

Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine



COURAGE
AGE NO BAR

Malala Yousafzai, 15 years

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

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Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine

Number 545 – November 2012

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Between Ourselves

A 15-year old schoolgirl Malala Yousafzai, from Swat in Pakistan has been showing immense courage in taking on religious fanatics, a lesson they are not likely to forget for a long time to come. *Freedom First* derives great satisfaction in honouring her on our cover. Turn to page 34 for a brief profile of this young heroine.

According to a report in *The Times of India* of October 18 Mumbai's Police Commissioner Satyapal Singh who was being felicitated on his appointment at a function at the Islam Gymkhana observed responding to complaints, that the murder charges should not have been invoked: "I took charge 12 days after the Azad Maidan riot..(the mistakes) were made before I took charge". We requested Ashok Karnik, a retired senior official in the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and a member of the Advisory Board of *Freedom First* for his comment:

He said: "Satyapal Singh should have at the most promised to look into the matter but never should an officer blame his predecessor or his subordinates for a legal action. Generally the police throw the law book at the accused and then the charges are watered down as the investigation progresses. His attempt to placate the Muslim leaders gives political slant to the riot case. If he wanted to be blunt, he should have told the Muslim leaders that they should help detect 70-80 youth who created mayhem on 11/8 and if they argued on behalf of their community, it would be their responsibility to ensure that their wards abided by the law and those who transgressed it are punished. The best course would have been a diplomatic non-committal reply. A Commissioner of Police (CP) should be mature enough to do so".

Do we smell vote bank politics here? Was the CP prompted by his political masters to say what he said?

Editor

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Column: Nostalgia

Freedom First This month in November 1955

facing page 38

From Our Readers

***Freedom First* on the Web**

The website looks quite nice – clean, uncluttered and reader-friendly. I do wish there was some space for comments - with authentication, of course. Don't want trolls posting silly stuff. Also, if the webpages can have buttons to share the articles on Facebook or Twitter, that would help.

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An Opportunity Lost

In the last few months I have spent significant time in India and met a lot of people around the country. I cannot help but think how much damage Pandit Nehru did to post-independence India. I cannot even imagine what that guy was smoking? India had a fantastic opportunity to build a real nation based on free market economy. It would have even taken care of the caste system and killed it for good. But what we have created instead is a country where there is no system and no accountability. It will take a lot of determination to really reform the political system at the Federal but more importantly at the State level where the real change should take place.

So where are the young people (and please do not include Prince Gandhi!) to set the house in order. I do not see any signs of some new leadership emerging that could make this happen.

Ramesh Mirakhur, USA.
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Facebook 'Citizens'

I submit that

- Until like-minded persons come together and create a Vote Bank that attracts the Politicians;
- till our economic back up to support the Cause is negligible;
- till our youth, on reaching adult stage, get military training and discipline,

one can write energetic comments with vigour on Facebook and satisfy ourselves that we have been active citizens!

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*

Why "Mango people" Rally behind Anna Hazare

Despite all the witch-hunting and persecution of

activists like Anna Hazare, Arvind Kejriwal, and Swami Ramdev, crores of "mango people" like me would rally behind them, because the *aam admi* is suffocated by the swindling and loot of national wealth by the politician-bureaucrat- corporate mafia, which is trying to seize control of the Indian economy. This powerful trinity is threatening the future of millions of Indians and Indian democracy itself. Their activities could be termed as anti-national. It is time for the citizens to stand together and fight for their rights.

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*

Scrap the Minority Commissions; We are all Indian Citizens

We should stop calling them the "Minority Community" anymore, after 60 years of Independence. Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs, Hindus and others are Indian Citizens and as such enjoy equal rights and privileges under our Constitution. They cannot be "segregated" as belonging to the "Minority" or "Majority" communities, as that would discriminate them under the tag of being 'second' or 'first' class' citizens, something that does not exist in our secular, democratic Constitution. Yet, some political parties and politicians in league with a section of the media, persist in imposing the idea that the country is 'divided' or 'segregated' on communal lines. This is an absolutely dangerous attitude, perhaps a legacy of the past which should be curbed at all cost. The so-called "Minority Commissions" should be scrapped, It gives the impression that we Indians are insecure in our own land. How can we allow such a farce to prevail?

Let there be more voices heard from our brothers and sisters across our country proclaiming aloud that India is not a theocratic Nation but very vibrant and progressive one where we indeed enjoy equal opportunities.

Pramod L. V. Amonkar, Panaji, 403 001, Goa

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Power of Hype

Sri Firoze Hirjikaka seems to have an unquenchable animosity to Sri Narendra Modi (*Freedom First* Oct' 2012). Some people don't tire writing about of post-Godhra Hindu-Muslim riots but seldom mention that more than 3000 Sikhs were hunted down by organised gangs belonging to the ruling party under the very nose of the very secular Prime Minister the late Sri Rajiv Gandhi in 1984 in the aftermath of Indira Gandhi's assassination.

Sri Hirjikaka asks, why is it that 10 years after Godhra the Muslims still harbor undiminished animosity towards him”. Muslims have not been feeling “safe” since the end of their minority rule and domination in India from the 18th century onwards .They are feeling much more insecure since independence because it was the over 98% separate Muslim electorate in what is now India, that voted for Muslim League which asserted that Muslims are not Indians; they are a nation separate from Hindus and therefore India should be divided and Islamic Pakistan created as a Homeland for the subcontinent’s Muslims. There is not one Muslim organization in this country now which say that they are getting fair treatment despite Indian Muslims becoming Presidents, Chief Ministers, (of Hindu majority states: Assam, Bihar, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Puduchery) Chief Justices, Chiefs of Air force, Chiefs of so many Commissions, PSUs etc.

It is ridiculous for Hirjikaka to say that the Gujarat regime is intolerant and autocratic. Does he want us to ignore and forget that Pakistan carried out ethnic cleansing of Sikhs reducing its 19% such population to less than 1% and Bangladesh has reduced its 33% Hindu –Buddhist population to 8% . Does he want us to forget that the Muslim residents of Bombay staged violent demonstrations in support of the Bangladeshi Muslim infiltrators into Bodoland of Assam? Sri Hirjikaka should give up his visceral dislike of and phobia for Narendra Modi and his regime.

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*

Mr. Chowdary should visit Gujarat to See for Himself

T. H. Chowdary seems to have a fund of info about the Andhra CM, which must presumably be uncontested. but his info about Gujarat is highly questionable. Perhaps he should pay a visit here.

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Solar Energy

This refers to Mr. G. K. Bhide’s piece on “Avoiding Power Grid trips -The imperatives of Solar Energy” (*Freedom First*, Sept.2012).

I agree with the author that it is high time that India “walked the talk” as far as promotion of renewable energy is concerned. But I would like to comment on some of the recommendations made.

It is true that the high cost of solar cells was a

serious impediment to propagation of Solar Voltaic Power (SVP). But of late, the costs have come down drastically due to advances in technology in the USA and China. So much so that cheap Chinese solar cells and panels have arrived in India, to the grave consternation of local manufacturers.

Of course, SPV, as of now, cannot produce large mega wattage, but it has a very crucial role to play in decentralised, stand alone systems in areas not covered and poorly covered by the power grid. Ideal for rural India. A panel or two could provide basic lighting to a home, with minimum maintenance expenditure, mainly on the battery.

The viability of SPV has been proven in a number of countries in the last 15 years while India talks and keeps talking. Germany passed legislation as far back as the late nineties mandating the purchase of SPV from producers at prescribed rates. The same law offered an innovative incentive to individual homes which installed SPV panels on their rooftops. The power was bought by the power company and the consumer’s bill adjusted accordingly.

Solar Thermal Power (STP), which converts solar energy into steam, which then runs the turbines, requires extensive land. Thousands of acres would be needed to produce 50 mw. It has been tried in arid areas of California and Spain, but I am not sure if STP has caught on in a big way. It is reported that the government’s Solar Mission is trying it out in Rajasthan’s desert areas.

Among the renewables, wind power is doing well. The potential for bio energy is tremendous but hardly exploited. It is clear that walking the talk in India calls for progressive legislation and dynamic policies.

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Corrections

In the September 2012 issue of *Freedom First* on page 5 Mrinal Gore’s maiden name is mis-spelt as Mrinal Mohite. This is a typographical error. It should read as Mohile and not Mohite. Since *Freedom First* magazine is stored and referred, it has a reference value. In Marathi *te* and *le* are quite distinct.

Dr. L. N. Godbole, Mumbai

In the October issue Dr.Vergheese Kurien’s name on the contents page and on page 3 is mis-spelt as Dr. Vergheese Kurian. It should read Dr. Vergheese Kurien.

The editor regrets the misspelling and apologises for being careless.

Much Ado about New Policy Reforms

Sunil S. Bhandare

The crucial point is why are such harsh realities of the country's fiscal health not being made transparent to the public at large. On grounds of political expediency, the government invariably delays even economically compelling and urgent policy decisions. In the process, it fails to carry any conviction.

There has been a swift change in India's economic policy profile thanks to a welcome flurry of new policy reforms (NPR) in the last couple of months¹ ending a prolonged dry period what was being derisively described as "policy paralysis". This is a welcome development. There is a feeling of relief that the hitherto dithering of the UPA II government has ended despite the fact that infighting among the partners of the coalition and corruption scams continue to roll out corruption scams! The NPR has surely infused some positive whiff in the economic outlook. For well over the last two years and more there were growing concerns over (a) downward drift in the country's growth scenario; (b) rapid deterioration in fiscal and external sector balances; (c) erosion in investment activity; (d) impending prospect of sovereign debt downgrade by international credit rating agencies; all these spreading sense of despondency among stakeholders of the economy.

Following the announcement of NPR, in his address to the Nation, the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh justified unequivocally some of the tough decisions, especially the raising of diesel prices and rationalisation of allocation of subsidised LPG. He emphasised the maxim: "Money does not grow on trees." Adding "If we had not acted, it would have meant a higher fiscal deficit." Referring to the most contentious area of multi-brand retail, he assured that with the other decision to reduce some subsidies would put the country back "on the path of high and inclusive growth". He also appealed for the people's support to strengthen his hands.

Now the question legitimately being raised is: "why was the government's resolve so conspicuously missing for well over last two years?" We won't, in this analysis, argue over this for now. Instead let us understand what are the salient features of the NPR? And what would be its distinctive impact on the country's economic outlook – both short-term and long-term? While reflecting on these issues, it is imperative to recognise that NPR *per se* can only transform the proximate gloomy sentiments. It is not a magic wand. A substantive positive impact of NPR on India's growth profile would obviously take much longer

time; and for which many more pending policy reforms have to be set in motion. The 'wait and watch syndrome, of business and industry would continue thanks to the hitherto policy hibernation, and also due to stubborn global economic uncertainties.

Salient Features of NPR

Broadly speaking NPR falls into *three separate buckets*, consisting of those measures which contribute to (a) fiscal consolidation through reduction in subsidies and revival of PSU disinvestments; (b) acceleration of FDI inflows; and (c) stimulating structural and supply side responses of the economy.

- NPR expects to alleviate fiscal pressures through diesel price increase of Rs.5 per litre (or by 12%); excise duty reduction on petrol by Rs.5.30 to ease under-recoveries of oil companies and restore some parity between diesel and petrol prices; a drastic reduction in allocation of subsidised LPG cylinders – capping it to six per household and pricing its additional requirements at market prices;² and clearing disinvestment program of selected PSUs (for example, NALCO, MMTC, Hindustan Copper and Oil India).
- Liberalisation of FDI in (a) multi-brand retail (up to 51%); (b) broadcasting sector (74%); (c) power trading exchanges (49%); and civil aviation (49%). In the subsequent second round of NPR, the government has also expanded the scope and raised the FDI limit from 26% to 49% for insurance and pension sectors.
- NPR also covers a comprehensive bailout package for state electricity distribution companies, whose cumulative losses are placed at over Rs.180,000 crores. The diesel price hike, the rationalisation of subsidised LPG and the rest of the bailout package cannot be strictly considered as reforms. These provide only a temporary breather to such companies, whose operations camouflage inefficiencies and government's failure to effect power tariff reforms. In the liberalised market system, there is neither a place for diesel price regulation (misdirected subsidy benefits) nor for periodic bail-out packages to cover policy/

implementation distortions.

- As part of structural reforms, a mention must be made of a whole set of proposed legislative changes/ amendments recently approved by the Cabinet, which include Companies Law Bill, Forwards Contracts (Regulation) Act, Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority Bill, Competition Act, etc. Almost all these legislative amendments have been under consideration for the past several years. Further, there are some key proposals for financial sector reforms, including expeditious framing of rules and procedures for new banking licences for facilitating entry of new private banks. While some of these reforms may see the light of day, many would probably fall through in the present parliamentary imbroglio.

Expected Outcome of NPR

As stated earlier, the NPR's substantive positive impact on the economy would gradually trickle down over a medium to long-term period. But expectations are galore about the likely surge of FDI flows into various sectors. If all those were really to materialise, India would end up with incremental FDI flows of about US\$ 35 to 45 bn. in the liberalised sectors, spread over the next three to five years. It is only then that investment driven growth momentum, including "crowding in" of domestic investment, would set in.

In the meantime, there are some immediate concerns relating to *fiscal consolidation*: The latest Kelkar Committee Report (KCR) is extremely forthright about massive challenges of fiscal imbalances; and states that "*The Indian economy is presently poised on the edge of a fiscal precipice, making corrective measures aimed at speedy fiscal consolidation an imperative necessity if serious adverse consequences stemming from this situation are to be averted in an efficient and timely manner*"... "*Potentially, if no action is taken, we are likely to be in a worse situation than in 1991 for several reasons.*"

Based on the reality check of budgetary arithmetic, it estimates likely fiscal deficit to GDP ratio at around 6.1%, which would be a huge adverse variance from the budget estimate of 5.1% for 2012-13. NPR could yield some modest relief in this grim situation.

The crucial point is why are such harsh realities of the country's fiscal health not being made transparent to the public at large. On grounds of political expediency, the government invariably delays even economically compelling and urgent policy decisions. In the process, it fails to carry any conviction about the eventual urgency of normal price revisions, based on the logic of market

forces, be it of petroleum products, fertilisers or food-grains. And the opposition parties, as is their wont, have a vested interest in resisting practically every single reform, especially relating to reduction of subsidies. So long as there is a credibility-deficit in our system of fiscal and political governance, it is going to be increasingly difficult to push through the tougher agenda of pending reforms, including those wrapped in the KCR's road-map of fiscal consolidation.

Foreign investment inflows

We do not expect any immediate acceleration of FDI inflows. However, NPR seems to have enthused increased FII inflows, which have surged by as much as about US\$ 4 bn over the last six weeks. This has renewed a mood of confidence in stock markets, which is reflected in the Sensex surging from 17,767 on September 10 to a recent high of 19,058 on October 4, 2012 – an increase of 7.3% in just about three weeks – but since then it has been wavering in a lower band. We believe that domestic players would continue to be cautious about their investment intentions.

The prevailing upbeat market sentiment is surely of great value for the eventual revival of capital raising activities. But for the present, it is largely the behaviour of FIIs daily inflows and outflows that seem to be defining our hopes and aspirations! Hence, for achieving more sustainable change in the long-term investment and growth outlook, actual involvement of both domestic and foreign investors (FDI included) – and not just their solicitous acclaim – is most imperative. For which the government has to walk the talk – and it is a marathon, and not a short, brisk crisis run!

Strengthening of Indian Rupee

FII inflows have led to improvement in supply-demand position in the foreign exchange market, thereby causing appreciation in the external value of the Indian rupee *vis-à-vis* US dollar. Thus, the rupee has gained by 5.5% over the last few weeks from US\$ = Rs.55.35 to Rs. 52.50 (+/- 25 paise). Market fundamentals still continue to be weak – for example, inflation differentials between India and her major trading partners remain relatively high. Also, the external viability remains impaired. Various official reports tend to suggest that India would continue to have huge current account deficit in 2012-13 comparable with that of previous year (4.2% of GDP).

If, however, the current combination of falling crude oil prices and appreciating rupee is sustained, then it would help in softening general inflation and reducing the subsidies burden of petroleum products. Likewise, a

combination of successful fiscal consolidation with strengthening of external viability would improve the macro economic fundamentals. But these are big, big ifs...

Summing up

The NPR has certainly brought about some welcome change in an otherwise despondent outlook. It has generated expectations of a turnaround, albeit there is no inherent confidence that real GDP growth would be anywhere near 6% in 2012-13. Indeed, the latest IMF forecast has sliced India's real GDP growth rate for the current year from 6.2% earlier to only 4.9 % now – this is the lowest rate predicted by any credible institution so far. Even Standard and Poor's has reiterated its warning of one in three likelihood of downgrading of sovereign credit rating (to 'junk' status) over the next 24 months.

Going forward, therefore, the limited *Advantage NPR* needs to be leveraged into a sustainable growth agenda. This calls for the UPA II Government to gather much greater courage in pushing for tougher policy reforms covering such contentious issues like land acquisition bill, environmental clearances, institutional and regulatory

reforms, GST, and many more. The whole set of legislative amendments that are already announced and those in the pipeline require astute political management. But this is precisely the most worrisome fault-line of the present government. It cannot even control strident discordance within its Ministries on many economic issues, leave alone combating pathological resistance of opposition parties and many State Governments on much of what is urgently required to be done to eschew the likely economic crisis situation. Hence, the concerns of the Planning Commission and many other experts about the policy logjam and likely drift towards low growth trajectory – irrespective of the NPR!

(Endnotes)

¹ This article is a sequel to one published in the previous month entitled "The State of the Economy". In its postscript we promised to evaluate the implications of new policy initiatives keeping in view the overall liberal perspective.

² Incidentally, many State Governments have offered to provide nine cylinders at subsidised prices by taking up the burden of additional subsidies.

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Consideration for Others

N. R. Ravi

In my college days at Coimbatore, I often visited my village in nearby Palghat. Electricity was still a novelty and my grandparents' home was one of the first to have it; just a few light points and a couple of plug points. Many times, I would doze off in the afternoon's sultry weather with the fan on, to wake up completely drenched in sweat and the fan off. No, it wasn't power cuts; it was my grandmother who would put it off. "Electricity is a scarce resource my dear", she would say "and we should conserve it to ensure others get to use it too". I argued with her that her monthly utilization was only 6 units while the minimum for which she was being charged was 8 units, but her 'consideration for others' overruled anything I said and that's the way it always was while she lived.

Whether it was the neighbour, the coffee seller, the cobbler or any other vendor – in fact anybody who knocked on her door – she would bade them sit while she gave them a tumbler of buttermilk (more! as they call it in Tamil) or jaggery water (panagam) all of which went well with the climate. She was particularly nice to the vendors who, she said, travelled so much everyday as part of their livelihood.

'Consideration for others' that was so ingrained in our elders seems to have all but disappeared to be replaced by the 'survival of the fittest'. I see this new

paradigm when a scooter cuts into my lane to get ahead, when vehicles stop on the zebra crossing unmindful that pedestrians too need right of way, when loudspeakers blare unmindful of sick people or people needing quiet, when people throw garbage anywhere and everywhere including water bodies, the very source of life. Obviously this goes beyond just population; it is also the lack of education, civic sense, and the current rat race for survival.

I am reminded of recruitment in my office some years ago. The candidates were each asked to speak extempore for three minutes on a subject indicated on a slip they picked from a bowl. One candidate's topic was 'Consideration for Others'. He coughed, thought for a while and shifted his feet around nervously for a few seconds. "Consideration is required everywhere", he began. "It is required for anything to get done at the municipality, at the RTO, at the EB office etc. Unless you give consideration", he said tossing up an imaginary coin on his thumb "nothing moves". It was hilarious! At a business level we selected him for his quick-wittedness.

On a larger perspective we certainly need to re-look education and values as opposed to just literacy.

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The State of the Nation Today

H. R. Babu Satyanarayana

There are disquieting developments on the parliamentary front that continue to dampen the potential to bring about positive changes in the system of governance.

It was more than six decades ago that India adopted the Constitution. Whenever a new problem arose for which there was no parallel remedy in our Constitution to effectively tackle it or reflect the aspiration or popular will of the people, Parliament in its wisdom introduced amendments from time to time to overcome the infirmity in the existing laws. Till now more than a 100 amendments have been made and by and large the Parliamentary System has endured despite some serious flaws.

Failure of Hazare's movement?

The issue that has exercised the minds of the citizens is the phenomenon of people with a record of serious criminal offences continuing to enjoy parliamentary immunity. This has created serious disenchantment in the minds of the people and even the judiciary has been unable to live up to its reputation to bring in a modicum of control. An impression has gained that a government entrenched in power can twist the laws to perpetuate itself in power. This became glaringly evident when despite Anna Hazare's brave efforts to see that the Jan Lokpal Bill is passed by parliament, which at one time gained tremendous momentum when people rose in spontaneous upsurge to support his movement, failed to deliver. This is because the government, which yielded to popular sentiment did not play fair and went back on the core issues it had agreed on. It went back to its old game of taunting Hazare to fight by democratic means. With stakes heavily stacked against Hazare it has become an unequal fight. Despite tremendous odds Anna has kept the pressure on the government. Now it has taken an unexpected turn with Anna's movement losing its original resolve to fight politically.

However, not all is lost. Kejriwal has broken off and embarked on his own with a resolve to form a new political party. He has yet to name the party but the core group is still with him and he swears that Anna is still his Guru. Kejriwal of late has broken new ground in his fight when he charged Sonia Gandhi's son-in-law Robert Vadra with dubious land deals. The fight is beginning to take another turn and curiously it has prompted Anna Hazare, who had distanced himself from Kejriwal, to lend his open

support. There the matter rests and it is difficult to predict what is going to happen if fresh elections are held. At least as the matter stands today, it appears that Kejriwal seems to be the best bet to see the beginning of a change for he exudes an aura of honesty with cynicism singularly absent from his political vocabulary.

A Capricious Government

There are other disquieting developments on the parliamentary front that continue to dampen the potential to bring about positive changes in the system of governance. 50% women's reservation of Parliament seats is one such change that can really make a difference. Unfortunately it is enmeshed in narrow sectarian caste and religious interests which has made its prospect of becoming a reality a chimera. It is not as if India has not progressed; indeed it has made tremendous progress but care has to be exercised to see that we do not undo some far reaching legislation which has served the country well to check capricious decisions in governance and bring in accountability. The Right to Information Act passed in 2005 has done a great good. However, the latest decision of the Supreme Court of associating a judicial officer as an Information Commissioner has enormous potential to make it a toothless Act. All political parties should be alive to the danger of such a move and see that such a move is nipped in the bud. It is in this connection my thoughts on four issues are highlighted.

Issues Agitating People

There are four issues that have created a lot of controversies which have not only vitiated the political environment but is also agitating the minds of the general public because existing laws are generally open ended. This is because the interpretation is purely subjective and perceptions vary widely. These are laws concerning blasphemy, secularism, capital punishment and sedition. While blasphemy falls purely under the purview of religion, the other three are operated under various sections of laws based on the Constitution. When a particular case arises, even here, it is the interpretation of the country's judiciary that prevails. This is also subject to change depending upon how liberal or how strict the interpretation of the

statutes governing the offence is. Even among the judiciary there are contrary views when judgments are delivered.

In the Indian context both secularism and sedition have been handy instruments in the hands of the establishment to impose its will. The case of the arrest of Aseem Trivedi recently on charges of sedition for his cartoons is a case in point. After severe opposition by the general public in which political commentators, intellectuals and the media joined, the government had to eat humble pie and release him on bail. In an interview on television Justice Katju who is the Chairman of the Press Council of India severely castigated the police who arrested Aseem. offence. In his view it did not constitute sedition for it was Aseem's way of depicting corruption and it did not constitute incitement to violence. Now there is a move to either scrap the offending law on sedition or altogether to remove it altogether from the statute books.

Repeal Amendment on Secularism?

In the case of secularism the government has misused it to remain in power by creating a host of societal conflicts which have mainly helped to divide the country

on religious and caste basis. Clearly, it is time serious thought is paid to consider whether it was wise to have amended the Constitution in 1976 to introduce the word 'secularism' because the history of India shows that a secular outlook is an integral part of her ethos. The passage of time has shown that it has done more harm than good.

Uniform Civil Code and Capital Punishment

Another issue that our politicians are fighting shy is enacting a common civil code which is the expressed mandate in the Constitution. This is in direct contradiction to what we profess as 'secular'. As regards Capital punishment despite an unequivocal judgment by the Supreme Court in awarding capital punishment to Afzal Guru involved in the attack on Parliament and Ajmal Kasab involved in the 26/11 attack the impression is that the government of the day is dragging its feet. The opposition accuses the government of appeasement of the minority community to get Muslim votes. With elections slated for 2014 it is unlikely that the sentences to hang the two terrorists will be carried out. t.

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From the Memoirs of Minoo Masani

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the India-China war and the 107th birth anniversary of Freedom First founder Minoo Masani (November 20) we share with readers an anecdote that involves him, Nath Pai, J. Nehru and Krishna Menon relating to the political aftershocks of the war as narrated by Minoo Masani:



"It was one of the days during the Chinese invasion when my friend Nath Pai came to see me in Bombay and said: "Minoo, you must go and see Jawaharlal, make him feel that you, as an old friend and present day critic, would still rally behind him if only he would staunchly fight the Chinese." "Whatever for?"

I asked. Nath then explained to me that according to his information, Krishna Menon was telling Jawaharlal that the real target of the campaign that had been mounted by Kripalani, Masani, Lohia and company was not Menon but Nehru himself. If Nehru sacrificed Krishna, his own overthrow would follow very quickly. Nath appealed to me to counter this propaganda by giving the Prime Minister the necessary reassurance and thus expediting the removal of someone who, whether rightly or wrongly (it was still too early to say) was considered the evil genius for the debacle.

"I told Nath I was very sceptical about whether anything I said would have a perceptible impact on the course of events but that, since he was so convinced about it. I could certainly do my bit. On 2 November 1962, I wrote to the Prime Minister:

My dear Jawaharlal,

We are all facing a situation of grave danger to our country. While political controversies may continue, may I as a friend of old times tender my personal goodwill in the tremendous burden that you bear?

"I am coming up to Delhi for some meetings there on the 5th, 6th and 7th instant, and would like to see you if you should have a few minutes to spare during those days.

"November 7 turned out to be a historic day but not because I saw Nehru! As it happened there had been a meeting of the Executive of the

(Cont'd. on page 37)

Encounter with Tigers

Ashish Chandola

The forest was not to be feared and along with all the creatures whose home it was, the forest needed to be understood and correctly read. So I got to know the many creatures that walked amongst the trees and the brush and by observing them I learnt to understand their ways.



I walked up to the very first wild tiger I ever saw - and though I did not get to see its face, the hindquarters and the flicking tail disappearing into the thick jungle undergrowth left such an indelible imprint that it still seems like a recent event even though what I am relating happened many decades back – well before the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972. Those days the ‘wilderness experience’ was not a novelty and to wander in the forest that one knew was not dangerous and neither was it a crime! That I led two or three of my schoolmates up to a tiger in the forest was quite unintended and certainly unplanned!

I must have been 14 or 15 then and we were staying at the Forest Department bungalow at Timli amidst the forest of the tall and stately Sal (*Shorea robusta*) trees. Timli Forest Division lies by the Jamuna River to the West of the Dun Valley and extends into the Shivalik range that runs south of the town of Dehra Dun. In fact the Shivaliks mark the southern extent of the Dun Valley that lies between this jagged chain of ancient hills and the much younger folds of the true foothills of the Himalayas referred by some as the Lesser Himalayas.

A party of us, boys from school, were out on a mid-term break with my parents and the forest bungalow at Timli, one of my father’s favourite haunts. We would go for walks along forest roads and learnt that the long narrow clearings cutting through the forest were called ‘fire lines’ made to contain forest fires. That the much gnawed *Kakar* (barking deer) antler we found by the side of a forest track was the work of a porcupine – that creature not seen during the day, but seen in photos and also known by the black and white quills that we would come across in our walks through the forest. But what about the funnel shaped indents in the sand and dust of the forest tracks? It was fascinating to discover that these were made

by a small creature called an antlion to trap insects and not by some unknown alien or the forest banshee of which the cook and caretaker of the forest bungalow had endless spine chilling tales to tell us. The antlion was something to investigate and sure enough we found the well camouflaged and nearly impossible to see insect. Watching it closely we learnt how it made the conical indents and saw how it ensured that an ant, big or small, that fell into its trap had little chance to escape. But I stray from my story.

I had learnt the forest well having been exposed to it at an early age. The forest was not to be feared and along with all the creatures whose home it was, the forest needed to be understood and correctly read. So I got to know the many creatures that walked amongst the trees and the brush and by observing them I learnt to understand their ways.

It was a bunch of crows that caught my attention that morning - they were hopping about on some short trees just beyond the gate of the forest bungalow. Some would descend to the ground but very quickly scramble back with rapid wing beats to perch on the trees again,

cawing occasionally; they looked intently at the ground below. My friends and I watched all this with interest and it hardly took any time to decide that there was something out there, just beyond the gate that needed to be investigated. And when we went to look we came upon the tiger and its flicking tail that melted into the forest without a sound.

The tiger had been feeding on a *Cheetal* kill and had eaten quite a bit. The uncongealed blood and lack of putrid smell suggested that the kill was fresh. This find caused much excitement amongst our party at the forest bungalow and it was agreed to leave the area undisturbed so that the tiger could feed in peace. We went back the next day and most of the kill had been eaten. Whatever was left would not last long as the crows had descended and a few vultures were sitting around on trees and would soon glide down to strip every morsel from the carcass.

In the 1970s I found myself working in the Chitwan National Park in Nepal and met tigers on foot on a number of occasions. Nearly each one behaved differently – an old female who had probably been fired upon at some point of her life quickly turned and dashed for cover. A young male stopped and stared before turning off the track

and disappearing into the undergrowth. I was working with Charles McDougal who, with a small group of dedicated people, had perfected the art of recognizing tigers by their tracks. Later we set up camera traps to get top class professional photos of the tigers in our area. We matched the tiger photos with their tracks and found that we had not only been correct in sexing the tigers from their tracks but had also been accurate in judging whether it was a young or a full-grown tiger. The excitement of working with tigers has been immense but meeting them on foot during the day is sheer thrill that is difficult to describe.

Filming tigers is another story – Mike Price, a wildlife film maker and a dear friend had a tiger walk up to his flimsy cloth hide and actually try and look in through the opening meant for the camera lens! I spent hours on more than one occasion sharing a rock shelter with tigers. One day five tigers rested in the shade and the damp of the rock shelter and they were not even aware of me! But that is another story that I will relate to the reader of this column on another occasion.

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

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Profiles of Indian Liberals

A. Madhaviah (1872-1925)

R. Srinivasan

Madhaviah was a felicitous versifier both in Tamil and English. He had the unique distinction of competing with the most famous poet Subramania Bharathi and winning a prize.

The piece on M. Krishnan in *Freedom First* (No.543, September 2012). makes older readers recall the name of his illustrious father, A. Madhaviah. He has carved a place for himself in the world of Tamil letters. He is regarded as one of the champions of losing causes, battling for them to be heard and recognized. He pursued the world of Tamil writing assiduously in his leisure hours. He was a full time civil servant, often on horseback, and was posted in different places in the Madras Presidency. Conscientious in his duties, he held on to principles with doggedness regardless of displeasing the higher-ups.

Born in 1872 in Tinnelvely (now Tirunelveli) district, Madhaviah was educated in a local school and later joined the Madras Christian College which remained a premier educational centre in the Presidency. The pre-eminence of the college was due to the dynamic leadership of Principal William Miller who was to deeply influence countless students by his noble personal example; and like other fellow students Madhaviah would remember him with reverence and deep affection. Madhaviah served in the college for a brief while and successfully competed for the Salt Akbari competitive examination. A fearless civil servant, he would take on would-be criminals and drive them away from their provenance. He was in trim shape for his duties entailed him to be on horseback for hours.

Madhaviah was a felicitous versifier both in Tamil and English. He had the unique distinction of competing with the most famous poet Subramania Bharathi and winning a prize. In English a spirited poem, *The Ballad of the Penniless Bride* conveyed his anguished feelings. This was occasioned by an incident relating to Snehalata, a Bengali girl. Her parents found it impossible to raise the dowry for her marriage. Overhearing the conversation of her parents regarding their difficulties in mustering funds for her marriage she committed suicide, an event that shocked the country. Many girls born in that year were named Snehalata.

His first novel *Padmavathy's Chronicle* (1892, 1893, 1924) is a long narrative urging the importance of social reform and to extend fair treatment to the weaker sex. It

begins with an avaricious Brahmin, scheming, arrogant, resorting to all wiles, most of them illegal, impoverishing many people. Finally the law catches up with him and he gets his just deserts.

This should be regarded as a satire on the most exalted caste. There is no aspect of hypocrisy, superciliousness, insensitivity to the weaker sections and arrogance that are not mercilessly exposed. They are grasping and do no worthwhile work. Family life is generally staid and the elders seem to resort to licentiousness to add savour to their humdrum lives. Many indulge in this with no sense of guilt or remorse. Astrologers and priests, generally a fixture in most of these homes, were unprincipled rascals who took advantage of their credulous clients and enrich themselves. No blackguarding trick is beyond them. Their world revolved around non-significant rituals, gossip and backbiting. He describes vividly their widespread resort to nostrums, generally the monopoly of barbers and such like.

One of the most obnoxious of social customs is the marriage of boys and girls who, before they understand the world, become man and wife. Equally condemnable is the custom of old people in the fifties getting married to pre-pubescent girls (who could be their grand-daughters' age) ensuring that the helpless girls surely would graduate into widowhood. Once widowed, these young girls are unfeelingly tonsured.

A second novel *Muthu Meenakshi*, an autobiography of a young girl, recounts the miseries of being born a girl in a Brahmin house; early marriage (at the age of nine), being denied the one happiness that of reading of books, almost wearing herself like a dray horse from morning to night, charged as a barren woman; extremely barbarous nostrums practiced and quack remedies resorted to including swallowing a live insect sandwiched within a ripe banana (*grylow-talpa*) to induce pregnancy.

His most famous novel, *Tillai Govindam* (1903), was republished in England in 1916 with a preface by Fredric Harrison the famous Positivist. It is in three parts being

the chronology of a young man in the beginning of the 20th century battling against native Brahmic superstitions and meeting his Waterloo in almost all his attempts and being compelled to beat a retreat in his government employment where he faced corruption, casteist prejudices which permeated all sections. Educated young men fired by modern western ideas of reform find it impossible to battle against solidified superstitious prejudices. In all these the greatest support is from women who are sunk in ignorance, empty rituals and superstitions. Social reform, social and individual betterment is a hopeless task in the face of casteist prejudice. The dilemma of the educated is expressed most poignantly in a passage from another climate and context, "In my heart of hearts, I have always felt that my life is governed by a faith which is mine no more. There is this peculiarity about faith that long after it has disappeared, its influence still survives." (Renan)

Satyananda (1909) explores the possibility of social redemption through the adoption of Christianity. Individually many Christians and missionaries are indeed angelic but not all of them are. The Christian missionaries, who are critical of the Hindus, know nothing of the culture and civilization which they criticize. Many of the Hindus adopt Theosophy instead of Christianity to keep up with the religious Joneses. Indians need to know deeply of western education, adopt new professions and urbanization.

Lieut. Panju (1924) puts its hope among the younger educated for inaugurating a new social order for the older generation is hopelessly incorrigible. The new institutions and bodies such as Social Reform Congresses

are seen as leavening the social order. The younger educated generation should take to social service, slum development and see whether social amelioration can be attempted there.

Besides writing verse Madhaviah translated Shakespeare, tried his hand at children's books, as well as historical novels. He was a good short story writer many of which are critical of society. One of them was a biting satire on an upcoming Congress nationalist who in politics was a famous orator but at home an unashamed tyrant over his wife – all due to the unjustified complaints against her by an unfeeling mother-in-law.

In his time he was almost alone in analyzing the serious shortcomings of the Brahmin community. He advocated elevation of women by getting them educated, but not turning them into blue stockings. He would have been happy at the education of women, seeing girls daily marching to schools and colleges.

Traditional Hinduism was facing challenges then and there was apprehension of many in the South that the young impressionable minds would turn to Christianity. While the run of the mill *padri* was unacceptable to him, he had admiration for those among them empathetic to the land and culture. He wanted the young to take to medicine, law and education and help in the building of the nation. In several respects Tamil society has changed for the better but he would have been happier if further advance was made among the underprivileged and further education of women among them.

DR. R. SRINIVASAN, Professor of Political Science (retd.) Mumbai University, Associate Editor, *Freedom First*.

The Economy in a Recovery Mode says India's President. Perhaps, but No Thanks to Him

That's not what he thought as the Finance Minister when he was Finance Minister not so long ago. The last Union Budget he presented was described as the worst to inflict India after independence (not quite) that 'compliment' should go to the infamous budget of TTK, J. Nehru's Finance Minister but that's another story.

The President, who was predecessor to the present Finance Minister, as his last act before seeking election as India's President of India, succeeded in driving out foreign investors – a policy that would have won acclaim, from his earlier party leaders – Mr. J.Nehru and his daughter Mrs. I. Gandhi no less! The Presidential election saved India from bankruptcy a second time in the nick of time.

On his visit on October 4 (we are informed that this

was his maiden visit India's commercial capital as President) he is quoted as saying: "The economy is witnessing a rebound. I hope it will come back to the path of steady recovery." (*Mumbai Mirror* October 5, 2012) We are sure Mr. President, so long as you remain President and do not consider returning as Finance Minister, which possibility is bound to make even the most hardened economist wince. Incidentally, the moment the FM resigned to take on the Presidential burden, those burdened by his policy worked double quick to reverse some of his "socialist doctrinaire" prescriptions". For a moment we thought there was a new government! Which of course it was not!

No offence meant Mr. President.

Comments by a Survivor of the Deprived Generation

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.

UPA's Survival

1. True to her reputation, Mamata gave a jolt to the UPA by withdrawing her support. It reduced the UPA II Government into a minority, technically. It could survive the shock because of the presumptive and opportunistic support of two other parties, the SP and the BSP. Neither of these is reliable enough to ensure the Government's survival for long. They will demand their pound of flesh, at least to ensure easing of CBI pressure on them. UPA is not above doing this kind of skullduggery. We now have a Government that wants to act – though belatedly – but has no strength to do so. The country is the loser as the main opposition party (BJP) which had advocated the same economic measures refuses to support these now. We have no tradition of bipartisan agreement on issues of national interest. If it comes to power, the BJP may be forced to adopt the same measures it is opposing now. It is a battle between those who hope and those who fear. Opponents of reforms always point to the disasters waiting to happen and the other side points to the possible benefits. The nay sayers win because we are all afraid of ghosts although none has seen one!

1. The unfortunate part of the unfolding tragedy is that the UPA Government should have been thrown out earlier on moral grounds because of its connivance at or involvement in corruption. That did not happen and the Government was reduced to a minority over its long awaited decisive action on national economy. Its decision to hike prices of petroleum products and allow FDI in multi-brand retail trade as also in aviation, insurance, pension fund, etc indicated its will to act after years of non-Governance. The FDI in retail is being blown out of proportion as it will neither add significantly to India's economy nor will it render thousands jobless as claimed. The country's economy needed a push and the UPA is trying to provide it. FDI in retail is thus a mere signal and not a life and death matter it is being made out to be. UPA's credibility is so low that even the right things it tries to do are viewed with suspicion and it has lost the ability to connect with the people. In hindsight, will the ruling party now realise that the principal opposition party should always be respected or it will refuse to cooperate when the Government needs its help for the national good?

Ajitdada's Googly

2. Ajit Pawar sprang a surprise by resigning from Deputy Chief Ministership of Maharashtra (September 25) purportedly to allow an impartial enquiry into allegations against him for sanctioning irrigation projects worth thousands of crores, without following rules, permitting exorbitant cost escalations, defective work of dams and irrigation canals etc., Since the allegations were made by a serving Chief Engineer, these got wide publicity and appeared credible. Before the allegations could gather steam, Ajitdada resigned. This was embarrassing for several Ministers sticking to their posts despite serious allegations. It was variously speculated that it was a gimmick, or a challenge to his detractors within and without the NCP; it was a ploy to challenge his uncle, the redoubtable Sharad Pawar; it was an attack on the State CM who had allegedly launched a campaign against NCP Ministers; it was an attempt to divert attention from corruption charges, and so on. Ajitdada is known to be impetuous but was there no logic behind his resignation? Ajit Pawar could return to his post after a White Paper on Irrigation (or a status report) proves his detractors wrong. A White Paper/Status

2. Sharad Pawar started his brinkmanship a few months back by showing his displeasure for not being consulted at the Centre or in Maharashtra; his claim for the number two post in the Cabinet was also a sore point but Pawar had brushed it aside. It was then guessed that the NCP was preparing to break away from the Congress (I). An educated guess is that Sharad Pawar is planning to abandon the sinking ship of the Congress (I) and would do so just before the next General Election as any association with a losing party would damage NCP's chances. Unless the Congress (I) improves its image and has a good chance in the next election, Sharad Pawar would ditch it at an appropriate time. Ajit Pawar's offensive does not perhaps suit his uncle's calendar. It has come too soon as Sharad Pawar would stand to gain by remaining in power for another year or so. Ajit Pawar can gamble that any enquiry into allegations against him would lead nowhere as bureaucratic procedures leave a lot of room for legal manoeuvres. To Ajitdada's advantage, the Indian Administrative System has no in-built culture of accountability. If things get too hot for Ajitdada, the NCP

Report is not an investigative report. It is a statistical report and cannot deal with malpractices *per se*. What kind of White Paper/Status Report Ajitdada is expecting to exonerate him? On the other hand, mere allegations should not lead to resignations as that would render all posts of Ministers defunct, considering the current practice of mud-slinging and people's predilection to believe anything against those in power.

Sonia's (B)ills

3. Narendra Modi, as is his wont, raked up the issue of Smt. Sonia Gandhi's foreign trips and the Government expenditure on that account. It is well known that Soniaji has been going abroad for medical treatment but the nature of her illness and treatment as also the Government expenditure on it have been kept secret for reasons unknown. A person's illness is an intensely private matter and others have no business discussing it. However, the problem arises if the people's money is used i.e. the Government exchequer shells out the money. The people then have the right to know the amount so spent – but not necessarily the nature of illness. The issue boiled over when Modi claimed that Rs. 1880 crore were spent on this account. Instead of meeting the issue headlong, UPA's counter was to allege that Nitin Gadkari (BJP President) too was involved in wrong doings; he had written to the Centre to clear the dues of private contractors to expedite a dam project; this was a favour to his contractor friends. Gadkari retaliated by asking if it was wrong to pursue development projects in one's constituency. Are there no straight answers to any questions?

will always have the capacity to topple the State Government and force an election. It is better to fight an election as a martyr rather than as a Minister under a cloud! The Congress (I) on its part is also preparing to go it alone in 2014.

3. Who is right and who is wrong? The Congress (I) accused Modi of lying. Modi pointed to a newspaper article but his allegation seemed to have no basis. The BJP insisted on knowing what the actual expenditure was if Modi's figure was wrong. Our habit of keeping things secret is baffling. Belatedly, the PMO revealed that the Government did not spend anything on the foreign trips or the medical treatment. However, our embassies spend money on such visits and the Security team (SPG) spends from its own budget. This is disguised expenditure. Even then, it is a welcome gesture if Soniaji did not claim any reimbursement for her treatment. If Soniaji's expenses came out of private funds, some other questions would be raised. There is no end once charges are flung at each other. Business deals of Robert Vadra (son-in-law of Sonia Gandhi) have already come under scrutiny which is unlikely to end soon. Caesar's son-in-law should also be above suspicion! The season of dirty politics is upon us! It is not Soniaji's alone, but everybody's integrity is being questioned these days. The misleading conclusion is that nobody is clean! Wait for more dirt in the coming months.

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

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

Of Rulers and Freedom

The British had a mania for organising and recording things. Land records, railways, communication, foodgrain distribution, water supply, municipal affairs; there isn't an area in which we don't see their influence. Some are indeed triumphs of bureaucracy; our national elections, for instance. These are inconceivable anywhere else in the world, with polling booths at altitudes of 18,000 feet and in the remotest corners of the country...

Railways are another fine example. One of the most ridiculously entertaining reads in a railway journey is a railway time-table. This is a proper book, with a nice heft to it, properly bound. It has yards of time tables in every permutation and combination. And, at the back, in very small print, are the "rules".

Rules that tell us when we must go to bed and when we must wake... Our rules come at a price, and increasingly, it seems to be a price that many of us are happy to pay. In a panel discussion some time ago, a senior lawyer said, he would willingly barter some of his freedoms for 'greater security'. This is the myth that feeds ever more invasive rules. Being forced to unbolt yourself or subjecting yourself to the touchy feel of a uniformed cop does not in any way secure us from terrorists. Many of our rules are built on this ethos of fear and nothing feeds a repressive regime of rules more than fear.

Excerpted from lawyer Gautam Patel's article in *Mumbai Mirror*, October 5, 2012

Brajesh Mishra, Whom Personally I Didn't Know

P. M. Kamath

Whenever a person in public life passes away, at least two things immediately happen: First, all those who criticised him earlier, now begin to write or sing all that is good about him. Second, a large crop of people publicly come to claim that they knew him and very closely!

Recently India's first national security adviser, Brajesh Mishra who served Atal Behari Vajpayee, died in Delhi.

Two assessments, I saw this weekend come under the above category. One by Shekhar Gupta, "Vajpayee's Atal" in *The Indian Express* (6 October 2012) and the second, "Doing things his way" by Karan Thapar in *Hindustan Times* (7 October 2012). Both journalists knew him and give high marks to the former national security adviser as a strategist, as it ought to be.

However, despite being an academic specialist on national security and having studied in depth the working of national security advisers in the US and India, I didn't know Brajesh Mishra. This is so largely because our policy makers prefer meeting foreign academics rather than Indian. Indian journalists are an exception as they need them to reach out to the general public. We have not, even after sixty five years of independence, overcome our slavish mentality of considering the white man as superior! Incidentally, I was able to talk to most of the American national security advisers; but I could only meet briefly India's two of the three national security advisers so far.

That apart, even if I have not personally met Brajesh Mishra, I have a fairly good idea of how he came to wear two hats: as the Principal Secretary of the Prime Minister and also as his National Security Adviser. That is because I had some in-depth interactions with members of the Committee appointed in 1998 by the PM to suggest an elaborate structure for the National Security Council (NSC) as an apparatus of policy making which some of us including this author had been advocating since the early 1970s.

I was invited by K. C. Pant, chairman of the drafting committee, to provide him my inputs. I had, of course, strongly argued that the entire NSC structure should be legally created so that subsequent governments would not discard the NSC as a policy making tool because top level secretaries of the departments involved in national security policy making, right from the beginning, were not

in favour of it. While some of them quietly worked against its creation while in service, others, like Madhav Godbole or D. S. Kamtekar post-retirement wrote overtly against it.

There were others in the BJP, who desired that regular party members become the PM's security adviser. Pramod Mahajan, for instance, while releasing a booklet written by me on the NSC, told me that some then recent entrants into the party wished to become the national security adviser. I presumed then, and I wrote to the effect, that the PM wished to appoint K. C. Pant to the post. But noting the opposition to the idea within the BJP, the PM chose to make Brajesh Mishra wear a second hat.

But policy making continued to be *ad hoc* under Brajesh Mishra, despite the creation of NSC. It is not necessary for me to give numerous instances of such *ad hoc* policy making, when one instance should suffice: Was it right for the national security adviser to advise the PM on conceding Chinese sovereignty over Tibet where earlier India had only accepted Tibet as an autonomous region of China?

This happened because of non-use of the National Security Council for systematic, structured and studied deliberations before a policy was accepted. That, in turn, was attributed to the existence of the Cabinet Committee on security by George Fernandes while discussing the subject with me. Later during the UPA regime, under national security advisers like J. N. Dixit, M. K. Narayanan and Shiv Shankar Menon, the NSC set up was not used for national security policy-making. The UPA only used the post of National Security Adviser created by the previous regime to accommodate their favourites in policy-making while continuing with the *ad hoc* nature of the government's policy making process.

Dr. P. M. Kamath, formerly Professor of Politics, Department of Civics & Politics in Mumbai University and currently Hon. Director, VPM's Centre for International Studies and Adjunct Professor, Department of Geopolitics and International Relations, Manipal University, Manipal.

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.





Cornucopia

Firoze Hirjickaka

Manmohan Singh: The Worm has Turned

Manmohan Singh has the air of desperation of a statesman who has belatedly realized that his place in history is in serious jeopardy of being compromised.

So our effete Prime Minister has finally developed a backbone by reducing the subsidy on diesel and allowing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in retail and aviation, although it is yet to be seen whether he will be able to weather the inevitable political storm that follows. So far he appears to be holding out, buoyed up no doubt by unexpected support from Sonia Gandhi. The question everyone is asking is how and why he has shaken himself from his customary stupor.

There are two plausible explanations for this. One is that Manmohan Singh has reached his saturation limit. Goaded into utter humiliation by ridicule and scorn, particularly in the Western media where he was hitherto held in high esteem, the worm has finally turned. The PM who has always taken great pains not to rock the Party boat in order to keep his position secure has seen the writing on the wall. He knows that, one way or another, his innings are coming to an end and he seems determined to rescue his reputation. He has reportedly declared during a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs "If we have to go down, we go down fighting." Good for you, Manmohan, go out in a blaze of glory.

The alternate explanation is that the Congress party has finally woken up to the reality that it cannot win the next general election and therefore has nothing to lose – and it has decided to let the PM have his way. Moreover, the party has realized that it no longer has anything to gain by putting up with the shenanigans of a tantrum-throwing Mamata Banerjee or an openly opportunistic Mulayam Singh Yadav. Actually, if it had bitten the bullet about a year earlier, its defeat may not have been inevitable. Whether the self styled champions-of-the-poor admit it

or not, economic reforms will raise the standard of living of a substantial portion of India's population. As China's pragmatic Communist leaders have demonstrated, people with a healthy amount of disposable income do not really care about how they are governed. The problem is that the reforms will take at least one and a half years to show an impact. The Congress has left it too late and now it will have to pay the price.

The next few weeks will prove to be crucial to Manmohan Singh. Mamata Banerjee pulling out her party from the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) has proved to be a blessing in disguise, since it has removed the fruitless option of trying to appease her. The other parties are making the appropriate threats, but I doubt if they mean business. The opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is playing the same scratched record of the Congress' perceived calumnies so repeatedly that it has become an irritant. The only genuine threat to the Congress is Mulayam Singh who may want to cash in on the Samajwadi Party's thumping win in the recent state elections by forcing an early general election.

Yes, the next few weeks are going to be a real trial of strength for Manmohan Singh. He has the air of desperation of a statesman who has belatedly realized that his place in history is in serious jeopardy of being compromised – and this will work in his favour. If he refuses to buckle under to pressure from the Opposition and so-called allies and, more importantly, convinces his party that appeasement and vote-bank politics will no longer pay significant dividends, he may yet secure his place in history. At least it will get *Time* and the *Washington Post* off his back!

Politics of the Absurd

We now seem to be well and truly into the silly season of Indian politics.

Recent pronouncements by ministers and even by the self-anointed Lord of the Universe (who always refers to himself in the third person) are perfectly ludicrous and yet, judging by the media frenzy they have generated, are apparently important enough to warrant hours of primetime news.

It started with His Omnipotency Narendra Modi (who is soon to launch his own NaMo television channel¹) displaying his supposed oratorical wit at a public rally in the run up to the impending State elections. The political pundits and media savants, in their wisdom, have decreed that the Gujarat Chief Minister will inevitably be pitted

against Rahul Gandhi for the post of Prime Minister. NaMo laughed off the challenge in his typical aristocratic style by sarcastically remarking that Rahulji could indeed become PM, not just of India but also of Italy. Personally I thought this cheap dig at Sonia Gandhi's origins was in extremely poor taste and totally irrelevant to the issue at hand, but his Gujarati audience lapped it up (in Gujarat NaMo can do no wrong.) This Italian business has now become so stale that even Sharad Pawar, who split from the Congress on this very issue, has discarded it as fruitless.

It turned out that Modi was just getting warmed up. He next trained his guns on Big Momma herself. Quoting a news item in an obscure newspaper, Modi claimed that the Congress Government had spent the staggering sum of Rs.1880 crores on Sonia Gandhi's foreign travels. Here Modi allowed his enthusiasm and his bravado to cloud his common sense. For one thing, the source of his allegation was far from impeccable. Secondly, the amount quoted was wildly impractical. Even assuming Sonia Gandhi made five foreign trips a year, it would take a century to spend Rs. 1880 crores. It appears that Modi is getting carried away with his own rhetoric. Flinging

absurd allegations instead of focusing on his development agenda – of which he can be justifiably proud – he is only raising doubts in the peoples' minds about whether he is Prime Minister material.

The most recent salvo was fired by Coal Minister Shriprakash Jaiswal. Addressing a gathering of poets, he remarked that wives become stale with age, indirectly implying that husbands were justified in seeking greener pastures after a decent interval. He later explained that he was joking, although he should know that politicians, particularly Indian ones, have a terrible sense of humour. Be that as it may, he brought down a storm on his head from women's groups who designated him as just a shade better than the devil himself.

An outsider witnessing the media frenzy generated by the above incidents could be pardoned for surmising that India must be approaching a state of Utopia if these absurdities are the only burning issues plaguing an otherwise blessed land. In my opinion, the only reason the gods haven't washed their hands off our pathetic 'rulers' is that they are too busy laughing their heads off.

Arvind Kejriwal: Just another politico

In India, politics corrupts even the apparently incorruptible.

How quickly the sheen wears off when politics intervenes. Arvind Kejriwal burst upon the public stage as a selfless crusader fighting against the corruption that is rampant in our political system, irrespective of party ideology. As second in command to Anna Hazare, he gained the type of public recognition politicians would kill for. Here finally, was a national figure the public could look up to, radically different from the charlatans who 'govern' us, one who had the guts and principles to confront a shamelessly corrupt and incompetent establishment.

That was then. The same Kejriwal that decried the rot and degradation in politics at every opportunity has now joined the same system he condemned so vigorously. He has formed a political party of his own. Initially, one still held out hope that his "party with a difference" would not make the same mockery of the phrase as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has done. Kejriwal promised that his party stood for the *aam aadmi* and would not permit a personality cult, such as was prevalent in other political outfits. Maybe his party would be a model of what genuine democracy is all about.

Alas, Kejriwal flattered only to deceive. As reported in the national press, Kejriwal's party promises free

healthcare, power, education for all, the common man to decide prices of essential commodities, no land acquisition without public consent and Jan Lokpal bill within 10 days of being elected. For a fledgling political party with virtually no funds, these claims seem wildly optimistic, besides being impractical. Even assuming that Kejriwal manages to win a few seats in Parliament (highly unlikely), his party will have little more than nuisance value. Cannily, Kejriwal does not explain how he intends to achieve his lofty goals, probably because he does not know the answer.

But wait, there's more. Kejriwal has given an ultimatum to the Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dixit, to reduce power and water tariffs by 3rd November, failing which he will disconnect power supply to the CM's residence. We are used to displays of foolhardy bravado by our politicians, but this one takes the cake. It seems that the mere anticipation of power has gone to Kejriwal's head. He has further exhorted the people to refuse to pay their electricity bills unless the government yields to his threat. In other words, he is promoting anarchy without any thought to the inevitable consequences.

(Cont'd. on page 32)

Containing China: Challenge of the Century

B. Ramesh Babu

Issuing maps on disputed territories and to keep on revising them from time to time is an old and established Chinese ploy for territorial aggrandisement against all her neighbours!

Aggressive assertion of China's sovereignty over the islands and adjacent waters in the South and East China Seas is leading to the eruption of many bilateral and multi-lateral turf wars in the region. The conflict between China and Japan over the islands (called Diaoyou by China and Senkaku by Japan) erupted into the open, as noted in my column last month. Since then, the conflict has become more serious. Anti-China protests intensified in Japan. China responded by hinting at economic curbs and "postponed" the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Japan to "a more appropriate time." It looks as though the dispute may escalate into mutual retaliation on the economic front, which neither can afford. Of late, Taiwan joined the row against Japan in its own right! There were reports that a 'bullet' was sent by post to the Japanese Embassy in China in the name of the Japanese PM. Addressing the UN General Assembly on 27 September 2012, Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi accused Japan of "stealing" the disputed islands. Naturally this led to a fierce verbal duel between the two delegations. Pleas of the UN Secretary General and the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for "cooler heads" to prevail fell on deaf ears.

China submitted maps to the UN reiterating its U-shaped claim line covering almost all of the South China Sea. Issuing maps on disputed territories and to keep on revising them from time to time is an old and established Chinese ploy for territorial aggrandisement against all her neighbours! India is also a victim of such cartographic aggression, as the readers know very well. Unfortunately for China, in this case, the newly discovered maps of 1904 dating from the Qing Dynasty do not show the Paracel and Spatlys Islands. Instead they indicate the Haninan Island as the southern limit of the Empire. Consequently, as the dispute between China and Japan heats up further, the ill conceived U-shaped claim line could become the proverbial bone in China's throat, which it cannot swallow or remove. However, the bullying dragon may not bother about such legal niceties!

In another set of disputed islands, the jurisdictional clash between China and Vietnam took a serious turn in

August 2012. China launched infrastructure projects to build sewage disposal facilities in Sansha city. Vietnam protested saying that the building of the city is illegal. Border clashes between China and Vietnam go back to 938, A.D., i.e. over ten centuries! Vietnamese name for the South China Sea is East Sea of Vietnam. Another dispute is brewing in the islands near Philippines. China decided to fly unmanned drones over the islands and challenged Manila to attack them.

China-US Equation in Asia-Pacific

With an eye on competing with the US in every sphere and all over the globe, China has been developing its strategic military capabilities with determination. Some years ago China demonstrated its offensive reach through a rocket attack that destroyed its own satellite in outer space. It is not necessary to match it bomb for bomb and missile for missile to counter the strategic superiority of the adversary (namely the US), it was pointed out. It is enough to stymie the enemy's offensive capabilities selectively and do so far away from one's own territory. The Chinese security experts called it the "strategy of asymmetry."

Furthermore, China recently disclosed that it successfully test-fired its 1400 KM ICBM with ten nuclear warheads in July 2012. Thus, China has acquired the capability to hit targets on the mainland of the US and also destroy America's incoming missiles in outer space. More recently (September 2012) China launched its first aircraft carrier. An old Soviet vessel has been modernized and upgraded to add to its strike power at sea. The aggressive rise of China, thus, poses a serious political and strategic challenge to the extant regional and global hegemony of the US.

In the light of the growing threat of China's expansionism in Asia-Pacific, the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited China early in September 2012. She declared that "America does not take sides in the competing territorial claims" in the region. The US is only interested in "the maintenance of peace and stability, respect for international law, freedom of navigation, and unimpeded commerce," she declared. She called for a code

of conduct for China and the countries it is opposing for the control of disputed islands. China responded by declaring that it is committed to resolving the disputes through “direct negotiations and friendly consultations” and that it would not disturb freedom of navigation. But, China reiterated that it has “sovereignty over these islands” and also has “ample historical and jurisprudential evidence” to substantiate its claims. *People’s Daily*, the official newspaper of the Communist Party of China, “enquired” whether Clinton was visiting the country to “create troubles or solve the problems?” China’s Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi went farther and pointed out that his country was playing a key role in the global financial crisis. He made it a point to remind her that America needed China’s help on the economic front. To top it all, Yang (slated to be the next President of the country) cancelled his scheduled official meeting with the visiting US Secretary of State! By snubbing her, China made it clear that it does not relish American involvement in the disputes over the islands. The US on its part is maneuvering to get her foot in as a trouble shooter.

Halting the Dragon on the Prowl

Unless curbed quickly and effectively an aggressive and expansionist China will cow down her neighbours into submission one after another. Each morsel of territory devoured will only whet the appetite of the dragon to reach out for more. We should learn from history. From the end of the 19th century till the Second World War most of the countries in the region including China were under the spell of Imperial Japan. Japanese euphemism for it was the Co-Prosperity Sphere, which was resented by one and all. Half a century of Cold War and America’s global hegemony followed suit. Now it seems, it would be the Chinese turn to dominate and exploit her weak neighbours unless the US is ready and willing to stand up to the dragon on the prowl. The countries in the region are strengthening their military alliances with the US. But, they are also worried that a declining America may settle for some sort of “shared or joint supremacy” with a rising China. Such a ‘duopoly’ is not an unlikely prospect because the economies of the two countries are intertwined and integrated into a kind of ‘mutual hostage’ equation. However, in global power politics it is more likely and natural for the top nations to contest one another rather than cooperate for the good of mankind.

Be that as it may, the best that could happen right now for the people in Asia-Pacific is the concerted rise of the potential victims against China’s evil designs in the region. Therein lies the individual good and common welfare of all. Such unity among so many diverse countries is certainly difficult. But, it is not unattainable. Since Japan

is facing the dragon’s fury at present, it should take the initiative to mobilise all the countries into a united front against China. The best opening available at present is to build on the international regional code of conduct that was initially agreed to at the ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting in Bali in July 2011. (see my column in *Freedom First* October 2012). It is true that China chose to defy it soon afterwards. But, it should be noted that there was no unanimity among the member states at that meeting. Now that the turf war between China and one of them has become critical, it is high time for them to close ranks behind Japan quickly. A concerted diplomatic initiative by all of them will receive instant support from across the world. The US will be the first country to welcome such an international regional initiative against China. America has already announced its new defense strategy of rebalancing its forces in the region. The US has been trying for some time to position itself to become a mediator in the disputes over the islands. As noted above, Clinton went to China on such a mission and was snubbed by an arrogant China early in September 2012. But, immediately after the fierce exchange of words between the two delegations in the General Assembly more recently, it should be noted, Hillary Clinton rushed to meet the Chinese Foreign Minister Yang on the sidelines of the UN.

That is what happens if and when you go to the UN with any dispute. Others come in and interested nations acquire an opening to intercede in the name of world peace and regional stability. It should be noted that Japan was ready to take the dispute to the World Court (ICJ). The Chinese brushed it aside with disdain at that time. At present, the situation has changed for the worse. There is scope for wiser counsels to prevail and bring the two sparring nations back from the brink. The opportunity should not be missed by the stakeholders in the region, which includes India. If the UN appoints some sort of peace mission, India should join the effort with enthusiasm. If acceptable and invited, India should not hesitate to head such a mission. Let us hope that the crisis will be sorted out and the two countries will go back to joint development of the islands and the resources in the adjacent waters for mutual benefit and welfare of the people in the region.

A new set of agreed rules and regulations between the two countries as well as all the others in the region could be worked out under the auspices of the UN. It will be in China’s long term interests to hide the dragon side of its face and fall back on its more benign civilisational heritage of Confucianism. No country,

(Cont’d. on page 32)

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

- What Governance is All About - Some Anecdotes

Suresh C. Sharma

A few princes in Orissa wanted to be kept as a separate entity and not merged in Orissa. They desired to take legal opinion. Sardar Patel retorted "Your Highness may consult the lawyers but I make the law."

Sardar Patel was out of station when the Home Secretary H. V. R. Iengar took a decision on an urgent issue. On his return to New Delhi, Sardar Patel explained the flaws in Iengar's decision and that it might invite criticism. Subsequently, when it came up before the cabinet, he told them that it was his decision. Iengar was deeply touched. He followed the principle that authority can be delegated but not responsibility.

The Congress Working Committee had directed the Government to take steps for the formation of linguistic Andhra State. Iengar expressed his reservations to Sardar Patel who told him to do his duty as the Home Secretary. Iengar subjected it to a cold analysis and the proposal was postponed. Sardar encouraged the civil servants to be independent and not try to please the boss.

Shavax A Lal, the Law Secretary, was requested to give his opinion on a question raised by the Governor-General. Having had an unpleasant experience of conveying straight forward views to a cabinet minister, Lal asked Patel whether he wanted his honest opinion. Patel flared up, "Does the Government pay you Rs 4000 per month for your dishonest opinion? It is your duty to give your honest opinion and upto me to accept it or not."

Sardar Patel and the Military Commanders

General Bucher, Commander in Chief of the Indian Army, strongly opposed the military action in Hyderabad and threatened to resign if his recommendation against employing the Army was rejected. Sardar Patel quietly told the General that he was free to resign. The army was ordered to enter Hyderabad. Bucher did not give up and attempted a rare feat of pulling Sardar Patel out of bed at the midnight of 12 September after speaking to Nehru. He advised Patel to call off the military action for fear of air attacks on Bombay and Ahmedabad. Patel reminded Bucher of how London had suffered during the Great War and assured him that both, Bombay and Ahmedabad could stand up to an air attack.

Sardar Patel and the Princes

When the 21 year old Prince of a small state in

Orissa said "My people want..." Sardar Patel interrupted him "They are not your people, Your Highness. They are my people. Leave them to me." The Prince sat down.

A few princes in Orissa wanted to be kept as a separate entity and not merged in Orissa. They desired to take legal opinion. Sardar Patel retorted "Your Highness may consult the lawyers but I make the law."

On Kashmir

He told Minoo Masani that, but for Nehru, he could settle the Kashmir issue in no time by arranging that Kashmir Valley went to Pakistan and East Pakistan to India. Both countries would benefit from such an arrangement.

When he was officiating Prime Minister, he told Air Marshal Elmhurst, Chairman Chiefs of Staff, that if all decisions rested on him, he would be in favour of extending the little affair in Kashmir to a full scale war with Pakistan and get it over once and for all and settle down as one continent.

What They Said About Him

"Meetings with Vallabhbhai were a joy from which I returned with renewed confidence in the future of the country. I have often thought that if fate had decreed that he, instead of Jawaharlal, would be younger of the two, India would have followed a very different path and would be in better economic shape than it is today" - J R D Tata

Sardar Patel had reacted sharply to Churchill's comments about the ability of Independent India for governance. Churchill sent a conciliatory message through Anthony Eden: "He had nothing but admiration for the way the new dominion had settled down to the tasks and responsibilities, particularly those relating to those involving relations with the Indian states....Sardar should not confine himself within the limits of India, but the world was entitled to see and hear from him."

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Why Government Subsidies are Harmful

Arvind Ilamaran

What is a subsidy by government?

Subsidy is a public good which is non-excludable and non-rivalrous¹. That is, in that individuals cannot be effectively excluded from use and where use by one individual does not reduce availability to others. The simple logic of subsidy is that the selling price of the product is less than its cost price. Which essentially is a *Loss*. A private player cannot run a loss-making business but a government can. The government produces or procures the goods from the market and redistributes them at a subsidized rate. The government cannot procure goods for a price less than the market price as that would be looting the people and the government cannot sell the goods at a price greater than the market price, which is the whole point of a subsidy. Given that government subsidy in India is around 2.5% of GDP, where does the government get the money to compensate for the loss. The important ways in which this loss is compensated is through tax revenues, quantitative easing and government debt.

Two kinds of subsidies?

Direct subsidy: Concession given on the price of the good when procured from or through the government. In this form of subsidy, government recovers part of the money expended.

Indirect Subsidy: Where government recovers nothing and is given through entitlement programs such as NREGA, Food Security Bill, Right to Free Education etc.

How are Subsidies Increased?

Subsidies are increased by providing more per cent concession on the goods when the market prices are constant. This is mostly observed in the case of indirect subsidies or by maintaining the same per cent concession while the market prices are rising such as in the case of direct subsidies e.g. petrol, diesel, LPG etc.

When subsidies increase ...

The Government needs revenue to fund these subsidies. The major modes of revenue generation for a Government are Tax Revenue, Quantitative Easing,

Monetizing Government debt and Sovereign debt. Hence, to finance an increase in subsidies, the Government has to resort to an increase in taxes, print more money or borrow more money. When the Government increases taxes, it leads to higher production cost leading to a rise in the price of commodities and thus affecting the people.

When Quantitative Easing is chosen, it reduces the interest rates, resulting in low yields on long term investments and pension schemes. Though QE might sound necessary at times, the speculation that the positive consequences of QE can be achieved by restructuring government debts seems worthy of investigation.

When the government prints more money to buy back bad debts and mortgages, in times of emergency to prevent the crash of private banks, it effectively injects more money into the system without an increase in the aggregate amount of goods. This simply means that now the unit value of a rupee has gone down and hence you have to pay more of the same units than before to procure the same amount of the same goods. This adversely affects the poor people especially the 300 million living below the poverty line as they have limited purchasing power. But during these times, government increases its expenditure by giving more subsidies which only leads back to a vicious cycle only offset by private production. But given the unfriendly government policies for investment, we are losing out on huge capital from private investors both local and foreign.

Conclusion

The means to finance subsidies are detrimental to economic growth and hence a government should strive to scale down subsidies by fostering economic growth through increased private sector participation. Unless people understand that subsidies cause more harm than good, politicians will try to provide more subsidies to please the electorate thus impeding real growth leading to better living standards for all.

¹ ri-val-rous – adjective, characterized by rivalry; competitive: *the rivalrous aspect of their friendship*.

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Feudalisation of Indian Politics

T. H. Chowdary

We have abolished Maharajas, Nawabs and the Zamindars. In their place, we have got a “New Class” of hereditary political feudal lords.

One cannot but notice the progressive deterioration in the political life especially among political leaders in our country. The noble ideals of true public service, personal integrity and inspiring common people to aspire high, to patriotism and to self-help for self-advancement are all unfortunately extinct among the political class. Over time politics has become a profession for many otherwise unqualified people. It has become a very highly paying business with least investment and minimum risk. Once elected as legislator or a MP, they are able to quit poverty, accumulate wealth and become overlords and owners of parties. By now, except the communist parties and the BJP, all other parties have become nearly private; in fact proprietary. The Congress -I, the RJD the BSP, Samajwadi, RLD, (Rashtriya Lok Dal), Biju Lok Dal, DMK, AIDMK, TDP, Trinamool Congress and the Akali Dal have all become more or less properties of a family. The trend was set by the first family, the Nehru –Indira-Rajiv-Sonia – Rahul family. (Rahul is the sixth M.P of the family). Membership of legislatures and parliament and even cabinets is increasingly becoming hereditary. The so called ‘high-commands’ have degenerated into I-Commands. Any person reading newspapers can easily identify who the proprietors of these parties are.

We have abolished Maharajas, Nawabs and the Zamindars. In their place, we have got a “New Class” of hereditary political feudal lords. There is an excellent study of this development of inherited political positions by the British journalist-author, Patrick French. In his book, *India - An Intimate Biography* of 1.2 billion people in the chapter, ‘Family Politics’ information is presented about the New Class of MPs (Members of Parliament) these are called HMPs; that is, Hereditary Members of Parliament. The following tables give the information.

Feudalism Replacing Indian Democracy

* How did the 545 MPs enter the Lok Sabha (2009)

No significant family back ground	255
Family	156
Student politics	47

Business	35
RSS	18
Trade Union	10
Royal family	7
Maoist Commander	1
Inducted *	16

* Inducted means the MP was a famous actor, or someone who had done well abroad and returned home, or one who was a commando in Rajiv Gandhi’s security cordon parachuted into politics or a cook of the first family etc.

HMPs or Hereditary MPs

Percentage of Hereditary Congress MPs by age

Age	71-80	61-70	51-60	41-50	31-40	Below
%	18.2	22.6	31.2	43.9	86.4	100

Percentage of hereditary MPs by age in all parties together

Age	71-80	61-70	51-60	41-50	31-40	Below
%	10.5	16.4	20.6	36.8	65	100

Which Political Party is most hereditary?

(What percentage of party MPs had reached the Lok Sabha through a family link - excluding parties with fewer than 5 MPs)

RLD	100%	5 out of 5
CPI(M)	25.0	4 out of 16
NCP	77.8	7 out of 9
JD(U)	20.0	4 out of 20
BJD	42.9	6 out of 14
BJP	19.0	22 out of 116
INC	37.5	78 out of 208

Trinamool	15.8	3 out of 19
BSP	33.3	7 out of 21
Shiv Sena	9.1	1 out of 11
DMK	33.3	6 out of 18
AIADMK	0.0	0 out of 9
SP	27.3	6 out of 22
TDP	0.0	0 out of 6

Source for all the Tables: India (A Portrait) by Patrick French (Chapter: 4 - Family Politics ; Publisher- Allen Lane)

Taking cue from the current power-wielding proprietors of the feudalised political parties, many castes are also moving to found their own centre of power. New persons are emerging as leaders of castes. For example in Andhra Pradesh, Sri R. Krishnaiah has emerged as leader of the Backward Classes(BCs). His movement and agitations and demands have become so strong that threatened by this move , Sri Chandra Babu Naidu the I-Command of the Telugu Desam Party is obliged to call his party a party

of BCs. He has promised that not less than 100 BCs would be put up by his party in the elections to the State Assembly in 2014. An SC sub caste Madigas, have thrown up their own leader Sri Krishna Madiga. He has been demanding that since Madigas constitute 60-70% of the SCs in Andhra a major percentage of the 15% reservations for SCs should be set apart for the Madiga caste. He is moving to launch a party of his own with himself as the leader. He will emerge as leader of one more proprietary feudal party.

During the sunset period of Mogul rule emerged Nabobs and Rajas owing nominal allegiance to Delhi. With so many regional proprietary parties, are we not heading into a disintegrated India, to be once again ruled by foreign elements settled in India? This indeed was the fear expressed by Dr Ambedkar in his speech to the concluding session of India's Constituent Assembly in November 1949.

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The Madras High Court Complete 150 Years

- Some Nostalgic Memories

B. M. N. Murthy



The Madras High Court has a long list of 35 Chief Justices and 323 puisne judges who have come to occupy the seat of justice in the 150 years of the existence of the Madras High Court.

Based on a Proclamation by Queen Victoria in the year 1862, three High Courts were established in India simultaneously – one at Calcutta, one at Bombay and one at Madras. The first High Court to be established was at Calcutta which was inaugurated on 1st July 1862, followed by Bombay and Madras a fortnight later. All these historic institutions mark their 150th year of birth this year – 2012.

The Madras High Court initially started functioning in the Old Collector's Office on Rajaji Salai. A new building for the High Court was constructed and got ready three years later at a cost of Rs. 12 lakhs in Parry's Corner [the present premises] and was inaugurated on 12th July 1892. A Light House was constructed at the top of the main tower of main building which is about 175 feet. Till 1970, the public was allowed to climb the Light House. This was stopped about 35 years ago. A new Light House has since been put up near the Gandhi Statue on the Marina beach.

First Day's Business

There were no celebrations to mark the occasion of the formal inauguration in 1862. The newly appointed Chief Justice, Sir Colley Horman Scotland, and five judges simply walked into the Court Hall and took their seats. The Master and Sheriff took seats on either side of the Bench. The Chief Justice spoke a few words after which the Court plunged into the day's business. However, after

the completion of the High Court building in the place where it is now located, an inaugural ceremony was held with pomp and fanfare of a high order on 12th July 1892. The then Governor of Madras arrived at the main entrance under a salute of 17 guns. He was received by the then Chief Justice Sir Arthur Collins and taken in a procession through the Court premises. After the British National Anthem was played, the Secretary to the Government in the Public Works

Department offered the key of the building to the Governor and the Governor, in turn delivered it to the Chief Justice. After a short speech by the Governor, the Chief Justice replied with solemn gravity and concluded:

"I fervently hope that long after you and I, Your Excellency, have passed away to the undiscovered country, of which we know so little, there may also continue to be found men of ability and courage, who will administer the law in these Courts without distinction of class, creed or race"

Ever since, the Madras High Court has a long list of 35 Chief Justices and 323 puisne judges who have come to occupy the seat of justice in the 150 years of the existence of the Madras High Court.

Two Sentinel Deities of the Madras High Court: Rajaji and T. Prakasham

The High Court has two boundaries – one is called the Rajaji Road [the Old North Beach Road] and the other is called Prakasham Road [formerly the Broadway] and the court premises has the statues of two elderly, popular and respected statesmen: Rajaji and T. Prakasham who appear to be the two sentinel deities of the Madras High Court.

Rajaji: Winding up a lucrative practice in Salem, Rajaji came to Madras from Salem in 1919 with a view to practice in the Madras High Court. But the fate of the nation

changed it. Gandhiji just then issued a call for the 'Non-Cooperation Movement' against the British Government. Heeding to the call, Rajaji plunged into Gandhiji's bandwagon and did not even bother to unpack the boxes containing legal tomes. A person who had the capacity and the caliber to become the foremost legal luminary in India, spent several years in the darkness of prison. However, Law's loss became an asset to the whole country and he became the First Indian Governor General when India got independence. The Constitution of India came into force on 26th Jan 1950. It was Rajaji's privilege, as the first Indian Governor General, to anoint Dr. Rajendra Prasad as the first President of India.

T. Prakasham: Prakasham studied in England and became a barrister. He returned to India sometime in 1920 and registered himself as an advocate in the Madras High Court. Very soon he made a mark in the legal field and both his reputation as a lawyer and his professional income became legendary. He too responded to Gandhiji's call and joined the Non-Cooperation Movement. Once he joined Gandhiji, he never looked back at the Madras High Court. It was said that that when he was arrested by the British Government during the Non-Cooperation Movement, he returned a fee of one lakh rupees he had received the previous day as professional fees from his client. [Rs one lakh was a hefty figure about 90 years ago]. He fought for the formation of Andhra Pradesh and the people hailed him as 'Andhra Kesari' by which title he is famous even now.

While Rajaji took over as Chief Minister of the State of Madras in 1952, Prakasham became the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh in 1953.

Sir T. Muthuswamy Iyer, the First Indian High Court Judge

Born into a poor family, Muthuswamy Iyer read his school lessons under a street lamp, like the famous Engineer cum statesman Dewan Sir M. Visveswaraya. Eventually he held many important positions and became a Judge of the Madras High Court in 1878, the first ever Indian to become a High Court Judge during the British regime. He served as a Judge for 17 years and his statue, sculpted in white marble, has the pride of place in the High Court premises. It is unfortunate that he was never elevated to the position of Chief Justice, a position which he immensely deserved.

Defining the duty of a Judge, he once said: "The court of justice is a sacred temple, the judges presiding over it are, though men, the humble instruments in the interests of truth and those who enter this holy edifice

with unholy thought or desecrate it with unworthy thought or desecrate it with unworthy actions are traitors to their God and to their country."

Sir Muthuswamy Iyer and the national newspaper *The Hindu*:

It may be interesting to note that the year 1878 which saw the emergence of the first Indian as a High Court Judge, also saw the birth of the national newspaper *The Hindu* and both events are related to each other as the following paragraph makes clear.

Till *The Hindu* came on the journalistic scene in Madras in 1878, there was only one newspaper in Madras called '*The Madras Mail*' which was started in 1867 and owned by the Anglo-Indians. The paper's main purpose was to protect the interest of the European community. There was no Indian newspaper which could voice the opinion and feelings of Indians. This void was vexing the feelings of some local intellectuals for quite sometime and the feeling became stronger when '*The Madras Mail*' criticized the appointment of Mr. [later Sir] T. Muthuswamy Iyer as a Judge of the Madras High Court in unfair and unflattering terms. These intellectuals took it as an insult to the whole nation but unfortunately they could not give vent to their feelings. Unable to stand this gross injustice to India, six of them namely G. Subrahmanya Aiyer, M. Veeraraghavachar, T. T. Rangachariar, P. V. Rangachar, D. Keshava Rao Pant and N. Subba Rau Pantulu, still fresh from their colleges founded *The Hindu* on 20th September 1878, with an investment of one rupee and twelve annas [all borrowed capital].

Sri V. Bhashyam Iyengar, the First Advocate General

Sri V. Bhashyam Iyengar became the first Indian Advocate General in 1897 whose statue also adorns the premises of the Madras High Court. He served as a Judge of the Madras High Court from 1901 to 1904. Though many were amazed at his independent attitude, the British judges of that period refused to allow his statue to be installed in the High Court premises. But thanks to the relentless efforts of lawyers, a statue was eventually installed in 1927. Denied a judgeship due to his fearless independent attitude, he was finally made the High Court Judge when he had just two years of tenure left.

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BOOK REVIEW



WOMEN IN PEACE POLITICS edited by Paula Banerjee, *South Asian Peace Studies: Volume 3* • Published by Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd. B/1-011, Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area, Mathura Road, New Delhi 110044 • www.sagepublications.com • 2008 • Pages 323 • Rs. 450

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Among the many values underlying most contemporary debates on politics and governance, is the value of peace. Peace today has

borders and ... (the) constant negotiations till ... (one) can breach these borders". (pg. xv)

The volume is elegantly structured in three sections: "Ideas and Ideologies"; "Movements"; and "Voices", each section focusing on a different aspect of the role of women in peace politics.

become a desired concept, particularly with the emergence of the security state, excessive laws, leviathan politics, outright aggression, global control of monopolies and immigration control. On the one hand, the contemporary world is confronted with an overwhelming degree of violence, both routine and crass, and on the other the imperative of peace is placed at the centre of political theory and practice. This despite the fact that there has been little theorizing on the notion of peace. Peace for long and particularly in debates on international relations has simply been understood as the end of armed conflict or more the absence of bloodshed. The multi-dimensional comprehensive nature of peace as a political concept has received little, if any, attention.

The book under review puts together a substantively rich, academically entrenched and deeply provocative collection of articles which focus on the place and politics of women in the ongoing discourse on peace politics. The volume sets out to question the mainstream canonical view in peace studies offered by national and international security establishments, which emphasizes the role of conflict and conflict resolution approaches and game theories as adequate apparatus to establish a politics of peace. The collective concern of the articles is to underscore the role played by justice, democracy and reconciliation in the guarantees of peace and to bring out the distinct contributions that women offer to such guarantees. Also, the volume deals with peace as a multi-dimensional concept rather than simply as the other or the derivate of war and violence. As noted in the Preface: "Peace has little to do with war between states, and a lot more to do with ... (the) everyday battle against inviolable

Introducing the section on "Ideas and Ideologies" Samir Kumar Das locates the historical trajectory of peace studies and traces its emergence as an offshoot of security studies. He critically engages with the inter-relationship between peace and security, arguing in favor of a rupture and an inclusion of such concepts as justice and democracy. Later in the section, Das puts forward a nuanced argument in the article titled "Ethnicity and Democracy Meet When Mothers Protest". Here, he critically engages with the inter-relationship among motherhood, ethnic nationalism and democratic protest. He positions motherhood or maternal care as a mode of democratic resistance, and discusses the politics of nationalism and democracy in north eastern India to demonstrate his point, underscoring the rape and murder of Thangjam Manorama in Manipur. In doing so, he questions and rethinks the dominant understanding of a binary between nationalism and ethnicity as patriarchal and democracy as egalitarian. Das in a brilliant way brings out the inter-relationship and interplay between democratic struggles, nationalism, gender politics and maternal care.

In his article titled "Shefali", Ranabir Samaddar makes a rather poignant argument in favor of women's agencies in processes of peace. He suggests how women, rather than being mute spectators of history, play an involved role and resolve to begin a new unaccustomed and unfamiliar life. Here, Samaddar looks at the question of displacement and demonstrates how displacement from home does not amount to a displacement of women's subjectivity. Instead, in a gendered labour market, women and their bodies "find it easier to get work". In this way he questions the openness of state borders to human

trafficking which they never regard in terms of a violation of peace.

Sumona DasGupta in her article titled “Security, Gender and Conflict Prevention” focuses on the relation between conflict prevention and human security and locates gender as a cross cutting variable in this interface. DasGupta begins by differentiating between conflict prevention and conflict resolution, and goes on to underscore not only the ending of conflict, but more that which is being built in its place. Moving away from a state-centric understanding of security, which is essentially gender insensitive and masculinist, and which has for long dominated the tradition of international politics, DasGupta brings in the idea of human security and invigorates our safety as individuals in terms of survival, livelihood, dignity and the common good. Reading about the issue of security from a gendered lens, the article focuses on three concerns: militarism and militarization of state and society, which it criticizes as being essentially patriarchal; development and globalization where it underscores the human insecurities caused by such phenomena; and post conflict reconstruction and peace building processes which are rooted in gender insensitive notions. According to DasGupta, only when the theory and praxis of conflict prevention moves out of the shadow of the dominant patriarchal understandings, would feminist formulations of security and conflict prevention enrich each other, thereby opening up new spaces for thinking and action.

The collection of articles carries an Afterword by ‘Stree Shakti Sanghatana’, which details the keen involvement and engaged participation of women in the Telangana movement, demonstrating their renegotiation with gendered spaces of exclusion and confinement. The chapter marks out the experiences of liberation and consciousness peasant women underwent as they joined the struggle. It deeply unsettles the established notion that war and conflict are sites of domination; rather, for the women of the Telangana movement, war introduced moments of freedom, agency, education and mobility. Interestingly, the involvement of women in the struggle facilitated a move to respond to such crimes as rape, wife-beating and child marriages. The Afterword vehemently advocates the blurring of, if not erasing, the ‘dividing line’ between the public and the private, arguing that if political education, training and a continued political involvement ought to be seen as relevant to women then one must assimilate the normally invisible aspects of the private sphere.

In her article titled “Islam, Feminism and the Women’s Movement in Pakistan” Fauzia Gardezi traces the history, politics and challenges of the ‘Women’s Action

Forum (WAF), particularly in the context of the emergence of right wing politics and gender insensitive laws in the country. She differentiates between the grass roots impulse of the WAF and its bureaucratic statist orientation; while the former is poised towards a radical rethinking of the law in Pakistan; the latter is keener on working with the established order. Gardezi takes on the extremely relevant issue of whether or not a struggle against patriarchy should be waged from within the framework of Islam. She highlights the tense equations that working within the Islamic framework creates between feminist struggles and fundamentalist imperatives. She holds that the fear of developing an essentially inclusive feminist movement would risk a backing away from the challenge to patriarchal cultures and alienate feminists from their ends.

Working on a renewed understanding of the relationship among nationalism, war and gender, Rada Ivecovic in the article “Women, Nationalism and Wars” uncovers the different and inherently gendered relationship women bear with the experiences of war. She suggests how women’s identity with the “Other” is different from that of men, and therefore women participate less violently in nationalistic movements. Also, the structures of nationalism are fundamentally homo-social and thereby antagonism towards women of one’s own nation remains among the first forms of attack on the “Other”. Ivecovic reads the construct of war from a gender perspective by relooking at stereotypes such as the enemy as the feminine other, the soldier as physically, socially and culturally stronger, the question of ‘origins’ and the identification of a ‘father to the nation’. Although questioning the essentialist position, she demonstrates how women are less violent in such instances of war, and are more open to understanding the other.

The second section devoted to “Movements”, introduced by Kalpana Kannabiran, uncovers the conceptual contradiction between conflicts understood as inhospitable terrains for feminist mobilization on one hand, and the many movements for peace and reconstruction undertaken by women. Invoking the use of religion and culture, she draws a distinction between intimate and inter-group violence. She underscores the significance of movements aimed at peace and reconstruction, mainly as they are pitted against heightened patriarchal sensibilities of war and/as masculinity. In doing so, she places a premium on the imperative for movements as passages to a peace politics. The section then goes on to deal with movements in different countries of South Asia, and to bring out their contributions and limitations in nurturing peace initiatives in the face of war.

Focusing on the Sri Lankan context, Saro

Thiruppathy and Nirekha De Silva, in their article titled “Women in Sri Lankan Peace Politics”, tease out the contributions of women in the different strategies of peace negotiations and conflict situations between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Government. It provides an account of the various organizations and individuals located as parts of the women’s movement. Thiruppathy and De Silva also analyze the role and risks that women undergo as active combatants in war. An equally compelling narrative on Sri Lanka is by Malathi de Alwis titled “Motherhood as a Space for Protest”. This article gives a historical and conceptual narrative of the ‘Mother’s Front’ in war torn Sri Lanka, which was a grassroots women’s organization with essentially routine feminine and maternal demands. Recognizing the essentialist position underpinning this narrative, Alwis also sees such demands “to re-enforce the notion of biology as destiny and legitimize the sex-role system that, in assigning responsibility for nurture and survival to women alone, encourages masculinized violence and destruction” (p.153). While narrating the trajectory of the ‘Mother’s Front’, Alwis is also careful not to overlook the underlying violence of majority/minority cultural and class politics.

In the article titled “Negotiating Peace: Feminist Reflections” Kalpana Kannabiran, Volga and Vasantha Kannabiran provide a brilliant analysis of the Naxal problem in Andhra Pradesh, the peace process and its engagement with feminist issues. The authors rightly complicate the issue by drawing a correlation between the identification of naxalite infested areas with the criminalization of political dissent, as well as anti-state violence and statist violence. The article reads critically into such issues underlying the peace process as the role of the media, the bearing of arms, land reforms, and political neutrality. The paper underscores the erasure of women’s roles and contributions in both struggles for justice and in peace imperatives, and focuses on the continuing male-stream patriarchal notions of sexuality, knowledge and politics. For the authors, this continuity would only limit the potential successes of any peace initiative as it would fail to respond to the deeper and more violent question of gender relations.

Paula Banerjee, in her article titled “The Space Within”, teases out the intrinsic though somewhat problematic relationship between democracy and justice. According to Banerjee, democracy and nationalism are related as they both depend on and manipulate with the category of the people. In her words, “central to the processes of democratic nation-state formation is the question of identity.” (p. 201) For Banerjee, the state machinery seeks to create a homogenized identity which often is a reflection of majoritarian male and monolithic cultural values that deny space for differences. She traces

the essentially patriarchal constructs of citizenship and nationhood that underlie the story of nation-state formations. She then goes on to explore the place of women in the politics of peace in North East India, particularly in Nagaland and Manipur. She explains how women’s movements hold on to a broader and more meaningful notion of peace and justice, rather than viewing it simply as the end of armed conflict. Also, it is such women’s movements that foster and nurture democratic values especially when they emphasize the guarantee of rights and the protection of health standards for all.

Meghna Guhathakurta’s “Minorities, Women and Peace” deals with the issue of fundamentalist violence and women’s politics in Bangladesh. She unfolds the patriarchal nature of the power relations between kinship and religious structures. She also uncovers the essentially exclusionary nature of the politics in the country. She examines how violence, whether of a fundamentalist nature or that influenced by the state impacts on the everyday lives, and in particular of women.

The third section on “Voices” is introduced by Anuradha Bhasin Jamwal, wherein she points to the manner in which women are employed as tools both in times of war and for processes of settlement; where women constitute a distinct identity, one that transcends caste, language and colour, by virtue of their use as bodies for retribution and reconciliation. She gives importance to the voices emanating from the different women’s movements in the region, which glamorize the politics of victimization but also provide spaces for change by struggling against human unfairness. The section includes the resolutions, agendas and voices of such women’s movements as the ‘Naga Mothers Association’ and the ‘Women’s Action Front’. In doing so, the section clearly demonstrates the more valid and valuable accounts and understandings of peace and reconstruction which such movements adhere to – accounts which are not limited to ending armed conflict or bloodshed, but rather which focuses on building humane possibilities for better lives. The section also includes two poetic accounts of women’s voices – “The Way of the World” by Josiane Racine and Jean Luc Racine and “Chadur aur Diwari” by Fehm Ida Riyaz.

In “Drawing Lines, Erasing Lines”, Cynthia Cockburn examines the politics of forced migration by employing the metaphor and conceptual category of lines. For her, lines are markers of identity, which include and exclude categories and thereby label each person with a name. Put differently, lines contribute to a xenophobic understanding of social life. According to Cockburn, feminism plays a rather significant role in questioning and transcending these lines, and thus in challenging

xenophobia. She strongly speaks in favor of blurring exclusionary identities by “doing feminism”.

The section ends with a conversation between Aditi Bhaduri and Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, the General Secretary of the Palestinian pro-democracy organization ‘MIFTAH’. Through this conversation, the study puts forward an illustration of the shortcomings of a limited understanding of peace. The conversation details the turbulent process of peace as an end to the armed conflict in Palestine, but also emphasizes the need to develop and implement a multidimensional and varied strategy for peace and reconstruction, in the absence of which conflict would never cease.

Peace has for long remained restrictively understood as the end of conflict and/or the absence of war. Violence in its routine manifestation or denials of everyday humane existence and opportunities of development has until recently never formed part of the discourse on peace. This collection of articles marks a significant contribution to the discourse on peace studies by underscoring the need for a multidimensional and more comprehensive understanding of the idea of peace. As such, peace *per se* and in its limited manifestation would have little meaning in the study of politics; in fact, it may be looked at with great suspicion. With this more meaningful engagement with peace, it may be possible to redeem the value of peace and talk in terms of peace politics.

Cornucopia (Cont'd. from p.20)

The above could well be a cautionary tale. In India, politics corrupts even the apparently incorruptible. Idealism and good intentions stand no chance against the system of governance followed in this country for the past 60 years. No new political party can stem the rot. Only the people can, but that is unlikely to happen. The me-first syndrome is ingrained in the Indian psyche. As long as I'm OK, the rest can fend for themselves.

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(Footnotes)

¹ NaMo are Narendra Modi's initials and the word NAMO means salutation, obeisance in Indian language.

‘NaMo’, was launched a day after the December-bound assembly elections were announced in the State but was shut on October 5 because of the model code of conduct in force.

The poll body gave its nod after the District Electoral Officer in Ahmedabad, where the channel is headquartered, had sought EC's permission. Imposing certain conditions, the commission said all political ads broadcast during election will have to be first cleared by Media Certification and Monitoring Committee.

– Editor's comment.

Containing China: Challenge of the Century (Cont'd. from p.22)

however powerful, can be a global player if it is not an acceptable leader among its immediate neighbours. Chinese aggrandisement will only drive her neighbours closer to the US, whose hegemony China seeks to curtail! Vietnam overthrew the Chinese-backed Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia. China wanted to “teach Vietnam a lesson” and in the ensuing fierce Battle of Cao Bang (February-March 1979) the two sides lost more than 30,000 soldiers. China retreated empty handed. China should learn from its military and political misadventures. When pushed to the wall every country will fight back. Wars never solve disputes between nations. Only agreements signed peacefully resolve them. But, nations do not learn from history!

war with Japan and embarks on such strategic misadventures in the region.

Let me end by saying that prevention of war and promotion of peace will be the most fitting homage the world could pay Mahatma Gandhi on his 143rd birth anniversary!

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All the bets will be off, if China chooses to go to

So targeted are the Shias that many wonder if Pakistan's founding father Mohammad Ali Jinnah – a Shia – would have been able to live there today. Even back in 1948, Jinnah's state funeral was conducted as per Sunni traditions.

Cited by Khalid Baig from a report in *The Hindu* August 21 by Anita Joshua “Growing intolerance”

Educating Adults

The Right to Education Act (5)

Compulsory Schooling

Suresh Sharma

Education for children in the age group 6 to 14 is compulsory under the RTE Act. It is also their right. There is a contradiction in “right” and “compulsion” It is like making voting compulsory but leaving it to the voter to exercise this right. There are some reservations about the implementation of the provisions. Brig. Sharma continues the discussion of this aspect of the RTE begun last month; this time, dealing with the problems in our country involving “compulsory attendance” viz. absence of facilities for disabled children, domestic violence and children having to help with the family business. - Ed.

It is generally taken as universal truth that education can be conducted only in schools and compulsory education implies that all children must attend schools regularly. A school is considered to be a safe place and children learn to be part of a team. Schools provide much more than literacy; they develop leadership qualities, communication skills and duties of a good citizen. Parents are happy to send children to well administered schools. Doubts arise on finding violence, lack of discipline, ragging and even drugs in schools.

An amendment to the RTE Act lays down that children with severe disability may not attend schools and can be educated at home. This violates the UN Convention of the rights of persons with severe disabilities. The very notion of isolating them is negation of social inclusion. Dr. Mithu Alur, founder chairperson of Spastic Society of India, comments, “Home schooling for severely disabled children amounts to condemning a child to imprisonment at home.” It would make it easier for schools to deny admission to such children and recommend home schooling. It is difficult for parents to teach severely handicapped children as this requires qualified teachers. A typical example is the difficulty of parents to understand dyslexia. They may attribute it to lack of effort by the child. Currently, there are 415 institutions registered for rehabilitation counselling and

the total number of qualified teachers is 35,000 against a requirement of 175,000. A large number of severely disabled children do not attend school and they are not getting any education at homes either. The parents are not able to devote adequate time and resources.

The school management committees are required to ensure regular attendance by all children but they do not have any punitive authority. They can only advise parents. Parents engaged in small trade and shops expect their children to help and learn the traditional family work. It could be carpentry or mechanic or hawking. Girls get overloaded with the need to help in household work like cleaning and cooking. It would be desirable to have schools for limited hours for this category.

The schools are supposed to be located within a radius 1 km of a child’s residence. That may not be the case and arranging conveyance may be beyond the financial capacity of many families. Bus accidents, even if few, send an alarm, particularly when they occur due to negligence, poor maintenance of vehicles or rash driving. In Maharashtra, the rules for school buses have not yet been finalized. It is also not possible for children to go to school in violence prone areas. Terror attacks and poor communications in tribal regions are another obstacle to regular attendance. It is not unusual to



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accommodate security forces and people displaced by natural disasters in schools. It is difficult to deny shelter to displaced families but it should be only for a limited period. It is not advisable to accommodate security forces in schools, since the building may get damaged due to riots by mobs or attacks by militants. While the buildings are being repaired, teaching has to be conducted in verandahs or in the shade for short periods.

Home education

There are an increasing number of parents in UK and USA who prefer schooling at home. Some parents believe that they can impart better education to the children themselves. They feel that education is important; schooling is not. Some parents feel that a student need not learn all the subjects included in the syllabus. This may be true of trained and well educated parents. A child should have the liberty to study only subjects he considers useful or of interest to him. Typical is the case of a student who left school and took lessons in calligraphy. This skill proved useful to him in designing Macintosh computer. Such incidents apply to a small percentage of children. This approach has faults since children need to interact with other children and adults other than their parents. A child's thinking and communication skills develop when he has to explain his views to other children and trained adults. Children are natural born scientists and should be encouraged to ask questions and solve problems. Teachers can pose the right questions to develop that ability.

Reading and writing alone does not comprise good education and the parents should send children to schools. A major hurdle is the quality of a large number of schools. For example, Times of India of 9th February, 2012 reported that more than one hundred parents locked the gates of a school in protest the lack of teachers. This is not an isolated incident. Similar protests have occurred at other places too. In the absence of teachers, the children tend to misbehave and pick up fights.

Another complaint is about the mid-day meals cooked in unhygienic conditions. In a school about 70 kms from Bangalore, there was only one water tap located in the toilet. Water for drinking and cooking was collected from that same tap. In another school in Kolar District, the door was chopped off to cook meals. The teacher had taken the gas cylinder home and the cook had no choice. Water filter supplied to the school had not been unpacked. With long interruptions in electric supply, how well will the gadgets work? The building of a school in Mumbai has been declared dangerous but the school has not been closed or shifted. To add to the woes, the authorities have directed schools in neighbourhood not to admit students from the former school to safeguard the service of the staff. Barring a few exceptions, parents would like to send children to good schools. They may not be concerned about buildings and mid-day meals. They desire good education so the children learn discipline and acquire the skills for a good job.

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Malala Yousafzai – *Freedom First* Salutes Your Courage and Determination



Malala Yousafzai (born July 12, 1997) is a school student and education activist from the town of Mingora in the Swat District of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. She is known for her education and women's rights activism in the Swat Valley, where the Taliban has at times banned girls from attending school. In early 2009, at the age of 11/12, Yousafzai wrote a blog under a pseudonym for the BBC detailing her life under Taliban rule, and her views on promoting education for girls. On 9 October 2012, Yousafzai was shot in the head and neck in an assassination attempt by Taliban gunmen while returning home on a school bus. In the days immediately following the attack, she remained unconscious and in critical condition, but later her condition improved enough for her to be sent to a hospital in the United Kingdom for intensive rehabilitation. On 12 October a group of 50 Islamic clerics in Pakistan issued a fatwâ against those who tried to kill her and the Taliban reiterated its intent to kill Yousafzai and her father, Ziauddin.

Courtesy: Wikipedia.

Economic Reforms because ‘Money does not grow on Trees’

Jyoti Marwah

To remind you Mr. Prime Minister, money does grow on the trees for your cabinet colleagues who have accumulated enormous wealth courtesy Commonwealth Games, sale of 2G, grant of coal licences, allocation of water projects and what not.

‘New’ Economic reforms of the 21st century India reiterate the jeering words of Mary Antoinette that immortalized the 18th century French Revolution. Yes, friends if you have no bread, you may have cakes in the midst of drudgery, starvation, malnutrition, filthy urban areas in a country which is ravaged by floods. It reminds me of those days in school, when we wondered what exactly did Charles Dickens have to say in *Hard Times*. Today, the understanding is clear as the media fretfully knits, knits and knits the vows of the 21st century masses — appalling number of suicides by *aamadmi*- the ‘mango man’ -, cases of kidnapping for ransom, closure of malls due to rising inflation as India becomes the malnutrition capital of the world.

To remind you Mr. Prime Minister, money does grow on the trees for your cabinet colleagues who have accumulated enormous wealth courtesy Commonwealth Games, sale of 2G, grant of coal licences, allocation of water projects and what not. Shed off this innocence, to hear the voices of distress all around you. Give the nation an honest and efficient government which can render a just social and political order. Only to further reinforce my point, this pertinent yet naïve question of money growing on trees should be put to you by the people of this land— ‘a banana republic’ and not by you.

People waited and waited to only hear of the vanishing subsidy on cooking gas, diesel becoming dearer, introduction of FDI in multi-brand retail (at the wrong time), in insurance and pension. Is it the return of the *Raj*? Furthermore it’s even more heartening to hear that these reforms will make the common man flourish. Does it gladden us to hear that economy will boom with fast-track infra structural growth leading to creation of jobs which in turn will reduce unemployment or the farmer will benefit from the boom in FDI and probably reduce the incidence of suicide amongst them?

Our wait for the long overdue economic reforms

pitted us against the wall, as we stand dazed and amazed at the benevolence and kind hearted efforts of UPA II in food for all and health for all. Why does this government want to fleece the people to spend 100 crores on advertising their make believe ‘well-conceived reforms’ which repudiate their very own clarion call for austerity. With vegetables, fruits and pulses selling at phenomenally high prices what is justifiable? *Nothing at all.*

According to Sunil Bhandare in *Freedom First*, issue 541, of July 2012, “Austerity has to be imbibed through self-discipline.” Also, one wonders if these reforms will fortify the nation to pursue a high growth rate of 9% having fallen below 7% in 2012 and will it offer ‘sustainable solution to issues of poverty and unemployment’ or ‘prevent frustration amongst youth’ or ‘achieve greater regional economic balance’ or ‘restore confidence in domestic and global investors to overcome policy paralysis and fiscal drift’ as opined by Sunil Bhandare in an earlier FF issue 536 of February 2012.

On the lighter side, I thought only Rekha could grow ‘*khubsoorat*’ chocolates on trees as she broke away from ‘*kayada*’ and ‘*kanoon*’. I suggest, Mr. Prime Minister, let us follow some ‘*kayada*’ and ‘*kanoon*’ and abstain from making naïve statements with your professional ingenuity to back up your image of innocence.

To be fair, let us give you another chance in all our distress and see where you go with the so-called economic reforms. I always thought that reforms stood for welfare and rights of the masses to live with dignity and not for the masses to contribute solely for the welfare of those in government. Are we moving to pre-renaissance medieval times?

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"Dear Taliban, when you shoot a kid in the head and she doesn't die,
I gotta ask, are you sure God is on YOUR side?

Posted on Facebook. Courtesy Subroto Roy

FDI in Retail

Devinder Kaur

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is a direct investment into in a country by a company located in another country, either by buying a company in the target country or by expanding operations of an existing business in that country. Foreign direct investment is done for many reasons including to take advantage of cheaper wages in the country, special investment privileges such as *tax exemptions* offered by the country as an incentive to gain tariff-free access to the markets of the country or the region. Foreign direct investment is in contrast to *portfolio investment* which is a passive investment in the securities of another country such as *stocks* and *bonds*.

The economic liberalization in India refers to ongoing *economic reforms* that started on 24th, July 1991. After Independence in 1947, India adhered to socialist policies. In 1991, after India faced a *balance of payments* crisis, IMF required India to undertake a series of structural economic reforms. As a result of this requirement, India started breakthrough reforms. The new *neo-liberal* policies included opening for international trade and investment, *deregulation*, initiation of *privatization*, tax reforms, and inflation-controlling measures.

For more than a year, every problem in India has been blamed on government by national and international lobbies and “Policy Paralysis” has been the reason cited for every shortfall including the falling rupee, the worsening fiscal deficit, high inflation, high interest rates and delayed capital expenditure plans. On September 14, 2012 the government came out with the much needed and highly anticipated reforms regarding Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the Single Brand and Multi-Brand Retail Sector (MBRT) of India.

Opening the retail industry to FDI will bring forth benefits in terms of employment, organized retail stores,

availability of quality products at a better and cheaper price. It enables the country’s product or service to enter the global market. FDI will ensure better operations in production cycle and distribution. Due to economies of operation, production facilities will be available at a cheaper rate thereby resulting in availability of a variety of products to the ultimate consumers at a reasonable and lesser price.

FDI enables transfer of skills and technology from overseas and develops the infrastructure of the domestic country. Greater managerial talent inflow from other countries is made possible. Domestic consumers will benefit getting great variety and quality products at all price points. FDI will provide necessary capital for setting up organized retail chain stores. It is a long term investment because unlike equity capital, the physical capital invested in the domestic company is not easily liquidated.

Comparison of India with emerging markets shows that India has a very small organized retail sector amongst its peers and therefore has the biggest opportunity. Countries like China, Brazil, Indonesia are much smaller in terms of population but have a much bigger retail sector. There are two ways of looking at FDI in Retail. One is to see that there are plenty of emerging markets where more capital could be deployed in retail. Second is to see the hidden opportunity in investing in the retail sector in India as it is the second largest country in the world in terms of population. Hence it provides a huge opportunity for an organized retail sector.

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We are Netas! Who Can Stop Us!

Politicians and their supporters plastered hundreds of banners across the city during the Ganpati festival, turning our already cluttered roadsides into an unsightly expanse.

The BMC’s licence department removed more than 700 political banners from different parts of the city, of which only 41 were legal – a fact that exposes politicians’ false claims of not putting up unauthorised hoardings.

“We had granted permission for only 41 banners which helped us earn Rs.57, 800. The rest are illegal” said an official with the licence department”.

- *Mumbai Mirror*, October 4, 2012

Recent Economic Reforms in India

Veena Singh

To meet the liquidity crunch the government had to take some tough measures. As the Prime Minister remarked, “The flagship programmes, many of which are designed to benefit the rural poor, cannot be implemented effectively till the economy is on sound footing.” These measures resulted in 12% (Rs.5/- per liter) price hike in diesel, restricting supply of subsidized LPG cylinders to six. They also opened up multi brand retailing, besides permitting foreign investment in aviation, broadcasting and power exchanges.

Industry, media and intelligentsia reacted positively, besides the markets hailed the decision, the sensex went up by 400 points the very next day and the Rupee gained 36 paise and breached the 54 mark. At the same time there was opposition to these measures. An all India bandh was called.

Most of the opposition is ill founded. There is dire need of foreign currency inflow for infrastructure growth, huge quantities of food grains and goods are lost in transaction due to lack of good means of transport and storage facilities. The fear of foreign companies taking over and pushing small traders and producers out is misplaced; rather they are likely to benefit in the long run. After the first phase of reforms many such sectors not only survived but have also thrived.

There are strict conditions attached to the FDI policy, one of these involves mandatory investment of \$100m out

of which 50% must go to back end infrastructure like supply chain logistics in first three years of operations and must source 30% of produce from small business men. Foreign companies can have 49% investment in aviation, which will help struggling airline companies. The same way broadcasting and power sectors will gain.

High food inflation is a matter of grave concern. The country needs modern technology to meet supply side bottlenecks. Farmers will also produce fruits, vegetables and other perishables due to improved transport and storage facilities and they will diversify into agri-business. Farmers will get rich and consumers right price.

If the subsidy on petroleum products had not been, given though partially, fiscal deficit would not have gone up from Rs.1,40,000 crores to Rs.2,00,000 crores in the current year. Hike of Rs.17/- and not Rs.5/- per liter was needed to cut losses on diesel. In its concern for the *Aam Admi* the government is announcing schemes like cash subsidy etc.

There is urgent need for pushing forward the reforms as the nation needs private investment-led growth, reviving investor confidence and preventing fiscal crisis. Let us not be pessimistic and wait for the results of these recent measures.

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From the Memoirs of Minoo Masani *(cont'd. from p.10)*

Congress Parliamentary Party where member after had demanded that Menon should be removed from his position as Defence Minister. Nehru fought “from page with his back to the wall. At last, he used the one weapon that had so far enabled him to get away with whatever he wanted. He hinted broadly if Menon had to go it would perhaps be necessary for him to step down as Prime Minister. Mahavir Tyagi took the bull by the horns and said that would be too bad but, if necessary, the party and the country were prepared to face that contingency. That was the end of that so far as the Congress Parliamentary Party was concerned. It was clear by then that if Nehru did

not yield and if the matter was raised in parliament by some of us in opposition. Nehru's fate would be that of Chamberlain in 1940 – the larger party of his own party would not be prepared to sustain him in office.

“Our hearts beat fast. We appeared to be on the verge of a tremendous change that would end the pro-communist regime Nehru after 15 years and put an anti-communist party in office.

“All the same, I carried out my promise to Nath Pai.

(To be continued in the December 2012 issue)

Transforming Indians to Transform India

A Nation-Building Initiative by Chinmaya Mission's Yuva Kendra

Aditya Rao

Chinmaya Mission Trust (CMT) is a global non profit organization known for its nation-building, educational, cultural, rural development and social service. With its noble motto “to give maximum happiness to maximum number of people for the maximum period of time” and enabling individuals to become positive contributors of society and the country, CMT has initiated a nation-building movement “Transforming Indians to Transform India (TITI)”, on 4th September 2012 with a national quiz-oriented book released by the Governor of Maharashtra, K. Sankarnarayanan at the Y. B. Chavan auditorium, Mumbai.

Despite having the best of human and natural resources in the world, our country is bleeding profusely plagued by grave problems like corruption, injustice, casteism, intolerance, etc. However, upon deeper contemplation, the root cause that is revealed is the erosion of patriotism and national self-esteem among Indians over the years. People can collectively bring about a positive change and not only bring India out of its present state of crisis but also take it to greater heights. What we need is a corruption-free and efficient India, A prosperous and just India, a united and truly educated India. We need a new India, an ideal India as envisaged by our national leaders. So our transformation will transform the nation.

During India's freedom struggle when M. K. Gandhi was transformed to the Mahatma, India transformed, when Subhash transformed to Netaji Bose, India transformed, when Abdul transformed to Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, India transformed, Jamshedji transformed into an industrialist and India transformed, Sachin transformed to master blaster

and India transformed. ‘TITI’ is need of the hour for the nation; it is a national call to every Indian to TRANSFORM. The aim of this nation-building movement is to awaken Indians to their national glory and instill in them national self-esteem, to inspire millions of Indians to work for a developed India that will enable the nation's transformation.

Similar to Chinmaya Mission, previous successful nation-building initiative via national quiz awakening Indians to India, encouraged by the former President of India, Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, this time too, the first phase of this nation-building movement comprises a national level quiz competition based on the transforming Indians to transforming India book for families, students, corporates, individual citizens. Indians across all age groups and strata of society are eligible to participate. The ‘TITI’ book is a compilation of seven original stories each depicting how every Indian should transform at 7 levels – physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, national, cultural and universal. For more information, check out www.transformingindians.org

Chinmaya Mission & Chinmaya Yuva Kendra (CHYK) is a meeting place for all young minds with a love for India, Indian culture, quest for spiritual knowledge & dedication to a selfless cause. CHYK's goal is ‘Harnessing Youth Potential through Dynamic Spirituality’ and has a presence in over 100 centers in India and across 10 countries. It believes that “There is nothing more purifying than knowledge”. Founded by Swami Chinmayananda in 1975, CHYK is now celebrating its 37th year of inspiring many young individuals.

Today, our top bosses grovel!

On a rather warm day the Defence Secretary, Harish Sarin, a very powerful civil servant, upon entering the Ministry's conference room said to a Colonel sitting close to a window, “You there, open that window!”

Before the Colonel could get up, a sharp “Sit down” came from Manekshaw, who had also just entered from another door. Turning to the Secretary, he said, “Mr. Secretary, don't you ever address one of my officers in that tone of voice. You may say, “Sam,

would you please open that window, and I will open the window for you. That officer is a Colonel, and not ‘You there’.”

Harish Sarin mumbled something to the effect that he didn't mean it that way, to which Sam replied, “I don't care how you meant it. I heard it & didn't like it.”

From the Net. Contributed by Melanie Silveira, Pune.

N O T E S

North East Tribal Problem

Since India attained independence, the North-East Frontier Area has become a constant trouble spot. To say the least the Indian administration has failed to inspire the tribal people with confidence and to make them feel one with the rest of India. In view of this fact, Mr. Nehru's Note, prepared by him in 1952 after his tour of the North-East-Frontier, for the guidance of officers of the External Affairs Ministry who deal with the tribal people is indeed relevant, though a little belated. Mr. Nehru has tried to view the problems of the tribal people, a copy of which was recently placed on the table of the Lok Sabha with understanding and sympathy. If Mr. Nehru's suggestions are implemented, it is certain that they will go a long way in easing the tension. The problems of the tribal people are not merely economic, but cultural, and they require a careful and sympathetic handling and not a bureaucratic approach as has been the case so far. Therefore, Mr. Nehru rightly insisted: "India to them (tribal people) should signify not only as a protecting force, but a liberating force. Any conception that India is ruling them and they are the ruled or that the customs and habits with which they are unfamiliar are going to be imposed upon them will alienate them and make frontier problems more difficult".

Mr. Nehru's Note, however, has brought to light a fact of grave concern, and we hope Mr. Nehru himself is aware of its gravity. He says: "In some other areas bordering on Tibet, I was told that comparisons are being made with conditions on the Chinese side and that this was not always to our advantage. Many of our people who go across the border to work on the other side get good wages. They say that the Chinese are building roads and schools etc. In fact, it appeared that the Chinese treated our people somewhat better than they treated the Tibetans".

This means that there is full scope for the Chinese communists to infiltrate amongst the tribal people. It will not be surprising if the Chinese communists supply arms to Nagas to fight the Indian administration. If this happens, this area will prove to be a potential danger to Indian democracy. And if once the Chinese communists succeed in infiltrating into this area, there will be no end to their machinations.

We, therefore, hope that the Indian Government

would not only take steps to befriend the tribal people in the North East Frontier by a sympathetic and non-bureaucratic approach towards them, but would seriously think of resisting Chinese communist infiltration. This can be done while bettering the economic and social conditions of the tribal peoples.

D. R. S. Vindicated

The Privileges Committee of the Travancore-Cochin Legislative Assembly upheld the Chief Minister, Mr. P. Govinda Menon, and came to the conclusion that the document containing the Madurai thesis adopted by the Communist Party of India was "not a false and fabricated" document as contended by the communist group in the Assembly. The conclusion was later endorsed by the Assembly by a large majority despite communist opposition.

The document in question is in the book *Communist Conspiracy at Madurai* published by the Democratic Research Service. The book published for the first time a secret document of the Communist Party revealing that, whatever its present tactics may be, its real objective is the overthrow of the existing Indian State.

There were loud protests by leaders of the party when the document was published that it was false. But when challenged they dared not take the matter to a court of law. The General Secretary of the Indian National Congress, Mr. Shriman Narayan, had made that suggestion, but the leaders of the party did not think it wise to accept it.

The verdict has once again gone against the communists in the Travancore-Cochin Assembly. The only thing that they can do now is to shower abuses on the Democratic Research Service which had the courage and boldness to secure the document and to publish it. The spokesman of the communist group in the Assembly called the Democratic Research Service "a well-known American agency serving American imperialist interests in India." The abuse is so patently vile and false that it will not deceive anybody.

These are excerpts from the *Freedom First* edition No.42 of November 1955. To also read other stories published 57 years ago in November 1955, a visit to the archives of www.freedomfirst.in would be rewarding.

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