

Freedom First

The Liberal Position

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செது சமுத்திரம்

A Heady Mix of
History,
Mythology &
Geology.

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By advancing spiritual reasons for their opposition, the religionists are doing a disservice to those whose opposition to the project is based on empirical evidence.

What is the Project?

The Project is to cut through Ram Sethu (to the religionists) or Adam's Bridge (to scientists, ecologists, economists, geologists et al), a physical underwater chain of coral islets linking India and Sri Lanka.

Why the Project

The Channel will link the Bay of Bengal to the Gulf of Munnar saving a day's journey for ships circumnavigating India benefiting the shipping industry and those dependent on the cargo these ships ferry. Much like the Suez and Panama Canals.

The People's Case

The Suez and Panama Canals are land-based i.e. the canals have been built by hacking through the land. The Sethu Channel will be created by dredging and deepening the shallow ocean bed. The Suez allows ships with a displacement of 150,000 tonnes to pass through the Suez. The Sethu Channel allows only ships with a maximum displacement of 30,000 tonnes. The Suez and the Panama canals cut sea voyage by almost half; the Sethu Channel may save ships a mere 24 hours.

The project was based on the assumption that it had to deal with heaps of sand, naturally deposited by the oceans. But just 15 feet beneath the sea level, workmen found sand deposits wedged between hard rocks. This information was not known before the project began!

In the Tsunami of December 2004 the waves entered the channel and encountered Ram Sethu. The chain of coral islets made of rock and sand deflected the tidal wave back into the open sea. The wave was forced to find a route around Sri Lanka and by the time it reached coastal Kerala on the other side, it had lost much of its potency. Coastal Kerala was saved. Widening the Channel by breaking through the coral islets will provide an alternative route for

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The Nuclear Deal - A Calculated Risk Will Accelerate Economic Growth

S. C. Sharma

After the nuclear explosion by India in 1998, the USA imposed sanctions against the transfer of sensitive equipment and technology. Impressed by India's progress in nuclear and allied fields and her track record of non-proliferation, USA realized that it was not possible to curtail India's nuclear activities and if USA insisted on India scrapping its nuclear weapons, she will be placing India at a serious disadvantage *vis a vis* China. As it is, the nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) had become hopelessly out of date as it was not able to curtail, check or even monitor the nuclear activities of a number of countries like China, Pakistan, India, Israel and Iran. By the Indo-US 123 Agreement, India will be able to get nuclear material and reactors from USA and other countries without signing the NPT, a concession which has not been extended to any other country. The facility of imported material, equipment and technology will be available only for peaceful purposes. India will not use it for military weapons. India has identified 8 out of 22 reactors for military use. India is free to use these 8 reactors for military purposes. The remaining reactors will be subject to IAEA inspection. India has been recognized as a *de facto* nuclear power.

By this Agreement, the two countries are committed to enlarge their strategic partnership to achieve their national security objectives. India commits itself to combat terrorism and the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). India has the right to reprocess nuclear fuel and can get high technology items like nuclear reactors, radars and super-computers. For a similar agreement China, had to sign a written assurance of non-proliferation.

Can the provisions of the Hyde Act cut off supplies of nuclear fuel if India carries out a nuclear test? At present, we have voluntarily placed a moratorium on further tests. It may become necessary in the future to meet a changed security environment. Each party can terminate the agreement at one year's notice. A non-hindrance clause protects India from a sudden cut off. By conserving our own resources of nuclear material, we can continue our civil and military programmes without any breakdown. It may be further noted that the US Supreme Court has ruled that when a treaty and a legislative act are inconsistent, the one enacted later will override the other.

The deal will pave the way for nuclear energy and catapult the Indian economy into high growth. The existing capacity of 130,000 MW including captive units is inadequate for current needs as is evident from the power cuts for domestic and industrial users. Through indigenous efforts, nuclear energy has contributed only 3% of our energy against the planned 7%. The global average for nuclear powered electricity is 17% and in France it is 80%.

Do we need nuclear energy? Today, wind energy contributes about 5300 MW while the potential is 45000 MW. Wind power sites are away from user location and subject to seasonal variations. The transmission costs are high beyond a certain distance. Solar energy has not made much headway despite heavy government subsidy. Solar energy has the merit of being useful in the farm sector in isolated areas. The promise of free power in more than one state rules out any private industry or farmers venturing into it.

Hydroelectric power is clean and we have a potential of 45000 MW in the North-East. The human costs are high as can be seen from the oustees of Narmada and Ganga projects. A commitment by the Government can mitigate the misery of those who are displaced. It is doubtful that our bureaucratic process can be improved.

Thermal energy is a good choice. Coal stations can be built in shorter time and India has large resources of coal, though of low quality. Substantial investments are required to increase coal output. The one major snag is the pollution caused to the waterways and air. China is setting up a large number of coal fired power stations and the rivers are black. 5000 miners have died in a year in mine accidents in China. There have been frequent demonstrations by the villagers. The situation must be really bad if such protests occur in a communist country. There is a promise of clean coal technology. A study by the UN shows that the adoption of some of the clean coal energy technology may push up the cost of electricity by 40 to 90 per cent. Our requirements are large and we need to explore all energy sources, hydroelectric, coal and nuclear, both uranium and thorium based. Nuclear energy can contribute 20000 MW by 2020. The cost of nuclear energy should be compared with the likely costs of clean

The Nuclear Deal - A Calculated Risk

coal energy plants and the projected high costs of imported gas and crude oil.

Do we need foreign reactors when we have reliable indigenous technology? The fact is our own technology uses sequential process and it cannot be accelerated.

Source:

Non-hindrance clause in Agreement 123 and inability to accelerate indigenous nuclear programmes.- Dr Kakodkar's interview, India

Today, 27 August 2007

Economics of clean coal power plants and environmental degradation in China due to coal fires plants - Article in The Guardian, published in Hindustan Times, 31 August 2007

Agreement 113 controls Hyde Act - Ram Jethmalani, Hindustan Times 28 August

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It Will Pull India Backward

N. S. Venkataraman

The nuclear deal is being discussed as if it is only about Indo-American relationship or the dependability of USA as a long term partner. The more important issue is whether it is necessary to bind India to international controls despite India's resources and technological strength. If India can do without such a long term nuclear deal then India should opt out of it.

We also need to keep in mind at this stage as to what would be the level of investment required for buying several fuel reprocessing reactors and other equipment from abroad, the cost of acquiring technology, the recurring cost of inputs and the cost of spare parts. Having signed a binding agreement, India may not have much room for negotiating the price. The cost of nuclear power may ultimately become unacceptably high creating serious problems for the overall national economy.

A careful examination of various aspects would clearly indicate that India can do without this nuclear deal and would not suffer in its absence.

Indian Nuclear Power Scenario

India's power generating capacity as on January 2007 was 1,28,435 MW comprising hydrothermal (coal, gas and oil based), nuclear and renewable sources.

Generating capacity:

Sector	Unit (MW)	Percent
Hydro	34,110	26.56
Thermal	84,234	65.58
Nuclear	3,900	3.04
Renewable	6,191	4.82
Total	1,28,435	100

It can be seen from the above data that India's nuclear power capacity represents only 3 percent of the total power capacity in the country.

Even globally, nuclear power contributes only about 17 percent to the world's electricity demand.

If the target of the proposed nuclear deal was to step up the share of nuclear power in India to as high as 17% in the next decade, it should be noted that equivalent quantity of power can be generated even without resorting to the nuclear deal, by exploiting alternate sources of power that are potentially available to the country.

Enough Fuel for Nuclear Power

For the production of nuclear power, the fuel (fissile material) required can be uranium-233 or uranium-235 or Plutonium-239. Besides, there are other fissionable material which can be converted into fissile material, such as uranium-238 (which generates Plutonium-239). The above fuel are produced from natural uranium and at the present use rate, there are 50 years worth of low cost known uranium reserves remaining in the country.

In advanced countries, the fuel used in nuclear power plants is reprocessed, so that it can be reused that would provide inexhaustible source of fuel for nuclear power projects for all time to come. As of now India does not have either the facility for reprocessing nor commercially proven technology to set up reprocessing facilities.

At present, Indian demand for natural uranium is 540 tonnes per annum and the present production of natural uranium in the country is only 280 tonnes per annum. As a result, nuclear power projects are currently

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operating at low capacity utilisation level, which is a matter of concern.

To overcome the shortage of uranium, the Department of Atomic Energy is working on plans to set up new uranium processing plants in Banduhurang in Singhbhum district of Jharkhand; Seripally in the Nalgonda district and Tummalapalle in the Cudappah district of Andhra Pradesh; Mawthabah in the West Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya and at Chatrapur in the Ganjam district of Orissa.

The Government of India has very recently approved the proposal for setting up a uranium mining and processing plant at Tummalapally in Cudappah district in Andhra Pradesh at a cost of Rs.1106.29 crores. The setting up of this mine will meet the uranium fuel requirement of the nuclear power programme. The mine is likely to be commissioned within thirty months and the processing plant in 36 months. The government of India is also considering a proposal to set up a facility at Paradeep in coastal Orissa to extract uranium from waste material generated by two fertilizer units in the vicinity.

Therefore, it can be seen that India is unlikely to run out of uranium for the next fifty years, even without the reprocessing facility to be acquired through the nuclear deal.

Thorium as Alternate Fuel

India has large reserves of thorium which is a source of alternate nuclear fuel for power generation. Thorium 232 generates uranium 233 which can be used as fuel for nuclear power.

India is on the verge of setting up the world's first advanced Heavy Water Reactor, which uses thorium as fuel. India has the design and technology to install a 300 MW thorium-based reactor immediately. This would be a major technological achievement for the country, as thorium based reactors would see the completion of India's nuclear cycle. The Director of Indira Gandhi Atomic Research Centre, Kalpakkam said recently that the project would be taken up in the Eleventh Plan and would be completed within seven years.

With the use of Thorium as fuel, India's dependence on uranium will become considerably less and India can comfortably do without the fuel reprocessing facility that Manmohan Singh seeks to bring to India through the nuclear deal.

Renewable sources of energy

All over the world, it is well accepted that renewable energy is the best source of power in the future.

Wind power is one of the most viable renewable energy sources for power generation in India. India has installed wind power capacity of 5340.6 MW and ranks fourth in the world after Germany, USA and Spain. As far as wind resource potential is concerned, the wind energy potential in India has been assessed at 45,000 MW, assuming 3 percent land availability for setting up wind farms.

India also has considerable hydroelectric power potential still untapped. Very recently, new hydel power projects have been announced in Arunachal Pradesh to produce 25000 MW, that would be set up in the next eight years. With the involvement of the private sector in the hydroelectric power projects of Arunachal Pradesh, things are moving fast now and generation of 2710 MW of power by end of the Eleventh Plan is expected.

What we need is pride and confidence

Recently, speaking at a function at the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research at Kalpakkam, Dr. Georges Vendryes, Hon. Executive Vice President of the French Atomic Commission said that India has unique expertise in the nuclear power field and pointed out India's expertise to handle the kind of fuel used in fast breeder reactors, which produce more fissile material even as they use them.

When India and France parted ways after India's nuclear test in 1974, India lost the supply of enriched uranium from France and other countries. But, Indian scientists overcame the constraints to a large extent by developing technology to use mixed uranium and plutonium carbide fuel. This speaks enormously about the capability and confidence levels of the Indian scientists.

India and Indian scientists should not be reduced to the level of mere recipients of technology but provide them the opportunity to generate the technology themselves and supply to other countries in the world.

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It is Good For India

T. S. Gopi Rethinaraj

The intense domestic debate since July 2005 on various issues concerning the India-US nuclear deal did help the Indian government in its negotiations. But political shortsightedness and misplaced concerns can prevent the country from seizing the opportunity to end the "nuclear apartheid" that it is a victim of. It is necessary to realise that the single country exemption accorded to India in the context of an international treaty is unprecedented. Ratan Tata, the doyen of Indian industry, indicated in a recent television interview that the nuclear deal "is in many ways the best possible thing that has happened to India in a long while," adding, "the only people happy to see this not happening are probably Pakistan and China." So why the opposition to an initiative regarded as a major foreign policy success?

Among the voices of opposition to the deal, the communist hypocrisy stands out. From being long-time opponents of India's nuclear weapons program, the communists are now masquerading as bomb lovers and ultra nationalists. Indian communists have been enthusiastic supporters of Soviet and Chinese bombs as essential tools for defeating imperialism, but have always viewed the Indian bomb as threat to regional peace.

The current worry of the Left seems not really about the nuclear deal but about other issues involved, especially India's growing ties and strategic alliance with the United States. Most Indian newspapers have charged the Left as serving as platform for promoting China's national interest. While it is very difficult to establish whether the Indian communists are actually taking orders from Beijing on this issue, their stance serves China's interest well. Moreover, killing the deal within India will save the Chinese government from huge embarrassment of being a dissenting minority when the issue comes up for discussion at the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). With almost every major player in the NSG cartel indicating support for the initiative, the Chinese have been conspicuous by their official silence on the issue since July 2005. Instead they have used their controlled media to express their anti-India views and mindset.

So, despite the Left's claims that their position is based on independent assessment they have effectively

converted themselves as agents of Chinese interests. Also, by exploiting Muslim discontent over U.S. policies in the Middle East, the Left is reaching out to Islamists, giving a communal colour to the nuclear deal. While the communists' position and attitude is in keeping with their political and ideological preferences, the shrill campaign by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will undo some of its own foreign policy achievements. By pursuing opportunistic politics on the nuclear deal issue, the BJP is only helping the Left's cause for which it may pay a dear electoral price. For a party struggling with identity, organizational and leadership crises, finding a common cause with the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government on the nuclear issue would have helped restore its dented image. The BJP's argument that the deal constrains nuclear testing sounds dishonest given that the unilateral testing moratorium and willingness to commit to fissile material cut-off was announced when it was in power.

Others oppose the deal due to some genuine and many misplaced concerns. Individuals formerly associated with the nuclear establishment have expressed concern about how future US administrations will interpret and apply their domestic laws including the Hyde Act. They argue that India should have ironclad guarantees to prevent fuel supply disruption in the event it conducts a test in future, say 20-25 years from now. However, this long time horizon is irrelevant because it is very difficult to predict the geopolitical landscape - and therefore the usefulness of guarantees - so far into the future. Indeed, it is India's growing economic and political clout that is likely to help weather the impact of testing.

Another criticism levelled against the government is that the negotiations were conducted by a small coterie chosen by the prime minister, and for most part, Parliament and the public were kept in the dark. While this is true, it is par for the course: from Nehru to Vajpayee to Manmohan Singh, nuclear policy making has always been conducted in secrecy by a small clique in the prime minister's secretariat. At least in the case of the current deal there has been an extensive public debate in Parliament and the

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Point Counter Point

Ashok Karnik

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

Ramsetu Again

1) The Sangh Parivar has again raised the issue of the Sethusamudram project. It has launched a nation wide agitation against its implementation. It claims that the Ram Setu (Adam's Bridge) was built 17 lakh years ago as described in the Ramayana; that it is linked to India's heritage and the Government has no right to damage it for whatever reasons, economic or otherwise. Subramaniam Swamy has challenged the project in the Supreme Court. The opponents also claim that the Setu protects the coast from tsunami, its destruction would cause ecological damage, fishermen will be hit badly and the thorium deposits on the coast would get depleted.

The secular orthodoxy is bound to bemoan the government's hasty exit from the world of non-believers ... the humanists will say that a country's Law Minister has no business testifying that the "existence of Ram cannot be doubted ...

"But once again, this textbook dogma misses the pulse of the people and pushes religion and secularism into enemy positions in a forced war between faith and modernity. As a matter of fact, the conflict is an entirely manufactured one. Most Indians believe that they are able to be both religious and rational, and happily so."

- Barkha Dutt in the *Hindustan Times*, September 15)

1) Sangh Parivar's opposition is based on a mixture of scientific assertions and faith. Faith has no need to respond to questions like Lord Rama's origin about 17 lakh years when human civilization is itself traced back at the most to 10000 years back; like why any army would build a 2-1/2 km wide bridge, which is the width of Ram Setu? Geologically, such sand bars are common between two landmasses. The NASA pictures do not prove anything except that a sandbar/bridge exists between India and Srilanka. However, religious beliefs transcend science and logic, and are not open to judicial interpretation.

The Archeological Survey of India while giving an affidavit in the Supreme Court indicated that there is no scientific evidence to prove that the Adam's Bridge is man-made. Unfortunately, it went a step further and questioned the historicity of Ramayana, a trap it should have avoided. It is suicidal to attack people's faith that is based on centuries of cultural heritage. It has given a handle to the Sangh Parivar to take its agitation to a different emotional level. The Government has had to backtrack and issue a revised affidavit. All this was so avoidable! A cause may be lost in the debate over the existence of God!

As a sidelight to the issue, let us see whom the Government sacrifices for submitting such a damaging affidavit in the Supreme Court. It is improbable that the ASI on its own prepared the document. Ambika Soni's Ministry and the Law Ministry are certainly responsible for vetting any document filed in the Court.

"Kaoboy of RAW"

2) The book "*Kaoboy of RAW - Down Memory Lane*" has stirred interest because laymen are keen to know the cloak and dagger activities of intelligence agencies. Curiosity is the all-important feeling. The book provides titillating details of various developments, like India having a mole in the Pak establishment in 1971 who provided Pak Air Force's plans for a pre-emptive attack on Indian airfields in the western sector just before the Bangladesh war, West German intelligence about the visit of LTTE bomb-making experts to Tamil Nadu prior to the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, existence of a French mole in the PMO, CBI's slipshod investigation into the Bofors deal, etc. All these are salivating details, which would never have seen the light of the day without exposure by an insider like B. Raman.

2) The benefits of such *exposes* are indeed many but the motive of the author needs to be clear: Is he trying to bring about improvement in the functioning of intelligence agencies? Has he magnified the trivial or attributed to himself undeserving glory? Raman has a good reputation and his bonafide need not be doubted. Even then there is a possibility that bits of information that are presented as vital may not be as crucial as made out. Examination of such claims normally reveals that the secrets are not as earth shaking as touted by the publishers of the books.

A more pertinent point is whether such disclosures should be encouraged. What price is the Oath of Secrecy? An officer of Raman's caliber may be able to avoid causing

author of this book. It can be argued that besides providing interesting information, such books draw attention to the flaws in our intelligence machinery, which the agencies are prone to sweep under the carpet; such revelations should force the agencies to become accountable.

(Please see page 15 for a review of this book)

Coalition Dharma

3) Since the defeat of the Congress (I) in 1989, India is faced with the problem of no party getting a clean majority. Coalition politics is almost a given after any election since then. Although not the most desirable situation, Coalition Governments have served the purpose of having a functional administration in place. There is merit in having coalition governments as political parties learn to live with each other despite differences. In a mature democracy, this ensures comparatively trouble free governance and avoidance of repeated, futile elections. As a working arrangement, it is an acceptable alternative to political chaos. Adherence to a Common Minimum Programme can prevent pulls in different directions.

damage to the intelligence machinery by being very selective but similar endeavors by lesser officials could be disastrous. Not every one tempted by the disclosure bug can be relied upon to be discrete.

3) Small parties inside or outside coalition governments have rendered the governments ineffective. Governments led by Charan Singh, V.P. Singh, Chandra Shekhar, Dev Gowda and Gujral all fell due to the failure of the 'coalition dharma'. NDA and UPA governments too have suffered from the obstructionist policies of their allies. The shenanigans of a Mamta Bannerjee, Jaylalita or the Left parties make non-sense of the notion of governance. Is coalition politics no longer a satisfactory answer? The country is faced with this dilemma as the Left threatens to pull the plug on the UPA Government over the Indo-US nuclear deal. The crisis may be averted temporarily but this kind of tightrope walk creates constant uncertainty which is not good for the country. The lesson is clear for the people. Elect a government that is strong and stable.

Celebrity Prosecution

4) It is generally believed that the rich and the powerful never get punished in this country. They manage to defy the law. No politician has been so far convicted for corruption despite dozens of cases pending in courts for years. Lalu Prasad Yadav and Jaylalita are ever immune from the law because of their political clout. For others, either the police mess up their investigation so that cases fail in courts or, even if convicted by lower courts, appeals in higher courts are kept pending so that the guilty do not get punished. The legal system seems to be ineffective against the rich and the powerful.

4) The trend is possibly changing. After the outcry over the rich getting the benefit of the legal system, a few cases of celebrities being convicted of criminal offences have been publicized. Unfortunately, instead of celebrating the victory of law over lucre, people are pleading on behalf of the celebrities extolling their virtues. The relatives of such convicts claim that they suffer because of the celebrity bias; that there is a prejudice against the celebrity. It is true that the media gives unfair publicity to involvement of celebrities in such cases but once the courts give their verdict, it is wrong to complain of bias. The cases of Sanjay Dutt and Salman Khan make one wonder what the people really want – immunity for their heroes or equal justice for all?

Corruption in India

Will the continuing integration of India into the world economy diminish or exacerbate graft? Ravi Ramamurti (Northeastern University - USA) looks at the issue. He argues: The paradox is that even though India's faster growth in recent years is the result of fewer controls, most managers would tell you that corruption has increased...The explanation is that faster growth has created new choke points at which politicians and bureaucrats can extract payments... Faster growth has also raised the economic cost to firms of delays in public approvals, giving officials that much more 'held-up' leverage over private investors.

From the 'Private Sector Development Blog' cited by *Mint*, September 3

J. B. D'Souza R.I.P.

What Mattered to Him was Public Service

"A letter in *The Times of India* of September 7 2007) was titled "An Exceptional Man". It said some warmly felt things about my father: "Visionary but practical, unassuming but bold", and this final thought - "his respect for subordinates was exceptional." Late on September 9, a 78-year-old man rang our doorbell. It was U.V. Joshi, the writer of that letter. He had walked the 2 kms from Bandra station, searching for our home. He had come to remember, with us, my father: J.B D'Souza, "JB" or "Bain" to those who knew him. There's a measure of the affection Joshi had for JB."



(1921-2007)

Dilip D'Souza

At the funeral on September 2, two friends of JB spoke about him to the gathering. One was the structural engineer Shirish Patel, who worked with J.B.D'Souza on the New Bombay project in the early '70s. The other was the journalist Naresh Fernandes, editor of "*Time Out Mumbai*"

"I have known Bain for not much less than 50 years. Looking back and thinking about all the conversations we had and the things he said to me, the one thing that stands out is what he said when I joined CIDCO.

"He had just been appointed its Managing Director, and had persuaded me to leave my practice and join CIDCO in a position where I reported directly to him. On the day when I first joined he met me, shook my hand and said 'Welcome to public service'.

"It doesn't sound like anything much, but there was something in the way he said it, something that gave it an emotional charge. Because, for him, public service was what life was all about. Being a government servant was almost incidental. What mattered was public service.

"He wasn't afraid of fighting with government. In the days of Prohibition, when common citizens could get a liquor permit, there was a rule that government servants could not apply for such a permit. Bain filed a Writ Petition challenging that; for which he got a punishment posting to one of the more remote and backward districts of Maharashtra. He won that Petition, and civil servants, like all other citizens, could apply for liquor permits. He liked his evening drink, but the interesting thing is that while that Writ Petition was being fought, and the rule that

Government servants could not consume alcohol was in force, he did not take a drink.

"He had innumerable achievements in his long career to his credit. But I never heard him look back and reminisce or boast about them. Till the end, he was always looking forward. He had been ill on and off for a year and a half, but only recently filed a Writ Petition against the Anti-Corruption Bureau for not taking action against MHADA officials who had been named in a recent Court judgement as having issued false certificates regarding tenancy rights.

Shirish Patel

"Over the years, evidence of the deep impression Bain has left on our city - decades after he retired from government - is still remarkably visible. Only recently, a colleague reporting a story on the public transport system came back from an interview at the BEST offices marvelling at how the undertaking's employees were still talking about the fine work Bain had done when he headed the organisation.

"As I grew to know the D'Souzas, I was struck by how Bain's commitment to public life placed as much emphasis on the second part of the phrase as on the first. He didn't treat the public as a large, faceless entity but also recognised the humanity and individuality of life - and he never failed to acknowledge the frailty and quirkiness of what it is to be human.

"A few months ago, when the Bandra police were arresting courting couples at the Bandstand, Bain sent me a note pointing out that the police were merely indulging in blackmail. "Which one of us hasn't had a slightly embarrassing relationship we'd rather have kept hidden?" he wrote, making me chuckle at the very unlikely image of Bain's lanky frame being hauled away by the police and led into a Black Maria.

"Along with his recognition of what it is to be human was his suspicion of pomposity. Bain is the only person I know who so abhorred formality that even his children and grandchildren called him by his first name. In his memoir, '*No Trumpets and Bugle: Recollections of an Unrepentant Babu*', he tells of an official dinner at Murli Deora's home in 1977 when Jonas Salk came to

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Hot Air Balloons from the Red Fort

Sharad Joshi

Dr. Manmohan Singh now Prime Minister, speaking from the ramparts of the Red Fort on 15 August 2007, appeared to be retracing his steps back to Nehruvian precepts

Dr. Manmohan Singh, in his incarnation as finance minister under Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao led the 'U' turn away from the Nehruvian era of licence-permit- quota Raj and began the process of economic reforms in the direction of liberalization and globalization.

Dr. Manmohan Singh now Prime Minister, speaking from the ramparts of the Red Fort on 15 August 2007, appeared to be retracing his steps back to Nehruvian precepts:

- Industry as the vanguard of development,
- Priority to urban development,
- Priority to institutions of higher education.

As the multi-coloured balloons soared towards the clouds at the end of the Prime Minister's address; a Minister of State asked me: "What did you think of the speech?" I turned my index finger in the direction of the balloons and replied: "So much hot air!"

During times of crises, the media talks of damage control. The Prime Minister's address from the Red Fort was preceded by damage provocation in the media. There were rumours in the press that the Prime Minister, after having put the Left in their place on the Nuclear treaty, was now going to turn full attention towards sectors where the UPA performance was lacklustre. The Prime Minister, it was a rumoured, would deliver an equally historic package to resolve the agricultural stalemate once for all.

Had it not been for these high expectations floated by the media, the Prime Minister's address from the ramparts of the Red Fort would have passed off unnoticed as an exercise in mediocrity. Of course, there was a reference to the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, the "Bharat Nirman" facelift exercise, the doubling of

agricultural credit and the stale package of Rs.25,000 crores announced two months back. That impressed no one. A committee of the Congress party as also a working group in the Prime Minister's Office after studying the impact of the various agricultural packages found that they have just disappeared into thin air. The farmers in the field knew that as usual, the money went where it was designed to go - the bureaucratic, the cooperative and the political pipelines that are being refurbished in preparation for the General Elections of 2009.

The Prime Minister offered concrete sops to the weaker sections, the handicapped and even the invalid, but had nothing to offer to the able-bodied hard-working farmers who made India self-sufficient in food in spite of the government.

The Rural Perspective



It is remarkable that one of the more prominent Marathi dailies has editorially compared Dr. Manmohan Singh with Prime Minister

Jawaharlal Nehru on scores of clean image, integrity and mannerism that represent the best combination of the Indian tradition and western upbringing. One can only say that there was no Italian accent in Nehru's Hindi, no combining of separate consonants and no splitting of the joint consonants so characteristic of a Punjabi. There was none of the lyrical and poetic quality of either Nehru's speeches nor the spirit with which Nehru used to energize people. It was a typical bureaucrat's report - steeped in monotonous insipidity. Of Nehru's brilliance, there was none. On the other hand, the speech was replete with some of the ideas for which Nehru became infamous - the economic blunders of the Nehruvian epoch.

Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation who anointed Nehru as his political heir was, essentially, an anarchist who was very skeptical about the worthwhileness

of the institution of government and attached the highest importance to the right of the individual to decide his own destiny.

Agriculture, for Mahatma Gandhi, was the centerpiece of all development. For Nehru, agriculture was an unfortunate reality he could not ignore. It was the source of manpower, wage goods and raw material that were necessary for industrial development that was so dear to his heart. It was industrial development that was supposed to trigger agricultural prosperity.

For the Mahatma again, the village was the centerpiece in his economic plans, not the towns. The education of the children from villages was so dear to him that he designed a whole system of "basic education" for the purpose; Nehruvians had a penchant for institutions of higher education leaving the village primary schools to be without blackboards, teachers and even students.

Dr. Manmohan Singh, in his present incarnation as a Prime minister under Sonia Gandhi, is putting the cart before the horse. For him, industrial development is the main vehicle that will provide employment to the surplus population in agriculture; a solution to the problem of farmers' penury that drives them to commit suicide; these farmers should have a supplementary income not from land but from non-agricultural jobs and occupations.

Again, for Dr. Manmohan Singh, industrial development is mainly an urban phenomenon and not something that takes place in the countryside on the basis of the agricultural surplus generated there. The Japanese model has no relevance for the learned Dr. Singh. The Japanese government followed policies of deliberately hiked agricultural prices that generated the primary capital that gave birth to small-scale industries, which blossomed into the giant industrial houses today. In Nehruvian economics, the surplus from agriculture has to be taken away to urban centers, which are the cradle of industry. The farmers will benefit from the secondary effects of industrial prosperity. The villagers cannot sustain any worthwhile lifestyle. The entire infrastructure of roads, power, electricity, education and health had to be provided to them by the government. Improving the rural infrastructure is a good hobbyhorse; on the other hand, providing modern infrastructure to the cities is an instrument of industrial development as also accommodating displaced farmers coming to the cities. Converting Mumbai into Shanghai and providing modern infrastructure in the lesser towns form the core of development plans in the UPA era.

Dr. Manmohan Singh also reeled out impressive

figures of new IITs, ITIs, IIMs, Universities and all that the government has plans to establish.

The Prime Minister did give the farmers that get displaced by various projects of industrial development a promise of satisfactory rehabilitation. He did not spell out any scheme in detail for the purpose. Obviously, in the learned doctor's mind industrial development must necessarily result in the displacement of agricultural population not only from the vocation but also from their traditional habitats.

MR. SHARAD JOSHI MP, Founder, Shetkari Sanghatana and president, Swatantra Bharat Party. Email: sharad.mah@nic.in.

Liberal Budget 2008-2009

"After producing four Liberal Budgets for the years 2004/05, 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08 the Project for Economic Education and the INDIAN LIBERAL GROUP have announced there will be no Liberal Budget for 2008-2009. In a joint statement the two organisations have informed us that they hope to be back with one for 2009/10. The reasons are both intellectual and material. The Drafting Group is of the view that there is need to assess the impact of the Liberal critique and the recommendations made in the four Liberal Budgets, on government policy, in terms of what has been done so far and what remains to be done. Whether there is need for a change in strategy and approach. If so what. This is the intellectual part. The material part is financial stringency. The organisations' funds are virtually exhausted and we do not believe in fiscal indulgence!

The Drafting Group is convinced that the Liberal Budget exercise must continue and has decided to take advantage of the situation to take a strategic pause for the reasons mentioned above. At the same time they have decided to prepare a detailed note examining the four Liberal Budgets released so far, their strengths and weaknesses and to what extent there is either divergence or convergence in government's economic policy. This will be published as a supplement in the December issue of *Freedom First*.

Meanwhile 'Be with us. We will return soon' says the statement."



Cornucopia

Firoze Hirjikaka

Equal Justice for All?

In India, the concept of equal justice for all is so ludicrous as to be pathetic.

A number of people are expressing smug satisfaction at the recent stiff jail sentences handed down to Sanjay Dutt and Salman Khan. Platitudes like "this proves that even the rich and famous do not escape justice" (one of the more ridiculous untruths that occasionally gain currency) are flying thick and fast. These idealists need to get over their euphoria and look at the hard facts. In India, the concept of equal justice for all is so ludicrous as to be pathetic.

Let us consider dispassionately the 'heinous' crimes committed by the two actors. The first conclusion drawn is that neither of them had any truly evil intent. For sure, it was wrong – and somewhat foolish – for Dutt to procure and keep automatic rifles at his home, but I very much doubt that he did it with the purpose of inflicting terror and mayhem on innocent bystanders. True, he may have been deluded, by the prevailing atmosphere at that time, but the overriding consideration would have been the ability to procure an AK 47; a licence denied to most of his fellow citizens. It would also be in keeping with the macho image his screen persona had cultivated. The reality is that not once were the weapons fired in anger, nor anyone harmed.

Salman Khan was also, perhaps, a victim of the hype created around him by his adoring fans. Hunting was a sport cherished by our erstwhile maharajas; and he had the means to indulge in it. It is a moot point whether he even knew that his action was against the law. And as for consequences, what was the life of a few animals – even if they were on the endangered list – in a land where human life is absurdly cheap; and where thousands die every year as a result of starvation and violence; among a plethora of causes?

It would, perhaps, be unfair to impugn any ulterior motives to the honourable justices who handed down the sentences, but one cannot help feeling that there was a certain amount of grandstanding involved. The accused,

after all, are national icons and the judges were probably anxious to show their peers – and the general public – that they were not overawed by the Bollywood star status of the individuals they were passing judgment on. Their zeal may have led to a degree of over-compensation.

Don't get me wrong. I am not an advocate for either of the actors – and who am I to judge if the sentences are fair or not? I would even applaud the judges if I could be convinced that the concept of equal justice for all was prevalent in this country.

But is it? What about the multitudes of crimes perpetrated by our public officials on a routine basis – crimes that result in untold hardship, even death – to thousands of our citizens? What happens to those who pocket the relief money intended for victims of natural and man-made disasters; often forcing the deprived recipients to starve or commit suicide? What happens to the food adulterers who condemn thousands of innocents to years of medical complications? What happens to those politicians who regularly loot our tax rupees for their own selfish ends – or those who saddle many parts of the country with an incompetent and corrupt police force, because postings are determined not on the basis of qualification for the job, but how large a bribe is paid?

The answer, in two words, is not much. Yes, once in a while, some get caught and – mainly due to adverse publicity in the media – suspensions and transfers are announced, accompanied by totally insincere moralizing by the powers that be. But that is where the matter ends. Very few of the culprits ever see the inside of a jail cell; and most are quietly reinstated in their former positions after public memory fades.

This, then, is the true measure of justice in India – and so it will remain. What hope is there, when our law-makers are themselves the law-breakers? So feel good for a time. Trust me, it won't last.

The Left parties have made a big issue of India's foreign policy autonomy in the debate on the nuclear agreement with the US. They will soon have to come to terms with the reality that while the US is seeking a revision of the global nuclear order to accommodate India, Beijing has come in the way.

Professor S. Rajaratnam, School of International Studies, Singapore in *The Indian Express*, July 31

A Powerless Powerhouse

The recent news report about the arrest of suspected terrorist mastermind, Abu Hamza, in Bangladesh is encouraging news. However, if past experience is anything to go by, any celebrations by our law-enforcing and intelligence agencies would be premature indeed. It is no secret that Bangladesh has scant love lost for its giant neighbour to the West; and there is likely to be an insurmountable divide between Hamza's arrest and his extradition to India. The recently notorious headless-chicken syndrome comes to mind.

The dichotomy here is that there should not be. Forget the lamentable fact that Bangladesh has displayed little gratitude to the nation that helped it come into being. In every sphere – economic, military and geopolitical – India is miles ahead of its eastern neighbour. A quiet word – and an implied message – in the right ears of the Bangladesh powers-that-be should be sufficient to ensure that Hamza is promptly dispatched to India. The façade

of a formal extradition treaty is irrelevant here. Do you think the United States bothered about extradition treaties when it was transporting terror suspects across national borders to Guantanamo? The whole point of being a powerhouse – as India claims to be – is that you are in a position to use your clout when the occasion demands it. Diplomatic niceties have no role to play in affairs of realpolitik. They are a luxury India cannot afford – particularly when it has been the second largest victim of terrorist attacks in the world.

There is a time and a place for principles and for *Gandhigiri*. For sure, they produce a warm, fuzzy sensation within our hearts. But the time is not now – not when terrorist attacks are being routinely being perpetrated on us, with near impunity. There is not much point in our country being a powerhouse, if it is almost embarrassed to use its power. Will we ever learn?

The Fundamentalists' Assault on Taslima Nasreen



Dr. N. Inniah is seen in this picture resisting the assault on Taslima Nasreen. Though this picture has been splashed in many papers and journals but in none of them (at least those I read) was his name mentioned in the caption. Dr. Inniah deserves the applause of all freedom lovers for his courage not only in defending Taslima Nasreen but the courage in inviting her to Hyderabad for the book release function. He has been a long time friend and supporter of *Freedom First*. We requested him for a brief report of the incident. This is his report:

"The Center for Inquiry India published two books and invited Taslima Nasreen to Hyderabad to release the Telugu versions of the two books *Wild Swans* by Jung Chang (banned in China) and *Shodh*, by Taslima Nasreen (banned in Bangladesh). They were translated into Telugu by Ms. Venigalla Komala, director of CFI India. The release function was held on 9 September at the Press Club, Hyderabad. Mr. M. Nageswararao, principal Eenadu Journalism School presided over the function..

The translator Ms Komala narrated how the contents of the books influenced her. In her brief speech Taslima stressed the need to implement equal rights for women as envisaged in the UN Declaration on Human Rights. She expressed her desire to stay in India as she felt at home with Bengali culture and language. Her approach to the freedom of women cut across all religions

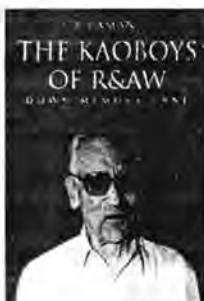
The whole function was completed in an hour. It was a low profile function without much publicity open to invitees and the press. Somehow the news reached some muslim fundamentalists and three Majlis legislators of the Andhra Pradesh Assembly gatecrashed with their armed security guards and 25 rowdy followers. They invaded the stage raised ugly slogans, abused Taslima and threw flower vases and books at her. They threatened to kill her and sat at the door for few minutes. They then broke window panes threw chairs and created pandemonium. In the scuffle Dr. Inniah and a press photographer were injured.

The police arrived after half an hour and arrested the fundamentalists, presented them in court and released them on bail. These included Akbaruddin Owasi, leader of the Majlis who declared to the media that they would like to kill Taslima without regrets.

You can visit Dr. Inniah's website at <http://inniahn.tripod.com>

SVR

Book Review



THE KAoboys OF R&AW: DOWN MEMORY LANE by B. Raman • Published by Lancer Publishers & Distributors, 2/42 (B) Sarvapriya Vihar, New Delhi 110016 • Year of Publication: 2007 • Pages: 304 • Price: Rs.795

Reviewed by Mr. A. V. Karnik, formerly Deputy Director, Intelligence Bureau, Government of India.

A book on India's external intelligence agency is uncommon and raises expectations. Raman has written it in a fluid, narrative style, very uncommon for civil servants.

The book has its strengths and weaknesses. It is obvious that Raman is authoritative about events he was connected with and slides over matters he was not directly involved with but could not avoid including in the book because of their importance. Raman's revelations help remove the persistent doubts that our intelligence services are useless; failure of intelligence is a common cry of anguish whenever something goes wrong in the country. Raman gives glimpses of a few things done right by an intelligence agency. Whether such *expose* are to be welcomed is a matter of debate.

The book has to face two criteria: Credibility and the syndrome of self-centrality. There are always doubts if all that is claimed is true because there is no other proof available. Secondly, all biographical authors believe that the world revolved around events unfolded by them. Raman's credibility is not in doubt. It is the second aspect that can be examined as we progress through his versions of important events.

Raman emphasises the crucial role played by the people of the then East Pakistan in their liberation struggle; Indira Gandhi, the Indian army and the R&AW played a secondary, complementary role. Thanks, Mr. Raman, for keeping the record straight after Rahul Gandhi's diplomatic *faux pas* in claiming credit for the Gandhi family in the liberation of Bangladesh! Even then Raman claims that R&AW came in for all praise in the international intelligence community for its achievements in Bangladesh. R&AW officers then came to be known as Kaoboys, so named after the founder of R&AW, RN Kao. Whether R&AW played a seminal role in Bangladesh is open to question, particularly by army officers.

A sensational disclosure made by Raman is that R&AW had a mole in General Yahya Khan's office who gave information about Pak Air Force's plans for a pre-emptive strike on Western Indian airfields in November-December 1971. Many defence experts question

this claim on the grounds that the mole, if he existed, had failed to give information on many more important developments. The objection is not valid since a source does not necessarily have access to all information. Considering that Pakistan was a country split down the middle then, it is quite possible that a disaffected person opted to help India in the battle for Bangladesh's liberation. Intelligence was pouring in from all over East Pakistan. Whether R&AW's input turned out to be vital for the Indian Air Force has not been commented upon by any IAF source. Since there is so little archival material available in the country for research, the impact of such intelligence is difficult to assess. However, R&AW needs to be congratulated over the intelligence coup.

Raman's explanation for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan is rather feeble. The Soviet Union is supposed to have acted in self-defence to protect its underbelly from US designs and it was hoped that the occupation would be short-lived. One wonders if Indira Gandhi's lukewarm response to the Soviet invasion was based on R&AW's above assessment or vice versa. The book leaves the impression that a lot remains to be stated. For example, it is alleged that IB and R&AW officers advised and guided Rajiv Gandhi in covering up the trail of the Bofors deal although Rajiv Gandhi had done nothing that needed covering up. How should such politically oriented activities of intelligence organisations be stopped is a question that remains unanswered. Similarly, there is no comment on whether formation of R&AW by bifurcating IB has produced desired results; or has it ended up as an empire building exercise by rival intelligence bosses?

Interestingly, Raman reveals the amoral nature of intelligence work. While the CIA was assisting R&AW against China, it was aiding Pakistan against India to ensure that there was no further division of Pakistan; R&AW was getting some cooperation from the French SDECE but it did not prevent the French from running a mole in India's PMO; R&AW was working with the Soviet KGB and the Afghan KHAD and at the same time it had links with the Israeli Mossad. R&AW had a liaison with the Chinese MSS (Ministry of State Security) too. In intelligence work there are no marriages between agencies

cont'd. on p.15

The Sethusamudram Channel Project (cont'd. from p.1)

for the Indonesian tsunamis to funnel energy into the channel. On the other hand it is possible to realign the channel without cutting through Ram Sethu.

The rocks below Ram Sethu are really very hard. Therefore the project managers decided to blast the rocks. This will destroy the area's fragile ecology. It is to prevent this blasting with explosives that Dr. Subramanian Swamy filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court. And it is in response to this writ that the State filed its stupid affidavit which hurt religious beliefs and provided a handle for Hindutva organisations and parties to make political capital.

At the time of going to press the State has filed fresh affidavits and has asked the Supreme Court for three months "to re-examine the entire matter."

Will the project result in economic prosperity for those living in the coastal areas of the Indian peninsula? Ask the fisherman and they will simply laugh it off. With the cost escalating from 2600 crores to 3,500 crores it is, however, no laughing matter for our politicians!

This brief summary is based on an excellent piece of investigative journalism by Mint correspondent Priyanka P. Narain. For the full report visit www.livemint.com/sethuproject. Highly recommended.

J. B. D'Souza R.I.P. (cont'd. from p.9)

Bombay. Because the seating arrangements weren't strictly according to protocol, a state minister got stuck at the end of the table, away from the guest of honour. He threw a tantrum and barely touched the food, blaming Bain for the mix-up. But Bain bore the minister's complaints in his usual, sanguine way and recalled how Churchill had dealt with a similar situation. 'Arrange them as you think proper,' Churchill had said: 'Those who matter won't mind, and those who mind won't matter.'

"As we recall Bain's remarkable, joyous life today, that's the message I'll remember with a smile: that we should keep our sights on what's important, but acknowledge human complexity – and laugh it off."

Naresh Fernandes

We at *Freedom First* were in awe of him. Used to

firing our guns at a largely corrupt bureaucracy, J.B.D'Souza represented our role model of a Bureaucrat who not only did not ask "What's in it for me" but asked instead "What can I do for you?" The first time I heard of J.B.D'Souza was in 1976 during height of the bogus 'Emergency'. Minoo Masani phoned to tell me that he had a message from Bain D'Souza then Maharashtra Chief Secretary, advising Masani to put his affairs in order as he was on the list of politicians to be arrested. A few weeks later Bain D'Souza informed him that his name had been taken off the list.

We at *Freedom First*, join his wife Neela, their son Dilip and the other members of his family in this their hour of grief. He was a great civil servant, more than that he was a great human being. We salute his memory.

S. V. Raju

The Reservation Conundrum in Education

On June 10, 2006, J. B. D'Souza participated in a Seminar organised by *Freedom First* on Reservations. This is an extract from his speech.

Government policies are increasingly being based on vote-catching slogans like Karunanidhi's in Chennai, where he is promising TV sets to everybody, or they are based on one-upmanship as in Arjun Singh's case; or they are based on a hasty fall back as in the case of increasing the number of seats. Can we increase the seats in an educational institution just by a government fiat? Can you suddenly in 2007 or 2008 increase the number of seats in the IITs and the IIMs? Consider the limits that there are

on increasing. classes that have to be held. Can you design programmes before you have recruited the faculty? If you don't get the faculty, how will you design the programmes? Can you set up the laboratories and libraries for these extra students suddenly? So increasing the number of seats by numbers is by no means a solution. You will find that quality will suffer, or you will just not have the classes going.

The Nuclear Deal - A Calculated Risk (cont'd. from p.5)

media with the government periodically responding to various doubts and concerns.

Unlike the United States, the Indian executive has the prerogative for negotiating and signing treaties with foreign governments without having to obtain Parliament's approval. This is the constitutional position in India. Perhaps after seeing how the process was handled in America (with the executive going through the Senate and House approvals systematically) the political class has suddenly woken up to the fact that the constitution and historical precedent gives enormous powers to the Executive without legislative oversight, resulting in creating an impression that the Indian Parliament was inferior to the US Congress. Fixing this difference will require a constitutional overhaul in India, which is a different matter altogether.

The core of the debate is nuclear testing as there are many uncertainties surrounding the question. Deal or no deal, there will be consequences - as in 1974 and 1998 - if India were to conduct tests unilaterally. Testing would be very imprudent because the costs of economic sanctions will be relatively higher now than in 1998. There is no strong domestic constituency for testing, as citizens are aware of India's nuclear power status after Pokhran-II in 1998. Moreover, the Indian business community is unlikely to be enthusiastic about testing and its consequences at a time when it is globalizing its interests and looking forward to the removal of technology sanctions. Removal of dual use sanctions and betterment of India-US relations is not just about the nuclear sector alone, but about technology

access to building knowledge industries and high value added products as the country positions itself as a key player in the knowledge economy. Neither political nor economic conditions are conducive for renewed testing.

India will find it very difficult to overcome its own testing moratorium - at least for the next 10 years - barring extraordinary geopolitical or security developments. So, given the prospects of India conducting a test before a Chinese or a Pakistani one are rather remote in the foreseeable future, this should not be a cause for killing the deal that has other benefits. It is quite possible to maintain strategic deterrence without testing - by refining the non-nuclear components and delivery systems till a favourable climate emerges for renewed testing.

The circumstances would be very different if India responds to a Chinese or a Pakistani nuclear test. It would be politically unrealistic for the United States to lower the boom on India as a response. But it is also unrealistic to expect the US to accept this in advance. An American expert summarised to this author the dilemma from U.S. point of view thus: "The difficulty here is that it is not politically practical, either domestically or internationally, for the United States to formally codify a position that it will look the other way [if India] responds to rather than initiates nuclear explosives testing."

MR. T. S. GOPI RETHINARAJ is Assistant Professor at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore.

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Book Review (cont'd from p.13)

but brief affairs when it suits both parties. Raman extols the achievements of R&AW in establishing rapport with various international intelligence agencies. This is an incidental function of an intelligence agency, not its major responsibility. On that score, Raman candidly admits that R&AW is good at analysis and not at prevention; it is good in TECHINT (Technical Intelligence) and not in HUMINT (Human Intelligence). What should be done to improve its functioning is a question that persists.

The book is controversial because it has revealed the working of R&AW that was under wraps so far. The authorities may frown upon this 'sacrilege'. Raman might be careful enough not to divulge anything that may damage the operational interests of R&AW but lesser officials tempted to repeat this exercise might not be so careful and we may soon be inundated with books exposing

intelligence operations, with the lofty aim of improving the intelligence functioning. Instead of facing such an uncontrolled exhibitionism, the Government should concede that intelligence agencies must be made accountable. It would be better if these were put under the scanner of a Parliamentary Oversight Committee or intra-department review system as suggested by Raman.

The book is good reading for the layman. It reveals four cases of penetration by the CIA of the Indian intelligence establishment and one case of penetration of the PMO by the French. These were well publicized when these were detected but the book puts them in a perspective. That is sensational enough for the publicists and curious readers. Discerning readers might have more pertinent questions not easy to answer.

Between Ourselves ...

Much has been talked and written about the Indo-US Nuclear Deal. Despite this, a number of extraneous issues not quite pertinent to the Deal have clouded the public debate. The communists have been doing all they can to ensure that the Deal is delayed if not scuttled – to suit Communist Chinese interests. Our readers will find the three articles (including that of a genuine dissenter) analyse the issues involved – in layman's language – to get a clearer picture.

There's a new daily on the block. The *Mint* is very readable and informative even to the average reader who

is not an economist or interested in finance and related subjects. Some of their features are unusual in a journal basically devoted to the economy, nevertheless welcome. We recommend that our readers who may not have seen a copy to visit their website www.livemint.com.

The proposed discussion in the October issue "India's Polity Needs a 'U' Turn" has been postponed to January as some of those whose contributions would add value to the debate find the October 2 deadline too short. The revised deadline: December 20.

Editor

Many Voices

It is hilarious to hear the comrades waxing eloquent about national interest. It is the same Left that sided with China when it invaded India in 1962 and still supports China's claim to Indian territory.

T. N. Menon in a letter to *The Asian Age*, August 16

China's human rights violations are conveniently overlooked by democratic governments eager to "engage" (in trade). Restaurant owners in France are advised by the government not to mention Tibet or Taiwan before visiting Chinese tourists.

Writer and journalist Madhuri Santhanam Sondhi,
The Asian Age, August 16

One country that has known terrorist violence for decades is India. One country that constantly fails to do anything about preventing the next terrorist violence is also India.

Editorial in *Hindustan Times*, August 27

My observation over years of street walking is that spitting is a male-dominated activity. There is no class distinction among male spitters. A beggar spits, and so does a necktied executive.

Columnist Dilip Raote, *Hindustan Times*, September 11

The Hyde Act could equally have stipulated that the US would withdraw nuclear support if we conducted searches for dinosaur eggs ... we need more nuclear

weapons as much as we need dinosaur eggs. Why should restrictions of this order ever threaten our national sovereignty?

Professor Dipankar Mehta *Hindustan Times*, September 3

A globalising India cannot afford a passport system that resembles the Great Wall. It needs one that responds to both security and mobility challenges of the times.

Editorial in *The Indian Express*, September 10

When a European leader lectures Africa on reducing corruption, it is a bit rich. Europe is a cache of choice for the discerning dictator.

James Waters in *The Guardian*, published in
Hindustan Times July 27

When the state has no outlet for legitimate grievances violence will erupt. The surprise is not that we often have senseless violence without an object; the surprise is that we don't have more of it.

Pratap Bhanu Mehta, president Centre for Policy Research, *The Indian Express*, September 3

A deep study of (former Prime Minister) Chandrashekar's life and work is a must for students of Indian politics, not so much for an appreciation of his achievements as for the understanding of his many failures.

Veteran journalist S. Viswam, *Janata* weekly, August 12

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