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M. A. RANE



(1925-2008)

M. A. RANE, well known for his championing public interest litigations (PIL) passed away in Mumbai on July 24 after a prolonged illness. He was 83.

M. A. Rane and PIL were interchangeable. Someone even suggested that he should change his initials to P.I.L.Rane! So dedicated he was to the cause of human rights and his crusading zeal in defence of human rights and his taking up public causes in the courts of Law. More often than not he fought these causes *pro bono* and despite heavy professional commitments. His legal battlefield was the Mumbai High Court.

Born into a peasant family on November 24, 1925, M. A. Rane began life as children of peasants did in those days, minding cattle and crops in the village of Kanasgiri in the Karwar Taluka in the Uttar Kannada district. Fortunately, despite his family's poor circumstances he was able to receive schooling and was among the top ten in the matriculation examination in 1942. Six years later with the help of scholarships and freeships he secured the LL.B. degree and began his legal practice in 1949 as assistant to jurists like V. M. Tarkunde and K. S. Daundkar. His close association with the late Justice Tarkunde lasted a life. In fact the last book Rane edited was *The Legend of Tarkunde* in anticipation of Tarkunde's birth centenary next year!

He was drawn to the Humanist philosophy of M. N. Roy and was an active member of the Radical Democratic Party founded by Roy. After the party was dissolved he continued to actively participate in the Radical Humanist Movement. Mr. Rane was also closely involved in the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) and was Secretary of its Mumbai branch. He was a founding member of Citizens for Democracy a movement launched by Jayaprakash Narayan in the early seventies.

We shall miss this dedicated rationalist thinker, human rights activist, and above all a fine human being. *Freedom First* and readers salute his memory and convey our deepest condolences to his family.

S. V. Raju

ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN



(1918-2008)

Alexander Solzhenitsyn is among the greatest Russians and world writers of the 20th century. He survived the second world war, incarceration in the Soviet Union's prison-camp system, and internal exile to produce a series of novels and essays that retrieved and reimagined the history of the Soviet state and the experience of its people. His major works include *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1962), *The First Circle* (1968), *Cancer Ward* (1968), *The Gulag Archipelago* (three volumes, 1974-76), and *The Oak and the Calf* (1975). Alexander Solzhenitsyn was awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 1970, and was deported to the west in 1974. He returned to Russia in 1994 and died near Moscow on 3 August 2008

Freedom First pays tribute to this great Russian with the following extract from his speech accepting (in absentia) the Nobel Prize for Literature:

"A quarter of a century ago, in the great hopes of mankind, the United Nations Organization was born. Alas, in an immoral world, this too grew up to be immoral. It is not a United Nations Organization but a United Governments Organization where all governments stand equal; those which are freely elected, those imposed forcibly, and those which have seized power with weapons. Relying on the mercenary partiality of the majority UNO jealously guards the freedom of some nations and neglects the freedom of others. As a result of an obedient vote it declined to undertake the investigation of private appeals - the groans, screams and beseechings of humble individual PLAIN PEOPLE - not large enough a catch for such a great organization. UNO made no effort to make the Declaration of Human Rights, its best document in twenty-five years, into an OBLIGATORY condition of membership confronting the governments. Thus it betrayed those humble people into the will of the governments which they had not chosen."

COURTESY: *Open Democracy*

Terrorism in India

Kill At Will

A Sleeping Behemoth

Ashok Karnik

India is under terror attacks for the last thirty years. The Khalistan problem was overcome in the 1980s but jihadi terrorism has made its home here. Apart from the daily depredations in J&K, it also strikes elsewhere sporadically. One can never be sure of the next target or whether it has decided to leave India alone for greener pastures in Afghanistan, Iraq or Pakistan itself.

India is under terror attacks for the last thirty years. The Khalistan problem was overcome in the 1980s but jihadi terrorism has made its home here. Apart from the daily depredations in J&K, it also strikes elsewhere sporadically. One can never be sure of the next target or whether it has decided to leave India alone for greener pastures in Afghanistan, Iraq or Pakistan itself. In the last few years, targets have been as varied as Delhi (2001, 2003, 2005, 2007), Kolkata (2002), Mumbai (2003, 2006), Ayodhya (2005) Malegaon (2006), Varanasi (2006), Bangalore (2005, 2008), Hyderabad (2007, 2007), Lucknow (2007), Ludhiana (2007), Jaipur (2008), Ahmedabad/Gandhinagar (2002, 2008) and Surat (2008). Terrorists attack wherever their infrastructure allows them to do so. The recent attacks prove the existence of modules or sleeper cells in a wide swath of the country. How many more are to surface yet? The extent of attacks shows that the entire country has become a target.

Inertia or Indifference?

This great country takes a lot to stir. Nothing seems to move it from its slumber. Its philosophy allows it to suffer with equanimity. It is comforting to know that it cannot be provoked easily; it is disturbing to see that it is so careless of its own welfare. Unfortunately, there are no leaders who can rouse it to action. The Union Home Minister, who is expected to take control, is so inarticulate in emergencies that he almost joins the victims in their cry for help. To expect him to lead the country out of trouble is naïve. On the other hand, an eminent BJP leader sees a political conspiracy in the attacks on BJP-ruled states. If serious threats to national security are to be reduced to such political farce, there is no need for the ISI to plot against India. The country has the knack of turning its back on disasters and refuse to learn anything from them. It is the biggest victim of terrorism in terms of duration

and losses but it has sought no remedial measures with any degree of seriousness. Statements of intent are made and meetings of top officials held ever so often. The result is zilch.

When devastated, the quest is for an explanation why we were targeted, who did it and what can be done to punish the perpetrator. When left clueless, it is necessary

The country has the knack of turning its back on disasters and refuse to learn anything from them. It is the biggest victim of terrorism in terms of duration and losses

to find somebody to blame; the conclusion is that the intelligence must have failed. If that is taken care of, all will be well. The Government also panders to this sentiment, promising tightened security

and better intelligence in the future. The authorities never disclose that the future is a chimera and total security unachievable. It is frightening to admit that the adversary is determined to attack again and again and the country is ill-equipped. A scapegoat is psychologically comforting. A vague conclusion that “intelligence” was the guilty party, is a good placebo. However, there is no desire to hold anybody accountable. For the shortcomings over the last 20 years, nobody has been held responsible. The same worthies keep getting promotions and occupy higher and higher posts. Has nobody failed all this while? Agreed, the common man is not privy to intelligence matters and has no right to question as to who did what. Nonetheless, Ministers should inform Assemblies/Parliament whether the health of our “intelligence” is good or it is on its deathbed. It is difficult to believe, given the present spate of terrorist attacks, that everything is fine and intelligence is in good health. It is possible, but not probable, that Intelligence might have done wonders all this while, without seeking publicity! If it has indeed done so, we should be surprised but proud.

The Roots of Terror

It is common to get caught in nomenclatural debates.

Arguments go back and forth whether Al Qaeda has a branch in India, whether Lashkar-e-Toiba or Jaish-e-Mohd or HUJI or Indian Mujahideen are responsible. It is forgotten that the disease is the same, the diagnosis is the same and that names do not matter any longer. The culprit is well known. The fond hope that a democratic Pakistan might control the jihadis better has been belied. Neither an army dictator like Musharraf nor democratic representatives like PPP/Nawaz Shariff seem to have the ability or the will to control the militants. The apprehension is that the hunted might become the hunter in Pakistan. With the rising tide of fanaticism and waning control of the Government there, India is in for a much longer haul in its fight against terrorism than anybody could anticipate. It is not as if the situation across both the Eastern and the Western borders inspires any hope of improvement. India has to deal with the problem by itself.

A welcome development in recent months is the 'fatwa' issued by the Deoband Islamic seminary declaring that "jihad" does not permit slaying of innocent persons. Although it was issued in February 2008 and reiterated at a massive rally in Delhi on May 31, 2008, it did not receive the attention it deserved. It seems to have had no impact on jihadi terrorists even though they are Deobandis. This development needs to be debated in the Muslim society and terrorism removed from the pedestal

According to one estimate, the death toll from terrorist violence from the 1980s to 2000 was 94000, more than in all the wars fought by India since independence.

it has been placed and declared as denigrating the high ideals of Islam. Those who were unfortunate enough to have to read the e-mail sent by the Indian Mujahideen before the Ahmedabad blasts were deeply disturbed by the venom spewed by the attackers and wondered how a great religion can be so twisted around to justify mindless violence.

Counter Measures

According to one estimate, the death toll from terrorist violence from the 1980s to 2000 was 94000, more than in all the wars fought by India since independence. The expenditure on security forces during this period was Rs.46,500 crore. The expenditure and the death toll have multiplied since then. The terrorists have tried their best to create communal disharmony by targeting temples and mosques from time to time. So far, they have failed. The attacks outside J&K prove that the jihadi terrorism is not Kashmir-centric but has a wider design of destabilizing the country.

The Government is lost in the debate over the advisability of having harsher laws to deal with terrorism. TADA and POTA were discarded when the free world was moving towards harsher laws. It was argued that these laws did not prevent terrorist attacks earlier. The argument is fallacious as the laws only equip the society to deal with miscreants, not stop them. The IPC has not put an end to thefts and murders but is a weapon in the hands of the police. Misuse of laws by its guardians is the real worry. A better system of checks and balances will have to be evolved instead of jettisoning the laws. Political correctness of a law has to give way to the need for effective action against terror. Priorities have to change. Unfortunately, Shivraj Patil, Union Home Minister, under attack for inaction, has hit back vehemently refusing to consider harsher laws to tackle terrorism. Such a closed mind does not bode well for joint action with the BJP. Another move mooted by the Center is to have a Federal force to deal with terrorism. There is an objection to this move by the states fearing Central intervention. Another objection is that in any case an individual's activities are available to those who live nearby or provide services to him, not to the police and never to a Federal agency. This is a misplaced argument as the Federal agency is not intended to replace either the local police station resources or local enquiries. It can be effective because it can bring all resources together and can be held responsible for following up every lead possible and not shift the blame on the state unit when things go wrong. (Mr. Balachandran's article (next page) deals with this aspect more exhaustively)

Prospects

The unending blows on the vast continental mass of India are being absorbed with patience and shrugged off as nuisance. The behemoth barely stirs, which is both good and bad. If stirred rudely, it can become mindless. Timely action is needed to control the sleeping giant. The problem transcends political divides and must be faced as a national crisis. No Government can meet these challenges without active public support. The country has to get united forgetting the factional and ideological differences, as the adversaries want to destroy us all. Since India is too vast to be conquered through an armed conquest, the adversaries intend to bleed us through dagger thrusts. Terrorists aim to destroy the people's faith in their Government. They believe that India would collapse under the weight of its contradictions and squabbles. To outsiders, India gives an impression of being at war with

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itself; is seen as if it has no stomach for hardships. India's capitulation at Kandahar in the plane hijack case is taken as proof of its inherent weakness. It is necessary to reverse this perception.

There is no doubt that the intelligence machinery must be strengthened. Government must stop giving mere assurances and act decisively. Unfortunately, very few ministers are good administrators; they are guided by bureaucrats who have nothing to lose by remaining inactive. There is urgent need to act now and make "Intelligence" effective. Notwithstanding what our

"Intelligence" or security forces achieve, the menace of terrorism will not disappear quickly. The militants have enough 'fidayeen' to push into India; since death does not deter them, the people have to develop fortitude to face terrorist attacks with equanimity and not show signs of panic every time there is an attack. It will be a battle of attrition for some time, before it dawns on the adversary that its tactics can not succeed.

MR. ASHOK KARNIK is a retired Deputy Director, Intelligence Bureau, Government of India.

A Case of Abdication of Responsibility

V. Balachandran

State leaders must realise the inherent handicap their forces have in penetrating terrorist modules: Terrorism is transnational, professional and secretive in nature, conducted by highly motivated cadres.

I have been writing and speaking about terrorism since 2002 when I delivered the "Usha Mehta Memorial Lecture" at Mumbai University on March 20, 2002. Freedom First and the INDIAN LIBERAL GROUP jointly published an updated version of this lecture as a monograph ("Terrorism") in 2005. Never have I been so sad at the plight of the common people due to total neglect by authorities. My heart bleeds seeing the moving picture of a man and a woman in Ahmedabad, both fruit sellers, lying dead next to their fruit carts. Terrorists exposed security agencies to public ridicule in Bangalore, Ahmedabad and Surat by placing bombs facing police posts. It was a pathetic spectacle retrieving all those unexploded bombs from behind street hoardings, bus stops and other public places. However responsibility has to be laid at the strategic level in New Delhi.

Pious Wishes

In all my lectures or published pieces I have been pointing out the errors of our methodology in dealing with terrorism. The same mistakes are committed year after year. Yet they also try to make political brownie points over political rivals as we saw in the aftermath of the Jaipur blasts when the only contribution made by our Home Minister was blaming the BJP Government in Jaipur. Our counter-terror strategy follows a predictable pattern. Grandiose statements are made that we will not "tolerate" terrorism and that the nation will not be cowed down by such acts of "cowardice." An avalanche of VIP visits follows, causing avoidable burden on law and order machinery. After this, competition starts within the media, with different news agencies airing different theories about

the perpetrators. Then leaks appear that Central agencies had already alerted the state concerned, but the latter had failed to act upon such leads. A necessary part of the game is blaming Pakistan and ISI. Then the state chief minister announces that a "new" intelligence agency will be created to tackle terrorism. In the end, everything dies down. Then a new terror strike takes place, and the charade starts all over again.

Culprits by Negligence

Who are the culprits for this negligence? First and foremost is the Government of India especially the Ministry of Home Affairs: Seven years after the Group of Ministers (GOM) submitted their recommendations in a report titled "Reforming the National Security System" (Feb 2001) after the Kargil episode, no concrete action has been taken by the MHA. Was it because the GOM was of the NDA government? If so it is a pity since the present National Security Advisor was also part of that exercise. The report had stated: "The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has the nodal responsibility of internal security in the country and has to ultimately deal with the consequences of any dereliction of responsibility at the local level and must therefore play a more proactive role vis-à-vis the State Governments. The MHA would also have to catalyze the process of modernizing and upgrading the Central Para-Military forces and the State police forces. Appropriate restructuring of the MHA is called for in order to better equip it to deal more effectively with the problems of internal security" (para 4.10). Again: "The National Security Council (NSC), Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) should evolve an effective counter strategy against

security threats posed by Pak ISI. This strategy should be pro-active rather than reactive” (para 4.23). “The MHA had proposed setting up of a federal agency with grave offences, which have inter-State and nation wide ramifications. This was opposed by the states, on the plea that it infringed their constitutional right to maintain law and order. Considering the worrisome internal security scenario in the country, the states may be approached again...since it may become increasingly difficult for the State Governments to handle such crimes on their own”(para 4.27). One would like to know what the UPA government had done all these four years to implement these recommendations apart from convening meetings? What has the National Security Council done despite being so top heavy with three officers of Secretary rank working under the NSA? What has the NSA himself done to restructure the Central Intelligence agencies apart from blaming Pakistan?

The second sets of culprits are state leaders who think they can tackle inter-state terrorism on their own. In the wake of the 2006 Mumbai train bombings and 2007 Hyderabad strikes, Maharashtra and Andhra leaders announced that they would set up dedicated intelligence agencies to tackle terrorism. Maharashtra said that it would “revamp” its intelligence machinery and recruit “non-police officials” to collect intelligence. Two years have passed - there is still no sign of the Maharashtra intelligence wing. The old Bombay Special Branch, which I had the opportunity to head in the nineteen seventies, had a hard core of non-transferable non-police officials who met the then challenges admirably. Unfortunately, that system was allowed to wind up, and the non-police officials gravitated to “profitable” police branches under political influence.

Where is the guarantee that something similar will not happen again? The Andhra Chief Minister went one step further and said that they would recruit 100 linguists to monitor terrorists’ conversation. Even the languages were mentioned: Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Pushto, Bangla, Uzbek, Baluchi, Kurdish, Hebrew, Spanish and Chechen! (Why Hebrew? Is Israel a terrorist nation?). Recruiting 100 linguists for a state force for communication intelligence can at best be a pipe-dream. Even our Central agencies are perennially short of linguists, especially those speaking foreign languages. Even if one is able to recruit that many linguists has anyone considered the sheer volume of data that will have to be transcribed and then converted into actionable intelligence? How many states can do such tasks?

State leaders must realise the inherent handicap their forces have in penetrating terrorist modules: Terrorism

is transnational, professional and secretive in nature, conducted by highly motivated cadres. State police units, on the other hand, are fragmented, largely inefficient, slow in reaction, badly trained and highly politicised. Postings in intelligence wings are a punishment. Police cadres are governed by tenure rules which prevent growth of professionalism needed to penetrate secretive terror units. Operational efficiency of police units differs vastly from state to state. Coordination between police units is hardly satisfactory. Interrogation reports are not shared promptly. Nothing illustrates this better than two recent incidents: After the Bangalore bombing (July 26) it was announced that they would send a special officer to M.P Police to study the interrogation reports of SIMI leaders arrested in March 2008! The same was done by Gujarat which designated an IAS officer to liaise with outside intelligence units!

On the other hand, a Centralised operation against terrorism has always produced better results elsewhere. None claims that terrorism can be wiped out with a Federal Police. But it can be handled better since Central agencies are not governed by tenure rules. There will be better accountability as they will not be able to pass the buck. When the IRA terror hit England, the London Metropolitan Police’s Special branch, which had tackled the menace earlier, was designated as the nodal authority to detect and prosecute IRA terrorism all over the country till MI5 was asked to take over the lead responsibility in 1992.

In USA all such crimes against the nation including money laundering are investigated by Federal agencies. A study of our own history will reveal that only such nodal authority could tackle such serious nationwide crimes. Like modern terrorists, the 19th century Thugs were secretive, used codes in secret language known as “Ramsee” and had killed over 50,000 in a vast area extending from Delhi to Hyderabad. In 1829 Governor General Bentinck designated William Henry Sleeman as the “Nodal” officer to fight the Thughee menace, allowing “hot pursuit” into princely States. Despite formidable difficulties Sleeman with a staff of only 7 assistants and 300 “Najibs” systematically collected a data base of 4,000 Thugs from 200 gangs with family trees and Muslim as well as Hindu aliases. Reports on all Thughee murders were sent to Sleeman for collation. Each Thug was assigned a unique number. Interrogation of captured Thugs provided advance intelligence on their next operations. By 1830 Sleeman managed to arrest 350 Thugs based on this database. All Thugs so arrested by Sleeman were brought to trial in two special courts in Sagar and Jabalpur. 3504 out of 4,500 Thugs tried between 1826 and 1848 were

(Cont’d. on p.16)

Point Counter Point

Ashok Karnik

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

The Confidence Vote

1) The fact that the Manmohan Singh government survived the confidence vote is heartening, not because the government deserved to survive but because it did not deserve to lose on account of the only bold step it took in four years. The nuclear deal would hopefully go through, which does not mean that we shall have electricity flowing soon and the bad days of power cuts are over now. It will take time for the benefits to accrue. Meanwhile, load shedding would be a part of life for most of us. At least, we have started moving in the right direction.

"Nothing is more difficult, and therefore more precious, than to be able to decide."

Napoleon Bonaparte

1) The vote exposed the ideological dilemma of the Communists and as usual they will admit their "historic blunder" after 20 years or so. They have lost the opportunity to run a government without bearing any responsibility for their actions. Nobody has had it so good for so long. They threw it away themselves. The BJP, which appeared to be closing in on power, marred its advance by being in haste to bring down the government. It lost its assumed chastity and high-minded rhetoric by aligning with all and sundry including the Communists, Mayawati and all those who treat them as untouchables. And all for power a few months earlier than envisaged. Those whom Gods wish to destroy are made mad first! The vote highlighted the utter venality of our parliamentarians when horse trading became the breaking news for a week

Bomb Blasts Again

2) Serial bomb blasts are becoming so common that soon they may stop being news. After Jaipur (May 13), Bangalore (July 25) and Ahmedabad (July 26), the reactions could have been cyclostyled in advance: The PM condemns the blasts, the MoS (Minister of State) explains that the Center had warned the states in advance, police in all metros and sensitive cities are on high alert, security has been tightened and meetings of senior officials are being held everywhere. News reporters interview eyewitnesses who have seen nothing but express genuine anguish. News editors speculate who might be behind it all, although every one knows who is behind it. The laxity of police officers, intelligence failure, first aid inadequacies et al are commented upon. Scenes of carnage are shown round the clock as if something new has been discovered suddenly. The bottom line is zero.

2) There is no accountability after nearly 20 years of mayhem. The promised improved intelligence gathering is still a mystery; is it functional or is it still in the planning stage? The common man is too dim witted to be told anything. No body can question intelligence; it may be the best in the world or it may be in shambles. Who is to know and who is to ask? Are our Ministers competent enough to question the well entrenched babus who can run rings around them? It is true that the attacks can never be stopped completely till our neighbours keep breeding terrorists. What can be expected of the Government are steps to create confidence among the people that it has the will and the mechanism to meet the challenge. It should get all parties together for a joint response and not allow each blast to become an occasion for partisan politics.

Right to Privacy

3) The Arushi murder case (NOIDA) has again focused attention on the much neglected aspect of the concept of privacy. The way the girl's and her parents' lives were brutally analysed by the media and the police shocked

3) No thought was given by the police or the media to the possibility that all their theories were just theories, not facts and that these were causing harm to the reputation of innocent people. When asked to explain, TV channels

the civil society. A debate has since started on what needs to be done. The police excuse is that they are under pressure from politicians, in sensational cases, to solve the case quickly; they are, therefore, forced to show progress and jump to half-baked conclusions to show that the case is solved. The media tries to be a detective and show 'investigative' expertise by disclosing 'new' facts by the hour. TV channels build up the crime scenes and theorise over what could have happened even before the police have a clue. Wonderful for TRPs and a pat on the back for great social service too!

"Privacy violation is tolerated in India even to ridiculous levels. Whether it is an issue of data protection, telemarketing, privacy violation by law enforcement, very few eye brows are raised. Even at the regulatory (TRAI) and judicial (Courts) levels privacy violations dealings have not proved to be deterrent enough to prevent their violations by others for purely "commercial reasons".

Praveen Dalal an Advocate, Techno-Legal ICT and Cyber Security Specialist

took the plea that they were responsible for bringing to justice the culprits in the Priyadarshini Mattoo, Jessica Lal and Nitish Katara cases; they had been doing great social service and it was wrong to paint them all with a black brush. As if one good deed gives license to be irresponsible! A simple request whether they were prepared to apologise to the injured parties was evaded, obviously for legal reasons. Newspapers were more forthcoming in tendering apologies because they were not so bold in causing damage earlier! The question is whether self regulation by the media is effective; whether they are prompt to undo the damage caused or whether more stringent laws are needed to protect individuals from the prying eyes, unscrupulously stuck to key holes. The media goes into its detective and highly speculative role if a case is salacious. It has nothing to do with social responsibility. That is a by-product of TRPs, not a cause by itself. If the media does not mend itself, we may be sorry to see the Government stepping in.

Readers are invited to send in their points of view on serious issues of the day to avkay@mtnl.net.in

Modern Societies and their Unwanted Elders

Yeats, one of the most distinguished poets of the 20th century, wrote:

That is no country for old men ...
An aged man is but a paltry thing
A tattered coat upon a stick.

No community except perhaps the traditional Chinese revered its old men and India came a near second. The primitive communities particularly the pastoral wandering tribes plagued by far from sustenance in their periodical migrations would leave their very old behind and go ahead and the helpless old would starve and die. Others would in a festival sumptuously feed them and later kill them ritually and partake of the remains in a community feast. Life in these communities was harsh and every mouth mattered and they had to come to terms with harsh realities.

In contemporary times, are we nearly reverting to a similar situation? We know in our country in many situations, the old are not wanted and anecdotal evidence tells us of old near relatives like one's own parents being abandoned cruelly by their offspring.

This seems to be happening in Britain too and with improving living standards and rising longevity. The old feel that they are treated like second class citizens, discriminated in many public spheres. "A majority of old Britons believe that the country is rampantly ageist", with those over fifty facing discrimination not only at work but also in other areas of life. One learns that doctors tend to neglect them in favour of younger clients and even deny them tests and treatment. In defence of this discrimination, it is argued that resources are indeed not aplenty and one has to exercise some choice. Also, they are regarded as less deserving. For instance, a 76-old person was told that she had had already a long life and therefore should she queue up for a by-pass.

In places of employment, bias against the elderly is common and 16 million people in a poll found definite discrimination widely rampant. Even in areas like theatre, media and the universities, discrimination is widespread and many feel marginalized. It is stated that even the BBC is not free from such a bias and this is compounded by sexism as well and many have preferred to retire than face humiliation.

R. Srinivasan

The Election Scene in USA

Lull Before the Last Lap

B. Ramesh Babu

A despatch from Washington from Dr. Babu who is currently visiting the United States.

The euphoria and the media hype of the primary season are over. The unprecedented breakthroughs of Race (Obama), Gender (Mrs. Clinton), and Religion (Romney, a Mormon) have receded into the background. Currently the race to the White House is on the low ebb. Though several names are being tossed around, Obama and McCain are yet to choose their running mates. This is expected to happen in the next few days. The two major parties will hold their National Conventions soon. The Democrats will hold their mega *mela* during August 24-28 at Denver, Colorado; and the Republican conclave will meet in St. Paul, Minnesota, during September 1-4. The general elections, the final phase of the voting process in USA, will come alive once again and literally edge most other news off the screen till the voting day, 4 November 2008.

Trivia to the Fore

Be that as it may, even the lull cannot be dull in this land. Obama's foreign tour to West Asia and Europe hogged the headlines day after day. He was able to talk to leaders of Israel and Palestine without alienating either! His speech in Berlin drew enormous crowds that cheered all the way. The way Obama was received wherever he went seemed almost 'presidential'. McCain was almost out of sight for weeks and turned green with envy. He lambasted his rival as "arrogant" and a "celebrity" with all style and no substance and foolishly added like Paris Hilton and Britney Spears! The beautiful Ms. Hilton, heiress of the Hilton hotel empire, was furious and hit him back in her own inimitable 'style'! She called McCain that "white haired old dude"; suggested a clever by half solution to the oil crisis facing the nation; and asked (tongue in cheek) the American people to vote for her as president next time around! Reportedly, Mrs. Hilton's parents demanded that McCain return the \$50,000 donation they gave to the Republican Party.

Then, it was the turn of a scandal to liven things up. For the past couple of days the so called "love child" of the former presidential candidate John Edwards is the most titillating news of the day on TV, radio, and in the

print media. Though the affair is reportedly a widely known 'secret' in the media circles, it hit the headlines at this time 'mysteriously.' Obama is indeed lucky because Edwards was one of the leading names under consideration for the Vice-President's slot on the Democratic Party's ticket. If the news broke out after a week or so, and Edwards was chosen in the meanwhile, Obama's bid to the White House would have been hurt grievously.

Lurking Trends

Lulls have their lurking lessons for the future, if only one looks deep for things to come.

One such portent was the unusual convergence on the withdrawal of troops from Iraq. Surprising as it may seem, the Bush Administration announced a policy shift on the issue on the eve of Obama's foreign tour on the ground that "the surge" succeeded in reducing violence in Iraq. During his meeting the visiting dignitary, the Iraqi Prime Minister endorsed Obama's plan on the withdrawal of US troops. McCain repositioned himself rather quickly and a kind of consensus at the top has emerged in favour of military withdrawal from Iraq, obviously contingent on conditions on the ground! This indeed is a massive plus for Obama because it is his promise of ending the war in Iraq that made the American people flock to his ranks in the first place.

The significant gain on Iraq was quickly followed by another plus in the foreign policy area for Obama. In Germany, France and England, Obama's spirited rededication to bringing the European allies back into the policy formulation in Washington, if he came to power, came as the most welcome news in many years. The highlight was Obama's speech in Berlin, where lakhs of people cheered him all the way.

Another key and undoubtedly more crucial indicator of the things to come, the lurking future, was the issue of race. The predictably unavoidable and subterranean issue of colour has finally crept into the campaign, as expected and feared. It is indeed a very complex and nasty

issue and no one knows how it will play out in the end. Though both Obama and McCain publicly committed themselves not to raise the issue of race, the inevitable happened; the wild card has crept into the electoral arena and is beyond recall. Bereft of issues, Obama warned the American people that his rivals will 'scare' you. They will frighten you by saying that this man with a funny name does not look like the past Presidents on our currency! The McCain people did not lag behind to pounce on the issue. It is now widely held that one of the main reasons for the stagnation of Obama's lead over McCain, despite the positive and extensive coverage of the former's foreign tour, is race. The other and equally important factor is Obama's incapacity to transform the popular enthusiasm for "change" and aversion against the Bush era politics and policies into positive support for him. He is yet to win the trust and confidence of a majority of the American people. It is estimated that about 15 per cent of the majority white voters are still undecided between the two leading contenders. This reluctance and apprehension on the ground of colour and suitability of Obama to the nation's highest office seems to be stronger among the white voters past middle age (55 and older), who constitute a sizeable segment of the electorate. Moreover, these senior citizens are more likely to cast their ballot on Election Day than the youth and the first time voters of all hues, who support Obama overwhelmingly.

The lull before the last lap also saw the McCain camp launching a massive negative campaign against Obama showing him as a good old "liberal" Democrat, who will raise taxes, spend big money, cause job losses, and erode the welfare of families. The Obama camp has just started their retaliatory negative campaign. It is too early to say where this will end and how the two negatives will play out.

The Russian 'invasion' of Georgia has come as a windfall for McCain. He has always been far more critical of Russia than China and his fulminations against Putin's Russia project him as patriotic, brave and more experienced in foreign affairs. As a former war hero, McCain portrays himself as some one who can stand up to the Commies! He and his campaign managers are leaving no stone unturned to highlight the relative inexperience of Obama in this vital area. Even as McCain thundered loudly in defence of the "free and democratic" Georgia, it is reported that a lobbying firm partly owned by an adviser to his campaign signed a \$200,000 contract in April 2008 to continue to provide strategic advice (from Washington) to the Georgian government in Washington!

As always, a number of campaign biographies of the leading contenders are slated to be out in the "Land

of Opportunity". The pre-publication blitz of these 'quickies' on Obama are arousing more curiosity because his past is not as well known as his rival. Two of them are all set to "expose" and damage the reputation and character of the 'lanky boy' with 'the funny name.' This is yet another lurking leaf in the wind.

Nothing is static in politics. Things may change once Obama returns to the fray from his vacation in Hawaii; the Vice Presidential candidates are chosen; the two major National Conventions are held; and the last lap of the race is launched by both the sides with the usual fan fare and hoopla. However, if the elections are held today (14 August 2008 in the US), it looks like a dead heat with the odds in favour of McCain. The American mainstream is demographically and ideologically un-young, un-poor, and un-black, I might add.

Let me end with a word of caution lest we in India get lost in sanctimonious hyperbole on racism in America. USA today is quite different from what it was even two decades ago. The fact that Obama came this far is a testament to the transformation sweeping the land. However, prejudice is as old as humans and also equally widespread. We have no moral basis to condemn others on the ground of colour, caste, gender, and wealth. The older readers know why Morarji Desai did not want Babu Jagjivan Ram to succeed him as Prime Minister despite the so called 'gentlemen's agreement' during the Janata Government that came to power after the Emergency! I am no defender of racism or human prejudice. But I am not blind to its pervasive presence in all societies and cultures across the globe. My only plea is to judge yourself with a judgment of sincerity, so that you will judge others with a judgment of charity!

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BBC Fined for Misleading Viewers

According to a report by the Press Trust of India the BBC has been fined a whopping 400,000 pounds by Britain's broadcasting watchdog Ofcom for "very serious" breaches by "faking" competition winners and misleading viewers on a series of radio and flagship television programmes.

Ofcom imposed the fine, the largest it has ever handed the corporation, in relation to eight phone-in competitions on TV shows such as Comic Relief, Sport Relief and Children in Need, and radio shows, including The Jo Whiley Show on Radio 1 and Russell Brand on BBC6. In all these cases Ofcom found that viewers were duped by production staff who made up the names of winners or even posed as contestants themselves.



Is India Mature Enough For Democracy?

The reason democracy does not really work in India is because we, the people, pay only lip service to it.

of us who are intelligent and well informed have discovered long ago that they cannot expect anything from their government. On the contrary, the government machinery – with its myriad of licences – and the resurgent tribes – is a millstone round their necks. Thus, we learn very quickly that we must fend for ourselves. And, come election time, we do not bother to vote because we don't care which bunch of jokers get elevated to "honourable" status.

At the other end of the spectrum, the uneducated and lumpen masses have learnt to recognize elections as a golden opportunity to make a quick buck. They are under no delusions that the worthies – who only remember their existence when they need their votes – will keep any of the promises that flow so glibly from their lips. In any case, the poor are smart enough to realize that promises won't fill their empty stomachs. But they do know that they can barter their votes for hard cash and gifts; and they are quite happy to do so.

So we end up with "leaders" with minimum qualifications and maximum avarice. And the rot does not stop there. Since like attracts like, these leaders promptly proceed to weed out the few honest and efficient public servants that may be around; and replace them with corrupt and venal police officers, municipal corporators and the rest, who will to their bidding and – in the process – enrich themselves and their patrons. This then is the great Indian democracy that is supposedly the envy of many countries: If they only knew what we know.

Who Cares About The Bahadur?

Our leaders never take any action unless they see some profit in it – either political or monetary – for themselves.

Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, did not deign to put in an appearance.

How soon we forget. If it was not for the major contribution by Sam Bahadur, we would even today be

(Cont'd. on p.16)

The blatant horse trading going on between political parties, prior to the imminent no-confidence vote in parliament, once again brings into focus the question: are we Indians mature enough to handle a democratic system with universal franchise?

The system of redeeming a simple majority of votes in the house, in order to attain power, has displayed time and again that, in this country, it is seriously flawed. It has become particularly insidious in the past decade, when the Indian public has become so disenchanted with its leaders that elections usually boil down to making a choice between the lesser of two evils. In the process, no single party manages to get a majority on its own. Then the desperate game to gather the requisite numbers begins in earnest. Disaffected members of rival parties, as well as independents, are literally purchased like cattle (although some cows would take objection to this unfattering comparison). And the ones being bought are well aware of their bargaining power. The price is usually a cabinet berth, or chairmanship of a public corporation. As a result, the most incompetent, corrupt – and even criminal – individuals end up as ministers.

It does not require a leap of imagination to anticipate how these third rate charlatans will use their newfound power. The only thing the public can be certain of is that its welfare will be the furthest thought in their minds – if it occurs to them at all.

The reason democracy does not really work in India is because we, the people, pay only lip service to it. Those

A lot has been written recently about the shameful disrespect shown by our "leaders" on the occasion of the funeral of Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, also affectionately known as Sam Bahadur. Not one person from the top political hierarchy showed up; and it was only after criticism from the media that a hurriedly arranged memorial service was thought of. Even the so-called

Lokmanya Tilak's Incarceration in Mandalay – A Hundred Years Ago

R. Srinivasan



“In spite of the verdict of the Jury, I maintain that I am innocent. There are higher powers that rule the destiny of man and nations and it may be the will of Providence that the cause I represent may prosper more by my suffering than my remaining free”.

- Lokmanya Balgangadhar Tilak

The closing decades of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century witnessed the beginning of a new mood in Indian nationalism. The earlier conciliatory approach of the Congress elite gave way among a significant section of the party to a mood of restiveness and people like Aurobindo Ghosh and Tilak became critical of the earlier leadership and its approach to the imperial rulers. At this juncture, the Partition of Bengal (1905) confirmed the worst fears of the critical group and unrest spread over large sections of the land and methods of violence became widespread. In Muzzafarpur, extremist hotheads hurled a bomb at a carriage supposed to be occupied by the local magistrate, Kingford, but instead two English ladies who were in it were killed. Tilak immediately denounced this in public. The Government forthwith responded by rushing an Explosives Bill and later the Indian Newspapers Bill giving the Executive wide and ample powers to curb seditious writings.

The *Kesari* at this juncture wrote two articles relating to the outbreak of the violence: (1) The country's misfortune, (2) These remedies are not lasting. The Government initiated action in prosecuting Tilak for these articles. In fact, the articles were written by a sub-editor but Tilak as editor and publisher took full responsibility for this.

During the trial, Tilak cross examined the translator who broke down under the severe examination and confessed that he was not the translator of the impugned articles for which Tilak was being tried. Tilak had no difficulty in proving that the English translations omitted important words and in short, it was a garbled version that was presented. The articles written in high-flown Marathi would have been beyond the ken of Justice Davar who tried the case.

The Jury of 9 – 7 Europeans and 2 Parsis – after being closeted for one and half hours, came out with a divided verdict with the Europeans pronouncing him guilty, and the Parsis, not guilty. The Court and Justice Davar had made up their mind to prosecute Tilak. The Lokmanya was sentenced to three years of transportation and departing from the general practice, it was ordered that the sentence should not run concurrently but consecutively, totalling six years. He was 53 and spent his birthday in Sabarmati Jail, before being sent to Mandalay.

M. R. Jayakar who was present during the trial and was in touch with Tilak comments that “it is a curious fact but nonetheless true that the precise sentence pronounced by the Judge towards midnight was talked of at 5.30 in the evening among members of the Bar who it was said, had received the information from a highly placed officer attending to the case”. (M. R. Jayakar, *Story of My Life*, vol.1, 1958 p.96).

He also says “we had been hearing the whole evening that a train had been kept waiting for him opposite the High Court in which he was to be removed”. (*Ibid*, p.98). This was the much vaunted British Justice indeed.

V. S. Srinivasa Sastri who was present at the trial commented in a letter: “When the catastrophe was reached at the end of an extraordinary night sitting lasting till 10 o'clock and Justice Davar gave out his sentence in slow, solemn tone amid death-like silence, the effect on us was crushing ... Tilak manfully bore himself throughout; and clear as his voice ran as he called on higher powers that guided the destiny of nations, looked greatly pulled down by age, diabetes and terrible strain of the last fortnight and few hoped to see him alive at the end of his exile”

(Cont'd. on p.16)

Wake-up Call for Citizen-leaders

Sanjeev Sabhlok

Last month I introduced myself to you and spoke about the need to organize politically. Not having a national liberal party in India is a major gap that must be filled, whether the party wins elections regularly or not.

Each generation has to fight for its freedoms. Gains made by previous generations can be quickly frittered away. For example, as a result of Nehruvian socialism we now have even less freedom than our 1950 Constitution said we would. In addition, our governance is in shambles; but without good governance how can anyone be free? If a business were to perform this badly, it would have been bought out by a competitor long ago, but countries depend on citizen 'shareholders' to keep their governments on leash. If anyone was waiting patiently, so far, for Korea or Japan to bail out India, let me say – that won't happen and is not desirable! The buck stops squarely with us.

We can hark back to ancient Greece for lessons on how to become citizens. These people were natural-born leaders. Actively participating in civic affairs, they ensured that their leaders were accountable to them. Even with their small overall population, these citizen-leaders led to an outpouring of art, philosophy and science that was never to be seen again till the Renaissance. Being a citizen is therefore a very important role in a democracy.

I introduced you last month to the **Freedom Team of India** (FTI: see www.freedom.sabhlokcity.com), a platform started earlier this year. FTI aims to bring together at least 1500 outstanding citizen-leaders who will, upon agreeing on a common strategy, contest elections by 2014. Only those willing to contest elections are being invited to the Team. For others, I have other activities to suggest – which I'll momentarily talk about. FTI's goal is to form governments both at the centre and in the states, thus bringing good governance and freedom to India. But this will remain wishful thinking unless you, India's citizen-leaders, take your country's destiny into your own hands.

Why Not Have a Food Team?

Why care for liberty at all? Why do we need a Freedom Team and not a Food Team or even an Equality Team: alternative titles which may appeal more to the 'common' man? While *Freedom First* is not the place to preach freedom to the converted, it may still be worthwhile to remind ourselves why liberty is the supreme good.

We care for freedom for many reasons, but

particularly because it works. Poverty bothers us a lot. We know it is not good for anyone. Lack of education among poor children hurts our soul even more. We know that by failing to educate our children well we are effectively destroying their future. The good news, of course, is that freedom has done more for the poorest of the poor over the past 250 years than any other system of political organization. Erstwhile poor nations like England, USA, France, Australia, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea, just to name a few, have become economic giants though free trade, free markets and good governance.

But freedom is also good because it encourages us to take responsibility for our lives. In doing so it leads unerringly to an ethical society. Capitalist countries are the most honest on the Transparency International surveys. On the other hand, socialist India and pseudo-communist China are hopelessly corrupt. Freedom also increases education and hence innovation in society. It reduces the demand for large families as parents spend time and money in educating their fewer children. And last, but not the least, freedom improves the environment.

Ideologies like socialism which put Equality on a pedestal are unnatural. Nature has designed us for great passions and deeds of competition and cooperation. No burden of attaining equality was put upon us. Our soul is built for success. If a 12-year old child were to tell me that his goal is to become only as rich as the average Indian when he grows up, I'd wonder if that child's head was in the right place! We want to see great ambition in our children. We want them to aim for gold medal in every race. Even the thought of equality saps our energy.

Capitalism thus challenges us to be the best we can be. Nothing less is expected of anyone. Freedom sends a shiver of life and excitement coursing through our veins. Only if each of us aims for individual greatness will our nation collectively become great.

For all these reasons and more we must have the Freedom Team of India, not a whimpering, groveling, Food or Equality Team. Freedom is the best. It is the most basic need of our soul. And so let's have it – right now! It is our birthright!

Prejudice Sells Well !!

"....O Lord, help me not despise or oppose what I do not understand...."

William Penn

Courtesy: Bopdant@gmil.com
Prejudice sold well yesterday, didn't it this office!"
"We will sell more copies with what we've created in
"Vijender Singh's medal!"
"Gushil Kumar's bronze!"
on..."
tomorrow? While other newspapers carry boring stories
rapping his hands, "Can you imagine our paper
This is getting better and better," smiled the editor
"Looking like Osama Bin Laden!"
"You want a cartoon of Hawwood?"
"Get our cartoonist on the job."
"Yes?"
"And sir."
"Billiant!" said the editor.
with a fundamentalist religious group."
"Say he belongs to a fanatic sect that has close links
editor his face breaking into a grin.
"Fundacism and fundamentalism sell well." mused the
"Yes fanatic."

"Fanatic?"
call it a fanatic sect!"
"He attends a church in Sandpda. Attack the church;
"Hawwood is not a Muslim."
Pull out the minority card and make them feel insecure."
"But the people won't. We'll do a Hitler on the public:
"Even the police will laugh at you!"
"Link him with terror! Say he was in touch with jihadis!"
"How?"
"We'll rake up interest sir!"
police!"
"Nobody's interested in him anymore, including the
"Everybody knows he's innocent!" yawned the editor,
good front page!"
"This Hawwood chap fleeing the country would make
man?"
"And how'd you intend doing that today my young
sir!"
debputy ginned, "When there's no news we make news
the biggest newspapers in India to his deputy. His
use on the front page", gumbled the editor to one of
"No news, no scoop, expose or piece of gossip I can

justice to everyone in India irrespective of religion.
Reforms are of the essence now. They will bring equal
however, readily fixable by adopting world-best models.
incompetence, and corruption. These problems are,
in India are creaking with the weight of politicization,
At the same time, the police and justice systems

them over to the police?
And how about excommunicating terrorists and handing
all young Muslim children being taught the right things?
the great Muslim community of India can do more. Are
killing of innocents. Assuming that this is true, surely
Muslims always emphasise that the Koran forbids the
responsibility, citing support from the Koran. Enlightened
group calling itself the Indian Mujahideen claimed
of all denominations has now reached a tipping point. A
radicalisation of youth by misguided religious fanatics
The Ahmedabad bombings confirmed that the
as obtaining nuclear technology.

see India divided so badly even on a matter as important
that nothing pleased Pakistan and China more than to
as a world leader in corruption. And we can also be sure
brought great shame to India, confirming India's reputation
motion in the Parliament. The 'rubes in Parliament, incident
the bomb attacks in Ahmedabad and the no-confidence
Two incidents from July stand out for comment:

Lessons from July

must get involved.
add up into a formidable movement for freedom. Everyone
Even the smallest contributions of time and expertise will
editors, organizers, planners, and finance and IT experts.
many other useful things. This effort can't go far without
If you cannot contest elections, you can still do

Freedom Families in Each Home

our freedoms, they have brought India to the brink.
Socialist and communal forces have not only destroyed
That means level-headed liberals must rise and lead.
determined to punish those who kill or injure any Indian.
solution, though: to have strong, secular leaders,
For the medium and long run there is only one

FTI and its leaders.
network with the larger movement for freedom through
for one such family. Ask these Freedom Families to
multiply these Freedom Families so each house is a node
the value of freedom and good governance. Aim to
few young people for a cup of tea. Talk to them about
You should start a **Freedom Family** by inviting a

saphlok@yahoo.com.
MR. SANJEEV SABHLOK can be contacted at
for your own country.
I look forward to hearing what you propose to do

The Burden of the Bureaucracy

Sadanand B. Kumta

The obvious question that arises is, what does this salary boost imply for the tax payer and more than a billion of our countrymen including 310 million living below one dollar a day?

The Sri Krishna Sixth Pay Commission recommendations have made 2008 a year of bonanza for the twenty million central government employees with a 40% whopping hike in their salaries. As a consequence, the Centre's salary bill will shoot up to Rs 66058 crores per annum with the additional burden of Rs 12,561 crores.* The arrears, in addition, from January 2006 will add up to Rs 18,060 crores. This will mean feeding the mammoth bureaucratic machine with nearly half the personal income tax collections for 2008-2009. Minimum monthly salary levels at the lowest level are increased from Rs.2,550 to Rs.6,600, and at the secretary's level from Rs.26,000 to Rs.80,000 (Rs.96,000 with allowances). In addition, the perks and some 14 different types of special allowances will continue as the Commission felt that these have not much fiscal impact. As a corollary, all the states of India will face the problem of raising proportionately the salaries of their own employees, followed by semi-government bodies. It should be remembered that some 375 million people work outside the government as against a total 45 million in all government and semi government bodies. The response to the Pay Commission's recommendations from the states is ambivalent with some states declaring their willingness to accept the additional burden and some others their unwillingness unless it is entirely borne by the Central government.

The obvious question that arises is, what does this salary boost imply for the tax payer and more than a billion of our countrymen including 310 million living below one dollar a day? Asked about the efficiency quotient of the package offered by the Commission, the Chairman replied that efficiency depended on the carrot and the stick and the Commission was concerned with only the carrot by incentivising the government servants. But the question remains as to who will wield the stick? One thing is evident; the cream of benefits has gone to the Indian Administrative Service.

When asked about cutting the flab in services, the Chairman said it was the job of the Administrative Reforms Commission. We have seen the fate of such Commissions

since the Appleby Report after independence. We have now a new Commission headed by a politician. What can we expect?

The Finance Minister of India speaking at the 'India Today Enclave' was himself very critical of the government's delivery system, whether it is the Public Distribution System, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, the Mid-day Meal Scheme for 130 million children or Road Development. It is all a saga of rank inefficiency and rampant corruption. It only means that all this hefty raise in salaries will not ensure high performance from officials, thus resulting in very little return to the hapless billion Indians. All the schemes initiated by the government, with good intentions, ultimately seem to fail at the cutting edge level.

Over a period of time we have seen the gradual decline in the quality of official uprightness resulting in a pliant bureaucracy sliding down further into an unholy nexus between politicians and bureaucrats. The comparison of our top bureaucrats with the executives of the corporate world is inappropriate as the latter are accountable to bring in profits to their companies and dividends to their shareholders. Otherwise they are out, in contrast to the security the *babus* enjoy without any guarantee of performance or accountability in achieving objectives and goals set for any projects meant for public welfare. It must be made clear however, that there are quite a few officers who are exceptionally competent with highest integrity and such officers have made a mark even in the eyes of the general public. Yet it is common knowledge that the administration in general is not people friendly and the hapless citizen is made to suffer apathy, inefficiency and what is worse compelled, in some cases, to resort to bribery to get his work done.

The former President of India, Dr. Abdul Kalam, has made some pertinent observations regarding how we look at the government's achievements. He wants that one should look at the positive side of achievements and not wallow in grudging about the deficiencies. While this may be true to a certain extent, the bureaucracy is not able to

* The article was written before the Prime Minister announced additional bounty for the bureaucracy in addition to the burden on the tax-payer.

(Cont'd. on p.19)

Terrorism in India – A Case of Abdication of Responsibility *(Cont'd. from p.6)*

given extreme sentences like hanging and life term. Only 250 were acquitted. The Thug menace disappeared by 1840. Later Sleeman's unit was merged with the Central intelligence office in Simla to tackle internal political turbulence. This was the British Intelligence Bureau till 1947.

It is not too late for our prime minister to take personal initiative to remedy the situation. It is a fiction that State leaders are objecting to Federal Police on the basis of our Constitution since law and order is a State subject. They do not object when the armed Special Protection Group virtually takes over law and order functions during the prime minister's travels. They did not object when the CSIF took over the security and law

and order functions at our airports in 1999. Their fear, based on CBI's track record, is the possibility of Centre's surreptitious and politically motivated enquiries against opposition ruled States through federal police. This can be allayed only by a high level PM- State dialogue assuring them that a federal police will not impinge upon their control over the State Police and that this force will be used only to fight borderless terrorism. We can quote the American model of their States accepting a federal crime system although they fiercely guard their autonomy through separate State constitutions, crime and polling laws.

MR. V. BALACHANDRAN is a former Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat.

Cornucopia *(cont'd. from page 11)*

facing two wings of a hostile Pakistan on both our Eastern and Western borders. Some would argue that there is no love lost between Bangladesh and India either. True, but at least, Bangladesh despises Pakistan as much as they do us. It is a far more comfortable situation than having two hostile neighbours combining to threaten us.

As lamentable as the indifference shown to a very brave soldier may be, what is even more nauseating is the reason behind. Our leaders never take any action unless they see some profit in it – either political or monetary – for themselves. Sam Bahadur belonged to the miniscule Parsi community that is too insignificant to be

considered a vote bank. Whether they praised him or ignored him would not make any dent in their political fortunes one way or another. So why bother? As one newspaper reported, for them, the funeral may well have taken place in Wellington, New Zealand, instead of Wellington, Ooty. It was no skin of their nose. This then, is the calibre of people to whom we have entrusted the destiny of our nation. The real tragedy is that most of us are quite content with this state of affairs. It is true what they say: we get the government we deserve.

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Lokmanya Tilak's Incarceration in Mandalay, a Hundred Years Ago *(Cont'd. from p.12)*

Fortunately, Tilak's will, determination and magnificent constitution pulled him through and on returning from Mandalay, he was destined to play an important role in national politics.

Tilak, addressing Justice Davar, after the pronouncement of the judgement, observed:

"In spite of the verdict of the Jury, I maintain that I am innocent. There are higher powers that rule the destiny of man and nations and it may be the will of Providence that the cause I represent may prosper more by my suffering than my remaining free".

Nearly half a century later and in independent

India, Chief Justice M. C. Chagla unveiled a plaque in the High Court (July 24, 1956), containing these words of Tilak. On that occasion, Justice Chagla observed: "We have met here today to make atonement for the suffering that was caused by the convictions to a great and distinguished son of India. That disgrace tarnished our record and we are here to remove that tarnish and that disgrace. It may be said that these convictions were a technical compliance with Justice, but we are here to emphatically state that they were a flagrant denial of substantive Justice. He was sentenced because he loved his country more than his life or liberty".

DR. R. SRINIVASAN is retired professor of Political Science, University of Bombay, and Associate Editor, *Freedom First*.

From Our Readers

Of Savitri and Satyavan

I have been reading the wonderful material contained in *Freedom First* and have been generally happy with Suman Oak's essays. However, she does not seem to go to the roots of the rituals at all. What she has written about the tale of Savitri is a travesty of a priceless *Upakhyana* (*Freedom First*, July 2008). For instance Ashvapati does not "hastily" perform Savitri's marriage. It is she who makes a stand: I have chosen once and shall not choose again, she says and the King helps her in getting married to Satyavan. To refer to Satyavan repeatedly as just a wood-cutter is funny. One must read Narada's description of the Prince-in-exile to know of his intellectual and spiritual attainments. Savitri's life of *tapasya* when living as a housewife has been a great role model for millions.

Prema Nandakumar, Srirangam

The No Confidence Motion in Parliament - Some Uncomfortable questions

Now that dust and din of trust vote is behind us, the country must ponder over seriously its fallout. It raises many important and uncomfortable questions that the country has to come to terms with; by all the political parties to introspect for the very future of democracy is at stake. Like The issues thrown up fall mainly under three heads; personal integrity, political morality and constitutional propriety. By now it is apparent that all the parties have played foul with the system to bring a bad name to the country. As regards personal integrity the adage *Yatha Raja Thatha Praja* (Like King, like subjects) applies for a King who has to be above reproach to ensure righteousness in society prevails and subjects live happily.

In our democracy the Prime Minister represents the King and his personal conduct would fashion democracy on the right lines with a caveat that he should not only possess personal integrity but should also not remain a silent witness to unsavoury happenings. Seen in this light has the PM, who is seen to be above reproach by common consent, emerged unsullied is the first question.

Secondly, political morality applies to seeking support by promise of cabinet posts, allowing voting by convicted criminals, changing party allegiance by lure of money and defying the party whip and of course the unseemly exhibition of throwing bundles of money. This involves all the political parties who have to answer the nation.

The last question refers to a constitutional issue involving the stand and role of the speaker in defying party discipline; voting by criminals, whether MPs receiving money remain outside the pale of accountability; the independence of the CBI and more importantly whether the PM by entering into the nuclear agreement has broken parliamentary convention and/or committed constitutional impropriety. These need to be discussed in public and widely debated in the media.

H. R. Babu Satyanarayana, Mysore

Corruption and Terrorism

The governments, both at the Centre and the states have to look inward while tackling the terrorist problems. Can the lack of efficiency in tackling the problem be due to any fall in the quality of the government machinery and its administration ?

It is well recognised that there is rampant corruption in the country at all levels and particularly in the government machinery including the police force and investigation agencies. Can the terrorist problem be solved without rooting out the corrupt elements in the government machinery ? For corrupt and dishonest persons, money and benefits can be an adequate attraction to do anything, unmindful of the consequences to the society at large.

I strongly think that the widespread prevalence of corruption in this country has made it easy for the terrorists to implement their nefarious plans.

N. S. Venkataraman, Chennai

Book Review



THE GARRISON STATE - THE MILITARY, GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY IN COLONIAL PUNJAB, 1849-1947 by Tan Tai Yong ● Published by Sage Publications, B/11, Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area, Mathura Road, Post Bag 7, New Delhi 110044 ● Year of Publication: 2005 ● No. of pages: 333 ● Price Rs. 640.

Reviewed by Brigadier Suresh Chandra Sharma (retd.) currently an advisor to the telecom industry and a freelance journalist. Email brigsc@bom9.vsnl.net.in

The book is the seventh volume in the Sage series in Modern Indian History. Punjab was annexed into the British Indian Empire after 1848 and was governed as a non-regulation province which emphasized flexibility over a rigid adherence to legislative regulations. The military theme had always featured prominently in Punjab due to its location as the gateway to invasions and trade.

Immediately after the defeat of the Sikh army, the Viceroy, Lord Dalhousie had the army disbanded. Gradually, the Sikhs were recruited into the British army as they were considered to be good material for policing the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). After the revolt by the Bengal Army in 1857, the recruitment was opened to a limit of 20%. Doubts still lingered about the loyalty of the Indian troops and it was decided that the army should be composed of different nationalities and mixed up generously in the regiments. The divide and rule policy was to ensure that the army did not galvanize itself into a unified force. In the First World War, a battalion of Muslim soldiers was considered to be a risk to fight in the Middle East and was at the last moment diverted to Africa. This fact was not publicized. Two companies each of different communities helped to maintain communal balance. After the First Afghan war, the threat from Russia provided the impetus to reorganize the force to meet a European enemy. The physique and tradition of soldiering of sepoys from the Punjab, Nepal and Garhwal had impressed the British.

Punjab became important for the supply of recruits. By 1929, Punjab was supplying more than half the combatants for the army. Recruitment was restricted to what the British had classified as the martial races: Sikhs, Jats, Dogras and Muslims from specified districts. The idea of martial and non-martial classes was introduced. It continues to be observed in the Indian Army even today in a limited sense. What the British had acquired was the Indian military market. People from these areas were soldiers by profession and tradition. Military service was regarded both as a career and an assertion of social identity, self image and status acquired by bearing arms. In 1929,

recruiting officer Malcom Darling, while touring the Punjab asked whether they joined the army “for *shauq* [keenness] or *bhuq* [hunger]. Most of them replied “*bhuq* first and then *shauq*.” This continues to be the motivating factor even today. This restricted market was well provided for by way of pay and land grants in the canal colony and special laws were enacted like the Land Alienation Act which debarred the village money-lenders from taking over the land of farmers. The Canal Colonies Bill was another sop to the agriculturist classes that provided the bulk of recruits. These privileges were guarded jealously by the few who enjoyed them.

India contributed 479 million pounds and one and a half million men during the First World War. The news of huge casualty rates in Europe led to an increasing reluctance to join the army. Mothers and wives went to extraordinary lengths to prevent their men from joining the army. The *Ghadar* Party also opposed Indians enlisting. A proposal to impose a penalty on a village for not meeting the recruitment target was given up in favour of local collaboration. Rural elites like Chhotu Ram and Tiwana were given significant patronage. The rural elites constituted themselves into a potent entity in the post war politics of Punjab.

After the First World War, a large number of soldiers were sent home. They were discontented when they did not get the promised land and jobs. The Jalianwala Bagh firing and the movement of non-cooperation by Mahatma Gandhi added to the unrest. It must be noted that the Congress failed to make an impression in the military districts of Punjab due to the fact that a number of pensioners lived there, who depended for their living on the Government. The Government, aware of the need to maintain the loyalty of serving soldiers appointed Soldiers Boards in the districts to help in employment and financial grants to deserving ex-soldiers and their families. The Army was always considered to be the ultimate guarantor of the power of the Government and a close cooperation between the civil and military authorities helped to maintain peace.

The Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen Boards continue to function even today but are hardly effective. The attitude of the civil administration is certainly indifferent.

In 1920, the Sikh community started an agitation to free the administration of the gurudwaras from the control of their hereditary managers. In 1922, the Akali movement encompassed the bulk of central Punjab's Jat Sikh community. The then establishment realized that the Indian army comprised of the subject population was vulnerable to political influence. The military repercussions of the movement were considerable. The recruiting officers reported a drop in the number of volunteers. The usual loyal military pensioners wavered in their support for the government and most disturbing of all, the Sikh regiments showed signs of restlessness. The prospects of mutiny limited the options available to the government. The full use of troops to control the agitation was ruled out.

In 1919; the Government had imposed martial law in five districts. This time they displayed remarkable flexibility. Initially, the Government handed over control of the Amritsar Golden Temple to the SGPC. This step failed to contain the movement. It encouraged a more militant approach by the reformers and they tried to transform the agitation into a civil disobedience movement. The Government's response was to arrest Sikh political leaders but show sympathy for the religious sentiments of the Sikhs. The dual approach paid good dividends. The new Governor, Sir Hailey, realized that the SGPC dominated the rural countryside due to the absence of an alternative organization. He created anti-Akali associations in the military districts. With official support these associations were able to undermine the influence of the SGPC. By 1925, Hailey's success was complete. The episode showed that the army comprising subject population was vulnerable to political influence.

Both in peace and war, the Government depended heavily on the rural elite and the preservation of the old aristocracy was central to the imperial interests in the province. When the post-war constitutional reforms created new opportunities, the government ensured that power would devolve to their rural-military allies by a system of franchise and reservations. The rural elites – both Hindus and Muslims – formed the Unionist Party under the leadership of Chhotu Ram and Sikander Hayat Khan. This party dominated Punjab politics till 1946. There was little prospect for the nationalist parties like the Congress and the Muslim League. Chhotu Ram gave wide publicity to the suspension of pension to retired army personnel who sympathized with the Congress. He exhorted the Jats to continue to join the army and shun the spinning wheel of Mahatma Gandhi. The colonial administration's decision to refund about Rupees Eleven crores land revenue in 1931 during the depression days helped.

During World War II Punjab was mobilized to support the war effort. The mobilization process concealed the cracks that had appeared in the Raj-rural elite alliance due to Sikh and Pakistan politics, food rationing and price controls. At partition in 1947, the garrison province by now militarized fell apart. Anarchy was unleashed in the province. The author is of the view that the story of the militarization of colonial Punjab is crucial to understand the post-colonial military rule in Pakistan. It is a continuation of the colonial era.

A Correction

Professor R.Srinivasan the reviewer of the book "Empire of Knowledge, Culture and Plurality in the Global Economy" (*Freedom First* No. 494 August 2008) is former Professor of Politics and not Economic as incorrectly stated. We regret the error. *Editor*.

The Burden of the Bureaucracy (*Cont'd. from p.15*)

achieve the social objectives of various welfare measures of the government.

One thing must be highlighted about the Pay Commission's recommendations. From reports appearing in the media the most unhappy section is the defence services who feel that they have been given a raw deal and they seem to be having no voice in sustaining the morale of its forces. The officers of the defence services are at a disadvantage vis-à-vis bureaucrats regarding retirement age, opportunities for promotion, and educational facilities for their children due to service conditions. The pay package offered will worsen the

present situation of shortage of officers. No bureaucrat would like his son to join the defence services, as they are aware of the occupational hazards. The ex-Army Chief has made an impassioned appeal to the Prime Minister bringing the patent injustices to his notice.

Finally, it is for the government to re-examine all the commission's recommendations and to rectify the inadequacies, at the same time ensuring that government servants are made more accountable through administrative reforms.

MR. SADANAND B. KUMTA is retired Director of Technical Education, Government of Gujarat.

Between Ourselves ...

There is a growing consensus in this country, at least among the literate voters, other than those who are in the various political parties, that the Central Government that we have today is perhaps the weakest we have had since independence; that it is possible for anyone within the country or from outside to do what they like with impunity and get away with it.

This is a pity for this government is headed by a highly educated person and a man of high personal integrity. On the other side we have a national party which does not know the difference between an opposition party and a party in the opposition.

We said this before in the columns of *Freedom First* and we say it again that while (inflation notwithstanding) the economy is registering impressive growth the quality of governance continues to be on a downward spiral.

This happens when the group in power wants to

hang on to power somehow - or put differently, when power becomes an end in itself; while the group in opposition is prepared to do its worst to get into power. The result is a logjam on the doorway and good governance is unable to gain entry.

These come as painful reminders when one views the recent acts of terrorism in Bangalore, Ahmedabad and even worse the renewed conflagration in Kashmir. In the latter case as many analysts are agreed the situation was improving and Pakistan and its ISI were on the back foot until our very own governments obliged them to retake the initiative. The two writers Ashok Karnik and V. Balachandran paint a picture which is far from optimistic.

All in all a depressing situation. Is there a silver lining anywhere? There has to be if we have to survive as a nation. What, dear reader, is your take on these matters?

Editor

Many Voices

It's better to wear a genuine Swatch than a fake Cartier because the latter puts you in the position of pretending to have something you don't, which is as bad as pretending to be someone you're not.

Shashi Tharoor in the column Trade Economics, *Mint* July 11

I certainly believe that we need a whole new value system to replace the old one, because we're living in a far more prosperous India now. With prosperity comes higher aspirations and we can't turn the clock back.

Author and novelist Shobaa De, *Sunday Hindustan Times*, April 27

Treat an actor as an actor. Enjoy his films. Do not put a halo around him.

Actor Satyaraj (in the context of an agitation in Bangalore against actor Rajnikanth) cited in an editorial in *The Economic Times*, August 4

As far as terrorists are concerned terrorism is a continuation of politics by other means. As far as the rest of us are concerned it is important to understand what this "politics" is.

Saubhik Chakravarti, *The Indian Express*, July 29

A new variety of terrorism has come out of nowhere to become India's No.1 security nightmare, and neither of the two main national parties has any fresh ideas on dealing with the threat.

Columnist Andy Mukherjee, *Mint*, July 30

RBI governors can get another term without going to the people. Politicians looking to the RBI to bring down inflation don't have that luxury.

Editorial in *The Indian Express*, July 31

India, as we have heard, is the world's largest democracy, so what have we learnt from this? I believe, nothing.

Vinay Bhagnari, *Hindustan Times*, July 3

Pragmatism, says the mayor (of Antalya in Turkey) is the AK Party's guiding creed. "We allow praying, we allow bikinis, we allow discos" he says. "We allow everything".

A report in the *Wall Street Journal* reproduced in *Mint* August 7

Why are you here? An Indian in (London's) Hyde Park was asked. His reply: "We are here because you were there"

Salil Tripathi in his column in *Mint* August 7

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