on.

We propose to digitise the entire set of 530-plus copies of ***Freedom First*** (1952 -2011) reflecting the times they were written by men known for their integrity and competence. We are also digitising ***Quest***, a bi-monthly journal of enquiry, criticism and ideas, which was also published by the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom (ICCF) between the years 1956 and 1976. Outstanding litterateurs, poets, writers and academics were its editors and contributors. ***Quest*** had to shut down in 1976 during the 'Emergency' due to difficulties with the Censors. Between the two, digitising involves over 19,000 printed pages of ***Freedom First*** and 2000 pages of ***Quest***.

We look forward to your support in the funding of this project. Cheques made out in favour of "ICCF" will be gratefully accepted. Our address: The Hon. Secretary, Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom, 3rd floor, Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400001. Phone: 022 22843416, 022 66396366. Cell: Hon. Secretary- 9820016392; email: freedom@vsnl.com / freedomfirst1952@gmail.com.

Editor