

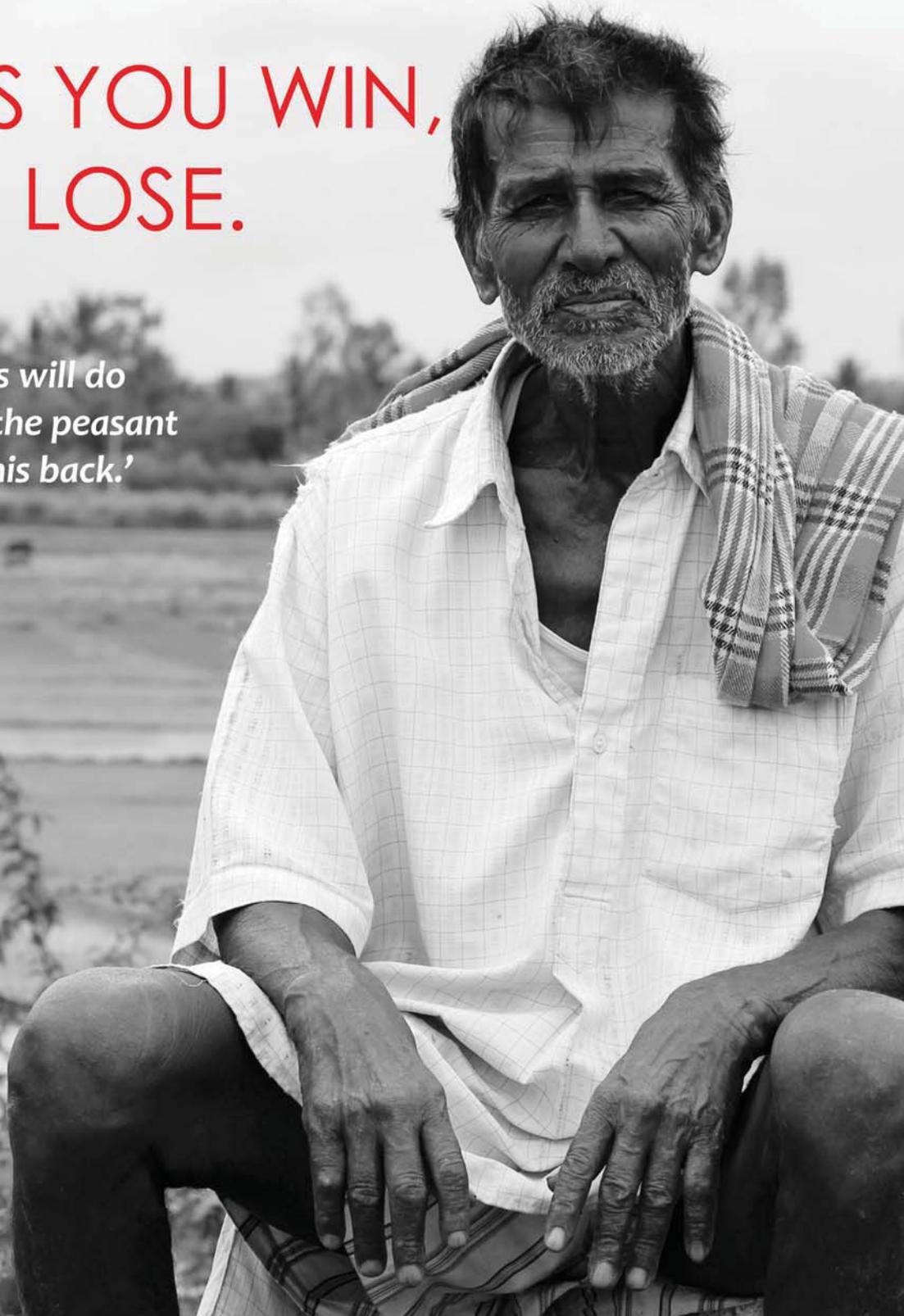
Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine

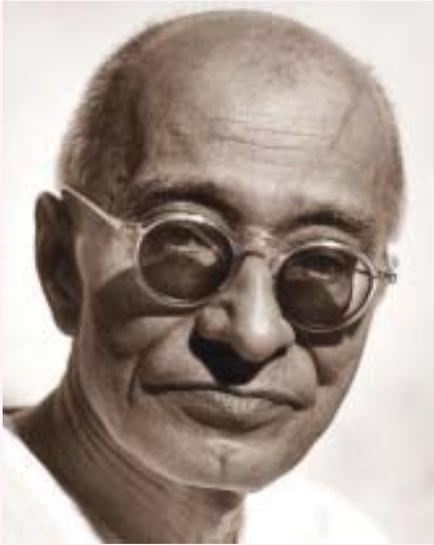
HEADS YOU WIN,
TAILS I LOSE.

*'We of the cities will do
everything for the peasant
except get off his back.'*

Mahatma Gandhi



Our “Inconsistencies”



If men were condemned to demonstrate rigid consistency on what they stand for, through half a century, dogmatism would be the rule in public life which would be a reductio ad absurdum. I venture to confess and claim that I have an accommodating mind, but one that does not forget truth or the public weal at any point. A fervent and patriotic resolution attracting the approval of a great body of people on the one side, and an unanswerable objection, on the other side, with a mass of people behind that protest – it is not an easy issue on which one could take a decision and stick to it rigidly. With hope, at each step, I have moved from position to position and I trust my views as formed from time to time will not be misconstrued as mere political opportunism but understood in their true evolution.

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

Excerpted from “My Inconsistencies”, *Swarajya*, August 10, 1963

The Liberal should learn to be realistic and shift his gun from time to time. The trouble with most people is that they are conservative. If a man is a Socialist, he goes on being a Socialist even if the whole situation is transformed. If a man is a Conservative he goes on being a Conservative even if his Conservatism becomes meaningless in a particular context; a certain amount of flexibility and fluidity is required. Mahatma Gandhi was a very pure man. That is why he was called the Mahatma but he kept on saying: “Consistency is the virtue of an ass.” He was a man who appeared to contradict himself every now and then, and that is because he was dealing with different situations at different times and he quite rightly took a different attitude to them.But there was a thread running through his inconsistency – It was a thread of clean methods – truthful and peaceful methods...that the ends do not justify the means... that your means have to be clean if your objective is to be preserved.



MINOO MASANI in *‘Democracy and Development’*
published by the Indian Liberal Group (1968).

Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine – 63rd Year of Publication
No.574 April 2015

Contents

Our “Inconsistencies”	2
<i>Between Ourselves</i>	3
<i>From Our Readers</i>	4
Hypocrites All!	
S. V. Raju	6
The Land Acquisition Bill Not Convincing	
N. S. Venkataraman	7
<i>Point Counter Point</i>	
Ashok Karnik	9
Remembering Pandit Nehru’s ‘Tryst with Destiny’	
H. R. Bapu Satyanarayana	11
“Daughter of India” – The BBC Documentary	
Nitin G. Raut	13
Rahul Takes a Break	
Firoze Hirjikaka	14
<i>Budget 2015-16</i>	
● An Evaluation	
Ajit Karnik	16
● Why So Special	
Sunil S. Bhandare	19
<i>The Rural Perspective</i>	
Agriculture and Rural Indebtedness - VI	
R. M. Mohan Rao	21
<i>Foreign Relations in the 21st Century</i>	
Obama Came and Concurred: Convergences Enhanced, New Vistas of Cooperation Opened	
B. Ramesh Babu	23
Pakistan’s Quest for Nationhood	
Suresh C. Sharma	26
Warriors After War	
Suresh C. Sharma	27
<i>Book Reviews</i>	28
<i>Educating Adults</i>	
● Three Emerging Religious Icons for Maharashtra Politics	
Sharu Rangnekar	32
● Shortage of Qualified Teachers	
Suresh C. Sharma	33
● The Right to Sanitation as a Human Right	
B. N. Mehrish	34

Between Ourselves...

To your editor the best piece of news in recent weeks was the report in *The Times of India* of March 21 that the large number of members of parliament did not play truant at the present budget session now in recess and that they actually earned their pay! According to this report “Lok Sabha members worked harder than their predecessors in the last decade registering a productivity of 121%”. The Rajya Sabha too was not very far behind “notching productivity of 109%.” Parliamentary Affairs Minister M. Venkaiah Naidu hoped that this marked the beginning of a new way of “transparent governance in the country.” This might not be entirely true – at least not yet – but an important fact was Y. V. S. Reddy who gave a fillip to the concept of federalism and, in the process, providing an answer to members from various states ‘what’s in it for my state’.

The next step should be enforcing discipline in its proceedings. The Speaker should not be from the ruling group NDA or the UPA. The two groups should, before the elections, agree on a person who has training, strictness and the wisdom of a Vikramaditya (preferably a retired judge or jurist) who will have the courage, for example to ban members from rushing to the well of the house at the slightest excuse and disrupt proceedings.

The third follow-up to take this forward is to cultivate a sense of bipartisanship. This is easier said than done. Pandit Nehru is rightly credited with nurturing and sustaining parliamentary democracy in India. But he did not encourage bipartisanship except when he was driven to a corner as during the Chinese invasion. At other times, Nehru would contemptuously reject or ignore our (The Swatantra Party’s) offers of support for instance because for him it came from a ‘Right Reactionary party of farmers and rich businessmen’. But that’s another story waiting to be told.

Editor.

FOUNDER: Minoos Masani ● **EDITOR:** S. V. Raju ● **ASSOCIATE EDITOR:** R. Srinivasan ● **ADVISORY BOARD:** Sharad Bailur, Rea Godbole, A. V. Gopalakrishnan, Firoze Hirjikaka, Ashok Karnik, Hina Manerikar, Jyoti Marwah, Farrokh Mehta, Jehangir Patel, Nitin G. Raut, Suresh C. Sharma, Kunwar Sinha, Sameer Wagle
SUBSCRIPTIONS: Kashmiri Rao ● **COVER:** Vivek Raju.

PUBLISHERS: Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom (ICCF) 3rd floor, Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400001.

Phone: +91 (22) 22843416 ● Email: freedom@vsnl.com / freedomfirst1952@gmail.com ● www.freedomfirst.in

PUBLISHED BY J. R. Patel for the ICCF and printed by him at Union Press, 13, Homji Street, Fort, Mumbai 400001.

Phone: 91 (22) 22660357 / 22665526 ● **TYPESET** by Narendra Kotak, A-605/606, Mahavir Platinum, Govandi, Mumbai 400043.

SINGLE COPY: Rs.20.00 ● **ANNUAL:** Rs.200 ● **TWO YEARS:** Rs.350 ● **THREE YEARS:** Rs.500 ● **Overseas** (Incl Class Air Mail) Annual: \$20 or £10
Cheques to be drawn in favour of *ICCF* and mailed to the publishers at the above address.

From Our Readers

Jamsetji Tata

I was very happy to see the radiant face of Jamsetji Tata on your cover page of March issue. Truly he was a visionary and a person who walked his talk. As you have rightly pointed out, he 'Made in India' 150 years before we started using the slogan.

I personally remember that my outlook towards my career and life changed on reading the book "*Creation of Wealth*" by R. M. Lala. In it he described how many rich businessmen of India accumulated wealth, but Tata stood steadfast to create wealth. When the British chief of Indian Railways sarcastically remarked, "I will eat every pound of steel rail that Tata can produce", the Tatas did it, and in his most humble way remarked, "The Chief of Railways is likely to get indigestion." What a role model to aspiring Indians of today!

The only disappointment was that you did not devote sufficient inner pages to enlighten your readers about this great man and the legacy he has left behind. Some other issue perhaps?

Dr. Ali Khwaja, Banjara Academy
Bangalore 560032
www.banjaraacademy.org

*

Amartya Sen's Outbursts on Being Denied a Second Term

On being denied second term as Chancellor of Nalanda University, Amartya Sen has criticised the Modi Government and accused it of threatening academic freedom.

Obviously, Amartya Sen would not have said this if he had been given a second term. His reaction sounds like that of a typical politician in India who views any situation in the light of his personal interests. It is unfortunate that Sen has viewed the issues relating to academic freedom in such a restricted way.

Amartya Sen has completed his term as Chancellor of Nalanda University and his term has not been disturbed mid-way. Certainly, the government has the duty, responsibility and authority to decide as to who should be the next Chancellor and the decision need not always go in favour of the incumbent. A person like Amartya Sen, a Nobel laureate who gets a lot of publicity in the media, should understand this prerogative of the government.

By no stretch of imagination can one say that not providing a second term as Chancellor amounts to a threat to academic freedom. Certainly there are people in India who are equally suitable or may be even more suitable than Sen for the job and the government is entitled to examine such possibilities.

Amartya Sen has given an impression that he is a pledged critic of Narendra Modi. In his recent interview in the media, he not only talks about his not being given a second term but has also made highly critical remarks about Modi's governance which is unwarranted from a person holding a position as exalted as a Chancellor of a University.

N. S. Venkataraman, Trustee
Nandini Voice For The Deprived
Chennai-600090
nsvenkat Chennai@gmail.com
twitter: @nsvchennai

*

Growing Saffronization

In his column in the March 16 edition of *The Indian Express*, Ribeiro joins a growing group of rational and intelligent personalities who have been lamenting the creeping saffronization taking place in our secular and tolerant country over the past few months. It is poignant and deeply distressing that a thorough gentleman who has served India with great distinction for most of his adult life is being made to feel like a "stranger in his own country". Ribeiro is right when he concludes that the "systemic targeting" of those who do not belong to the majority community has begun only after the BJP government of Narendra Modi came to power. Here I would make a subtle distinction. During the previous BJP regime under Atul Bihari Vajpayee, we did not witness this kind of open communal venom being spewed by Hindu fundamentalists. No doubt some extremists owing allegiance to the RSS and their offshoots were present even then, but Vajpayee kept them in check. It is inexplicable that a strongman like Modi who exercises total control over his party members, cannot do the same. It leads one to the conclusion that he is either turning a blind eye or is content to let the hardliners expound their perverted version of Hindutva and proclaim a Hindu Rashtra. Some would argue that Modi has occasionally made strong statements against this practice. Agreed, but they have been not been followed up with concrete actions and are not taken seriously by the venom-spewers. Witness how the Sadvhi made her trademark inflammatory

statements in public only three days after Modi gave a speech in Parliament on how all religions must be treated with equal respect. Also, even after his speech in support of the Christian community, churches continue to be attacked. It is also noteworthy that during the recent reshuffle of the BJP's top decision making committee, while Smriti Irani and others were dropped, the Sadhvi and the Yogi retained their places. And it is not only the fanatics. The new Chief Minister of Haryana, a committed RSS-sevak, has not only banned cattle slaughter in his state, but has made the penalty for violation equal to that of murdering a human being. Then there is the outrageously incompetent Chairman of the Censor Board, whose only qualification for the job seems to be that he is an RSS man. More eminent citizens like Ribeiro need to speak up. It will be a tragedy if we allow grand visions and promises of development and prosperity - many of them yet to be fulfilled - obscure the reality of what is taking place in this imperfect but democratic and tolerant nation of ours, of which we are justly proud.

Nagaland Lynching

The despicable incident in Nagaland where as bloodthirsty mob pulled an alleged rapist out of prison and beat him to death exposes the self righteous hypocrisy of our politicians. These "leaders" cried themselves hoarse in Parliament and on television over the BBC documentary on the Nirbhaya rapist, conveniently obscuring the reality that a sizeable number of them share roughly the same views expressed by the rapist, although few have the courage to express them openly. Their argument is that the BBC documentary shows India in a poor light. Well then, in what light does this sickening mob lynching episode - already broadcast on CNN and BBC - show the country? It portrays us as a nation of barbarians. Where is the outrage now? All we can expect from our politicians are the usual disgraceful platitudes like "the law will take its own course" and promises to "bring the culprits to justice." They forget that it is members of their own class who often encourage mobs for cheap political gains. God save our country, for no one else will.

Firoze Hirjikaka
leonardo8_99@yahoo.com.

*

Ugly Truths about Young India

A nationwide study commissioned by the Bangalore-based Children's Movement for Civic awareness highlights that high school and college students are shockingly casual about democracy and entertain regressive beliefs and antisocial attitudes

Dilip Thakore, Editor, *Education World*, March 2015.
(The full article a must read for every educationist – Ed.)

Kisan Mehta, R.I.P.

The Passing Away of a Dedicated Environmentalist



Shri Kisan Mehta leading environmentalist, social activist and an active participant in the Indian Freedom struggle passed away on 7 March 2015. He was 91.

Kisanbhai was imprisoned in the Yervada Central Prison, Pune for eight months for his participation in the freedom movement.

He conceived and organized the '*Himalaya Hamara*' Exhibition in 1963 soon after the 1962 Chinese aggression depicting the importance of the Himalayas to India and its people. The exhibition held in Mumbai was viewed by thousands of people over a period of two months.

He was a Municipal Councillor in the Municipal Corporation of Greater Bombay, and served as Chairman of the BEST Undertaking. He evolved an "Electric Supply to Slums Scheme" for providing electric supply to slums and implemented the scheme throughout Bombay despite formidable government opposition and the existence of a retrograde law. Inaugurated on 15 August 1971 in the Dharavi slums, this unusual project has since been implemented in unauthorized slums by local authorities throughout the country bringing about a quantum transformation in the quality of life of slum dwellers.

Kisan Mehta resigned from active politics and personal private business in 1977 and devoted himself to the protection of the environment and conserving the country's finite natural resources. He founded the Save Bombay Committee (SBC) in 1973 and Prakruti in 1988 as public trusts. The SBC works in the area of urban and regional planning and development to ensure equal opportunity for improving the quality of life to all citizens. The Maharashtra Urban Areas Preservation and Protection of Trees Act, 1975 came about following his initiative. He visited the USA, Europe, Russia, Asian and Latin American Countries, participating and presenting technical papers on urban issues, public health and waste management, and sustainable agriculture.

Freedom First, which had the privilege of interacting with him whenever the occasion demanded conveys its deep sense of loss to his family and associates in SBC and Prakruti.

SVR
Courtesy: Karmayog@yahoo.com

Hypocrites All!

“We of the cities will do everything for the peasant except get off his back.”

Mahatma Gandhi

Why We Do Not Support the Land Acquisition Bill

Under the original Constitution of India the farmers have the right to acquire, maintain and dispose of landed property and any amount of compensation cannot take that right away. The correct position would be, if a farmer wishes to continue to stay with agriculture despite the adverse situation, the government will have no right to acquire his land for whatever purpose. On the other hand, if a farmer wishes to discontinue agriculture then he should have the right to dispose off his land to whomsoever, whenever and at whatever price he chooses. The present ordinance (now a bill passed by the Lok Sabha and awaiting Rajya Sabha endorsement) will have the effect of strengthening the position of the government departments to the disadvantage of the farming community. Judged by the reactions of the present land holders, it would appear that the Bill would only cause further confusion and make industrial development even more difficult than at present.

**Shetkari Sanghatana founder Sharad Joshi in his comments
in Freedom First No.573, March 2015**

On January 12 1959 Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru launched a crusade against the property rights of the majority of the Indian people when he got the Indian National Congress at its A.I.C.C meeting that day in Nagpur to adopt a resolution which in effect would lead to appropriating the land of the farmer in the name of Joint Cooperative Farming, uprooting in the process, the traditional Indian method of peasant family farming. It came to be notoriously known as the Nagpur Resolution that led in turn to the 17th Amendment to the Constitution on 30th April 1964.

Denouncing this amendment Rajaji observed: This Bill is a gigantic falsehood to make all owners of land ‘intermediaries’, thus reviving the exploded doctrine that all land in India belongs to Government, every peasant being only tenant. When the British were ruling, the Congress vigorously sought to protect the peasant and objected to this feudal doctrine. It now seems the position is reversed”. Peasant leader Prof. N.G.Ranga and the then President of the Swatantra Party said: “It is wrong for the Government to consider their land policy which they have conceived with the aid of the Planning Commission to be of greater inflexibility than the Constitution.” Said Masani then General Secretary of the Swatantra Party: “What we want is sympathy and security for the farmer, not a Damocles’ Sword hanging over his head.”

The 17th Amendment amending Article 31 A of the Indian Constitution gave uncontrolled power to the State legislatures over all landed property in this country. A

feature of this measure is the peculiar definition of the word “estate”.

“The expression ‘estate’ shall in relation to any local area, have the same meaning as that expression or its local equivalent has in the existing law relating to land tenures in forces in that area and shall also include:

1. any *jagir, imam* or *muafi* or other similar grant and in the States of Madras, and Kerala and *janmam* right;
2. any land held under ryotwari settlement;
3. any land held or let for purposes of agriculture or for purposes ancillary thereto including wasteland, forest land, land for pasture or sites of buildings and other structures occupied by cultivators of land, agricultural labourers and village artisans.”

By this perverted definition, even a mere acre of land can be called an “estate” and be taken away.

The 17th Amendment started a seesaw struggle between the Supreme Court of India and the Governments of India for the next 15 years (between 1964 and 1977/78) and the various amendments that followed tightening the grip of the state on the farmer. The Supreme Court’s position on constitutional amendments laid out in its judgements and which is the position today is that Parliament can amend the Constitution but cannot destroy its “basic structure”.

The Land Acquisition Bill which at the time of writing has with various amendments passed the Lok Sabha is now in the Rajya Sabha where the Indira Congress (wearing the garb of the anti-farmer Indian National Congress) is opposing the Bill and posing itself as a protector of the farmer. The Cong(I) which did its damndest to despoil the kisan of his land is now shouting hoarse its bogus concerns. Its Madam-leader led 13 other political parties in a procession to Rashtrapathi Bhavan to demand

that the President should not agree to a demand for the Ordinance to be extended among other reasons.

Not one of the 14 political parties really has the farmers' interests at heart. Their only interest – their political survival AND not that of the farmers'.

Hypocrites All !

The Land Acquisition Bill Not Convincing

N. S. Venkataraman

Government of India's determined move to enact the Land Acquisition Bill has caused considerable misgivings in the country, for which there appear to be justifiable reasons.

There is the fundamental question as to whether taking away the agricultural land for setting up industry or housing projects is appropriate in a country like India, which is essentially an agriculture oriented economy and particularly when agriculture operations provide jobs to millions of people at unskilled and semi skilled levels. More than 75% of country's population constitute peasants and tribals, whose only traditional skill is in agricultural operations.

It is reported that in the last few decades, around 2% of agricultural land in the country has already been lost to industrial, housing and other projects, leaving thousands of agricultural labourers in difficult economic conditions, needing freebies from government to survive.

The Government's Stand

The government appears to think that industrial activity is as important as agricultural activity and converting some agricultural land for industrial projects is inevitable if the country were to sustain economic growth at the desired level. Government further argues that it has put several safeguards to ensure that land acquisition would be for appropriate projects only and will not result in undue benefit for corporate houses.

After much protest and realizing the mood of the country, the government has made modifications to the land acquisition bill, conferring on State governments adequate power to decide on grant of exemption for certain kinds of land acquisition from the provisions relating to social impact assessment and food security. Moreover, it

limited the acquisition of land for industrial corridors to within one km on either side of designated railway line or road and limited the extent of acquisition to the minimum requirement. Other provisions include compensation by way of government job for at least one member of the affected families. Further, the provision granting exemption for private educational institutions and hospitals had been dropped.

What About Wasted and Unutilized Land?

The question is whether the Modi government has exhausted all the options for identifying the available unutilized land for industrial and development projects , that can avoid taking away land from agricultural operations. One gets the impression that the government has not done this exercise adequately so far.

There are thousands of acres of industrial land currently occupied by many industries, where only a portion of the land is utilized and other land remains unused. There are many sick units which have remained closed with hundreds of acres of land that are not currently being put to any use. There are many educational institutions with hundreds of acres of land , where only a few acres are utilized. There are also land where the site is not suitable for agricultural operations. The government is not known to have enumerated such unutilized land available in the country. The government cannot say today that the country does not have such unutilized and wasted land.

The ground reality is that the promoters of many industrial projects ask for and get much more land than what they need , only considering the appreciation of the land value in course of time. The Modi government has not given any indication that it is aware of such issues and it has not announced any policy as to how much land

should be allotted for particular industrial projects.

Amongst the existing industries and in special economic zones, the government should conduct a land audit to identify the unused land and force the industries to give up such land for setting up new projects. This is possible.

The genuine question is why agricultural land should be taken away without putting the unutilized and wasted land for use for setting up industrial projects.

Investment in Agriculture can be More Productive than in Industry

Should the interest of agriculture be sacrificed for the sake of industrial growth is a very valid question. People

cannot live without food but they can live without cosmetics and automobiles.

Industrial growth should be complimentary to agricultural growth and it cannot be allowed to become a substitute for agricultural growth even to a limited extent. Such a move is bad in principle and contrary to the sentiments of large sections of our people.

Above all, the potential for exploiting agricultural operations for India's economic growth with equanimity is no less than what industrial operations can achieve for the country.

N. S. Venkataram, Trustee, Nandini Voice for the Deprived, Chennai.
nsvenkatchennai@gmail.com, website: www.nandinivoice.org

How to *bolo the boli* and *chalo the boli*

In a commendable effort to try and ensure that our top babus are heard to talk the talk - *bolo the boli* – but are also seen as able to walk the talk – *chalo the boli* – the Modi sarkar has provided them with a lingual ready reckoner by which they can translate the most commonly used words and phrases in bureaucratese into Hindi, which need not necessarily be of the *shudh* variety

...if an officer wants to make a file notation the handy word list supplied by the Home Ministry will make the Hindi word available at the official's fingertips

From an Editorial in *The Times of India*, March 7



VIRAT INDUSTRIES LTD.

(An ISO 9001:2008 Company)

**A Leading Manufacturer & Exporter of
EXCELLENT QUALITY SOCKS**

Our Export Markets include UK, Switzerland and U.A.E.

Our main customers are John Lewis, Ted Baker and Jaeger in the UK, Migros in Switzerland and Shoemart in UAE.

We produce Mens, Ladies and Childrens Dress and Sports Socks.

We also produce speciality Football and Rugby Socks.

For more information, you may visit our website: www.viratindustries.com

Corporate Head Office:

605, Veena Killedar Industrial Estate
10/14 Pais Street, Byculla (West)
Mumbai 400 011 (India)
Tel: (022) 3294 4131 or 3294 4217 /
Fax: (022) 2306 0486
Email: sales@viratindustries.com

Regd. Office & Factory:

A-1/2, GIDC Industrial Estate
Kabilpore
Navsari 396 424
Tel: (91-2637) 265 011 or 22 / 325805

Email: factory@viratindustries.com

Point Counter Point

Ashok Karnik

Every issue has at least two sides. A wise person 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.

Daughter of India

Point

1a) Under an impressive sounding name of “Daughter of India”, a documentary on the infamous ‘Nirbhaya’ rape case was prepared for the BBC and was to be telecast on an Indian TV Channel too. The furor over the enterprise resulted in it being banned in India but the BBC aired it nonetheless. As usual the “Rights” groups stood against the ban and argued why a work of research should be banned. Social workers joined in to argue that it was necessary to study the mind of the rapists to deal with this social disorder. They also held that India was trying to hide its shame by banning a documentary about a gruesome rape. The rest of the country protested vehemently against further humiliation of the victim by allowing the rapist to narrate the ugly incident on a TV platform. Leslie Udwin, Director of the documentary, argued that the ‘Nirbhaya’ incident could not be kept a secret. She believed that the mind-set of the rapists had to be fathomed. She had taken all the permissions required and had not breached the law. The Editors’ Guild of India too opposed the ban and held that there was nothing obscene in the film and the rapists’ mind-set needs to be brought before the world. The existence of such a mind-set is itself an affront to humanity but allowing the rapist to use a TV platform to regurgitate his poison is no less an affront.

Counter Point

1b) The real question was of the intent of the film maker. Was it to study the psychology of the rapists? Was it only to focus on the women’s plight in the world and particularly in India? Was the ‘Nirbhaya’ incident ever a secret and did it not get enough publicity earlier to awaken the entire country? The allegation that India was trying to hide a rape case was wrong as there was nothing left to hide in this particular case. Was it intended to use an already hyper-publicized rape case to point out that a country of yogis and snake-charmers was also full of rapists? Do we not already know the perverted mind-set of such beasts that inhabit the human body? If sociological and psychological research was the aim, where was the need to use a mass medium like the TV to expose this illness in our society which was already exposed ten-fold? It is clear that under the guise of research and social awakening, voyeurism of the worst kind was resorted to. It is a specious argument that the society needs to be told about the existence of animals among human beings. The Indian society learnt enough and more when ‘Nirbhaya’ happened. Those who want to study the subject do not need the exhibition of a girl’s victimization. If the aim was to show that India is a country where such brutal rapes take place the documentary did succeed. A ban does not work in this era of social net-working.

Porbandar Boat Again

2a) The December 31, 2014 sinking of a Pak boat off the coast of Porbandar refuses to lie buried. This time a garrulous DIG of the Coast Guard shot off his mouth claiming that he had ordered the sinking of the Pakistan boat as he was averse to taking prisoners and feeding them biryani. This was like an American Wild West movie. One would have thought DIGs would be more mature than this. Besides, this ran totally counter to the Government’s claim that the crew of the boat set fire to the boat and sank it to avoid being caught. The DIG’s version was grabbed by Pakistan to debunk India’s allegation of a possible Pakistani hand in the terror boat incident; even the Congress Party here went to town to find fault with the BJP. The entire mess was sought to be cleared by the Government by releasing pictures of the burning boat; it

2b) The Coast Guard DIG happens to have an unsavoury record and was superseded by his juniors. This is not material to his revelations but could be a pointer to his irresponsible conduct. He was not in charge of the Porbandar operation, nor did he issue any orders to the Coast Guard ship to sink the suspect boat. Even then he had the gall to play the brave-heart who would not tolerate any Pakistani mischief. He caused enough damage to the Coast Guard and the Government by creating doubts about their credibility. His impending court martial for his outburst would not be enough to undo the damage. In such cases, truth always remains unclear. One lesson for our opposition party leaders: be careful when dealing with international issues; take time to examine and re-examine an international issue before making it a matter of dispute. The eagerness

Point

hoped to prove that the boat was set on fire from within and not through an attack by the Coast Guard.

Counter Point

to damn the ruling party should not turn one into a weapon for the country's adversary. Truth needs to be pursued but it can be done with finesse too!

Sensitive Documents

3a) Recent revelations about leakage of Petroleum Ministry documents to Corporate Houses in the Energy Industry proved our suspicion that commercial houses would spare no effort, legal or illegal, to obtain privileged information to make a fast buck. The exposé initiated by the National Security Advisor through the Intelligence Bureau to get to the root of the mischief is welcome. How far the malaise has affected the higher bureaucracy and the corporate world is to be seen. It cannot be the handiwork of minions and a few executives arrested so far. The honchos of private companies are now feeling the heat of police interrogation; the bigger fish among the bureaucracy must be spending sleepless nights waiting for the axe to fall. The problem is how to prevent the theft of vital information. All Ministries have their own security units but these are mainly watch and ward functionaries who ensure that there are no property thefts and pilferages; information is hardly considered a valuable asset in most offices. Sensitive Ministries like Defence, Home, External Affairs and Finance are covered more effectively and the IB keeps a watchful eye on possible mischief but other Ministries are hardly considered potential targets. The thinking has to change now as commercial interests play havoc with the integrity of our systems. What is detected might just be the tip of the iceberg.

3b) Present incidents are a warning that much more could be wrong. This time the culprits may be caught and possibly punished but the disease would remain un-eradicated. Those spying for other countries have been caught in the past but that did not stop others from falling to the same temptation of money, honey and wine. When the one who subverts is from within the country, problems multiply. The treachery initiated by our own business houses is more subtle as the erring official does not think he is betraying his country. He is merely passing on some papers to an Indian business house. The culprit is not aware enough to understand that the rot would ultimately affect his country, its economy and defence preparations. We have failed to make all Government employees understand that their position in a Government office makes them privy to some information that can be used by outsiders to harm the country directly or indirectly. A Government employee's position puts him in a position of trust, be he a peon, a clerk or an officer. He could be targeted by somebody some day; he should inform his superiors if any suspicious approach is made to him. The initial briefing on joining service should cover this area. Security has to be built into the system as IB cannot cover every office. It is time to wake up!

Black Money

4a) The Finance Minister's pronouncement that a Bill to check Black Money would be moved shortly is heartening. The present system leaves too many loop-holes. Even after foreign bank accounts are detected, the account holder has no fear of going to jail. Generally, he transfers the holdings elsewhere and the account is found empty. He has to explain at the most whether he had paid tax on his earnings. Holding a foreign account is not *per se* an offence. He has to pay tax and penalty under the IT Act; there is no deterrent punishment as his only loss through his misadventure is the penalty he has to pay. Income Tax cases go through tortuous processes of hearings and appeals for years and the culprit has nothing much to fear, except some embarrassment if he has a conscience.

4b) The Government now proposes to impose a jail term of 7 years for holding an undeclared foreign account and jail term up to 10 years for stashing money abroad. It is proposed to have a more stringent law against benami holdings to discourage generation of black money within the country too. The details of the legal provisions are not clear yet and therefore the effectiveness of the new laws would not be clear for some time. The welcome development is that the Government has realized the weakness of the present system and plans to take remedial action. These measures may not eliminate black money but at least those detected will not escape through loop-holes. No law makes people moral but the fear of stringent punishment may keep the wrong-doers at bay. Confiscation of the stashed wealth will be the real deterrent.

Readers are invited to email their points of view on serious issues of the day to ashokkarnik2001@yahoo.co.in. Readers who do not have the facility of a computer can also post (mail) their points of view on serious issues of the day to "Point Counter Point", c/o Freedom First, 3rd floor, Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai, 400001.

Remembering Pandit Nehru's 'Tryst with Destiny' Thereby Lies ... A Twist in the Tale

H. R. Bapu Satyanarayana

There is an interesting progression of events immediately prior to and after India became independent on the midnight of 14th August 1947. The significance of these events reflects how political fortune has finally caught up with the Congress that lends credence to the adage 'As you sow, so you reap'. The result is that the Congress which held power for over five decades today finds itself in imminent danger of being reduced from a mainstream national party to a regional party. Extracts from the following three events clearly establish that the mind-set of the Congress has not changed even after being in power for five decades.

Before India's Partition

Homai Vyarawalla, the first female photographer in her book *Camera Chronicles* records some interesting incidents. She died in January 2012 at the age of 98. She gives an eye witness account of the historic event of the All India Congress Committee meeting held on June 14 1946. She recounts that it was a marathon and stormy meeting. She and P. N. Sharma were the only two people who were present when they clandestinely captured the historic meeting as she says where 'some' decided the fate of the country for 'all' which laid the foundation for vivisection of the country. Not burdening the reader with other details, it would be revealing to show the mind-set of the Congress. To quote her words in the book: "The Congress party seemed to be in a hurry to gain power" She further states, "The Congress party has treated India as their *jagir*, giving away the part of the country as if it belongs to them"

Pandit Nehru Tryst with Destiny Speech

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, on the midnight of 14 August 1947, said "Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny and now the time has come when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure but very substantially...It is fitting that at this solemn moment, we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and still to the larger cause of humanity...On this day our first thoughts go to the architect of the freedom, the father of the nation who embodying the spirit of India held aloft the torch of freedom and lighted the darkness that surrounded us.

"We have been the unworthy followers of this and strayed from his message, but not only we but succeeding generations will remember this message and bear this

imprint in their hearts of this great son of India, magnificent in faith, struggle and courage and humility. We will never allow that torch of freedom to be blown out, however high the wind or strong the tempest".

Soon After India Became Independent

Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel were said to have held the view that the Indian National Congress was formed only for achieving independence and should have been disbanded in 1947. But the movement transformed itself into a party. Gandhiji's secretary Kalyanam who was three feet away from the Mahatma when he was shot at close range on that fateful day on January 30, 1948. Gandhi was heartbroken within months of freedom because of the complaints pouring in from all over the country about widespread corruption in the Congress ruled states as well as at the Centre. Gandhi used to get more than fifty letters every day from freedom fighters and concerned citizens. Most of the letters referred to rampant corruption and favouritism being practiced by the Congress ministers and leaders. Gandhi was disappointed and disheartened over the developments. Though he told Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru about this, it fell on deaf ears, reminisced Kalyanam.

When viewed from the details given above, the supreme irony and hypocrisy of the Congress becomes clear. This DNA of corruption has so deeply taken roots that the Congress is in dire straits. The following incidents only show how the Congress has learnt nothing.

Terror Boat Incident

According to details in the media, a vessel had set off from near Karachi and as per Coast Guard Intelligence input it was traced in the Arabian Sea 365 km off Porbandar

on New Year's Eve. It had ominous implications keeping in view the 2008 Mumbai terror attack. The defence minister Manohar Parrikar said that the occupants of the boat were 'suspected terrorists'. Despite warning from the Coast Guard, it did not reply and its occupants believed to be four in number set fire to the boat. The Coast Guard said that the boat contained explosive materials and blew itself. Instead of congratulating the Coast Guards for their vigilance, it was turned into a huge controversy with the Congress making an issue of it by disbelieving the version of the Defence Minister. By so doing it has played into the hands of Pakistan which has accused India of wanting to score a political point. The Defence Minister was put in an untenable position with the chief of the staff of Coast Guard B. K. Lohani saying that he ordered the Pakistani boat to be blown up. It is another matter that he made a u-turn later and Parrikar had to defend his position by showing video evidence. But the point to be noted is to what level the Congress can sink unmindful of the fact that its statement would become a weapon in the hands of Pakistan to brow beat India. Even assuming that it was a smuggler's boat as contended by the Congress, in a situation when Pakistan is bleeding India with terror attacks, for any political party the security and integrity of the country should be foremost but the Congress has no such qualms.

Espionage Ring in Shastri Bhavan

In a shocking revelation the Delhi police, on instructions from NDA government, in a carefully laid out plan arrested a number of government employees and officials of some companies including a journalist thus busting a well-oiled ring operating in Shastri Bhavan stealing classified and secret government papers. Initially, it pertained to the petroleum ministry but gradually the seized documents revealed the involvement of other ministries like coal and power. It revealed the existence of a spy network operating to feed corporate and big business houses so that they could have advance information of government thinking on various policies. The system was so efficient that the information was leaked in real time as it was being sent by the ministers to the bureaucrats concerned or for discussion at cabinet meetings.

As of now the companies linked through their conduit are industrial giants like Reliance, Essar, Jubilant Energy among others. According to journalist Santanu Saikia who, before being whisked away by the police was heard shouting that this was a Rs 10,000 crore scam and that it has existed for many years. Though at present those arrested are low level government servants and officials of the companies concerned, it may also involve high

government officials. The government should take the issue to its logical end and punish the guilty. There is always the possibility that only the small fish would be caught and the real culprits escape.

With Modi showing zero tolerance for corruption as revealed in the action taken against the Home Secretary who tried to influence the CBI in the Saradha chit fund scam, it is hoped that prompt action will be taken to punish the guilty. In retrospect it shows how the rot had set in under the UPA government. The NDA government has inherited a difficult legacy for, despite its honest intention to move with speed to fulfil its electoral promises, a major part of its time is being spent in cleaning the system while the opposition led by the Congress, unable to reconcile to the ever increasing popularity of Modi, is blowing every small issue into a major controversy.

In Tune with the True Spirit of Federalism

The Central Government's decision to accept the recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission for greater devolution of funds to states is a demonstration of statesmanship. This recommendation involving the transfer of 42% of the divisible pool of taxes to the states against the existing 32% is unprecedented. Another notable feature is that the states have also been given the freedom and autonomy to design programmes which suit them according to their priorities. The states were always complaining that the Centre was denying them their rightful share of revenues and thrusting schemes of the Centre's choice. The other important consideration was that this revenue should go all the way down to local self-governing bodies. The responsibility is placed on the states to devise necessary mechanism to formulate the programmes. By this decision, at one stroke, the revenue deficit states find themselves receiving an unexpected financial bonanza. In monetary terms, it is a huge amount of Rs 1.78 lakh crore additional funds being transferred to the states' revenue every year. It is also to be observed that most of the states benefitting from this decision are Congress-ruled states. This not only exhibits the NDA government's non-discriminatory attitude rising above party ideology but also its interest that every state should have its fair share of the revenue generated by them to develop. This concept of strengthening federalism is also demonstrated in abolishing the Planning Commission and replacing it with the more consultative mechanism called the NITI Ayog.

Cont'd. on page 31

Even if there ever was a groundswell for socialism...it has ebbed...Stop the charade. Remove the socialism amendment.

Meghnad Desai, *The Sunday Express*, February 22

“Daughter of India” – The BBC Documentary – Banning Not the Answer

Nitin G. Raut

The overriding social purpose to create worldwide awareness and public interest is missed in a cacophony of misguided outrage.

The ban on Nirbhaya’s film “Storyville: India’s Daughter” televised by the BBC is yet another instance of the Government succumbing to populist reaction and shrill protests, ostensibly to protect India’s image. It is as if to say that the 16th December, 2012 horrendous crime was not in the public domain that it required the BBC film to sully India’s image. The ban in fact suppresses the powerful social message conveyed. The documentary ought to be a testament of Nirbhaya’s gallant fight-back – a life snuffed out in the prime of youth. As if to be a woman is a crime! To say that the film “created a situation of tension and fear among women” is incomprehensible.

The BBC film deals with a critical social issue. The overriding social purpose to create worldwide awareness and public interest, is missed in a cacophony of misguided outrage. Nirbhaya’s rape triggered a spontaneous protest, where otherwise in our society the hapless victim is intimidated by social stigma attached to it and also the cumbersome legal procedure which puts the onus of proving rape on the victim. To go public is an embarrassment; often the victims suffer in silence and the rapists go scot free! The inordinate delays in investigation and trial only prolong the agony and humiliation of the victims.

The film is in the public interest as it focuses on an important social malaise where rape is synonymous with unacceptable male chauvinism.

In fact the fiendish mindset of Mukesh Singh, an accused convicted and sentenced to death in Nirbhaya’s rape case and whose appeal is pending in the Supreme Court, is simply bone chilling. It is a shocking manifestation of a pervert mind when he is reported as saying “a girl is far more responsible for rape than a boy”. It is as if to say a woman is a toy living on gratuitous male sufferance; that her choice of dress should be in conformity with the diktat of the lumpen elements or the protagonists of Khaps and their counterpart in other religions. If the horror and brutality is not enough Mukesh Singh shows no signs of remorse. If such a convict has the audacity to justify his crime and attributes the commission of offence to a woman’s odd working hours and dress style then such a

person is not just a threat to society but unfit to live in it. An exemplary punishment to such offenders will act as a deterrent to future offenders.

In an age of social media such bans and censorship are not only counterproductive but sound extremely ludicrous as anyone can view it on the internet, but not Indians in India; more so when there is nothing repugnant to public policy.

There is a wide chasm between the BJP Government’s ostensible desire to protect “Public Order” and the BBC’s intent “...to ensure that such tragedies are not repeated”. The latter definitely carries more conviction. There can be a ban only if there is a threat to public order but no such perceptible threat exists. If at all, there is a compelling public interest in televising the film.

On 23 December 2012, the Justice Verma Committee, formed to recommend amendments to criminal laws, made recommendations to laws relating to rapes, sexual harassment, trafficking, child sex abuse. The Committee recommended that the offence of rape should not be limited to penetration of vagina, mouth or anus, but even non-consensual penetration of sexual nature should be included in the definition of rape. It has also recommended that marriage by itself should not be treated as irrevocable consent to sexual acts. Of course speedy disposal is a key for efficacious legal administration.

The committee has recommended a “Bill of Rights” for women like in South Africa and New Zealand which guarantees the right to life, security, bodily integrity and equality. Many such features are a part of the Fundamental Rights under our Constitution. Additional security by way of such a Bill of Rights for Women will not be superfluous. It can be called the Nirbhaya Bill of Rights for Women.

The crime of rape is a national shame. Instead of simply fulminating over the reported German Professor’s refusal to accept male Indians as interns, it would be better if we as a nation and society ponder over whether we have done anything to clear such misgivings.

MR. NITIN G. RAUT is an advocate by profession and a member of the Editorial Board of Freedom First.

Rahul Takes A Break

Firoze Hirjikaka

*They seek him here, they seek him there
They seek that fellow everywhere
He makes them grind their teeth and wince
That damned elusive Congress Prince*

(with due apologies to the Scarlet Pimpernel)

Rahul Gandhi has done a bunk – to god knows where. Unconfirmed Rahul sightings have been reported from Bangkok, Switzerland and even the frozen heights of Gangotri. There is intense speculation about his motives. Is he on a spiritual retreat, or a voyage of discovery, or is he just fed up of politics? Sonia probably knows, but she is not telling. Congress stalwarts are hoping that he comes up with a grand plan to resurrect their almost defunct party, but they are not celebrating just yet.

A lot of criticism is being levelled at Rahul Gandhi for taking a break from politics. He is being accused of abandoning his post and running away like a coward. There may be some substance to this. On reflection however, I believe it is a wise move by the Congress heir-apparent. After the Lok Sabha debacle, it has been proved conclusively that the more he opens his mouth and attacks Modi, the stronger the PM seems to get.

The strongest argument for allowing Rahul to figure out his party's future strategy and try to implement it is that it has to be better than the alternative. In fact, there is no alternative. Ever since the Lok Sabha shellacking, the Congress has been thrashing about like someone stuck in quicksand. The more they try to attack Modi, the bigger fools they make of themselves and the more they sink into the mire. Consider the asinine comments by his party men, like taking the Coast Guard DIG's bombast about "blowing the Pakistani boat out of the water and not serving them biryani" at face value and using it to criticise the BJP. This has not only earned the Congress universal scorn not just from politicians but also the armed forces, it has provided Pakistan with a handle to accuse us. Then there was the PM's infamous Rs. 10 lakh suit. After it was auctioned for over Rs. 4 crore, some nitwit in the Congress pegged the auctioned value as the actual cost of the suit, thereby displaying his pettiness and making a laughing stock of himself.

As for Rahul himself, there is a lot of speculation as to the reason for his sulk. Some say he is thwarted because his somewhat radical plans for revamping the

Congress Party are being opposed by the old guard. More frustratingly, while Mummy Dearest regards him with an indulgent eye, he is not quite able to convince her that reform from within is the need of the hour.

So what does Rahul do next? He could continue sulking, of course, or he could introspect on why India's Grand Old Party is facing near total irrelevance. If he allows that to happen, he will be doing a grave disservice not only to the nation that has afforded so many privileges to his family, but also to India's democracy. The previous exercise in one-person authoritarian rule resulted in the Emergency. Perhaps it was generations of democratic principles that caused Indira Gandhi to relent and call for elections - or perhaps it was her arrogance. Whatever the reason, the country's ordeal lasted for a mercifully brief period. I am not sure if our current PM has the same compunctions. For sure, he believes in democracy. However, he is not used to defeat and has had his own way in governance for 15 years. Delhi could be regarded as an aberration, but if the pattern repeats itself in other states, there is no telling what will be his reaction. With the best of intentions, such undiluted power can go to a person's head. I know some people are talking about the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) as a credible alternative, but they have a long way to go before they achieve national prominence. Whichever way you look at it, one party rule is not healthy for a democracy.

It is rumoured that Rahul wants to shake up the party from within and institute a system of party elections at all levels. It is rumoured that the Old Guard is vehemently resisting this effort, which is hardly surprising. The Congress lords have become too big for their boots and virtually abandoned interactions with the rank and file of the party. If internal elections were to be held, they would be unceremoniously booted out. It is rumoured that Sonia Gandhi is torn between maintaining the loyalty of the Old Guard and giving her son a free hand. There is speculation that Sonia will finally hand over the reins to the heir during the forthcoming AICC session. No one really knows, but the gossip mills of Delhi – and the know-it-all anchors of

the news media – are having a field day.

It would be presumptuous of course to second guess Rahul's motives or intentions, but then offering unsolicited advice is so tempting – and so human. So here goes. Firstly, trying to use Modi's masterful tactics for unsettling his political opponents against him is not only futile, it has proved to be disastrous. When Modi hurls a sarcastic or lethal barb at the Gandhis, the people applaud him for his wit. However, when Rahul tries the same thing against Modi, he is accused of being petty and vindictive. Rahul has to accept the fact that he is no match for Modi in political acumen or crowd pleasing oratory. Modi's strength is his weakness and he should accept the reality.

The most constructive thing he and the Congress can do is to forget about the BJP until a few months before the next general election; and concentrate on rebuilding the party and more importantly, restoring its shattered morale. Yes, the Congress risks losing all the states remaining in its control, but that is likely to happen anyway. There are no short term prospects for the Congress. Its image among the common citizens is so dismal that it would actually be to its benefit to keep out of the public eye for

the next two or three years. Perhaps the Congress could emulate the tactics that the AAP employed so successfully in Delhi. It would be advantageous for the Congress grassroots workers to circulate among the common people, particularly in states where assembly elections are coming up, listen to their problems and lend a sympathetic ear bereft of grandiose promises. The leaders should stay out of the public gaze and manage affairs behind the scenes. Above all, they should keep their mouths shut. It may or may not help, but it certainly will not hurt. This may be one instance where silence is indeed golden.

Rahul has arrived at the crossroads in his political life. It must be tempting to chuck it all and concentrate on the good life he is accustomed to. Perhaps he is conscious of the heavy weight of dynastic succession on his shoulders. If he does take the plunge, he has a long and arduous road ahead of him with the failures outweighing the successes. It is to be seen whether he has the fortitude to stay the course. I am probably in a minority of one, but I wish him well.

MR. FIROZE HIRJIKAKA is a retired civil engineer, and a freelance writer and a member of the Advisory Board of Freedom First. Email: leonardo8_99@yahoo.com.

"We really don't have 218 votes to determine a bathroom break over here on our side, so how are we going to get 218 voices on transportation, trade, or whatever the issue?"

**Representative Charlie Dent, a Pennsylvania Republican, on divisions in his party as it faces budget bills".
NYTimes.com nytdirect@nytimes.com, March 2015**

Freedom First

3rd floor, Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400 001.
Phone: (022) 2284 3416 • email: freedom@vsnl.com

SUBSCRIPTION FORM (In Block Letters Please)

NAME : _____

ADDRESS : _____

PIN

PHONE / MOBILE NUMBER :

EMAIL : _____

SUBSCRIPTIONS PAYABLE BY CHEQUE / DD DRAWN IN FAVOUR OF **ICCF** OR BY MONEY ORDER

Subscription

Within India & SAARC countries

1 Year : Rs.200

2 Years : Rs.350

3 Years : Rs.500

Overseas

(By Second Class Airmail)

Annual: \$20 / £ 10

Budget 2015-16 : An Evaluation

Ajit Karnik

My view is that there was no need for such a radical budget at this point. The need of the hour was for the budget to show a sense of purpose, halt the drift in policy making that had set in, give growth an impetus and signal to the Indian economy and to the world that there was a strong and sure hand in charge at the government. I would say that the Finance Minister's Budget Speech has done all that.

The budget for 2015-16 paints a wonderful vision for India which, it is hoped, will become a reality by 2022. Some elements of this vision are:

1. A roof for each family in India. This would require building 6 crore houses in India
2. Each house in the country should have basic facilities of 24 x 7 power supply, clean drinking water, a toilet, and be connected to a road
3. Electrification, by 2020, of the remaining 20,000 villages in the country
4. Connecting each of the 178,000 unconnected habitations by all-weather roads
5. Providing medical services in each village and city
6. Upgrading over 80,000 secondary schools and adding or upgrading 75,000 junior/middle schools to the senior secondary level
7. Bringing the Eastern and North Eastern regions on par with the rest of the country

Obviously, the items listed above are unexceptionable and there can be no disagreement about the desirability of bringing about these changes. However, unless there is a concrete course of action regarding how this vision is to be realised, it remains a fairy tale of the "Garibi Hatao" kind that we had witnessed during Indira Gandhi's regime. The Finance Minister (FM) Arun Jaitley's strategy for achieving these objectives is enhanced investments leading to high rates of growth. But the FM is a realist and clearly recognizes the challenges facing the economy. These are spelt out in his Budget Speech.

- Reviving agricultural incomes
- Increasing investment, especially public investment in the short run
- Boosting the manufacturing sector
- Maintaining fiscal discipline

Of course, Jaitley is not obsessed with growth alone

and pays due respect to social security. In a sense, he straddles the philosophies of both Amartya Sen (with emphasis on social security) and Jagdish Bhagwati (with prior emphasis on growth).

The NDA government has been dealt a wonderful hand in the first year of its rule and it is like manna from heaven: it can claim very little credit for it. But then, to be successful, the government has to make the best use of lucky breaks. The Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) has handed the NDA government a miraculously revived economy. The change of base for measuring the GDP has led a sudden increase in the growth rates for the past few years.^[i]

As per the earlier methodology, the rate of growth of GDP in 2013-14 was 5.1%, which has now been revised upward to 6.9%. We still don't know what revisions might yet take place for the data in the years prior to 2013-14. But an interesting question remains: Is it possible that the performance of the UPA was not as bad as the old methodology made it out to be? We will not know the answer to this question till the CSO goes back and revises historical data as per the new methodology. This upward revision of 1.8 percentage points in the growth rate of 2013-14 has suddenly offered the NDA government a much higher base to work from. Given this, the rate of growth for 2014-15, at 7.8%, looks very impressive indeed.

The other lucky break for the NDA government has been the dramatic decline in world oil prices since June 2014. Alongside this, the various measures that the RBI has been implementing for the last 18 months have begun to yield fruit and inflation has come down dramatically. This now opens up the possibility of interest rate cuts by the RBI^[ii] which will further add to the growth momentum. It is important to see how the NDA government builds on these lucky breaks.

Investment Expenditures

To take the tide at the flood, the Budget has pushed

hard on the investment front. The following major proposals have been put forward:

- Rs.5,300 crore support for micro-irrigation, watershed development and the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana
- Bankruptcy law reform. Increase in investment for infrastructure (mainly roads and railways) to rise by Rs.70,000 crore in the year 2015-16, over the year 2014-15
- Establishment of a National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) with an ensure of an annual flow of Rs.20,000 crore to it
- Tweaking the Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode of infrastructure development
- Setting up 5 new Ultra Mega Power Projects, each of 4000 MWs

Many commentators have hailed these investment proposals of the FM and taken it as proof of his commitment for re-booting the investment activity in the economy. Two of the above proposals have an institutional dimension to it, namely, the bankruptcy law reform and the reform in the PPP. Certainly, these are very important initiatives but only time will tell how crucial they are likely to be in boosting investment. Right now these two proposals should be viewed as showing the right intent. The other items in the list are more concrete and a more tangible evaluation is possible.

Let us consider the budgeted additional Rs.70,000 crore to be spent in 2015-16 as compared to 2014-15 for infrastructure investment in roads and railways. The FM has made it clear that this would come from budgetary outlays. As far as the Ministry of Road Transport and Highway is concerned, the budget allocation for 2013-14 on the capital account was Rs.16,770 crore while for 2015-16 it is Rs.33,049 crore, which is an increase of Rs.16,279 crore. The allocation on the capital account for railways in 2013-14 was Rs.30,100 crore and in 2015-16, it is Rs.40,000 crore, an increase of Rs.9,900 crore. Hence, for roads and railways, the combined additional capital expenditure for 2015-16 is Rs.26,179 crore which is only 37% of the additional Rs.70,000 crores mentioned by the FM. This implies that the remaining 63% will have to be funded from additional Internal and External Budgetary Resources (IEBR) which is made up of profits, loans or equity of PSUs. How likely is it that the required IEBR will be forthcoming? Considering the budgets from 2010-11 to 2014-15, actual IEBR have been about 74% of the budgeted amount. Given this uncertainty associated with respect to IEBR, one cannot be confident that the target for additional

infrastructure investment will be met.

As far as the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund is concerned, no allocations have been made for it. In fact, the FM quite honestly states that he will now go about finding the required funds. The five Ultra Mega Power Projects are at the moment mere wishful thinking. As the FM states, there is no government involvement here, and neither is any time frame stated regarding when these power projects will start nor when they will be completed. Rs.5,300 crore have been allocated to minor irrigation, watershed development and Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY). Very little of this is towards capital expenditure: Demands for grants numbers 1, 85 and 107 (*Expenditure Budget* Vol. 2) which deal with these items have been allocated less than Rs.200 crores towards capital expenditure. While some allocation for expenditure on the revenue account is required to run these schemes, the distribution between revenue and capital expenditures seems particularly adversely skewed.

Also consider the FM's promise of building 6 crore houses by 2022 (*Budget Speech*, paragraph 16). No doubt the objective is laudable but it is necessary to get some idea about the magnitude of the task. Just to put matters in perspective, during the decade 2001-2011, India added 6.5 crore residential units to its housing stock.^[iii] As per the vision of FM, almost the same number of units is to be added in the next 7 years. It is not clear where the funding for this is to come from. Apparently, 'Team India' led by the states and guided by the Central Government (*Budget Speech*, paragraph 16) is supposed to be in charge of this. The guidance of the Central Government, at the moment, seems perfunctory. The allocation to the Ministry of Housing (Demand for Grant No.58, *Expenditure Budget* Vol.II) for 2015-16 is Rs.5634.47 crore but surprisingly all of it is on the revenue account. I would have expected at least some allocation on the capital account of the Budget. Leave alone a credible commitment; this is not even a signalling of credible intent.

Social Security Expenditures

For a government that was supposed to be the anti-thesis of what Amartya Sen stands for, the Budget has given a lot of attention to social security. Almost Rs.35,000 crore has been allocated to Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) which is more or less on par with what was allocated during the UPA regime. The FM has stated that "Our government is committed to supporting employment through MGNREGA. We will ensure that no one who is poor is left without employment" (*Budget Scheme*, paragraph 32). This is an amazing turnaround from the earlier views which had called

MGNREGA a glorious failure^[iv]. In fact, the Economic Survey 2014-15 is even more effusive in its endorsement of the employment guarantee scheme “The MGNREGA program has the virtue of being reasonably well-targeted” (Volume 1, p.18). Critics of the programme had blamed it for the rise in rural wages which had made it expensive not only to hire labour in rural areas but also created a shortage of labour for industry since labour, “pampered” by high rural wages, had turned “lazy”. Incidentally, this is so reminiscent of Mitt Romney contemptuous comment about the “lazy” 47% Americans during the last US Presidential elections! In any case, Raghuram Rajan has rubbished these claims stating that MGNREGA contributed only about 10% of the rise in rural wages^[v].

Three schemes for insurance and pension have been announced. The Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojna will cover accidental death risk of Rs.2 lakh for a premium of just Rs.12 per year. How realistic is this? A quick check on the Life Insurance of India premium calculator^[vi] is quite instructive. The Jeevan Rakshak product covers accidental death. For an adult aged 27 years (this is the median age in India), for a term of 10 years and to receive a cover of Rs.2 lakh, the yearly premium is Rs.16,275. Sure, the product that will be offered by the government will be quite different from the example I have used, but the difference in the two premiums indicates the subsidy component that is implied by this proposal. The situation with respect to the other two products - Atal Pension Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana - is similar.

Fiscal Consolidation

Fiscal consolidation has been the Achilles’ heel of Indian public finances. These finances took a big hit especially after the onset of the worldwide recession in 2008. The Economic Survey notes “failure to control expenditure,...combined with excessive counter-cyclical policies in the second phase (2009-12) led to a loss of fiscal control that contributed to the near-crisis of 2013” (Economic Survey Vol.1, p.20). Even though fiscal policy is supposed to be counter-cyclical (i.e. lower budget deficits or even budget surpluses when the economy is doing well), there is general criticism that Indian fiscal policy has been pro-cyclical (higher budget deficits when the economy is doing well). The Economic Survey seems to suggest that the fiscal policy after 2008 was correctly counter-cyclical even though excessively so.

The focus on cutting and/or targeting subsidies is a major step that has been taken in the budget. Once again, a programme that was much reviled has made this targeting possible. I refer to the Aadhar project which was in the process of being wound up by the NDA government

but better sense prevailed. The FM has stated that Rs.6,335 crore have so far been transferred directly, as LPG subsidy to 11.5 crore LPG consumers. For 2015-16, the total LPG subsidy amounts to Rs.22,000 crore (Demand No.75, Expenditure Vol.2) of which Rs.21,140 will now be under Direct Benefit Transfer for LPG (DBTL) scheme^[vii]. Assuming that these subsidies are well-targeted, this represents only about 8.5% of the total subsidies bill of Rs.243,811 crore. Plugging leakages and targeting the remaining 91% of subsidies is going to be a daunting challenge given that interests of major groups / lobbies are involved in the continuance of fertilizer subsidy, food subsidy inclusive of support prices for farmers and interest subsidies.

Conclusion

The expectation from the 2015-16 Budget was that it would usher in Big-Bang reforms and that it would be as path-breaking as the 1991 Manmohan Singh budget that brought in economic reforms. That budget did change the direction that the Indian economy had followed up until 1991 and hence it was, indeed, path-breaking. There was no need for such a radical budget at the present time. True, the budget needed to show a sense of purpose. It needed to halt the drift in policy making that had set in; also true that it needed to give growth an impetus; and yes, it needed to signal to the Indian economy and to the world that there was a strong and sure hand in charge at the government. I would say that the Finance Minister’s Budget Speech has done all that. The importance of investment and growth has been brought to centre-stage but, despite this, the commitment to social security has not been abandoned. Both, the Budget Speech and the Economic Survey, have recognized the benign environment facing the Indian economy and both documents have emphasized the importance of taking advantage of this. My critique of the budget has been that the actual actions (in the form of allocation of funds) had not matched the words. This is a trend that I have observed over the last few budgets: impressive announcements have been made in the budget, huge sums of money have been dangled before the public, but the fine print in the other budget documents has not matched up to these grandiose announcements. This raises doubts whether budgets have become elaborate smoke and mirrors exercises which do not follow up with credible commitments in the form of assured funding. I have similar doubts about Arun Jaitley’s 2015-16 budget as well.

[i] http://passthrough.fw-notify.net/download/698873/http://mospi.nic.in/Mospi_New/upload/nad_press_release_30jan15.pdf

[ii] <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/rbi-cuts-interest-rate-by-25-basis-points/article6957965.ece>

[iii] http://censusindia.gov.in/2011census/hlo/Data_sheet/India/Housing_Stocks.pdf

[iv] <http://indianexpress.com/article/business/budget/despite-modi-criticism-jaitley-gives-nrega-a-slight-nudge/>

[v] http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2014-08-17/news/52901493_1_rural-wages-rahuram-rajn-welfare-programme

[vi] http://www.licindia.in/premium_calculator.htm

[vii] <http://petroleum.nic.in/dbt/>

DR. AJIT KARNIK, Professor of Economics, Middlesex University, Dubai, UAE. Excerpted from his blog. For the full text please visit <http://ajitkarnik.blogspot.ae/2015/03/budget-2015-16-evaluation.html>

The Budget 2015-16 – Why So Special!

Sunil S. Bhandare

India has reached a sweet spot – rare in the history of nations – in which it could finally be launched on a double-digit medium-term growth trajectory.

So much of applause for the NDA government's first full-fledged budget! Many economists, professionals, businessmen and industrialists have acknowledged it as comprehensive, all-inclusive, reforms directional, and growth oriented with a longer-term perspective. Such positive vibes have been endorsed by stock markets – not that they invariably provide the true barometer of the state of the economy or should make the Finance Minister [FM] lose his sleep. What are then the core underpinnings of the budget? From our perspective, these are: first, the fiscal empowerment of the states; second, accelerating public spending driven infrastructure development; third, creation of building blocks for aspirational India; and fourth, working towards a more holistic strategy for an inclusive development [social security network]. This article, however, reflects primarily on the first two aspects.

Suffice it to say, all the above sub-structures are to a large extent influenced by [a] the optimistic assessment of the economy; [b] the path-breaking recommendations of the Fourteenth Finance Commission [FFC]; and [c] the growing pressures on the NDA government to deliver election promises to the people of this country. There are, of course, going to be several inevitable pitfalls, as the government actually embarks upon implementation of its reformed budgetary strategy.

The State of the Economy

A quick backdrop of the current economic scenario: The latest Economic Survey eloquently observes "...a momentous opportunity awaits. India has reached a sweet spot – rare in the history of nations – in which it could finally be launched on a double-digit medium-term growth trajectory. This trajectory would allow the country to attain the fundamental objectives of 'wiping every tear from every eye' of the still poor and vulnerable, while affording the

opportunities for increasingly young, middle-class, and aspirational India to realize its limitless potential". It further points out that "the macro-economy has been rendered more stable, reforms have been launched, the deceleration in growth has ended and the economy appears now to be recovering, the external environment is benign, and challenges in other major economies have made India the near-cynosure of eager investors".

Fiscal Empowerment of States

Surely, the FM cannot take the entire credit for the states' fiscal empowerment. Really speaking, it is the FFC [Chairman Dr. Y. V. Reddy] that has paved the way for a decisive shift in the country's prevailing federal financial architecture. Its most decisive recommendation relates to an increase in the states' share of divisible pool of taxes from present 32% to 42%. This is the steepest and unprecedented hike in tax revenue transfers to the states. Together with grants, the total devolution of resources from the Center to the states works out to as much as 47%, as compared to 39.5% under the dispensation of previous Finance Commission. Experts estimate that the consequential fiscal dent on the Center's budgetary resources is equivalent of 0.9% of GDP. In quantitative terms, the FM points out that "the devolution to the states would be of the order of Rs.5.24 lakh crore in 2015-16 as against the devolution of Rs.3.38 lakh crore as per revised estimates of 2014-15. Another Rs.3.04 lakh crore would be transferred by way of grants and plan transfers. Thus, total transfer to the states will be about 62% of the total tax receipts of the country".

The moot point is how prudently the states would use such extra resources, and consequent fiscal autonomy, for promoting their developmental objectives. Would they not fritter away valuable resources for the populist programs? We are for greater fiscal decentralisation. But

the states' past record of quality of fiscal management is far from inspiring. Dr. Subir Gokarn, the former RBI Dy. Governor observes that "more money and more freedom without the capacity to spend wisely could worsen development outcome for the country as a whole". Hence, it is imperative for the Finance Ministry / NITI Ayog to assess constantly the impact of this fiscal empowerment of the states.

In the process, the FM has been forced to soft-pedal his commitment to fiscal consolidation. We are now assured that instead of two years, he "will complete the journey to a fiscal deficit of 3% in 3 years" – targets being 3.9% for 2015-16; 3.5% for 2016-17; and 3.0% for 2017-18. Further, the budgetary arithmetic has also been calibrated as a result [see table below]. Thus, a sharp erosion in Center's growth of 'net' tax revenues in 2015-16 – gross tax revenues growth, however, is estimated at 15.8% – would be made good through an equally steep increase in growth of capital receipts, mostly through PSEs disinvestment/strategic sale.

We, however, need to commend two significant features of the budgetary arithmetic: [a] a cutback in growth of revenue expenditure from 8.5% in 2014-15 to 3.2% in 2015-16; and [b] a hefty expansion in capital expenditure from 2.5% to 25.5%. The proposed growth of Central Plan expenditure, mostly on infrastructure programs, is expected to cause investment led growth stimulus. However, while resetting the commitment to fiscal responsibility, we wish the FM pursues aggressively with this divergent trend in growth rates in the composition of Center's expenditure over a longer time period. By so doing, a very healthy fiscal balance sheet would emerge during the current tenure of NDA government.

Public Spending & Infrastructure Development

Undoubtedly, a large part of the budget's growth ambitions is inextricably linked to infrastructure development. There are four key components of FM's proposals: First, a major thrust of public investment is on roads and railways, where the budgetary support would increase by ~Rs.140 bn and ~Rs.100 bn, respectively. At the same time, the PSEs are projected to expand their investments by ~Rs.808 billion over 2014-15 [RE] to Rs.3,179 bn in 2015-16. In substance, from the Centre's Funds and CPSEs' resources, total infrastructure investment would increase by as much as Rs.700 bn in 2015-16 over the previous year.

Second, the budget proposes to establish a National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF), and for which an annual flow of Rs.200 bn would be ensured.

In turn, this would enable the NIIF to raise debt, and which, in turn, would catalyse equity investment in various infrastructure finance companies. The infrastructure finance companies can then leverage this extra equity, many-fold. Third, the budget proposes issuance of tax-free infrastructure bonds for the projects in rail, road and irrigation sectors. Fourth, the reform of PPP mode of infrastructure development in which the major issue of risk re-balancing would be addressed. It is proposed that in infrastructure projects, the sovereign would bear a major part of the risk without, of course, absorbing it entirely.

Concluding Observations

In substance, the Budget 2015-16 is unique in many ways. It unveils a longer-term aspirational outlook for the economy. The success of growth promoting factors would surely be determined by how the NDA government now steers public sector driven infrastructure investment and ensures progressive crowding in of private investments through actual policy actions. Going forward, there would be some pitfalls: [a] the downside risks of financial turmoil in some part of the world, a sudden reversal of international crude oil prices, etc.; and [b] near home, yet another bad monsoon in the coming fiscal year. Moreover, the NDA government would have to nurture political stability carefully by taking on board the opposition parties on several tough policy reforms. Also, there is so much of work-in-progress as many important budget proposals are required to be brought to fruition within a reasonable time-frame. In substance, the budget's success would be determined by the deftness of its implementation.

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

Dr. Y. V. Reddy has become the darling of states. The 14th Finance Commission he headed has recommended a near third jump in the share of states in the devolution of Centre's tax revenues...The FFC recommendation completed the nailing of the Planning Commission coffin. To administer huge funds allocated under the Centrally-sponsored schemes government departments at the Centre have been employing an army of bureaucrats ...These have been well settled in Delhi. Naturally they will resist attempts to return to their states. Are we then going to witness another example of Parkinson's Law on the inexorable expansion of bureaucracy with more recruited by states?

S. Viswanathan,
editor, *Industrial Economist*,
March 2015

Agriculture and Rural Indebtedness - VI

R. M. Mohan Rao



In this, the VIth part of the series on the indebtedness of farmers, Professor Mohan Rao continues the discussion on farmers' participation in development programmes and various policy initiatives such as the role of the State vis-a-vis Indian agriculture, the phenomenon of rural indebtedness, rural credit and the nature of safety nets to deal with risks and uncertainties.

(xi) Farmers' Participation in Development Programmes

Development programmes are conceived, planned and implemented with a sovereign disregard for the rather simple democratic precept that it is the people, for better or for worse, who need to exercise the right of choice over their destinies, even if these choices do not maximize returns as defined by political economists right or left. As rightly noted by Robert Chambers. "People are put at the last not once but again and again".

Participatory development has not only moral appeal but makes sense even on purely theoretical terms in the sense that people will only contribute voluntarily when they perceive such actions as beneficial to themselves. Peoples participation in development hinges on three basic components viz., participation in decision-making, implementation of the programmes, material returns in terms of better services, facilities or incomes. There is hardly any evidence to show that it can be sustained for long through euphoria, moral exhortations or social pressure.

There is growing recognition of people's participation as a vital component of development strategy. It has many positive features. Firstly, it gives recognition and dignity to the powerless people.

Secondly, it serves as a valuable instrument for mobilizing, organizing and enabling people themselves as problem solvers in their local environs and to do things for themselves. Finally, it acts as a channel for local communities to gain access to the larger macro arena of decision-making. Successes and solidarity won in

accomplishing micro level problem solving might serve as - spring boards of credibility for major roles at higher level in the future.

Recognising the advantage of people's participation in development, many projects and programmes are being conceived and implemented but proved to be ineffective in practice for many reasons. To illustrate, Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) through Water Users' Associations is not as effective as expected due to the reluctance of technical and bureaucratic channels to handover the necessary records, water gauges as well as due to the absence of capacity measures. Similarly, the agricultural research system is expected to use feedback from farmers to help in setting the farmers' agenda. In fact, the rationale behind setting up zonal research stations was to provide a channel for farmers' participation in the research process. This has not happened. As a result research has become laboratory-oriented with disregard for farmers knowledge, practices and their concerns.

III

Policy Initiatives

1. The role of the State vis-a-vis Indian Agriculture - Broad Framework

The challenges confronting Indian agriculture are so formidable that farmers alone cannot face them successfully. It demands a comprehensive national effort to be an effective player in the liberalization regime. In this, the State, which steered its destinies for more than a half century, has greater responsibility. In view of this

the State must spell out its role with a focus on basic and fundamental issues confronting Indian agriculture. This is necessary to send the right signals to the farming community to reflect on future course of action, promote private investment in agriculture and allied activities.

The Liberal conception of a State is that of a promoter and facilitator and not a detractor. On this premise, Liberals expect the State to play a pro-active role on the following lines:

- Land and water are the most crucial but limiting factors for agricultural development. The State must initiate effective measures for the upkeep and strengthening of these basic foundations through participatory institutional structures at the ground level.
- Growth promoting services viz., research, extension, supply of inputs, credit and marketing are essential for farmers in developing countries to withstand the powerful forces of modernization and globalization. The State has to pay greater attention to these aspects.
- Removal of all restrictions on movement of farm products by farmers within the country and exim restrictions to strengthen national marketing and to build up sustained international markets for farm products.
- Evolving effective foolproof safety nets to protect farmers from volatile markets and vagaries of nature.
- Focus on increasing the earnings of individual farmers particularly the small and marginal in unfavourable areas.

Against this broad framework of the role of the State, policy interventions on various issues are spelt out.

2. Institutional Initiatives to mitigate rural indebtedness and enhance credit flow

Rural Indebtedness

There is need for a comprehensive debt and investment survey on the lines of the All India Rural Credit Survey of 1950's for a proper assessment of the burden of indebtedness among framers and to initiate corrective steps of a long-term nature. As a short term measure there is need to invoke debt relief measures on the lines of the Agriculture and Rural Debt Relief Scheme of 1990, and evolving a well thought out policy to scale down or wipe out the debt on the lines initiated by the provincial Governments in the pre-independence

era to keep the farmers alive with his productive potentials.

3. Credit flow

The following policy interventions are considered to enhance credit flow to farming from institutional sources.

- De-politicisation of Co-operatives.
- Issue of Kisan Credit Cards to all eligible farmers with increased credit limits to meet part of the consumption expenses and other family needs like children's education and health without restrictions on end use as in the case of non-priority sectors.
- Interest rates charged on agricultural loans should be lower compared to all other advances by the Banks.
- One-time settlements of NPA should be made applicable to agricultural loans as well.
- Banks loans to agricultural sector should form 18 per cent of their annual advances rather than outstanding advances of loans.
- Scales of finance must be fixed realistically by taking changing market prices into account rather than treating it as a routine ritual.

In the existing situation there is need for a comprehensive debt and investment survey on the lines of the All India Rural Credit Survey of 1950's for a proper assessment of the burden of indebtedness among farmers and to initiate corrective steps of a long-term nature. As a short term measure there is need to invoke debt relief measures on the lines of the Agriculture and Rural Debt Relief Scheme of 1990, and evolving a well thought out policy to scale down or wipe out the debt on the lines initiated by the provincial governments in the pre-independence era to keep the farmer alive with his productive potentials. In this connection the seminar made an interim recommendation. Please see Annexure 6 for the text of these recommendations.¹

PROFESSOR R. M. MOHAN RAO, retired NABARD Chair, Waltair, Andhra Pradesh. The purpose of serialising his Paper is to invite readers to share their views on the issues raised and recommend policies that would ensure a fair deal for India's farmers.

¹ Email:freedomfirst19523@gmail.com, or write to Freedom First, 3rd floor, Army & Navy Building, 148 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400001, if you are interested in getting a copy of Annexure VI.

To be Continued

Obama Came and Concurred: Convergences Enhanced, New Vistas of Cooperation Opened

B. Ramesh Babu

...the progress achieved in strategic security and defence cooperation during the Obama visit are equally, if not more, significant. If we read it together with the US-India Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region issued during the Obama Visit, the convergence of interests between the two nations is unprecedented.

The second visit of the US President Barack Obama enhanced the growing convergence of interests between the two countries and upgraded the strategic partnership to a higher level. The symbolism and significance of an American President gracing our Republic Day ceremonies as the Chief Guest for the first time should be understood and appreciated. To embellish substance with style and to drive home the significance of events in unique and unprecedented ways has by now become a tellingly successful Modi brand! The way he put the visiting American President on his very popular radio programme of sharing 'Mann Ki Baat' with his countrymen was a master stroke. By all accounts the Obama visit was a resounding success. Whether it would turn out to be historic only history would reveal!

“Breakthrough Understanding” on the Nuclear Deal

Naturally, the US-India Civilian Nuclear Agreement and the way-out of the impasse that arose in its aftermath hogged all the media attention. It was also the key issue facing the two top leaders before and during the visit. American nuclear energy industry found the “suppliers’ liability” clause in the Nuclear Liability Law to be unacceptable. Consequently, American corporations did not come forward to build nuclear reactors in India. During the last six years the Manmohan Singh and Modi Governments have been working hard to find ways and means of surmounting / circumventing the stipulations without violating the Law.

The Modi Government came up with the idea of “an insurance pool” – which is an established international practice – as a possible way out of the impasse. The proposal is to create a multi-million dollar insurance pool to cover the risk of accidental loss of life and property. India’s big national insurance companies and the Government of India are to share the costs of the insurance coverage. This solution seems to have met the concerns of the US Government. President Obama declared that it

is now up to the American corporations to go ahead and build nuclear reactors in India.

Nuclear issues are invariably unclear. The chain of queries from the American corporations and the clarifications given by the Indian side has not reached a clear and amicable conclusion so far. As far as India is concerned, the insurance coverage adds to the cost of production and the risk / burden devolves on the people ultimately. Those in the know of things say there is scope for litigation on the legality of “the breakthrough”. The whole thing is likely to take a lot of time. As far as India is concerned the delay is to our advantage. American nuclear energy technology is not as advanced as that of Russia and France. Nuclear energy produced by Russian reactors 1 & 2 at Kudankulam is estimated to be Rs. 3.50 per kWh. American and French companies Westinghouse and Areva respectively are talking about Rs. 6 and 6.50 per kWh. The cost of the proposed insurance pool will be additional. Therefore, it is a good tactic for India to drag its feet on the business of the American nuclear reactors; encourage the Russians to build more reactors as agreed; and sit back and see how this will play out.

This approach has several advantages. Firstly, the private investment from the US in other sectors (like defence, infrastructure, and trade etc.) gets de-linked from the nuclear reactors issue. American economy is on the upswing after many years and their corporations will be happy to come in a big way if our reforms agenda moves forward soon. Secondly, the Russians have not pushed us on the liability issue. Since Russian investment is in the hands of the Government, there is room to negotiate with them unlike the American corporations for whom the bottom line is profits and nothing else. Russian economy is sorely in need of expansion at this time. During his recent visit President Putin agreed to set up as many as a dozen new reactors in the Kudankulam complex. It is likely that the Americans and the French may not want to lose the nuclear energy business to the Russians by default; and

take a re-look at their inflexibility on the liability issue. In any case, nuclear energy accounts for a very small part of India's total energy scenario. A bit of delay (a year or two) does not make a material difference.

On a personal note, let me add that the author suggested the following as early as 2008: "Collect the gate pass from America. Get the nuclear reactors from Russia and France in that order of preference." The Deal was in the final stages of agreement at that time and Sanjay Baru was the Media Adviser to the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. There is no way to know if any attention was paid to the unsolicited advice.

Such a diplomatic game has to be played with finesse and with the full knowledge that the other players in the field are equally clever, if not more!

Strategic Partnership and Defence Cooperation

While the Nuclear Deal and "the breakthrough undertaking" received the highest priority and attention, the progress achieved in strategic security and defence cooperation during the Obama visit are equally, if not more, significant. The long term Defence Framework Agreement, which has moved the security partnership to the next level and renewed up to 2025 is extremely important. If we read it together with the US-India Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region issued during the Obama Visit, the convergence of interests between the two nations is unprecedented. The key paragraphs are as follows:

"Regional prosperity depends on security. We affirm the importance of safeguarding maritime security and ensuring the freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region, especially the South China Sea."

"We call on all parties to avoid the threat or use of force and pursue resolution of territorial and maritime disputes through all peaceful means, in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law, including the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea."

The target is crystal clear – the aggressive expansionism of China in the region. This covers the security concerns of Japan, the ASEAN nations, and also India. It is pertinent to add that think tanks in America, India, Japan, Australia, and Indonesia announced the convening of what is called Track-II Quad Plus dialogue to discuss ways of enhancing cooperation in the areas of defence, regional security, and counter terrorism. Quad Plus means Indonesia joining the quadrilateral of USA,

Japan, Australia, and India already in place.

No wonder China reacted strongly and immediately. President Xi "warned" India not to fall into America's "pivot Asia trap" and get huddled into an anti-China coalition "against her own will." He went on to invite India to join hands with China and Russia against the evil of America's global hegemony – a long cherished objective of the two nations and the Asian- African people in general.

So the Modi strategy of enhancing India's national security vis-à-vis China is working. Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj utilized her recent meetings (that were scheduled earlier) with the Chinese and Russian leaders to soften their concerns. The current state of India-China relations in the wake of the Obama visit will be discussed in the article to be published in Freedom First next month.

President Obama and Prime Minister Modi agreed that the two countries should move forward further on joint designing and joint development of advanced weapons in India. In this context the recent decision of the Modi Government to allow FDI in the defence sector and enhance its share up to 49 per cent was widely welcomed by the American side. It was also agreed that India would acquire more weapons, helicopters, military and civilian aircraft, and drones etc. from the US.

Another very significant development in security cooperation between the two countries is the decision to establish a hotline between the two leaders and their national security advisers. This clearly indicates that the two sides are advancing their ties to a deeper strategic level.

Second Generation Reforms are Crucial

It is important to not get lost in the maze of the issues discussed above and ignore the economic front, where the potential for progress is immense. President Obama's visit has opened up new vistas of cooperation in putting India back on the track of rapid and sustained economic growth, i.e. Modi's development agenda. However, so far the Modi led BJP Government has not been able to enact the much needed economic and political reforms. The US and the rest of the West are eagerly waiting for concerted action and real progress on the much hyped creation of business friendly environment in the country.

The current Budget session of the Parliament (25 February to 31 March 2015) is extremely vital for the country and also the Modi Government. It does not have the needed votes to get its economic reforms agenda passed in the Rajya Sabha. Prime Minister Modi has appealed for

cooperation from the opposition parties. He offered to respond to their real concerns. Congress Party is determined not to cooperate even though it agrees in principle that further liberalization is necessary for rapid economic growth. The Hindutva hotheads are hindering Modi's efforts to build non-partisan consensus in support of his development agenda. The BJP President Amit Shah has met the RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat in this connection. Let us hope things will be quiet on this front for a long while.

If the opposition parties dig their heels in and unfairly brush aside the massive mandate Modi won in the 2014 general elections, the Prime Minister will have to call a Joint Session of the Two Houses to get his agenda through the Parliament. If this does not work, he will be constrained to take the Ordinance route, despite President Mukherjee's reservations in this regard. This bridge is yet to be crossed.

Other Possibilities in the Pipeline

In analyzing our relations with the US, it is necessary to distinguish between what the American Government can do on its own and what the private industry and business of the country can and will do. On his part President Obama has stretched himself to the limit. President Obama announced one billion dollar assistance to India at the India-US Business Council meeting on the 25th January 2015. This is to be operated through the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). It is heartening to note that YES Bank signed an agreement with OPIC immediately, on 27th January 2015, to lend up to 220 million US dollars to micro, small, and medium enterprises. It would be wonderful if equally quick action follows on the other initiatives as well.

On the trade front President Obama pledged \$ 4 billion in investments and loans to release the "untapped potential" of business and strategic partnership between the two countries. There is another crucial area in which President Obama could deliver big. Indian professionals, especially in IT sector, working in the US are required to pay Social Security Tax. This is intended to fund old age pensions for American citizens. Since the Indian professionals in the US are on short term assignments, they cannot qualify for such benefits. The Indian side has been demanding to rectify this legal anomaly since long. President Obama agreed to have this rectified under the law. The dues on this score have grown beyond \$ 4 billion, it is estimated. This will be a very significant contribution in making Indian businesses more competitive and a welcome boost to Indian investments in the US. Let us hope that President Obama delivers on this promise quickly.

Since good relations with India enjoy bipartisan support in Congress, there is a good chance of this getting through, despite the pervasive hostility between President Obama and the Republican majorities in both Houses of Congress. Follow up from our side is crucial in materializing this prospect.

Parting Shot from the Famous Friend

On the last leg of his eventful visit President Obama gave a spirited speech at the Siri Fort on human rights and religious freedom. He emphasized the need to uphold the constitutionally guaranteed "Right to Freedom of Religion." He rightly remarked that unity in the midst of enormous diversity of India is what fascinates the world and this should be preserved at all times. Obama is a good orator and he put his soul into the speech. In the present context of India only a true friend could publicly warn us on such a sensitive issue. These remarks should not be misunderstood. Instead our metropolitan media went wild in "patriotically" condemning Obama for lecturing to India, when his country's record on racial prejudice is less than worthy.

Final Word

President Obama has done his best to help and open up endless possibilities for India's rapid and sustained growth. The ball is now in India's court. Let us hope Modi will succeed in turning around the fortunes of the nation. The time for promises is over. Performance is overdue.

DR. B. RAMESH BABU is a specialist in International Relations, American Politics and Foreign Policy. He is a Visiting Professor at the University of Hyderabad, 2013-2014 and Scholar in Residence, Foundation for Democratic Reforms, Hyderabad. Formerly, he was Sir Pherozeshah Mehta Professor of Civics and Politics, University of Mumbai. Email: brameshbabu08@gmail.com

Congress is set to recast its organisational orientation along urban and rural lines accepting that the demography and aspirations in villages and towns are too different to continue with a uniform approach...K. Raju – head of AICC's Scheduled Castes department, told TOI that the big contemporary change in metros was the collapse of caste identity requiring Congress to win the confidence of urban poor and elite alike. "It is good that caste is losing hold in metros. We cannot depend on caste identities. We have to look at urban livelihoods, security and employment."

The Times of India,
February 23, 2015

Pakistan's Quest for Nationhood

Suresh C. Sharma

The causes which produce military interventions in politics...lie not in the nature of groups but in the structure of society. In particular, they lie in the weakness or absence of effective political institutions in the society

– Samuel Huntington

Pakistan was conceived as a home for Muslims. Jinnah's direction for it to be a secular State with equal rights for all religions and communities was soon forgotten. Generals Ayub Khan and Musharraf took Kemal Ataturk of Turkey as their model. It required a strong nationalist movement, lacking in ethnically diverse Pakistan. The Turkey model had taken a long time at the cost of high loss of human lives. General Zia tried to unite the country under a puritanical form of Islam mixed with nationalism. It has led to sectarian violence. Zulfikar Bhutto wanted to rally the masses with a programme of economic populism. They all failed. The democratically elected elites were replaced due to corruption and misrule. It took a long time for them to frame a constitution. The military governments were not strong enough to rule without a Parliament. Democrats in Pakistan have tried to be dictators and dictators have tried to be democrats. The situation has led to confusion and misrule. General Zia's efforts to promote militancy in Afghanistan have resulted in internal subversion by the militants who want a theocratic state.

Pakistan has failed to forge their four units into a nation. They do not share a common language, history or ethnicity. Pakistan's attempts to convert the idea of Pakistan into a nation by spreading fear of India, Israel and the USA are unrealistic and have failed. The attitude of the major province of Punjab to claim superiority and much higher representation in the various services including the military has not helped to bridge the gap. The other states are wary to concede a major share of resources to one state. The proposal for a dam at Kalabagh with promise of water and hydro-electricity remains a dream due to opposition by Sindh and the NWFP. They are apprehensive that the benefits would primarily go to Punjab. Nor have the coal resources discovered in Thar been exploited due to opposition by Sindh. The Central Government does not want to force the issue lest Sindh break away.

Perhaps, the emergence of Bangladesh may have imposed this precaution. India is also a multi-language,

multi-ethnic and plural society, but there is a fundamental difference. India's federal constitution ensures that no state dominates over another state and all states are free to pursue their plans, with the assistance of the Central Government. The vice-chancellor of Delhi University could be from Chennai and the director of Bangalore Institute from Bengal. Students from Bihar are welcome in Karnataka. Even the insurgency prone areas like Nagaland have learnt to join the mainstream. The last assault on the Kargil peak was made by the Naga Battalion with their *dahs*. Similarly, the ex-Mizo rebels were absorbed into the para-military unit. Pakistan has not even tried this model of tolerance and reconciliation. Fear of India and the unattainable dream of Kashmir cannot forge the idea of Pakistan into a nation. Fear cannot be a substitute for shared goals.

“Pakistan's existence has been marked by attempts to build a nation but without first building up the institutional foundations that are needed to allow a stable federal entity to evolve in a democratic and pluralistic setting” - Shuja Nawaz

Brig. (Retd.) SURESH C. SHARMA, Navi Mumbai,
sureshsharma236@yahoo.com

A Social Obligation by India's Youth

It's all very well – and fashionable – to celebrate the nation's youth. But if they fool around for years in a highly subsidised education system without making any effort to learn, and graduate as ignorant and callous duds with an exaggerated sense of entitlement, one shouldn't shy away from blowing the whistle on them. Formal school and collegiate education aside, the country's youth have a social obligation to undertake self-study and learning initiatives to mature into socially aware and contributing citizens, rather than mere party animals.

Dilip Thakore, Editor,
Education World, March 2015

Warriors After War

Edited by Bonney, Richard / Maini, Tridivesh Singh / Malik, Tahir. **Indian and Pakistani Retired Military Leaders Reflect on Relations between the Two Countries, Past, Present and Future**

Series: **Studies in the History of Religious and Political Pluralism - Volume 6**

A Peter Lang Publication. 2011

Suresh C. Sharma

It is often said that Pakistan has better soldiers but India has better generals. Strategy comes from the Greek word 'strategos' which means general. Better strategy wins a war. What passes for strategy in Pakistan is tactics raised to the level of strategy, to the detriment of the State.

A recent book by Tahir Malik, Richard Bonney and Tridev Singh Maini, *Warriors after War* (Peter Lang 2011) carries interviews of Generals of both sides. What emerges confirms past assessments of Pakistani Generals. The Indian Generals are more professional; the Pakistani ones are ideological - therefore non-professional - and daring. The Indians speak from the drill; Pakistanis are unorthodox and swashbuckling.

Stereotypes: the average Indian officer will say Pakistan was a mistake; the average Pakistani officer will say India never accepted Pakistan. Both stances are wrong. The first one can't be proved; the second one has been proved wrong again and again.

Being a General in a status quo State with unconquerable size is laidback, intellectually fertile, and lacking in daring tactics; his counterpart has to be fidgety in peace, trigger-happy, non-intellectual and daring. India is better-off not being revisionist vis-à-vis China or it may have produced Generals in the Pakistani mould. The paradox in the case of Pakistan is that defeat teaches nothing.

From the Indian side those interviewed included: Maj-Gen. Gagandeep Bakshi, Lt.Gen. Kamaleshwar Dawar, and General V. P. Malik. From Pakistan, we have General Mirza Aslam Beg, General Hamid Gul, General Talat Masood, Major-Gen Syed Wajahat Hussain and Brigadier Shaukat Qadir.

Aslam Beg says, "The 1965 and 1971 wars were defeats for Pakistan. Jihad is ordained and has bestowed dividends in Afghanistan and Kashmir because of Divine Will behind Jihad". "In Pakistan, Pakhtun power has emerged as a reality. There are over three million Pakhtuns in Karachi; their power extends to Baluchistan, NWFP and to the Hindukush mountains. Their fight for freedom, since 1980, has galvanised them into a formidable force, combining the forces of Pakhtun nationalism, Islamic idealism (jihad)

and the universalism of the Islamic resistance against oppression, with its hard core resting along the Durand Line."

Hamid Gul says, "Indian secularism is a ruse as Babri Mosque proved it. This is my reason for dislike of India. The rift with India has a solid basis and that is why the Muslims living in the subcontinent — whether in Pakistan, Bangladesh or India — are one nation. The 1965 war was an interrupted victory because the finance minister Shoaib sabotaged it. Foreign minister Zafullah Khan sabotaged the 1948 war. I strongly believe that the sole purpose of the Pakistani Army is to liberate Kashmir from Indian occupation. I assure you that India is in a miserable state. Deep down, Indians are afraid of Pakistan."

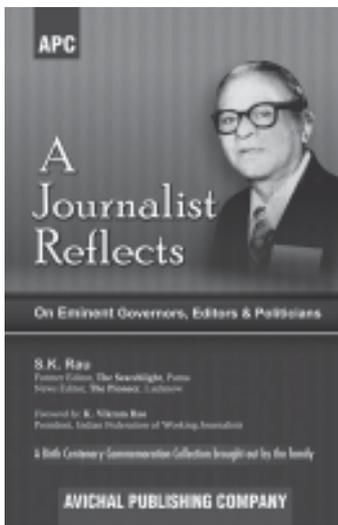
Major-General Syed Wajahat Hussain says, "Jinnah emphasised a liberal, tolerant and outward-looking, progressive Pakistan. Hamid is wrong on the 1948 war. Jinnah never wanted it and it was abandoned after Pakistan Army Chief General Gracey and Liaquat agreed with Jinnah to call it off. The 1965 war was our mistake. Extremism and the concept of jihad were never part of the Pakistani Army."

Lieutenant-General Talat Masood is for normalising ties with India instead of fighting. He thinks President Zardari is sticking his neck out to improve relations with India. His vision of relations with India is driven by economic and cultural motivations and is futuristic in approach. He goes on, "General Zia was the first to introduce the concept of jihad and shahadat. Pakistan has suffered more than India in the three declared wars. The people who were supported once by us are those who are causing terrorism in Pakistan today."

Brigadier Shaukat Qadir is remarkably perceptive, challenging the military's fundamental tenets of war. "The military is responsible for converting a genuine movement for an independent Kashmir into a jihad — the greatest damage that we could do and did. Both 1965 and 1971 wars were acts of stupidity. Musharraf, like others of his

Cont'd. on page 29

BOOK REVIEWS



A JOURNALIST REFLECTS ON EMINENT GOVERNORS, EDITORS AND POLITICIANS: A Birth Centenary Commemoration Collection by S. K. Rau, former Editor, *Searchlight*, Patna and News Editor, *The Pioneer*, Lucknow, Avichal Publishing Company ● pp.253 ● Rs.450

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

In his capacity as the news editor of *The Pioneer* in Lucknow, S. K. Rau was a contemporary of my father who was the resident editor of the *National Herald* in Lucknow. He had three children –

two boys and a girl. My father had three children – two boys and a girl. Both families were ‘*Madras*’ (anyone who belonged to a place south of Agra was, in those days, a ‘*Madras*’) and had their origins in Karnataka. Both families had moved extensively over many parts of India, Rau’s family perhaps more than ours. There the resemblances ended. I personally knew Raghunath Rau, the elder son because he was a year or two senior to me. He went on to become one of India’s star sports reporters. The second son, Keshav Rau, closer to me in age, was just a year behind me in college. He went on to rise to be a General Manager in the State Bank of India before he retired. This commemorative volume of the articles of their father has been a labour of love and respect for their father.

A word about Keshav Rau before I take up the main issue. Keshav Rau, easily one of the most brilliant among my contemporaries in the State Bank of India; we both joined as Probationary Officers in the same year; is an astonishingly good writer (a talent wasted in the SBI, as I found out, to my cost, quite early). Keshav was careful, much more careful than me, about using his writing skills, so long as he worked for the SBI. It is only now that he is beginning to flower out. This is clearly visible in this book. An understated humour and discomfort with hero worship laces his outstanding introductory article at the beginning.

Keshav had to contend with a huge pile of stuff his father wrote over the decades. That he was able to distil the essence of his writings into three main subjects itself is surprising. He has done it with professional ease. The three main subjects are Eminent Governors, Eminent

Editors and Politicians. S. K. Rau worked with politicians and got to know and understand them during his tenure in *The Pioneer*.

S. K. Rau’s journalistic career was restricted to print journalism and that too newspapers. He probably never worked for a magazine. His articles therefore reflect first-hand experience that is very rarely seen in the more relaxed environs of a magazine. They, therefore, remain fresh and alive in a manner which I found interesting for another reason. Having myself grown up in the same milieu at the same time and in the same place, I feel a certain easy familiarity with the subjects that he has dealt with. Rau’s felicity with the pen also brings his subjects alive as it does the events that occurred in full three dimensional colours. And yet the care taken to ensure that nothing is sensationalised comes from hard training and a deep understanding of the profession that made up his life. Those were the days of journalism restricted to print. It was therefore much more restrained. A certain respect for authenticity made for genuine broad-based research before anything was put to paper.

Rau is kind as he brings out the best points in his subjects beginning with the tenures of Sarojini Naidu who apparently did nothing much except act the prima donna when she was the governor, to Sir Homi Mody who went on to act the “lattu-saahab” during his tenure. The impression I get is that Mrs. Naidu felt as if the nation owed her, and itself, the honour of making her a Governor. While in Sir Homi’s case he comes off as someone rather surprised at having been suddenly pitchforked into a position he felt he did not quite deserve. That his family’s aristocratic background facilitated a Governor’s mien probably made it easier to fulfil the role.

Hesitatingly as it were, it is with K. M. Munshi that the politician governor and the Governor as a representative of the Centre comes to the fore; a Governor who decides that he, as a personality with little to do, will be a self-starter and make work for himself. In spite of his personal accomplishments I did not think too highly of Munshi and his weakness for astrology and ‘baba-

santism'. As a Governor he indulged in all of his pet fantasies apparently with uninhibited abandon.

The politicising of the Universities, and of Lucknow University in particular, started in Munshi's time. From the Governor as Chancellor to C. B. Gupta as Treasurer, the long road downhill had begun. By the time I had the misfortune of doing my BA and MA there, it was already scraping the bottom in terms of merit. The only two teachers who evoked respect in the Arts Faculty were Rajendra Avasthi in Political Science and Dr. Baljit Singh who headed the Economics Department. The rest of the lecturers wouldn't have stood a chance as undergraduates in any respectable university abroad.

If anyone brought a sense of purpose to the position of Governor, it was V. V. Giri who succeeded K. M. Munshi. A voluble bluff no nonsense man, Giri took his duties with the same seriousness as he had taken his trade union activities in an earlier avatar. As Rau says, "No humour, no brilliance and no controversy was his motto."

The volume then turns to the Editors of various newspapers. A varied phalanx of extraordinary journalistic skill is discussed in this section. Among those who get very honourable mention are K. Iswar Dutt, whose highly developed aesthetic sense thought of journalism as an exercise in artistic writing, K. Subba Rau who brooked no interference from anyone in his work, to A. A. Hayles the celebrated Editor of *The Mail of Madras*, M. S. Kamath, R. Krishnamurthy (Kalki), K. Gopalaswami, the first Indian Editor of *The Times of India* and M.S.M Sarma who went on to become the Editor of *The Daily Gazette* of Karachi in 1940. Writing about one's colleagues, especially when one has worked closely with them often throws objectivity out of the window. Luckily Rau's articles on his colleagues stand the test of time even if it is at the cost of a certain distance that the reader finds him maintaining in his treatment of them.

Among the politicians discussed are Dr. Sampurnanand, C. B. Gupta and Chaudhary Charan Singh. Dr. Sampurnanand was a scholar, a scientist, and astrologer, (though reconciling these two contradictory strands must have called for mental acrobatics of a schizophrenic nature. But most well-read people in those days in India seemed

to manage the tightrope with a panache that would not have stood the test of close questioning and logic in today's world). He was perhaps the last politician from UP who was held in high regard by Jawaharlal Nehru. Unlike him, C. B. Gupta, the quintessential baniya, understood the true meaning of "Economic Determinism" and was perhaps ideal in the position of Treasurer of Lucknow University. And yet he came from humble beginnings and worked with socialists in the Congress like Acharya Narendra Dev and Minoo Masani. His austere lifestyle and his open frankness was liked by his colleagues and at the peak of his popularity he was celebrated all over UP as a politician with a great future, much to the chagrin perhaps of his rival and fellow politician Kamalapati Tripathi. He had been picked up by Govind Vallabh Pant and, given his head, he knew the directions he could use it. And he did. His biggest political mistake was in backing the Morarji Desai led Cong(O) against the Indira Gandhi led Cong(I) and the subsequent eclipse that his party suffered.

Chaudhary Charan Singh did the unthinkable in those days. He crossed the floor with a few followers to bring the government of C. B. Gupta down. The cult of '*Ayaram Gayaram*' was born from this original move. Charan Singh was a farmer and economist of some merit. He fought his way up the greasy political pole that was the Centre and became the Prime Minister even if it was only for a short while. For more details about his activities in the corridors of power you must read S. K. Rau's book.

The insights offered by Rau are actually a chronicle of history seen in close-up by one privileged to do so and who had the journalistic acumen to analyse and tear apart various strands of the political fabric in his time. Having known the Rau family and having Keshav Rau as a very close friend may make this review slightly suspect in view of the obvious conflict of interest, but I have tried to keep a careful distance in my approach to the book and perhaps not given the book its due by leaning too far backwards.

All in all a thoroughly enjoyable and I might add, to me personally, a nostalgic stroll through areas of my own experience that I had long forgotten.

Warriors After War (Cont'd. from page 27)

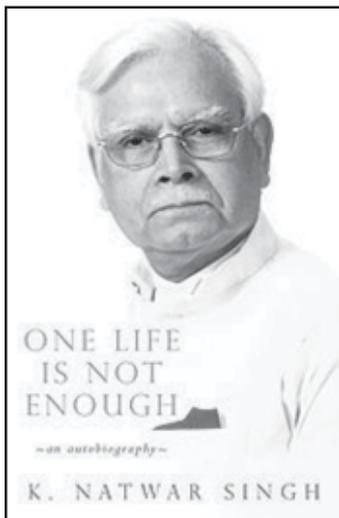
ilk, is given to bragging. Our oft-quoted strategic location is strategic only if commerce flows through it in all directions."

Today, because the Pakistan Army is not allowed to self-correct, it is being penetrated by a thinking that not only negates the military profession but the State itself.

Professional soldiers are silent; Aslam Beg and Hamid Gul are encouraging Pakistan's nemesis, the non-state actors, to pull apart whatever is left of the country.

Brig. (Retd.) Suresh C. Sharma, Navi Mumbai
sureshsharma230@yahoo.com

Based on a report in *The Express Tribune* (An e-paper published in Pakistan), 11 March 2012.



ONE LIFE IS NOT ENOUGH: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY by K. Natwar Singh ● Rupa Publishing, New Delhi ● 2014 ● pp.423 ● Rs. 500

Reviewed by P. M. Kamath, formerly Professor of Politics, University of Bombay and currently Hon. Director, VPM's Centre for International Studies and Adjunct Professor, Department of Geopolitics and International Relations, Manipal University, Manipal

Natwar Singh, former diplomat and Congress politician was close to Nehru-Gandhi (no relation to Mahatma Gandhi) clan in diplomacy as well as politics. He had met Nehru as a probationer in Indian Foreign

the mind of this trained diplomat because in both fields success and failures – more failures than successes – are inevitable. Thus, he was ready to plunge into politics after 31 years of serving Nehru and Indira Gandhi. He resigned from diplomatic career in 1984 and joined politics under Rajiv Gandhi to serve him and after him continued to serve his widow, Sonia Gandhi.

Natwar Singh was then Minister of State for External Affairs in the Rajiv Gandhi cabinet. Gandhi's decision in July 1987 to intervene militarily in Sri Lanka to help that country in resolving the ethnic crisis faced by President J. R. Jayewardene government was a disaster. The decision was taken in great haste by the Prime Minister (PM). Ostensibly because Jayewardene told Rajiv during his visit to Colombo that in the absence of immediate Indian intervention, he feared a coup. Singh says, "I told the PM to take a decision on so grave a matter only after consulting his senior Cabinet colleagues on his return to Delhi". Rajiv Gandhi told him to his utter surprise, "...he had already given orders for the immediate dispatch of Indian troops by air to Colombo".

I would also like in this brief review to focus on his version on the Civil Nuclear Deal (CND) offered by President George W. Bush and signed by him, now as external affairs minister and Manmohan Singh as the PM during their visit to Washington, DC in July 2005. As far as the CND is concerned Natwar Singh rightly says that it "was the logical, though somewhat unexpected, culmination of the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP)" signed in January 2004 by Atal Behari Vajpayee during the NDA's tenure and President Bush. The NSSP was to enable bilateral cooperation in fields of nuclear energy, space, technology transfer and defence. India agreed to follow Nuclear Suppliers' Group (NSG) regulations on sensitive nuclear materials transfers to other countries. India also agreed to abide by the Missile Technology Control Regime.

In the American media several arguments have been advanced to explain the reasons why the US which had effectively denied any US aid in nuclear arena after Mrs. Gandhi had conducted the first ever Indian nuclear test in 1974 signed the agreement. Of these, Singh highlights the China factor as the most important.

Service (IFS) in April 1953. He says Nehru had asked him, "Does China pose a danger to us?" He had then answered like a true diplomat in the making: "Yes and no;" because, in his own words, as he told Nehru, China, "our next-door neighbour is our best friend and worst enemy."

Nehru must have been impressed and expressed his honest opinion, when he replied: "Mujhe Chanakya neeti sikha rahe ho". But Natwar Singh thinks Nehru might have said so "half in jest" to his "audacious reply." His reply immensely proved his abilities to handle diplomacy as well as politics! He is the first Rajasthani to join the Indian Foreign Service. Diplomacy became his career to train him eventually to enter politics.

After national and international study tours, he joined the Ministry of External Affairs in September 1954. An important diplomatic assignment he worked for was as a liaison officer interacting with Chou En-lai during his crucial visits to India during his talks with Pandit Nehru in the 1960s that ultimately ended in the border war in October 1962.

That demonstrated that politics was writ large in

K. Natwar Singh called on Abdus Sattar, Pakistan's ambassador before proceeding to Islamabad to take up his appointment as India's ambassador. Sattar advised him "Never say that we are the same people. We are not. If we were, then why did we part company in 1947?"

One Life is not Enough, Page 188.

Contributed by Brig. Suresh Sharma

Despite the fact that Manmohan Singh, former PM, considered India's CNL with the US as his best achievement, a Congressman, turned a critic of his Party after he was expelled, K. Natwar Singh, writes that Manmohan Singh "didn't have" a foreign policy. Foreign policy "was run from Prime Minister's Office (PMO)." Natwar Singh was Foreign Minister from 2004 to 2005. He ought to know it better. Yet, whether it is made from PMO or from Ministry of External Affairs, it becomes PM's foreign policy!

There is media speculation that Natwar Singh might join the BJP. The BJP in its manifesto has proposed its intentions to "Review and update" India's nuclear doctrine. The print media has already carried a few articles on the topic. The problem with these articles seems to be their failure to understand clearly that No First Use (NFU) of nuclear weapons is not the Nuclear Doctrine in its entirety. Probably Natwar Singh could become an advisor to PM Modi on the CNL as well as on NFU. That could make a complete circle or circus from secularism to communalism!

Remembering Pandit Nehru's 'Tryst with Destiny' (Cont'd. from page 12)

In fact, this indirectly incentivises the states to tighten up their system of revenue generation so that they can look forward to a quantum jump in their share.

Land Acquisition Debate

It is in the debate over land acquisition bill in parliament that the NDA government faces the toughest challenge. The fact that many dissenters in its own party and its allies do not share the perception of the Government on this issue has queered the pitch. Despite the impassioned appeal of the Finance Minister and later by the Prime Minister himself who, when replying to the President's address, told the house that the Bill placed before Parliament was the same as framed by the UPA government except that the government has enlarged the scope of 13 items included in the original schedule so that the hurdles in land acquisition would be removed which would not only help to create more jobs but also to advance the interest of farmers themselves. Not surprising the Congress and other opposition parties remained unimpressed. The fact that there is such widespread opposition cannot be easily brushed off, and the government has to climb down from its stand and hope wiser counsels will prevail in the country's overall interest.

Mohan Bhagwat's Comment on Mother Teresa

When right wing zealots' crass comments have adversely impacted Modi's push on development, the RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's comments on the motives of Mother Teresa has added to Modi's troubles. This is not the first time that this controversy has arisen. Without

going into the merits or demerits of the issue, it has to be conceded that the comment of Bhagwat was definitely uncalled for at this juncture. Could it be that Bhagwat is increasingly feeling uneasy that Modi is slowly slipping out of the control of the RSS? Does he suspect that Modi is embarking on his own ideology of more inclusive growth to serve the larger interest of the nation which does not necessarily strengthen the concept of Hindutva which the RSS follows?

MR. H. R. BAPU SATYANARAYANA is a freelance writer based in Mysore. Email: what_option@yahoo.com

Form IV	
Statement about ownership and other particulars about <i>Freedom First</i>.	
Place of publication	: Mumbai
Periodicity of its publication	: Monthly
Printer's & Publisher's Name	: J. R. Patel
Whether citizen of India	: Indian
Address	: 3rd floor, Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400 001.
Editor's Name	: S. V. Raju
Whether citizen of India	: Indian
Address	: 3rd floor, Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400 001.
Name & address of individual: who owns the newspaper and Partners or shareholders holding more than one per cent of the Capital.	: Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom 3rd floor, Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400 001
I, J. R. Patel, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.	
Dated: 1st April, 2015	J. R. Patel Publisher.

Educating Adults

Three Emerging Religious Icons for Maharashtra Politics

Sharu Rangnekar

Use of religious icons for political campaigns is not unusual in India. The Ram Mandir campaign that led to the first BJP government in 1996 is a recent example.

In the near future three special icons are likely to play a political role. They are really all-India icons – but their special influence in Maharashtra is going to make them special for Maharashtra campaigns, viz. Panduranga ● Ganapati ● Sai Baba.

Panduranga

Panduranga has been an icon with the Warkari sect of Hindus in Maharashtra. The bi-annual processions on foot (called dindi) have become important events and have been played up by the electronic media. This has led to increasing popularity of Panduranga and Warkari dindis occupying the TV channels for several days every year.

For many years this was not considered an important source of political charisma till the anti-superstition law came up in the Maharashtra Assembly. Several issues were covered under the “blind faith” like astrology, Vastushastra, Reiki, etc. The Warkaris also had their superstitions over years strengthened by the various miracles attributed to various god-men of the Warkaris. These god-men were very powerful and the late Dr. Narendra Dabholkar had to accept many compromises to get the law on superstitions through. During this period it was realised by the politicians that Warkaris and Panduranga procession to Pandharpur can become focus of political charisma.

Ganapati

Ganapati is a very popular god and has been mentioned in various scriptures for his powers. However, it was used in Maharashtra by Lokmanya Tilak for creating

an institution called “*Sarvajanik Ganeshotsav*” (Public Ganesh Festival). This was used by him to create a platform for political communication which was difficult with Hindu masses. The Muslims could meet on Friday afternoons and Christians could meet on Sunday but Hindus had no such system of regular periodical assembly. So he introduced the *Sarvajanik Ganeshotsav* and used this opportunity to convey his political messages. After Independence, this phenomenon got into oblivion but over time, in view of the general enthusiasm of the Indian public for festivals, this has become a public festival parallel with Eid and X-mas. The festival required installation of Ganesh idol and now these idols are multiplying exponentially every year and the festival has become widespread with increasing Police bandobast problems.

Sai Baba

Sai Baba was born in the 18th century and died in 1918. Initially, he was known in a very small territory around Shirdi near Yewale which was a market place. I happened to visit Yewale in 1942 and found that Sai Baba’s silver jubilee death anniversary preparations were being made. It was a relatively modest celebration. He had a very peculiar attribute – he did not utter many words in his life time. In fact, nobody knew where he came from and what his religion was. He looked Muslim but is worshipped by both Hindus and Muslims and that became his basic charisma. Over a period the Sai Baba’s charisma expanded. The Satya Sai Baba, claiming to be the reincarnation of Sai Baba, coming from Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh, increased the attraction and, at one time, the charisma of Sai Baba and Satya Sai Baba were in competition. Satya Sai Baba gave an



A Feature Sponsored by

Adult Education Institute,

Registered under the Public Trusts Act N.E-4282

Contact: Email:freedomfirst1952@gmail.com

international flavour to the phenomenon because Satya Sai Baba disciples came from various western countries.

In 2011 Satya Sai Baba died and his charisma has been progressively declining. But the charisma of Sai Baba is increasing and now he is thought of as a god. Not only are his statues installed in homes, but even his temples are built. Some disciples of Hindu religion are opposed to these Sai Baba temples and recently there has been a controversy of Shankaracharya *versus* Sai Baba. This has led to further increase in Sai Baba's charisma. Sai Baba himself has written very little (he was probably illiterate) and has spoken only a few words. This has given his

disciples an opportunity to create Sai Baba messages.

Further Developments

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is very media savvy and is likely to use these charismatic personalities. He has already hijacked the Congress leaders like Gandhiji, Vallabhbbhai Patel, Subhash Chandra Bose to be part of his arsenal. Particularly in Maharashtra three icons described are likely to be used by Modi and his followers to make the future elections more colourful.

MR. SHARU S. RANGNEKAR is a well-known Management Consultant. www.sharurangnekar.com

Shortage of Qualified Teachers

Suresh C. Sharma

“Those who have witnessed the insults heaped on professors by students in the university would never want to be teachers.”

The Indian Institutes Technology (IITs) face a staff shortage to the extent of 37% resulting in a higher teacher-student ratio. 4,308 lecturers have been posted in IITs against a sanctioned strength of 6,944. When the IITs were started, there was a sprinkling of Ph.Ds from foreign universities. This is no more so and the rating of IITs has declined. IIT Bhubaneshwar has only one qualified teacher. The Government has announced plans to establish more IITs. They should first put the existing IITs in good shape. We cannot depend on foreign qualified individuals to volunteer for teaching assignments in India and steps have to be taken to improve the quality of intake of staff of IITs. It takes a long time to train students as engineers and it is all the more necessary to commence steps without delay.

One of the reasons for the reluctance of well qualified individuals to join the teaching faculty could be students' indiscipline and interference by political leaders.

Once, we happened to be travelling with the wife and daughter of the then vice-chancellor of a university. The daughter had been awarded a national merit scholarship and she was on her way to join the designated college. I asked her if she planned to follow in the footsteps of her father and work her way to be a vice-chancellor. The mother of the girl interrupted to emphatically say “Never. Those who have witnessed the insults heaped on professors by students in the university would never

want to be teachers”. Recently, the students and parents of Visva-Bharati University, Shantiniketan held the vice-chancellor hostage in his office and did not allow him to receive the visiting President of Bangladesh who had to leave without his lunch. Universities are meant for learning, and students indulging in violence or hooliganism should be expelled. Teachers must be respected.

The situation of qualified staff is even more dismal in primary schools. 86% teachers failed in the Eligibility Test. A large number of schools in Maharashtra have officiating principals as it has not been possible to get individuals with the approved qualifications. We need to be pragmatic in laying down the qualifications for recruitment of teachers and principals.

*

Twenty five per cent teachers are absent daily in government schools in India. Quality of teachers has been under discussion in the UK and the USA as well. An experienced teacher with a first class degree from Oxford and a Ph.D. from Cambridge has commented that the work load is high and young people leave the job as they have no private life. His wish list is -

- Freedom to visit the toilet whenever need to overcome chronic constipation.
- Reliable supply of toilet paper.
- A proper examination system.

Brig. (Retd.) SURESH C. SHARMA, Mumbai,
sureshsharma236@yahoo.com
Source: The Economist 28 Feb.-6 March.

The Right to Sanitation as a Human Right

B. N. Mehrish

Within the human rights arena, there is a linkage between water and sanitation. In countries like India and some African countries, such as Sudan there is acute shortage of water. Every human being needs water to survive, and needs to live in conditions in which diseases-causing elements are kept below a level where the immune system defences can fight off infection and illness.

Although some early civilizations linked water and sanitation, in the current century a technological revolution such as the flush toilet and the sewer trap has become one of the most significant developments in human history.

The effects of ever-increasing populations and ineffective means of meeting sanitation needs are being felt on unprecedented scale. Millions of people in India are living without adequate means of meeting their daily sanitation needs, with the expected adverse consequences to their health and to the quality of water around them.

In the late twentieth century, the concept of a human right to sanitation began to emerge as a potential tool to address this severe problem that affects the daily lives of people. Articles 11 and 12 of the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights provide the initial basis of legally binding obligations at the international level, though the ICESCR does not explicitly refer to sanitation but instead recognizes a right to “an adequate standard of living...”

Around the turn of the 21st century, scholars viz. Keri Ellis, a volunteer instructor in International Human Law with the American Red Cross, a Law Commissioner of the World Conservation Union and persons working with human rights groups began to argue that a right to water and sanitation must be implicit with more stated rights to be achieved, particularly right to food and health. Sanitation is a “fundamental component of improved living conditions and physical health”.

In 1977, sanitation was explicitly included in the convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women, pertaining as to rural women. Many who

live in suburbs of metropolis Mumbai, Delhi, Gurgaon (Haryana) do not have access to adequate sanitation.

Sanitation received attention during 2008, which was declared by the United Nations as the International Year of Sanitation. Two significant international developments for the right to sanitation took place in 2010.

- (1) A UN General Assembly resolution recognizing a conjoined human right to water and sanitation, and;
- (2) Affirmation by the Human Rights Council that right to water and sanitation derives from the right to life and the right to human dignity. Few countries namely Uruguay, Algeria, Colombia, South Africa have explicitly recognized a right to sanitation within their constitutions. Efforts are being made by India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi to change the status quo of sanitation in India. Will he succeed in his endeavour to improve the living standards of people and achieve his vision of Swachh Bharat?

Healthcare for All is still far from reality.

DR. B. N. MEHRISH, Retired Professor of Politics, University of Mumbai, now a Gurgaon resident.
brijesh.mehrish@gmail.com

Sankranti Kanukalu (Gift on Sankranti)

When thousands of schools in the state do not have toilets for boys and girls and those which exist are mosly non-functional for want of water as well as non-engagement of persons to clean them, is it not astounding that about a crore of white ration card holders in Andhra Pradesh will be a gift bag each containing a number of food items costing Rs.240!

How many schools can be provided with toilets with this Rs.240 crore. Is it *Swaachh Bharat* or vote-getting that is more important?

Dr. T. H. Chowdary, Secunderabad.
hanuman.chowdary@tcs.com

Freedom First

Freedom First speaks for the silent majority – the majority that wants to be left in peace to pursue its goal of improving its quality of life, but has been suffering in silence, the indignities heaped on it by insensitive governments who have abrogated to themselves the right to decide what is good for the people. In the process, the whole country has been turned into a cesspool of corruption. Public morality and character have reached an all-time low.

Freedom First affirms that much of the unrest and ferment in our society is a direct result of excessive State intervention in the day-to-day lives of our people. While the people's initiative has been stifled, the economy is in shambles. The Journal believes that while India needs a strong government that ensures the rule of law what India does not need is a meddling government – the system so far that has led to impoverishment, insecurity and instability.

Freedom First therefore stands for minimum government and maximum freedom, tempered by a sense of individual responsibility, in which the people's genius has a fair opportunity to develop and grow.

Freedom First rejects any ideology, movement or policy that sets one group of citizens against another, be it based on class, caste, religion or envy.

3rd floor, Army & Navy Building,
148, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Mumbai 400 001.
Phone: (022) 2284 3416
email: freedom@vsnl.com
Website: www.freedomfirst.in

Do A Favour

to your friends
send them
a sample copy of
Freedom First
with your compliments.

Freedom First

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

Please send a sample copy of **Freedom First** to the following with my compliments:

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Pin _____

*

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Pin _____

Sender's Name & Address

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Pin _____

www.cartridgeworld.in

365 day savings on all your ink & toner cartridge needs.



Cartridge World stores are independently owned and operated

*Conditions Apply

UP TO **70%***
SAVINGS

FREE
COLLECTION
& DELIVERY*

100%
PRINTER-FRIENDLY

- Over 2000 stores in 52 countries • Over 20 million satisfied customers worldwide

To recharge your printer cartridges, call us today.

For further details call or mail :
022 29206060 mail@cartridgeworld.in



Cartridge World

Why pay more to print ?