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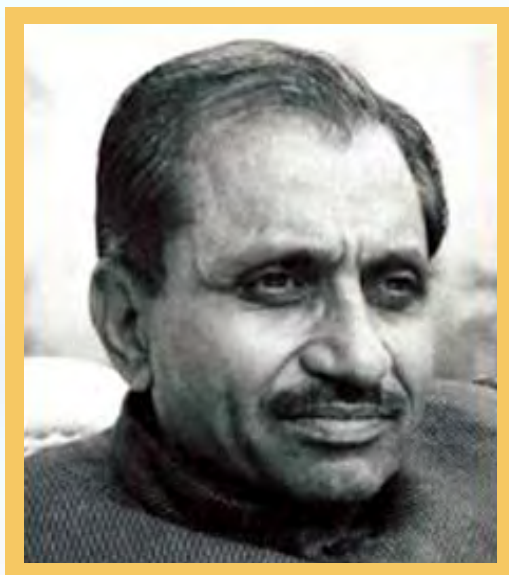
BUDGET 2017-2018

A Solid, Stolid & Entirely Consistent Effort

Modi's 'Act West' Policy in
Motion

India - Israel ties reflect
newfound maturity

उद्यमियों से तय होगा नए भारत
का भविष्य



“People should also realise that a vote is not an instrument of expressing gratefulness to any candidate but a mandate to carry out their wishes.”

-Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya

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- * भारतीय जनता पार्टी के राष्ट्रीय अध्यक्ष श्री अमित शाह द्वारा उत्तर प्रदेश, उत्तराखंड, मणिपुर और गोवा में भारतीय जनता पार्टी की ऐतिहासिक और अभूतपूर्व विजय पर की गई प्रेस वार्ता के मुख्य बिंदु

EVENT @ SPMRF

- * SPMRF & NMML Organised a Conversation with Shri Arun Jaitley (Union Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs) on "Towards a New Polity: Campaign Finance Reform in India" at NMML on 8th March, 2017
- * Launch of "Parivartan Ki Ore"
- * SPMRF & NMML Organised a Discussion on "Budget 2017: Remonetisation, Recalibration & Reform" on 8th February, 2017

“NEW INDIA”



Dr. Anirban Ganguly

The BJP under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, since 2014, has demonstrated a remarkable resilience in working to alter the political narrative of the country and to liberate it from the clutches of these negatives. As the results are analysed, as the details come in, it is for all to see how wide-sweeping the mandate has been and how it has cut across barriers. Those who minimise its symbolism are mostly those formations that have proved to be completely out of depth with the collective mind of the people.

The sweeping as well stunning electoral verdict in Uttar Pradesh in favour of the BJP announces a new era in Indian politics and marks a watershed in our national march, post independence.

But perhaps the greatest lesson from the Uttar Pradesh verdict is that it has given a decisive blow, as BJP president Shri Amit Shah reminded us, to the politics of appeasement that has held hostage our national aspirations in the last seven decades.

Throughout the hectic electioneering Shri Amit Shah was categorical that the mandate in Uttar Pradesh will actually announce the end of the politics of dynastism, of casteism and of appeasement and launch the era of the politics of performance. No political formation till date had the gumption to speak along these lines.

The BJP under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, since 2014, has demonstrated a remarkable resilience in working to alter the political narrative of the country and to liberate it from the clutches of these negatives. As the results are analysed, as the details come in, it is for all to see how wide-sweeping the mandate has been and how it has cut across barriers. Those who minimise its symbolism are mostly those formations that have proved to be completely out of depth with the collective mind of the people.

The mandate for Uttar Pradesh and for the BJP across the country is aspirational. All through the last three years that he has been leading the government at the Union level, Prime Minister Modi has been successful in articulating and then working out a new narrative – a narrative which he has termed the “New India.” This new narrative has responded to the aspirations of all classes cutting across divides of various types.

Through his work, through his commitment and determination to transform India, Prime Minister Modi has earned the faith and trust of the people. This faith and trust has been acquired and won through ceaseless and credible work. His talk of empowerment and his actions in laying the foundations of that empowerment has made visible impact at the grassroots. When he talks of people wanting opportunities and not doles and handouts, Prime Minister reflects and articulates the actual aspirations of the vast multitudes that have hitherto faced marginalisation.

The mandate for such a vision is so decisive, that the losing side is yet to fathom all its dimensions. Some of them speak of the creation of a “myth” which people have lapped up. Such a talk only betrays their own disdain for the wisdom of the Indian electorate which has often displayed deep discernment in selecting their representatives.

The “New India” is in the wings, it is determined to combine aspirations with capacities and work towards creating and evolving a new narrative.

SALIENT POINTS OF PM MODI'S ADDRESS AT SWACHH SHAKTI 2017 – A CONVENTION OF WOMEN SARPANCHES AT GANDHINAGAR, GUJARAT ON 8TH MARCH, 2017



■ मेरा सौभाग्य है कि आज 8 मार्च को अंतर्राष्ट्रीय महिला दिवस पर देश के कोने-कोने से आई हुई माताओं, बहनों का दर्शन करने का सौभाग्य मिला, उनके आशीर्वाद प्राप्त करने का सौभाग्य मिला।

■ यहां भी आप लोगों ने दो प्रदर्शनी देखी होंगी; एक गांव- गांव का विकास और उसमें स्वच्छता का महात्म्य, आधुनिक Technology से बहुत ही उत्तम प्रकार की प्रदर्शनी यहां लगाई हुई है। मुझे आने में कुछ जो देर हुई, उसका एक कारण वो प्रदर्शनी में मेरा मन लग गया; मैं जरा देखता ही रह गया; तो उसके कारण यहां पहुंचने में देर हो गई।

■ ये स्वच्छ शक्ति का समारोह है। गांधी की जन्मभूमि गुजरात में है, गांधी के नाम से बने शहर में है, और गांधी जिसे हम महात्मा कहते थे, उस महात्मा मंदिर में है; इससे इसका कितना महात्म्य है, आप समझ सकते हैं। यहीं पर

एक Digital प्रदर्शनी, Virtual Museum पूज्य बापू के जीवन पर है।

■ 2019, महात्मा गांधी को 150 वर्ष हो रहे हैं। पूज्य बापू कहते थे कि हिन्दुस्तान गांवों में बसा हुआ है। दूसरी बात एक कहते थे, कि मुझे अगर आजादी और स्वच्छता, दोनों में से पहले कुछ पसंद करना है तो मैं स्वच्छता पसंद करूंगा। गांधी के जीवन में स्वच्छता का कितना महात्म्य था वो उनकी इस Commitment से पता चलता है।

■ ये वो सरपंच बहनें हैं, जिन्होंने अपने गांव में ये करके दिखाया है। खुले में शौच जाना, उसके खिलाफ उन्होंने संघर्ष किया है। गांव में इस व्यवस्था को विकसित करने के लिए प्रयास किया है। वैसी स्वच्छता के संदेश को सफलतापूर्वक अपने गांव में लागू करने वाली शक्तिरूपी लोग यहां बैठे हैं।

■ अभी आपने फिल्म देखी, उसमें बयां है, स्वच्छता के संबंध में पहले हमारा rank 42% तक था। इतने कम समय में हम 62 पर पहुंच गए। अगर इतने कम समय में 20 प्रतिशत हम सुधार कर सकते हैं, तो आने वाले डेढ़ साल में हम और अधिक कर सकते हैं, ये साफ-साफ आप लोगों ने करके दिखाया है।

■ आज जिन माताओं, बहनों को सम्मान करने का मुझे अवसर मिला, उनकी एक-एक मिनट की फिल्म छोटी-छोटी हमने देखी। कुछ लोगों का जो भ्रम रहता है, उन सबके भ्रम तोड़ने वाली ये सारी फिल्में हैं। कुछ लोगों को लगता है कि पढ़े-लिखे लोग ही कुछ काम कर सकते हैं, इन बहनों ने करके दिखाया।

■ कुछ लोगों को लगता है शहर में होंगे थोड़ी चपाचप अंग्रेजी बोल पाते होंगे वो ही कर पाते हैं। ये अपनी भाषा के सिवाय कोई भाषा नहीं जानते, तो भी ये कर पाते हैं। अगर किसी विषय के साथ व्यक्ति जुड़ जाता है, जीवन का मकसद अगर उसको मिल जाता है, तो वो उसे पार करके रहता है।

■ लेकिन जिसको जिंदगी का मकसद मिल जाता है, Purpose of life जिसको पता चल जाता है, वह बिना रुके, बिना थके, बिना झुके, अपने लक्ष्य की पूर्ति के लिए, जिसकी भी जरूरत पड़े उसको साथ ले करके; संघर्ष करना पड़े तो संघर्ष करके, चुनौतियों से मुकाबला करना पड़े तो मुकाबला करके भी अपने मकसद को पूर्ण करने तक वो चैन से बैठते नहीं हैं।

■ आप में से सब सरपंच होना कोई छोटी बात नहीं है। कुछ लोग होंगे जिनको सरपंच बनने में शायद तकलीफ न हुई हो, लेकिन ज्यादातर ऐसे होंगे जिनको इस लोकतांत्रिक परम्परा में, यहां तक पहुंचने में काफी कुछ करना पड़ा होगा।

■ एक संस्था ने बड़ा मजेदार सर्वे किया है और उस सर्वे में उसने बड़ी महत्वपूर्ण चीजें पाई हैं। और उसने सारी जो professional महिलाएं हैं, उनका सर्वे किया था और उस सर्वे में पाया गया कि नई चीज सीखने की वृत्ति महिलाओं में ज्यादा होती है। जो काम उसको दिया गया, उसको पूरा करने के लिए जितनी अपनी क्षमता बनानी चाहिए, शक्ति लगानी चाहिए, उसमें कभी वो पीछे नहीं रहती है। जो काम उसको मिला, पूरा नहीं होता है वो चैन से बैठती नहीं है। वो उसको लगातार उसके पीछे लगी रहती है।

■ अपना काम करने के लिए, जो तय किया हुआ है उसके जिम्मे है, उसको

पूरा करने के लिए कौन-कौन से resource mobilize करने चाहिए, किस-किसकी शक्ति जोड़नी चाहिए, बड़ी आसानी से वो करती है उसको कोई Ego नहीं होता है। किसी को नमस्ते करके काम करवाना है तो नमस्ते करके करवा लेंगी, किसी से गुस्सा करके करवाना है तो गुस्सा करके करवा लेंगी। बड़ा Interesting Survey है ये।

■ जहां भी, जो भी अवसर मिला है, उस काम को देदिप्यमान करने का काम हमारी माताओं, बहनों ने किया है और इसलिए बेटी बचाओ, बेटी पढ़ाओ। ये हमारा सामाजिक दायित्व है, राष्ट्रीय दायित्व है, मानवीय दायित्व है। अमानवीय बात समाज में स्वीकृत नहीं हो सकती है और हमारे यहां तो शास्त्रों में कहा गया है, बेटी का महात्म्य करते हुए,

यावत गंगा कुरूक्षेत्रे, यावत तिष्ठति मेदनी।

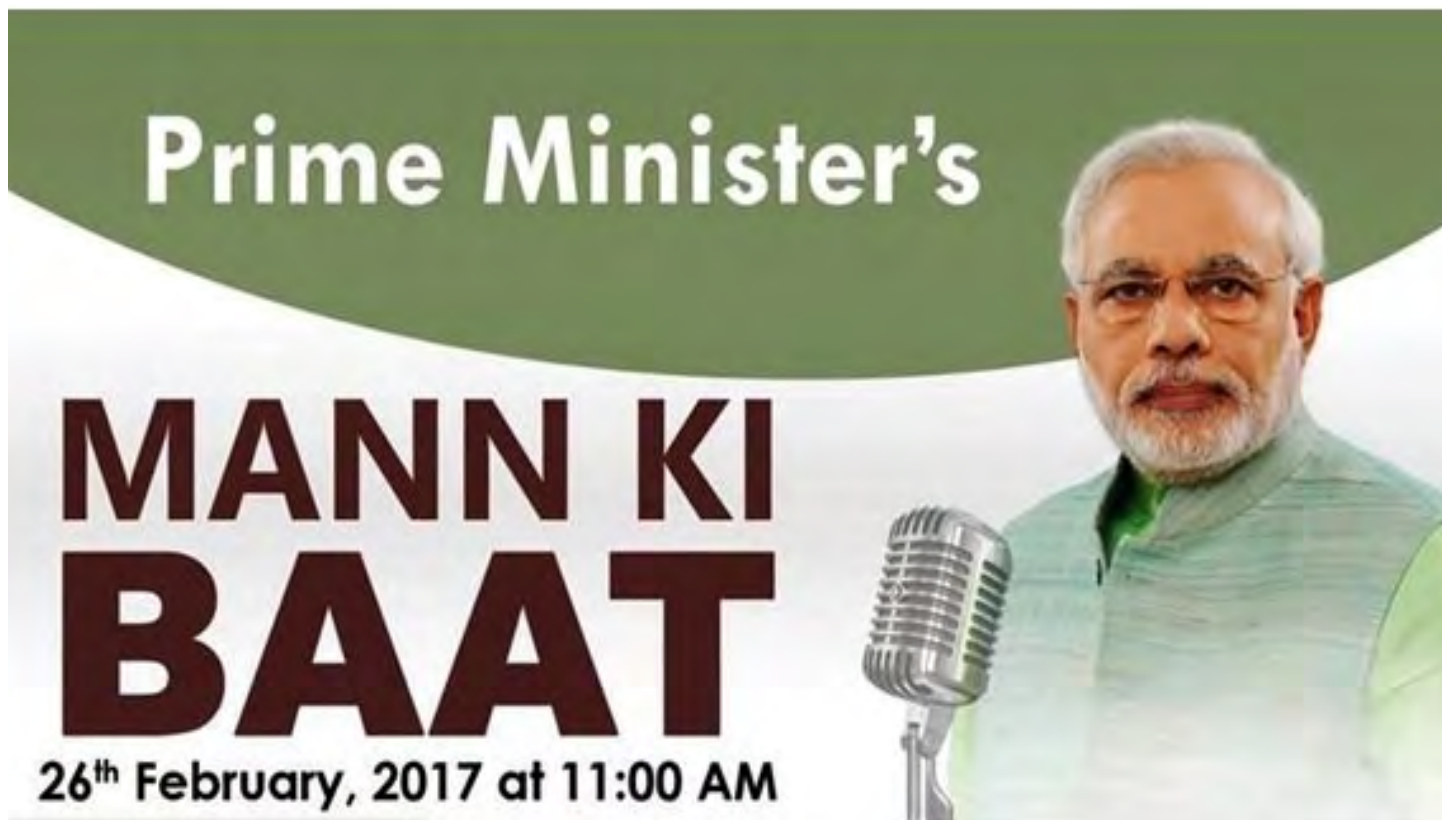
यावत सीता कथालोके, तावत जिवेतु बालिका।।

■ जब तक गंगा, कुरूक्षेत्र और हिमालय हैं, जब तक सीता की गाथा इस लोक में है, बालिका तुम तब तक जीवित रहो। तुम्हारा नाम तब तक दुनिया याद रखे। ये हमारे शास्त्रों में बेटी के लिए कहा गया है। और इसलिए बेटी बचाओ, बेटी पढ़ाओ; कोई भेदभाव नहीं।

■ हमारे सरपंच महिलाओं से मेरा ये आग्रह है कि इस बात को आप अपने गांव में डंके की चोट पर देखें। अगर बेटा पढ़ता है गांव की बेटी भी पढ़नी चाहिए। गरीब से गरीब हो, और सरपंच ये न सोचे कि इसके लिए बजट की, बजट की जरूरत नहीं होती है। सरकार ने स्कूल बनाया हुआ है। सरकार ने टीचर रखा हुआ है। उसके लिए गांव को अलग खर्चा नहीं करना है, सिर्फ आपको निगरानी रखनी है कि बेटियां स्कूल में जाती हैं कि नहीं, जैसे कौन परिवार है जिसने अपनी बेटी को स्कूल में नहीं रखा है; इतना सारा देख लीजिए।

■ आप गांव में कोशिश कीजिए, कुछ लोगों को लगाइए, Self-help group बनाइए। गांव के कूड़े-कचरे में से Compost खातर बनाइए, गांव खातर की बिक्री होगी, पंचायत की आय होगी। और जमीन का सुधार होगा तो गांव के लोगों की खेती भी अच्छी होगी।

SALIENT POINTS OF PM NARENDRA MODI'S "MANN KI BAAT" ADDRESS ON ALL INDIA RADIO ON 26TH FEB, 2017



- The festivals of Vasant Panchami, Mahashivratri and Holi, impart hues of happiness to a person's life
- My gratitude to lakhs of citizens for sending in a multitude of suggestions when I ask for them before#MannKiBaat
- After the successful mission of sending Mangalyaan to Mars, recently ISRO scripted a world record in the arena of space
- India created history by becoming the first country to launch successfully 104 satellites into space at one go
- This cost effective, efficient space programme of ISRO has become a marvel for the entire world
- Particularly for my farmer brothers and sisters, our new Satellite Cartosat 2D will be immensely helpful
- It is a matter of exultation for us that the entire campaign was led & steered by our young & women scientists
- On behalf of our countrymen, I heartily congratulate the scientists at ISRO
- India has successfully tested Ballistic Interceptor

Missile. This is a cutting edge technology in the arena of security

■ Inquisitiveness has played a significant role in the journey of progression of human life and development

■ The attraction of science for youngsters should increase. We need more & more scientists

■ Our society is increasingly turning out to be technology driven. Systems are getting technology driven

■ A lot of emphasis is being laid on #DigiDhan. People are moving towards digital currency. Digital transactions are rising

■ Delighted to learn that till now, under Lucky Grahak & Digi-Dhan Yojana, 10 lakh people have been rewarded

■ I urge my countrymen, especially youth of our country & those who have won prizes, to become ambassadors of these schemes

■ This scheme will complete its 100 days on 14th April, the birth anniversary of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

■ Remembering him, one teach at least 125 persons about downloading BHIM App & procedure of making transactions through it

■ Agriculture makes a major contribution to the fundamentals of our country's economy

■ Economic prowess of villages imparts momentum to the nation's economic progress

■ The hard work of the farmers has resulted in a record production of more than 2,700 lakh tonnes food grains

■ Government, society, institutions, organizations, in fact everyone, is making some or the other effort towards Swachhta

■ Our Divyang brothers and sisters are capable, strongly determined, courageous and possess tremendous resolve

■ Women players are bringing glory to the nation. Congrats to women players won silver at Asian Rugby Sevens Trophy

■ The whole world celebrates 8th March as Women's Day. In India, more importance needs to be given to our daughters

■ 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' movement is moving forward with rapid strides. It has now become a campaign of public education

SALIENT POINTS OF PM MODI'S REPLY TO 'MOTION OF THANKS' TO THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS, IN RAJYA SABHA ON 8TH FEB, 2017



■ Several members have shared their views and there was considerable discussion on demonetization

The fight against corruption and black money is not a political fight. It is not to single out any particular party

■ Corruption has adversely impacted the aspirations of the poor and the middle class

■ We will have to be tough on those who are cheating the system. When we do that, the hands of the poor will be strengthened

■ About 700 Maoists surrendered after demonetisation and this number is increasing. Shouldn't this make us happy.

■ There is a horizontal divide- on one side are the people of India & Government and on the other side are a group of political leaders

■ Today India is working to correct the wrongs that

entered our society

■ There was so much said about what is wrong with the nation...perhaps they were giving a report card of their own record

■ Attacks on the party I belong to, our government, on me are understandable but why was the RBI dragged into this. It was not required

■ Let us keep institutions above politics

■ I was surprised that people made fun of the Swachh Bharat Mission also

■ I want to congratulate the media, they have furthered the message of Swachh Bharat and created so much awareness

■ Sanitation coverage in the rural areas has increased.

SALIENT POINTS OF PM MODI'S REPLY TO 'MOTION OF THANKS' TO THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS, IN LOK SABHA ON 7TH FEB, 2017



- Various members of the House added vigour into the debate & shared insightful points. I thank the MPs for their participation
- How can someone see 'SEVA' or any positive virtue in the word 'SCAM'?
- There is something very special about 'Jan Shakti'
- We remember how democracy was under threat from 1975 to 1977, when opposition leaders were jailed, newspaper freedom curtailed
- It is due to this 'Jan Shakti' that the person born to a poor family can become the Prime Minister of India
- There are many people like me, who could not die for the nation during the freedom struggle but we are living for India & serving India
- Somewhere on the way, 'Jan Shakti' was forgotten. We do not accept this
- Let us understand & appreciate the inherent strength of our people & take India to newer heights. Faith in Jan Shakti will give results
- I had said it from the Red Fort- every Prime Minister

has contributed to the nation

■ I was surprised that there were some who made cleanliness also a political issue. Why can't we work together on ushering a Swachh Bharat

■ When Rail budget was first presented, the transport sector was different. Now things are different & a more comprehensive look is needed

■ From Day 1, we have been clear- we are ready for a discussion on demonetisation but some were more keen on TV bytes & not debates

■ पहले होता था – कितना गया, अब होता है – मोदी जी कितना लाये... this is how discourse has changed after we have assumed office

■ It does not matter how big you are, you will have to give back what belongs to the poor. My fight is for the poor

■ My fight is for the poor and giving the poor their due. This fight will continue

■ आप कितने भी बड़े क्यों न हो, आपको गरीबों के हक का लौटना पड़ेगा। मैं गरीबों के लिए लड़ता रहा हूँ और आगे भी लड़ता रहूँगा

■ We do not see everything from the prism of elections. The interests of the nation are supreme for us

■ When can you have an operation? When the body is healthy. The economy was doing well and thus our decision was taken at the right time

■ Like Swachh Bharat, the decision on demonetisation is a movement to clean India (from corruption and black money)

■ नोटबंदी के दौरान एक तरफ देश को लूटने वाले लोग थे और दूसरी तरफ ईमानदारी का प्रयास किया जा रहा था

■ Why was it that there were crop insurance schemes earlier but farmers were not keen to avail of the benefits

■ हमारी देश की सेना का हम जितना गुणगान करें, उतना कम है। हमारी सेना इस राष्ट्र की रक्षा के लिए पूर्ण रूप से सामर्थ्यवान है



Ashok Malik

BUDGET 2017-2018: A SOLID, STOLID & ENTIRELY CONSISTENT EFFORT

In many ways, the Budget of February 1, 2017, came at a challenging juncture. Demonetisation, while an important step in a series of measures being taken by the Narendra Modi government to fight black money and illegal cash transactions as well as promote greater recorded and cheque or digital transactions, particularly in the B2B (business to business) chain, had caused some pain. It was likely to subdue consumer demand for about two quarters and had apparently hurt small businesses and traders, as well as those engaged in the mandis or big farmer markets.

Second, the election of Donald Trump to the White House and the likelihood of a global demand slump as America shut itself behind tariff walls and global trade went into decline was worrying Indians. Third, with the Goods and Service Tax, another piece of reform with long-term benefit but short-term disruption, expected in the middle of financial year 2017-18, domestic turbulence was also predicted.

In these circumstances, **the economy wanted reassurance and surefootedness. This is exactly what Finance Minister Arun Jaitley delivered. His fourth budget was a solid, stolid and entirely consistent effort.** It may not have been perfect and met every parameter of every analyst – no Budget ever can – but **was remarkable in its unwillingness to resort to gimmickry and political populism even as critical elections approached in Uttar Pradesh and other states.**

This followed a pattern. The fiscal deficit target had been a Lakshmanrekha for the Modi government from its first year itself, when Jaitley ambitiously adopted the number left to him in the vote-on-account presented by the outgoing UPA government. In 2017, after three years of fiscal consolidation, the NDA government had just that much more room to spend. Even here, Jaitley was judicious.

He refrained from going overboard, promised a fiscal deficit of 3.2 per cent of GDP this year and three per cent in the following year, but gave concessions and bigger outlays to infrastructure and housing in the hope of promoting private investment. Politically, he gave himself the space to spend intelligently in his final year (2018-19) – when the slow jog to the general election would commence.

Jaitley was right in offering a Budget with continuity and few shocks. He assessed the economy needed a balm – especially as, as the finance minister pointed out, “In several parts of the world, there are signs of increasing retreat from globalisation of goods, services and people, as pressures for protectionism are building up. These developments have the potential to affect exports from a number of emerging markets, including India.”

The impact of Donald Trump’s economic policies is a concern. These have the potential to trigger a United States trade war with China and a global

slowdown. India will not be unaffected; that meant the room for adventurism and risk taking was just not there for the Indian finance minister. It also suggested why the Economic Survey, while such a remarkable document this year, remained an aspiration, as it tends to each year, irrespective of the government in question. Political realities and now global conditions tend to make it difficult to embrace bold and daring ideas.

Both Modi and Jaitley have a habit of sticking to points and promises made and sometimes even obsessing over them. When demonetisation was announced, the two men had spoken of it being the first of several moves against black money and corruption, as well as a trigger to promote digital payments. Inattentive critics had scoffed at such reasoning and ascribed it to an afterthought following the cash shortage in the early weeks after November 8, 2017.

Today, not only is the bulk of that cash shortage behind us, both the endeavours – fighting corruption and promoting digital payments – are being pursued. The honest citizen and tax-payer is being rewarded or at least being told she is not a fool for being honest and those who act dishonestly will be put to considerable inconvenience.

Tax incentives for point of sales (POS) machines, announced a month after demonetisation, were broadened and institutionalised in the Budget. Payments to the government, by way of taxes for instance, will henceforth mandatorily follow the digital route beyond a certain (and to-be-announced limit). Cash transactions above Rs 300,000 have been plain abolished. One suspects that ceiling will be lowered still further in the years to come. Prime Minister Modi's "war on cash" is a serious one.

An important aspect of the battle against corruption is cleaning up campaign finance and election funding. In this the reduction of individual cash donations to a political party to a limit of Rs 2,000 – from the earlier Rs 20,000 – is a strong move. True, parties will try and

work around this and at some point cash donations will have to go altogether, but it is still a good start.

The mechanism of "electoral bonds", to allow donors to buy bonds from banks and leave it to chosen political parties to redeem these, is also a welcome innovation. It will allow white-collar folk to donate to a political cause or party, without necessarily interacting directly with the party and its politicians.

Overall, this Budget stuck to the BJP-led government's key themes: infrastructure, including in agriculture, entrepreneurship at the grassroots, an energy revolution – the availability of and access to power will certainly be among the BJP's calling cards in the campaign of 2019 – and tackling corruption. The phrase "Swacch Bharat" has been expanded from physical cleanliness to a moral and systemic cleansing.

In that, with its appeal as well as warning to those Indians still avoiding taxes – "The number of people showing income more than Rs 50 lakh in the entire country is only 1.72 lakh. We can contrast this with the fact that in the last five years, more than 1.25 crore cars have been sold, and number of Indian citizens who flew abroad, either for business or tourism, is 2 crore in the year 2015" – the Budget persisted with a Modi-Jaitley resolve: the willingness to sacrifice short-run popularity, even among those who may be BJP voters, to effect a longer-run transformation.

That mission continues. Of course, it will require 2019 to be won. The BJP cannot afford to, once more, repair a wounded economy, nurse it back to health – and, as in 2004, leave it to a successor to fritter away a rich and undeserved inheritance.

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हर्षवर्धन त्रिपाठी

उद्यमियों से तय होगा नए भारत का भविष्य



बजट 2017 कई मायने में बड़ा अलग सा रहा है। वित्त मंत्री अरुण जेटली के पूरे बजट भाषण को देखने पर ज्यादातर समय ये नॉन इवेंट जैसा ही दिखता रहा। क्योंकि, पूरे बजट में कोई भी ऐसा एलान नहीं हुआ। जो किसी खास वर्ग को अलग से कुछ देने की कोशिश करता दिखा हो। यहां तक कि विमुद्रीकरण से हुई परेशानी के बाद बड़े एलान वाली उम्मीद भी धराशायी हो गई। अब सबसे बड़ा सवाल ये है कि क्या सरकार ने बजट के जरिये रोजगार बढ़ाने की तरफ खास ध्यान नहीं दिया है। क्योंकि, सीधे तौर पर कोई भी ऐसा बड़ा एलान होता नहीं दिखा, जिससे

लाखों-करोड़ों लोगों को रोजगार मिलता दिखे। लेकिन, ये अच्छा है कि वित्त मंत्री ने बजट में रोजगार की कोई तय संख्या नहीं दी है। लेकिन, वित्त मंत्री के दिमाग में रोजगार सबसे ऊपर रहा। ये इस बात से भी समझ में आता है कि वित्त मंत्री के बजट भाषण में 11 बार रोजगार का जिक्र आया है। लेकिन, रोजगार से भी ज्यादा बार वित्त मंत्री के बजट भाषण में जगह मिली है स्किल को। स्किल को अगर थोड़ा सा और आगे ले जाएं, तो वो उद्यमिता की तरफ भी जाता है।

दरअसल इस सरकार की सबसे बड़ी आलोचना इस बात को लेकर

होती है कि नई नौकरियां, नए मौके बनते नहीं दिखे या फिर उम्मीद से कम दिखे। इसी बात को बजट पेश होने के ठीक एक दिन पहले कांग्रेस उपाध्यक्ष राहुल गांधी ने भी कहा। राहुल गांधी ने नौकरियों के मामले में सरकार को पूरी तरह से फेल बताया। खासकर विमुद्रीकरण के बाद ये आलोचना और बढ़ गई कि सरकार ने तरक्की की अच्छी खासी चल रही गाड़ी के सामने रोड़ा लगा दिया और अब तो नया रोजगार मिलना और कम हो जाएगा। वित्त मंत्री अरुण जेटली ने इस धारणा को ही ध्वस्त करने की कोशिश की है। सरकार एकदम साफ है कि नए मौके लाने के लिए किधर ध्यान देना है। और सरकार उस तरफ खास ध्यान देती दिखी है। 21.47 लाख करोड़ रुपये के इस साल के बजट में 3.96 लाख करोड़ रुपये इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर पर खर्च के लिए रखा गया है। वित्त मंत्री अरुण जेटली ने नई मेट्रो रेल नीति जल्दी ही घोषित करने की बात बजट में की है। साथ ही कहा गया है कि इससे ढेर सारे नए रोजगार के मौके बनेंगे।

वित्तमंत्री ने बजट में रोजगार का जिक्र करते हुए बताया कि भारत इलेक्ट्रॉनिक मैनुफैक्चरिंग हब बनाने की कोशिश सरकार कर रही है। इसकी सफलता के बारे में उन्होंने कहा कि पिछले 2 साल में 1.26 लाख करोड़ रुपये की योजनाएं शुरू हुई हैं। इलेक्ट्रॉनिक मैनुफैक्चरिंग में सरकार को नए मौके बनने की उम्मीद दिखती है। वित्त मंत्री ने ट्रांसपोर्ट सेक्टर के लिए 2.41 लाख करोड़ रुपये का प्रावधान किया है। 64000 करोड़ रुपये सिर्फ राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग के लिए रखा गया है। समुद्री किनारों की 2000 किलोमीटर की सड़कों को भी सरकार ने विकसित करने के लिए चिन्हित किया है। सरकार ने 2018 तक 3500 किलोमीटर नए रेलवे ट्रैक बनाने का भी लक्ष्य रखा है। सरकार की योजना सड़क और रेलवे के जरिये बुनियादी सुविधाओं को दुरुस्त करने के साथ युवाओं को रोजगार देने की भी है। रियल एस्टेट क्षेत्र की मंदी को दूर करने और रोजगार के मौके तैयार करने के लिए सरकार ने सस्ते घर बनाने को बुनियादी क्षेत्र का दर्जा दिया है। इससे बुनियादी क्षेत्र को मिलने वाले सभी फायदे सस्ते घर बनाने वालों को मिलेंगे। विमुद्रीकरण के बाद सबसे ज्यादा रोजगार इसी क्षेत्र में घटने की खबरें थीं। इसीलिए सरकार इस क्षेत्र में रोजगार की गति को बढ़ाने के लिहाज से ये कोशिश करती दिख रही है। टेक्सटाइल सेक्टर में रोजगार के लिए सरकार ने पहले से विशेष योजना लागू कर रखी है। इसमें लेदर और फुटवेयर उद्योग को भी शामिल किया गया है। कपड़ा उद्योग भी रोजगार के लिहाज से काफी महत्वपूर्ण माना जाता है। साथ ही 5 विशेष पर्यटन क्षेत्र बनाने से भी नौजवानों को नए मौके मिल सकेंगे।

वित्त मंत्री के बजट भाषण में 11 बार जॉब और 16 बार स्किल का जिक्र है। वित्त मंत्री ने स्किल इंडिया को आगे ले जाने की बात इस बजट में की है। 600 जिलों में कौशल केंद्र खोले जाएंगे। सरकार 100 इंडिया इंटरनेशनल स्किल सेंटर खोलने जा रही है। इन केंद्रों के जरिये देश-विदेश में रोजगार की जरूरत के लिहाज से लोगों को तैयार किया जाएगा। कुशल भारत को मजबूत

करने के लिए 3479 ऐसे विकासखंडों में शिक्षा बेहतर करने पर जोर दिया जाएगा, जो पिछड़े हैं। सरकार चाहती है कि ज्यादा से ज्यादा लोग खुद उद्यमी बनें। इसके लिए सरकार ने इस साल का बैंकों का कर्ज देने का लक्ष्य दोगुना करके मुद्रा योजना के तहत 2.44 लाख करोड़ रुपये कर दिया है। उद्यमी तैयार करने के सरकार के इरादे को लोग भी हाथोंहाथ ले रहे हैं। उद्योग संगठन एसोचैम के एक कार्यक्रम में लघु, छोटे और मध्यम उद्योग के राज्य मंत्री एच पी चौधरी ने एक बड़ा जरूरी आंकड़ा साझा किया है। चौधरी ने बताया कि मंत्रालय को 4.4 लाख लोगों से आवेदन मिले हैं, जो सरकार से सहायता चाहते हैं। ये वो लोग हैं जो उद्यमी बनना चाहते हैं और अपना कारोबार शुरू करने के लिए सरकार से मदद चाहते हैं। उन्होंने बताया कि उनके मंत्रालय ने वित्त मंत्री से 5 हजार करोड़ रुपये की मदद चाही थी। लेकिन, वित्त मंत्री अरुण जेटली ने बजट में साढ़े 6 हजार करोड़ रुपये का प्रावधान कर दिया है। दरअसल ये पूरी बात सरकार की इस मंशा को और साफ करती है कि किसी भी हाल में उद्यमी खासकर छोटे, मध्यम आकार के उद्यमियों को तैयार करना है।

रोजगार भी दरअसल वहीं से आना है। बजट में कर छूट भी ऐसे ही छोटे और लघु उद्योगों को दी गई है। जो 50 करोड़ रुपये से नीचे का सालाना कारोबार कर रहे हैं। वित्त मंत्री इस बात को लेकर एकदम स्पष्ट दिखे कि ज्यादा रोजगार यही उद्योग तैयार कर रहे हैं। इसीलिए उन्हें बढ़ावा देने के लिए कर छूट से लेकर आसान कर्ज और कम से कम लालफीताशाही की तरफ सरकार ध्यान दे रही है। जानकारी मान रहे हैं कि 50 करोड़ रुपये तक के कारोबार वाली कंपनियों को 5 प्रतिशत की कर छूट मिलने से दूसरी और तीसरी श्रेणी के शहरों में तेजी से कारोबार बढ़ेगा। करीब 5-10 प्रतिशत रोजगार ऐसे शहरों में बजट प्रस्ताव की वजह से बढ़ने की उम्मीद की जा रही है। कुल मिलाकर सरकार स्पष्ट है कि बुनियादी सुविधाओं को बेहतर करके, उसमें बड़ा निवेश करके देश की तरक्की की रफ्तार तेज करते हुए रोजगार के नए मौके भी आसानी से तैयार किए जा सकते हैं। साथ ही आसान कर्ज मिलने से और कारोबार शुरू करने में आसानी की वजह से देश में तैयार हुए वातावरण से उद्यमियों की बड़ी फौज तैयार की जा सकती है। जो लम्बे समय के लिए रोजगार तैयार करने में मददगार होगा। जाने माने अमेरिकी लेखक थॉमस फ्रीडमैन ने लिखा है कि भारत इक्कीसवीं शताब्दी का सबसे भाग्यशाली देश है। ढेर सारे सुधारों के साथ लम्बे समय की सुदृढ़ नीतियों की झलक इस बजट में दिखी है। जो थॉमस फ्रीडमैन के अनुमान को साबित होता हुआ दिखाती है।

(लेखक वरिष्ठ पत्रकार हैं। ये उनके निजी विचार हैं।)



**S. Samuel C.
Rajiv**

MODI'S 'ACT WEST' POLICY IN MOTION



P rime Minister Narendra Modi in his speech at the Raisina Dialogue on January 17, 2017 affirmed that in interactions with the countries of the Gulf and West Asia, his government has 'not just focused on changing the perception. We have also changed the reality of our ties ... despite uncertainty and conflict'. This is most pertinently evident across three key areas — enhanced high-level political interactions, the increasing salience of defence/security cooperation, and the greater thrust to involve the resources of the

countries of the region in realizing the government's ambitious transformative domestic economic agenda.

High-Level Interactions

High-level political interactions between India and West Asia have seen a dramatic increase since Prime Minister Modi took office in June 2014. Mr. Modi visited the United Arab Emirates (UAE, August 2015), Saudi Arabia (May 2016), Iran (May 2016) and Qatar (June 2016). These visits constitute just four of the Prime

Minister's 54 foreign visits so far (till February 2017). They are however significant given the long-running anomaly of limited high-level political interactions with the region, despite India's oft-flagged high stakes vis-à-vis the region – which has been called its 'proximate neighbourhood' among many other evocative phrases. These include the security and well-being of the eight million diaspora, the huge remittances they send, and the critical role the countries of the region play in India's energy security calculus.

External Affairs Minister (EAM) Sushma Swaraj on her part has visited Bahrain (September 2014), the UAE (November 2014), Turkey (January 2015), Oman (February 2015), Egypt (August 2015), Israel, Palestine, Bahrain (January 2016), and Iran (April 2016). In comparison to the above visits, which occurred within two years of the NDA assuming office, UPA Foreign Ministers Salman Khurshid and S.M. Krishna made a combined total of eight trips to the region during the entire second five-year term of the Congress-led coalition from 2009-14. The only Prime Ministerial visits by Dr. Manmohan Singh during that time period were to Riyadh in February 2010 (after a gap of 28 years) and to Iran for the NAM Summit in August 2012.

President Pranab Mukherjee has also made productive State visits to Jordan, Palestine and Israel (October 2015), MEA Minister of State M.J. Akbar visited the UAE (October 2016) and Palestine (November 2016). While Israel is keenly awaiting the first-ever visit of an Indian Prime Minister to that country, Israeli President Reuven Rivlin reciprocated the hugely successful visit of President Mukherjee in November 2016. India-Israel relations meanwhile continue to be on their upward trajectory. January 2017 marked the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

Apart from President Rivlin, some of the dignitaries from the broader region who have visited India since Modi came to power have included the Foreign Minister of Oman (June 2014), Foreign Minister of Bahrain (February 2015), the Emir of Qatar (March 2015), the Iranian Foreign Minister (August 2015), the UAE Foreign Minister (September 2015), Syrian Foreign Minister (January 2016), Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan

(February 2016), Saudi Foreign Minister (March 2016), Egyptian president (August 2016), Turkish Foreign Minister (August 2016), and the Qatari prime minister (December 2016).

Defence/Security Component

By inviting Crown Prince Al Nahyan of Abu Dhabi to be the Chief Guest at the Republic Day celebrations in January 2017, India sent out a strong message of solidarity with an important Arab country that has lately been consistent in its appreciation of India's security concerns — specifically those emanating from Pakistan. The terrorist strike on a UAE diplomatic delegation on January 10, 2017 in Kandahar starkly reinforced the dangers of the common threat posed by state-sponsored terrorism. The previous time a dignitary from the region graced the occasion was in 2006 when the Saudi King was the chief guest. January 26, 2017 was also the first time in recent memory when the chief guest was not a head of state. The Crown Prince gracing the occasion therefore was a natural corollary of the conscious policy decisions being pursued by the two governments in recent times to take steps that aid in the better understanding of each other's strategic priorities.

When Prime Minister Modi visited the UAE in August 2015 for instance — the first such visit in 34 years, the decision to elevate the bilateral relationship to a 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership' was taken, and an agreement to this effect was signed in January 2017. The first ever Strategic Dialogue was held on January 20, 2017 (with MOS Akbar leading the Indian delegation), while Manohar Parrikar became the first defence minister to visit the UAE in May 2016. Joint exercises between the air forces of the two countries, was held after a gap of eight years, in May-June 2016. Both countries have pledged to further strengthen defence cooperation, including ensuring maritime security in the Indian Ocean region. The MEA, in a briefing ahead of the visit of the Crown Prince, indicated that the UAE was even looking at the possibility of joint production of aircrafts since the UAE and India are inducting similar aircraft (Rafale), among other areas of potential cooperation.

While the India-UAE strategic partnership has witnessed strong growth, India's defence and security

cooperation with other key countries of the region is also growing apace. The Modi government has continued to build on the institutional mechanisms already in place to further strengthen such cooperation. India and Saudi Arabia for instance have a Joint Committee on defence cooperation since September 2012 and a MoU on defence cooperation signed in February 2014. During Modi's April 2016 visit to the Kingdom, both sides agreed to further intensify their defence cooperation, including pertaining to the 'supply of arms and ammunition and their joint development'. A MoU on combating money laundering and terrorism financing was also signed while the Joint Statement called for dismantling of terrorism infrastructures and cutting off of support for terrorist activities.

Some of the pertinent bilateral defence-related institutional interactions since mid-2014 have included the eighth meeting of the India-Oman Joint Military Cooperation Committee held in February 2016, the Chief of Air Staff visiting Oman and UAE in August 2015, the fourth meeting of the India-Qatar Joint Defence Committee (JDC) meeting in January 2015, the Egyptian and Palestinian security personnel undergoing Special Forces training at Agra in Dec 2014-Jan 2015 and January 2015 respectively, among others. Security cooperation was an important arena of focus during the interactions with the dignitaries from the region, including relating to the fight against terrorism, sharing of information on intelligence matters, combating cyber crime, training for security forces, among others. When Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh visited Qatar in December 2016, the offer of training Qatari police personnel by India was accepted by his hosts.

Economic Component – Investments and Energy Security

The Modi government is actively engaging with the countries of the region to seek their participation in realizing the government's transformative domestic economic agenda. Efforts being finalised to obtain \$75 billion of UAE sovereign wealth fund for the India Infrastructure Investment Fund are a pertinent example in this regard. Reports noted that India received close to a billion dollars of foreign direct investment from the UAE during the past year. The agreement between

the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) and Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves (ISPR) that would allow the UAE firm to store its crude at the Mangalore facility is indeed significant.

As regards a key energy and connectivity partner Iran, the coming to power of President Donald Trump has the potential to alter regional stability. Most analysts note that the administration may not back out of the UNSC-recognised (and approved by the US Congress and the Iranian Majlis) Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) — negotiated in 2015 by the permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany with Iran, despite threatening to do so throughout his campaign. He has however taken punitive actions against Iran's ballistic missile activities and resolutions are being considered in the US Congress to make Iran more accountable for its alleged destabilizing activities in the wider region in places like Syria and Yemen.

In Closing

The Modi government has demonstrated a proactive approach to secure the interests' and well-being of its citizens. The evacuation of Indian nationals from the region in times of distress — 7000 from Iraq (2014), 3750 from Libya (2014), and 6700 from Yemen (2015) — with active role of MOS Gen. (Retd.) V.K. Singh, was noteworthy, as indeed EAM Swaraj's active responses (particularly on social media platforms) to pleas from help from Indians in distress. The decision to open additional Indian Worker Resource Centres (IWRC) in Sharjah, Riyadh and Jeddah, apart from the one functioning in Dubai, is a welcome step. The further strengthening of the three key elements of Modi's 'Act West' policy as delineated above would indeed enhance India's developmental and national security goals as well as contribute to regional security and stability.

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The views expressed are his own)

MISPLACED DATA ON COUNTERFEIT CURRENCY TO CRITICIZE DEMONETIZATION

● Anish Gupta

The presence of a high amount of counterfeit currencies in the Indian economy was one of the principal reasons cited by Prime Minister Modi while doing away with currency notes of high denomination from the midnight of November 8, 2016. The rationale behind this move has been questioned by many scholars, politicians and the media fraternity, who believe that the quantity of counterfeit currency was not at an alarming level for any government to take a step as big as demonetization.

The recent policy of demonetization has apparently targeted the realtors, hoarders, black marketers, illegal trade, funding of terrorist, hawala transactions etc. Implementation of the policy of demonetization, however, does not block the possibility of other measures or policy decisions that government could undertake to tackle other forms of black money. In fact it has provided a foundation for anti-black money drives and has created a fear in the mind of people involved in corruption.

The data on withdrawn currency notes deposited in banks till December 30, 2016, can help government identify the individuals who evade income tax. Hasmukh Adhia, the union revenue secretary, in an interview to a national daily (Indian Express February 3, 2017), mentioned that a set of puzzling figures emerged from the database of deposits till December 30, 2016, which hints towards tax evasion at a larger extent. According to him, the bulk of deposits made after demonetization in terms of banned notes of 500 and 1000, were of those above Rs 2 lakh. As people thought a deposit of Rs 2.5 lakh could be safe, so most of them deposited around Rs 2.25 lakh (deposits) in 10-15



accounts. A lot of cases were found where 20 accounts were connected to a single PAN.

During the period of demonetization, deposits of amount between Rs. 2 lakh and Rs 80 lakh, were deposited in 1.09 crore accounts, and deposits of over Rs 80 lakh were entered into 1.48 lakh accounts. It can be clearly contrasted with the figures on income tax returns filed in 2015-16, which indicate only 76 lakhs individual assesses have declared their income above Rs. 5 lakh. The number of people showing income more than Rs. 50 lakh in the entire country is only 1.72 lakh.

However, the main intention of writing this piece is not to evaluate the effects of the policy of demonetization on the Indian economy, which is difficult to measure in its entirety at this juncture, but to point out misplaced data on counterfeit currency used for a purpose to settle political scores, not just by some politicians inside or outside parliament, but

also by some of the most respected academicians in various journals of repute, to counter government's claim that substantial amount of fake currencies existed in Indian economy especially in large denomination.

It is not much known to the common readers that how some academicians and some journals as reputed as the Economic & Political Weekly (EPW), have indulged in misleading the nation on the figures related to counterfeit currency notes, just for the sake of criticizing the current government. As much as 5 editorials and more than 15 articles were published in the EPW, dedicated to views against demonetization, except for one. Though writing against any policy or view is very much accepted in democracy, the problem arises when the counter views are conveniently suppressed in a very sophisticated way by the print media as they are owned by some few elite belonging to a particular ideology.

Interestingly the lone article (Gupta, 2017) which questioned the usage of misplaced data to belittle the amount of counterfeit currency specifically in an article—'Demonetisation: 1978, the present and the aftermath' (EPW, 26 November 2016), was given space only in 'web exclusives' section (not in printed version). Moreover, this article was deliberately kept out from the list of articles shown on 'web exclusives' page of EPW site for a long time. Though, other articles published before and after it can be seen in the list. Effectively the article was published while ensuring that it doesn't get any currency/readership.

On the issue of counterfeit currency, an article written by Rajakumar and Shetty (2016, EPW), went on to say, "Counterfeit notes have generally constituted less than or around 0.002% of notes in circulation". This claim was made on the basis of Table VIII.8 of RBI Annual Report. Gupta (2017) tried to point out how the above mentioned article (even many others), cited RBI figures on counterfeit currency in a misplaced manner ignoring four crucial points; First, difference between volume and value of counterfeit currencies. Second, difference between volume/value of counterfeit currencies in circulation and volume/value of counterfeit currency seized in a particular year. Third, impossibility of estimation of counterfeit currency in Indian economy due to attached illegality

with the same. Fourth, misleading ratio of counterfeit currency with total currency in circulation.

Ignoring the difference between the volume of counterfeit currencies and value of counterfeit currencies may produce misleading results, since both are different, and the difference between these two increases with increase in the denomination of counterfeit currency. Similarly, what authors were calling the ratio of counterfeit notes to total notes in circulation is actually the ratio of the value of seized counterfeit notes with the value of total notes in circulation. The ratio of seized counterfeit currencies with total currency in circulation is 0.0007, not 0.002 mentioned by the authors (see Table).

Even, the volume or value of counterfeit currencies cannot be estimated in any economy due to the sense of illegality attached with the same. Data on counterfeit currencies shown by RBI reports are highly underestimated, as it excludes currencies seized by police and other law enforcement agencies as well. Moreover, counterfeit notes that are still in circulation, which couldn't be caught by the banking system, were not considered in the calculation, due to unavailability of the data. Apart from the issue of sense of illegality attached with counterfeit currencies, the number of unreported cases in the banking system are also very high as banks do not provide any credit for any reported case of counterfeit currency. And also due to a highly cumbersome process of reporting a matter to the police or any other government agency, people generally refrain from reporting such matters.

Gupta (2017) explains that even the use of the ratio of the total number/value of seized counterfeit notes by banks (FICN) with the total number/value of notes in circulation (NIC) as an indicator of extent of counterfeit currency is a misleading indicator. Though both NIC and total fake currency in the economy are stock, but FICN, which is being used as proxy of total fake currency by most scholars, is a flow concept calculated over a period of one year. Using this ratio of FICN to NIC as an indicator of the extent of fake currency in the economy is based on an unrealistic assumption that counterfeit currencies seized in a particular year comes into circulation in the same year, an assumption that points towards ignorance.

Table : Denomination wise counterfeit notes detected by banks and their values

Denomination of currency (1)	counterfeit notes seized from April 2015 to March 2016 (2)	Notes in circulation total in end March 2016 (3)	value of counterfeit notes seized during April 2015 to March 2016 (4)	value of total notes in circulation in end March 2016 (5)	$((2)/(3))*100$ (6)	$((4)/(5))*100$ (7)
2,5	2	11626000000	7	40691000000	0.0000	0.0000
10	134	32015000000	1340	320150000000	0.0000	0.0000
20	96	4924000000	1920	98480000000	0.0000	0.0000
50	6453	3890000000	322650	194500000000	0.0002	0.0002
100	221447	15778000000	22100000	1577800000000	0.0014	0.0014
500	261695	15707000000	130900000	7853500000000	0.0017	0.0017
1000	143099	6326000000	143100000	6326000000000	0.0023	0.0023
All	632926	90266000000	296425917	16411121000000	0.0007	0.0018

Source: Taken from Gupta (2017) based on RBI annual report 2015-16

Given the impossibility of the estimation of the exact amount of counterfeit currencies in the economy, it will not be a correct premise to conclude that the level of fake currency is not alarming, just on the basis of counterfeit currencies seized by banks.

Most academicians and academic journals took the advantage of the ignorance of common readers who do not understand the difference between seized counterfeit currency and total counterfeit currency, and perceived data on seized counterfeit currency as total counterfeit currency. Interestingly none of these articles ever mentioned that they are talking only about

seized currency. In this way they have done something unethical just for the sake of their shallow political gains. They have also been successful in blocking the readership of any voice which has the potential to expose their lie, since they have control over most of the academic journals and newspapers, with large circulation. By doing so they have set another example of academic intolerance.

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Claude Arpi

THE CLOSURE OF THE INDIAN CONSULATE IN KASHGAR – ITS HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Historians rarely mention an event which had the most serious strategic consequences for India; it is the 1953 closure of the Indian Consulate in Kashgar in Xinjiang, formerly Eastern Turkestan.

The Indian government was then not ready to read beyond the Chinese rhetoric and Zhou En Lai's assurance of 'eternal' friendship; the closure of the trade with Xinjiang should have been seen as an ominous sign. It was not to be.

As in several other cases, Nehru tried to justify the Chinese diktats, without taking any retaliatory measures or even protesting. India's interests were lost to the 'revolutionary changes' happening in China.

In December 1953, Nehru declared in Parliament: "Some major changes have taken place there [Kashgar]. ...But when these changes, revolutionary changes took place there [we had to close our Consulate], it is perfectly true that the Chinese Government, when they came to Tibet, told us that they intended to treat Sinkiang [Xinjiang] as a closed area."

India agreed to close its Consulate without even a discussion.

India had been trading with Central Asia and more particularly Kashgar, Yarkand or Khotan for millennia. Just because 'revolutionary changes' had occurred in China, Delhi accepted the closure of the trade with Xinjiang as a fait accompli. At that time, the Karakoram Pass was still witnessing a large numbers of caravans, trading between Kashmir and Central Asia.

A few months later (April 1954), instead of using the opportunity of the negotiations for the Panchsheel Agreement to clarify the contentious border issue and the closure of the trade, the Chinese were allowed to walk away with making a vague statement. It was indeed a great victory for Beijing.

The main reason for wanting India to close the Kashgar Consulate was that China was building a road across the Aksai Chin area on Indian territory. The Communists did not want any witness. The Government of India never acknowledged it, but it had information about the Aksai Chin road as early as 1954-55. So did the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) which recently released several lakhs of historical documents.

A CIA note

A couple of Information Reports dating from 1953 bring some light on the issue. On July 15, 1953, a note deals with "Chinese Communist Troops, West Tibet" and "Road Construction, Sinkiang to Tibet and Ladakh". It says that late 1952 the 2 Cavalry Regiment, commanded by one Han Tse-min, had set up his headquarters at Gartok (the main trade centre in Western Tibet). It mentions that the regiment had 800 camels and 150 men garrisoned at Rutok, in the vicinity of the Panggong lake, shared with Ladakh.

The same report affirms that another PLA's regiment is stationed on the Tibetan side of the Tibet-Ladakh border, near Koyul in the Indus Valley in Ladakh. According to the US document, the 2 Cavalry's commandant announced the Chinese intention to build

new roads in the area.

- A road from Rutok to Keriya, south of the Taklamakan desert in Xinjiang (the construction is 'contemplated' says the report); on the eastern edge of the Aksai Chin.
- A motorable road from Khotan to Suget Karaul ending at Vanjilga (at the western end of the Aksai Chin)
- A road from Khotan (or Hotan) to Rutok to be completed in June or July 1953.

The second road is clearly the Aksai Chin road (now National Highway 219), though the alignment may have been slightly different from the present one and it was then probably impracticable for heavy vehicles (only 4 years later, heavy trucks were able to ply on the road).

The Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai wave (or was it a tsunami?) was most likely too strong and Nehru's collaborators (BN Mullick, the IB Chief in particular) had 'more important' subjects to deal with than a road!

The local Chinese commander Han Tse-min asserted that "when these roads were completed, the Chinese Communists would close the Tibet Ladakh border to trade." It is what they did soon after the signature of the infamous Panchsheel Agreement. Worse, the CIA document says that Han declared that "the Chinese Communists in Sinkiang [Xinjiang] were telling the people that Ladakh belongs to Sinkiang."

Ten days later, another CIA note detailed the trade between Ladakh and Xinjiang, giving the coordinates for each place: "The Tibetan traders who visit Leh, are from the Chang Tang area, an arid plateau region in northern Tibet [plain between Xinjiang and Tibet] ... These traders follow the Chushul [in Ladakh] route from Tibet to Leh. Border check posts on this route are at Chushul and Koyul."

This shows how flourishing the trade was in 1953 ... for a few months more. All this ended once the Aksai Chin road became fully operational.

The CIA remarks: "The only Chinese in northwestern Tibet are the Chinese Communist troops, seven or eight hundred of whom are stationed along the Tibet-Ladakh border. They first appeared in northwestern Tibet in 1951, having come from the Khotan."

The CIA papers tend to prove that the Indian Government knew about the Aksai Chin road much earlier than thought, but it only became official on October 6, 1957, when a Chinese newspaper, Kuangming Jihpao reported: "The Sinkiang-Tibet – the highest highway in the world – has been completed. During the past few days, a number of trucks running on the highway on a trial basis have arrived in Gartok in Tibet from Yecheng in Xinjiang [near Yarkand]. The Xinjiang-Tibet Highway... is 1179 km long, of which 915 km are more than 4,000 meters above sea level; 130 km of it over 5,000 meters above sea level, with the highest point being 5,500 meters." The reporter spoke of: "thirty heavy-duty trucks, fully loaded with road builders, maintenance equipment and fuels, running on the highway on a trial basis" heading towards Tibet. The Aksai Chin road was officially opened.

It should have been obvious for everyone, even for the blindfolded Intelligence Bureau Director, B.N. Mullick, that India's Kashgar Consulate had been forced to close to hide the fact that the Communists were building a road on Indian soil; still, the government took nearly two more years to make the news public in India.

In recent weeks, one question has often been raised by Indian think tanks: should India participate in the new trade routes initiated by China?

Apart from the fact that nobody dares to question the viability of such a project, after all it is part of President Xi Jinping's Dream of a 'Revitalized China' for which he has envisioned a mega "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR) project to connect Asia (read China) with Europe and Africa via the ancient trading centres of Central Asia and Eastern Europe, a modern Silk Road.

However, at the same time, all the ancient trade routes between India and Central Asia remain closed.

The time has perhaps come for India to ask China to reopen the Consulates in Kashgar and Lhasa, then India could perhaps sincerely participate in the Belt and Road project!

(The author is a veteran Sinologist, Tibet expert, columnist and author who has lived in India for the last four decades. The views expressed are his own)



आशु दास

सरकार की कृषि नीतियों का दिखने लगा असर, फसलों के उत्पादन में हुई रिकॉर्ड वृद्धि

नोटबंदी के बाद विरोधियों द्वारा सबसे ज्यादा इस बात पर बवाल किया गया कि इससे किसानों और खेती को बहुत नुकसान पहुंचेगा। कृषि व्यवस्था बर्बाद हो जाएगी। लेकिन, अगर इस साल के पैदावार से सम्बंधित आंकड़ों पर गौर करें तो विरोधियों के सभी दावों की पोल खुलकर सामने आ जाती है। चालू फसल वर्ष में अबतक की सर्वाधिक पैदावार हुई है। पैदावार बढ़ने का सबसे बड़ा कारण होता है मानसून; जो कि इस साल काफी अच्छा रहा है, लेकिन साथ ही केंद्र सरकार द्वारा किसानों के लिए शुरू की गयी योजनाएं व नीतियाँ भी इस बड़े उत्पादन में महत्वपूर्ण कारक रही हैं।

गत दिनों कृषि मंत्रालय द्वारा जारी किए गए आंकड़ों के मुताबिक इस बार मानसून अच्छा रहने और केंद्र सरकार द्वारा किए गए अथक प्रयासों के कारण कुल फसल का उत्पादन 27.19 करोड़ टन होगा। यह देश के कृषि उत्पादन के इतिहास में अब तक का सबसे बड़ा आंकड़ा है। पिछले फसल वर्ष उत्पादन का यह आंकड़ा 26.55 करोड़ टन तक ही सिमट कर रह गया था। दालों की कमी को दूर करने के लिए सरकार द्वारा उठाए गए कदमों का असर भी अबकी पैदावार में देखा जा सकता है। दलहन फसलों की पैदावार में इस फसल वर्ष में 35.54 प्रतिशत वृद्धि दर्ज की गयी है। कृषि मंत्रालय के मुताबिक इस बार दलहन की पैदावार 2.21 करोड़ रहने के आसार लगाए जा रहे हैं। उल्लेखनीय होगा कि केंद्र सरकार की ओर से दलहन की खेती को प्रोत्साहित करने के लिए किसानों को पर्याप्त बीज, खाद और कीटनाशकों की उपलब्धता सुनिश्चित कराई गई थी।

अगर भारत में ही पैदावार पर्याप्त हो जाएगी तो केंद्र सरकार को दालों का विदेशों से आयात नहीं करना पड़ेगा, जिससे तकरीबन 2 हजार करोड़ रुपये की विदेशी मुद्रा बचेगी और अगर विदेशी मुद्रा बचेगी तो लाजिम सी बात है कि महंगाई को काबू करने में मदद मिलेगी। स्पष्ट है कि एक तरफ केंद्र सरकार कृषि के लिए हितकारी नीतियां बनाकर देश में फसलों की

उत्पादन को बढ़ाने में लगी हुई तो दूसरी तरफ आम जनता को राहत दिलाने के लिए महंगाई पर काबू पाने की भरपूर कोशिश कर रही है।



केंद्र सरकार द्वारा किसानों के हित में कई योजनाएं चलाई जा रही हैं। किसानों को राहत देने के लिए केंद्र सरकार प्रधानमंत्री फसल बीमा योजना, सिंचाई योजना और उन्नत बीजों के साथ संतुलित खादों की आपूर्ति कर रही है, तो दूसरी तरफ अधिकारी वीडियो कांफ्रेंसिंग और फोन पर बातचीत के जरिए किसानों से संपर्क करके उन्हें नए तरीकों से पैदावार बढ़ने के लिए टिप्स दे रहे हैं। सरकार के इन सब कदमों और प्रयासों का परिणाम ही फसलों के इस बड़े उत्पादन के रूप में सामने आया है।

(लेखिका पेशे से पत्रकार हैं। ये उनके निजी विचार हैं।)



पीयूष द्विवेदी

सरकार की कौशल विकास नीतियों से कुशलता की ओर अग्रसर भारत

भारतीय प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी द्वारा अपने वक्तव्यों में जिस बात की सर्वाधिक चर्चा की जाती रही है, वो यह है कि भारत का सर्वाधिक युवा आबादी संपन्न देश होना उसकी सबसे बड़ी ताकत है। मोदी की इस बात को वैश्विक मान्यता तब मिली जब संयुक्त राष्ट्र ने साल २०१४ नवम्बर में '१.८ अरब लोगों की ताकत' नाम से वैश्विक आबादी पर जारी अपनी एक रिपोर्ट में बताया कि आज भारत दुनिया का सबसे युवा देश है। कुल आबादी के मामले में तो चीन भारत से आगे है, लेकिन जब बात सर्वाधिक युवा आबादी की आती है तो भारत चीन को पछाड़ते हुए नंबर एक पर पहुँच जाता है। एक अन्य आंकड़े के मुताबिक देश की ६५ प्रतिशत आबादी ३५ साल से कम उम्र की है और इसमें भी ५० प्रतिशत आबादी की उम्र २५ साल से भी नीचे है। इस आंकड़े के आधार पर गणितीय विश्लेषण करने पर स्पष्ट होता है कि वर्ष २०२० में हर भारतीय की औसत उम्र २९ साल होगी और तब भी भारत दुनिया का सर्वाधिक युवा राष्ट्र होगा, जबकि तब चीनियों की औसत उम्र ३७ और जापानियों की ४८ साल होगी।

अब २०२० में जब एक तरफ भारत-चीन-जापान में आबादी के ये समीकरण बन रहे होंगे, वहीं दूसरी तरफ दुनिया के विभिन्न हिस्सों में लगभग ६ करोड़ कुशल कामगारों की कमी आएगी। कामगारों की इस कमी का सर्वाधिक प्रभाव अमेरिका, रूस, चीन और जापान में होगा, क्योंकि इन देशों की अधिकाधिक युवा आबादी तबतक बुढ़ापे की तरफ अग्रसर हो गई होगी और बाकी आबादी अपने शुरुआती दौर में होगी। अब ऐसे वक्त में कुशल कामगारों के लिए इन देशों की निगाह सिर्फ और सिर्फ भारत की तरफ होगी। ऐसे में अगर भारत चाहे तो इन देशों को कुशल कामगार देकर इस स्थिति का बेहद निर्णायक लाभ पा सकता है। कहना गलत नहीं होगा कि २०२० में होने वाली इस संभावित स्थिति का अगर भारत सही ढंग से लाभ लिया तो संशय नहीं कि ३० के दशक में वैश्विक अर्थव्यवस्था का केंद्र बिंदु भारत ही होगा। लेकिन इन सब चीजों के लिए आवश्यक है कि तब देश के पास दुनिया के कामगारों की कमी को पूरा करने के लिए कुशल कामगार तैयार हों।

मोदी सरकार की गंभीरता का अंदाजा इसी बात से लगाया जा सकता है कि उसने इस क्षेत्र के लिए कौशल विकास व उद्यमशीलता नामक एक नया मंत्रालय ही गठित कर दिया है। साथ ही, प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी द्वारा स्किल इण्डिया नामक अत्यंत महत्वाकांक्षी कार्यक्रम आरम्भ किया गया है। इसके अलावा प्रधानमंत्री द्वारा २००९ की राष्ट्रीय कौशल विकास नीति की जगह राष्ट्रीय कौशल विकास

एवं उद्यमिता नीति – २०१५ की घोषणा भी की गई जिसके द्वारा स्किल इण्डिया के लक्ष्यों को पूरा करना है। इसके अतिरिक्त मोदी सरकार द्वारा देश में कौशल विकास को एक उचित दिशा व गति देने के लिए जो सबसे महत्वपूर्ण व दूरगामी कदम उठाया गया है, वो है – मेक इन इण्डिया। इस कदम के द्वारा सरकार ने एक तीर से दो निशाने लगाने की कोशिश की है, पहला कि देश को दुनिया के लिए 'विनिर्माण धुरी' (इन्फ्रास्ट्रक्चर हब) बनाया जाय और दूसरा कि दुनिया के अन्य देशों में मौजूद तमाम तकनीकी जानकारीयां, विनिर्माण-कौशल उन देशों की कंपनियों के साथ ही देश में आए और देश के लोग उन चीजों को सीखें तथा उन कार्यों में कुशलता प्राप्त करें। हालांकि मेक इन इण्डिया एक दूरगामी प्रभाव का कार्यक्रम है, अतः इससे देश के युवाओं को कितना और कैसा लाभ मिलता है, इसका पता तो कुछ वर्षों बाद ही चलेगा।

वैसे मेक इन इण्डिया के अलावा सरकार कौशल विकास के लिए २००९ की राष्ट्रीय कौशल विकास नीति में कुछ परिवर्तन करके उसे नए सिरे से शुरू कर चुकी है। गौर करें तो संप्रग शासन के समय आई २००९ की राष्ट्रीय कौशल विकास नीति के तहत अगले १३ वर्षों यानी २०२२ तक ५० करोड़ उच्चस्तरीय कुशल व्यक्तियों को तैयार करने का लक्ष्य रखा गया था और इसके लिए १० हजार करोड़ का बजट भी निर्धारित हुआ था। इसके तहत राष्ट्रीय कौशल विकास परिषद् (एनएसडीसी) को यह दायित्व दिया गया कि वो गुणवत्तापूर्ण संस्थाओं के सृजन के जरिये तकरीबन १५ करोड़ लोगों को कुशल कामगार बनाए। बाकी लोगों के कौशल विकास का काम सरकार के १८ मंत्रालयों के जरिये होना था। लेकिन दुर्भाग्य कि नीति बनाने के बाद संप्रग सरकार ने अपने दायित्व की इतिश्री समझ ली और इसके क्रियान्वयन की कभी कोई समीक्षा करने की उसने जरूरत नहीं समझी। लेकिन, मोदी सरकार द्वारा लाई गई नई राष्ट्रीय कौशल विकास नीति में क्रियान्वयन की निगरानी के लिए पूरी व्यवस्था रखी गई है और कौशल विकास के उपक्रम संतोषजनक ढंग से अपने लक्ष्य की तरफ अग्रसर भी है। यह कौशल विकास बेहद आवश्यक है, क्योंकि अगले पांच सालों में भारत के पास विश्व की आर्थिक महाशक्ति बनने का संभावित सुनहरा अवसर आने वाला है और उस अवसर का भरपूर लाभ देश को तभी मिलेगा जब हमारे युवा कुशल कामगार होंगे। सुखद यह है कि ये बात देश के प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी बेहद अच्छे से समझ रहे हैं और इस दिशा में प्रयासरत भी हैं।

(लेखक स्वतंत्र टिप्पणीकार हैं। ये उनके निजी विचार हैं।)



शिवानन्द द्विवेदी

विधानसभा चुनाव परिणामों के निहितार्थ

पांच राज्यों के चुनाव परिणाम आ गए हैं. हार-जीत के कयास अब नतीजों में तब्दील होकर देश के सामने है. पांच राज्यों में से दो, उत्तर प्रदेश और उत्तराखंड, जहाँ भाजपा के पास सत्ता नहीं थी उनमें भाजपा ने सत्ता में मजबूती से वापसी की है. पूर्वोत्तर भारत का एक राज्य मणिपुर, जहाँ भाजपा न के बराबर थी वहाँ भाजपा ने सबसे ज्यादा 36.3 फीसद वोट हासिल किया है और 21 सीटें भी हासिल की है. गोवा राज्य में भाजपा सत्ता में थी लेकिन वहाँ इस चुनाव में किसी को बहुमत नहीं मिला है लेकिन मत फीसद के लिहाज से यहाँ भी 32.5 फीसद वोटों के साथ भाजपा ने अपनी मजबूत उपस्थिति कायम रखी है. वहीं पहली बार चुनाव में उतरी आम आदमी पार्टी काफी पीछे नजर आती है. अगर पंजाब की बात करें तो यहाँ भाजपा और अकाली गठबंधन दस साल से सत्ता में था. पिछले चुनाव की तुलना में पंजाब में अकाली-भाजपा गठबंधन अच्छा नहीं कर सका है. हालांकि इसबात के कयास पहले ही लगाए जा रहे थे कि पंजाब में अकाली सरकार के खिलाफ सत्ता विरोधी लहर बहुत अधिक है. ऐसे में चुनाव से पूर्व लड़ाई कांग्रेस बनाम आम आदमी पार्टी बताई जा रही थी. लेकिन परिणाम देखने के बाद ऐसा लगता है कि मतों के बंटवारे के मामले में कांग्रेस की लड़ाई अकाली-भाजपा गठबंधन से ज्यादा थी न कि आम आदमी पार्टी से वो लड़ रही थी. वोट प्रतिशत पर नजर डालें तो अकाली दल को अकेले 25.2 फीसद वोट मिले हैं जो आम आदमी पार्टी के वोट फीसद से लगभग 1.5 फीसद ज्यादा है. पंजाब में भाजपा लगभग 23 सीटों पर चुनाव लड़ी थी. ऐसे में अगर भाजपा के वोट फीसद को मिला दें तो अकाली-भाजपा गठबंधन को 30.6 फीसद वोट मिले हैं. आम आदमी पार्टी इस लिहाज से वैसा कुछ भी पंजाब में करती नहीं नजर आई है जिसका दावा मीडिया पूर्वानुमानों में अथवा अरविन्द केजरीवाल द्वारा किया जाता रहा है. विकल्प देने के रूप में खुद को सबसे बेहतर बताने वाला केजरीवाल का दावा भी खोखला साबित हुआ है. दस साल की सत्ता विरोधी लहर के बावजूद पंजाब ने कांग्रेस को आम आदमी पार्टी से बेहतर विकल्प के रूप में स्वीकार किया है और अकाली-भाजपा



भी अपना वोट आधारित जनाधार बचा पाने में कामयाब रहे हैं. खैर इन छोटे राज्यों से इतर अगर देश की निगाह सबसे ज्यादा कहीं थी तो वह उत्तर प्रदेश है. जनसँख्या के लिहाज से देश का सबसे बड़ा राज्य उत्तर प्रदेश ही है. यहाँ 80 लोकसभा सांसद, 31 राज्यसभा सांसद और 403 विधायक और 100 विधान परिषद सदस्य निर्वाचित होते हैं. लोकसभा चुनाव 2014 की मोदी लहर में भाजपा को अभूतपूर्व सफलता मिली थी. यहाँ से कुल 42 फीसद वोटों के साथ भाजपा 71 सीटें अकेले दम पर जीत कर आई थी. इस प्रचंड जीत के बाद राजनीतिक पंडितों ने इसे न भूतो न भविष्यतो जैसा परिणाम करार दिया था. अर्थात यह मान लिया गया था कि अब यह आंकड़ा भाजपा खुद दोहरा नहीं पाएगी. लेकिन विधानसभा चुनाव 2017 के परिणाम के बाद सारे राजनीतिक अनुमान गलत साबित हुए और भाजपा ने उसी इतिहास को

दोहरा दिया है। अगर विधानसभा चुनाव के ट्रेंड के लिहाज से मूल्यांकन करें तो यह जीत लोकसभा से भी बड़ी नजर आती है। भाजपा को कुल अकेले लगभग 40 फीसद के आसपास वोट मिले हैं और भाजपा अपने सहयोगियों के साथ 325 सीटें जीतकर इतिहास रच चुकी है। इन परिणामों के बाद ऐसा कहा जा रहा है कि मोदी लहर बरकरार है। शायद यह भी पर्याप्त आकलन नहीं है। मोदी लहर बरकरार ही नहीं है बल्कि उठान की ओर है। अगर विधानसभा चुनाव, जहाँ राज्य मुख्यमंत्री चुना हो और भाजपा के दो-दो विपक्षी दल अपना मुख्यमंत्री चेहरा लेकर चुनाव लड़ रहे हों, में यदि भाजपा मोदी के ढाई साल के कार्यकाल के बाद इतनी सफलता को हासिल कर पाई है तो अगर अगले लोकसभा चुनाव में नरेंद्र मोदी प्रधानमंत्री के फेस होंगे तो सामने कौन होगा ? इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं कि भारतीय राजनीति में मोदी के बरक्स खड़ा होने वाला कोई दूसरा चेहरा दूर-दूर तक नजर नहीं आता है। इसके पीछे कुछ और कारण नहीं बल्कि खुद नरेंद्र मोदी का विराट व्यक्तित्व और विपक्ष की मुद्दों को लेकर नासमझी ही कारण हैं। नरेंद्र मोदी की राजनीति को जो समझते होंगे वो अबतक ये जान चुके होंगे कि मोदी लकीर काटकर छोटी करने की बजाय बड़ी लकीर खड़ी करने में यकीन रखते हैं। वे जब 2014 में भाजपा के प्रधानमंत्री पद का चेहरा बने तबतक उन्होंने गुजरात में अपने राजनीतिक एवं प्रशासकीय प्रदर्शन को साबित कर दिया था। उनके खिलाफ तमाम किस्म के प्रोपगंडा को हवा तब भी दी जाती थी और आज भी दी जाती है। लेकिन प्रोपगंडा बनाम परफॉर्मेंस की लड़ाई को मोदी के परफॉर्मेंस ने लगातार शिकस्त दी है। अब जब प्रधानमंत्री के रूप में उनका ढाई साल लोगों ने देखा है, उनकी नीयत देखी है, काम करने जूनून देखा है, उनके अथक परिश्रम को देखा है, जनता से जुड़ने और संवाद करने की निरंतरता को देखा है तो लोगों के मन में यह भावना स्व-विकसित हुई है कि ऐसा ही उनका अपना प्रधानमंत्री होना चाहिए। उत्तर प्रदेश ने 2014 में जिस आशा और विश्वास से मोदी को जनादेश दिया था, विधानसभा के जनादेश से उन उम्मीदों में अपना विश्वास जताया है। यही वजह है कि भाजपा को उत्तर प्रदेश में हर वर्ग, हर समुदाय का वोट मिला है और प्रदेश में विपक्षी दलों की स्थिति कमजोर हुई है। सत्ताधारी दल समाजवादी पार्टी को पिछले विधानसभा की तुलना में लगभग 8 फीसद का नुकसान हुआ है और वे सीटों के मामले में लगभग वहीं खड़े हैं जहाँ 2012 में भाजपा खड़ी थी। बसपा की स्थिति वोट फीसद के मामले में बहुत कमजोर नहीं हुई है लेकिन उसको सपोर्ट करने वाला वोटबैंक अब साथ नहीं रहा। प्रदेश की राजनीति से 2017 विधानसभा चुनाव में वोटबैंक की ठेकेदारी

करने वाली राजनीति का अंत लगभग हो चुका है। यह तय हो चुका है कि बिना प्रदर्शन और खुद को साबित किए महज सोशल इंजीनियरिंग के भरोसे चुनाव जीत लेने की राजनीतिक कलाबाजियों के बूते अब लंबे समय तक राजनीति नहीं की जा सकती है। उत्तर प्रदेश में भाजपा ने जो लकीर खींची है, वह परफॉर्मेंस पर जनता का विश्वास हासिल करने का शिलापट साबित होने जा रहा है। इसे मिटाया नहीं जा सकता है। इसके लिए आपके पास सिर्फ एक विकल्प है, और वो है कि आप नरेंद्र मोदी से बड़ा जननायक बनिए। हालांकि फिलहाल की राजनीति में ऐसा होता दूर-दूर तक दिखाई नहीं दे रहा। देश की एक राष्ट्रीय पार्टी कांग्रेस जब अमेठी और राय बरेली में अपने वजूद को बचाने के लिए संघर्ष करती नजर आ रही है तो उमर अब्दुल्ला का वह बयान बिल्कुल प्रासंगिक प्रतीत होता है कि 2024 के लिए संघर्ष करो। उत्तराखंड में भी कांग्रेस का लगभग सूपड़ा साफ़ हुआ है और सीट के साथ-साथ वोट फीसद में भी भाजपा से काफी पिछड़ चुकी है। भाजपा और कांग्रेस में एक गौर करने वाली बात यह भी है कि भाजपा वोट फीसद के मामले में लगातार अच्छा कर रही है। यहाँ तक कि दिल्ली जैसे राज्य में जहाँ उसकी महज 3 सीटें हैं, वहाँ भी उसके वोट फीसद में कोई खास गिरावट नहीं है। वोट फीसद का बने रहना यह साबित करता है कि पार्टी भले सत्ता में नहीं है लेकिन जनाधार की कसौटी पर मजबूत है। कांग्रेस और कम्युनिस्ट सीट के पैमाने पर तो शिकस्त खा ही रहे हैं, वोट फीसद के मामले में भी बेहद कमजोर हुई हैं। अर्थात्, सत्ता से ही नहीं बल्कि जनाधार के मामले में भी कांग्रेस बेहद कमजोर हो चुकी है। एक बात तो तय है कि सरकार के मोर्चे पर भाजपा के पास नरेंद्र मोदी जैसा एक विश्वसनीय चेहरा है तो वहीं दूसरी तरफ संगठन के स्तर पर अमित शाह के रूप में कुशल संगठनकर्ता मजबूत हैं। भारतीय राजनीति में यह जोड़ी एक नया इतिहास लिख रही है जिसे समझ पाने में विपक्ष अभी तक असफल नजर आ रहा है।

(लेखक डॉ श्यामा प्रसाद मुखर्जी रिसर्च फाउंडेशन में रिसर्च फेलो हैं एवं नैशनलिस्ट ऑनलाइन डॉट कॉम में संपादक हैं.)



**Gautam
Mukherjee**

BJP CONSOLIDATES ITS HOLD ON MAHARASHTRA

The first civic elections after 25 years to be fought independently by the BJP and the Shiv Sena, has seen BJP fall short in the Mumbai metropolis by just 3 seats. It won 81, out of the 227 seat Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC).

The BJP has also scored decisive wins in the hinterland of Maharashtra, and thrown the question of which formation can control the BMC independently into considerable confusion. Congress has 31, others have 24, and MNS scored with 7 seats. Either BJP or Shiv Sena will need 30 seats, or more, and this near impossibility, given the options, may thrust them, once again, willy-nilly, into each other's arms.

Shiv Sena, despite a strenuous bid to go it alone and win a majority, has struggled to barely keep a nose ahead, at 84, in the end. It has just retained its title as the single largest party in the Mumbai BMC, but well short of the majority mark at 114. The BJP nearly trebled its tally, up to 81 from 32 in 2012.

The BMC, with a budget of some Rs. 40,000 crores, the largest in the country, is viewed as a prestigious prize. But retaining control of it, despite very patchy governance marked by allegations of corruption over its last term, is a matter of its very survival for the Shiv Sena. This, given that it has no footprint at all outside Maharashtra.

And yet, it is evidently in no position to do much except share power and decision-making once again. In fact, it is considerably weakened in comparison to its position in 2012. The party has also managed to

top out and hold on in adjoining Thane. But its grip on a demographic that is rapidly changing to contain almost as many people from North India, Gujarat, and elsewhere, as it has Marathi speaking natives, is definitely slipping.

In the hinterland, the municipalities of Pune (last with Sharad Pawar's NCP), Nasik (last with Raj Thackeray's MNS), and Nagpur (its own last time too), went outright to the BJP. Pune, a large industrial and urban hub, another prize in particular, has moved out of Sharad Pawar's grasp.

Raj Thackeray is ostensibly barely hanging on in the power equation of Maharashtra. These other municipality wins in the partially rural interiors, serviced largely by cooperative banks, were meant to have been hard hit by demonetisation. That they have voted solidly for BJP proves that the public there appear to be in support of the move. This contradicts the negative rhetoric put out on the matter by the Shiv Sena, Congress, and others.

Pot-holes likened to craters, and flooding, in the absence of adequate drainage/the destruction of mangrove swamps etc. poses serious risks every single monsoon. These two grouses are amongst a host of other shortcomings that make the richest municipality in the country amongst the poorest in terms of delivery. And this in a city that has impossibly high real estate rates and massive over-crowding. If BJP/Shiv Sena do get together again, they will have to do much better this time.

The Devendra Fadnavis led BJP government in Maharashtra, with grudging Shiv Sena support, has evidently consolidated its hold after the results of these civic polls. These results make it even more difficult for the Shiv Sena to withdraw support, particularly with the NCP still waiting in the wings to make up the difference.

That it has come to this between the ostensibly uneasy allies, both at the state and centre, does not affect BJP as much as it does the Shiv Sena. The saffron regional party, that has been unable to spread outside Maharashtra, appears to be in decline.

The Maharashtra municipal elections and its apparent endorsement of demonetisation also augurs well for similarly profiled urban and rural interior assembly seats in the ongoing elections in Uttar Pradesh, conducting its fourth phase simultaneously.

BJP has, from all reports, a very good chance of winning a majority in Uttar Pradesh, and some of the other smaller states presently. If it does win in the 403 seat Uttar Pradesh Assembly, come the results on March 11th, it will be able to considerably improve its numbers in the Rajya Sabha, and be in a much better position to pass legislation preparatory to the general elections in 2019.

The favourable “semi-final”, it is thought, will harbinger the outcome of the final.

A broader point, in the backdrop of both Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, and indeed the ongoing tussles in Tamil Nadu and lesser problems in other states, such as Bengal, Orissa, Karnataka and Delhi, is that the regional parties, and not just the Congress shrunk to likewise size and stature, seem to be self-destructing. This happening simultaneously in different parts of the country, is entirely to a resurgent BJP’s advantage. The SP internal feud is a case in point. The AIADMK in the aftermath of the death of J.Jayalalithaa, is another.

How the centrifugal and centripetal forces in the regional parties will multiply, particularly without the oxygen of power going forward, is something we will have to wait for in order to see.

(The author is a senior columnist & political commentator. This article was written on February 23rd just after the Maharashtra municipal polls. The views expressed are his own)



Ambassador
Virendra Gupta

INDIA – ISRAEL TIES REFLECT NEWFOUND MATURITY AND SELF- CONFIDENCE IN INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposed visit to Israel, perhaps on his return from G-20 summit in Germany in July this year would be a high watermark of our growing bilateral ties with Israel. Although Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon did visit India in 2003 during Vajpayee's government, there has been no return visit from our side so far. Modi would be the first ever Indian Prime Minister to embark on a visit to Israel. 2017 marks the silver jubilee of the establishment of our diplomatic relations with Israel and that makes the visit truly special.

For me, personally, it is an occasion for fond recollection, since I was tasked with the responsibility of opening the Indian Embassy in Dan Panorama hotel close to Jaffa on the sea shore in Tel Aviv in May 1992. The warm reception accorded to my small team from India by the Israeli government and the people alike made us feel completely at home. For the 70000 strong Indian Jewish community, to see the Indian flag fly in Israel was a long cherished dream and it went out of its way to make us feel comfortable and appropriately networked in the establishment. Zubin Mehta, the famous music composer was choked with emotion while conducting the Indian national anthem when our first ambassador presented his credentials at the State House.

Right from the beginning, there was strong

interest on both sides to take our bilateral relations forward rapidly, as if to make up for the lost time. Areas of water conservation, agriculture, drip irrigation and solar energy, in which Israel had registered remarkable success, drew particular attention in India and Prof Swaminathan was deputed to Israel by the then Prime Minister Narasimha Rao soon after opening of our Mission to recommend how we could proceed with cooperation in those areas in concrete terms.

At the political level the lead at that time was taken by our state governments particularly since at the federal government level we were still somewhat hesitant and ambivalent with regard to the visibility for our relations with Israel. Incidentally, the first high level visitor to Israel, within a few weeks of the establishment of our Mission, was by Chiman Bhai Patel, the Chief Minister of Gujarat and he was so impressed with the technologies available in Israel that he arranged a steady flow of business and PSU delegations from his state in the following weeks to ensure adoption of those technologies and practices in Gujarat.

Our foreign policy had traditionally been driven by our overriding concern to safeguard our key interests in the Middle East which hosted a large number of Indian workers and which was our major supplier of oil and gas. As such the decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel was admittedly a bold

one but the subsequent years saw a fine balancing act on our part to ensure that our growing linkages with Israel were not taken amiss in the Arab capitals.

Viewed in this context, the decision by PM Modi to undertake a stand-alone visit to Israel without combining that with a trip to Palestine, brushing aside possible objections from Arab countries and domestic lobbies, amounts to a significant shift in the basic orientation of our foreign policy. For long, we have allowed our policy to remain a hostage to ideological high moral parameters. PM Modi has injected the much needed realism in dealing with other nations and critical global issues, benchmarking our foreign policy on the consideration of 'national interests'.

At a broader level, this new approach is reflective of the newfound maturity and self-confidence on the part of India. We have shown requisite resolve to develop our relations independently with competing power centres in the world in a manner designed to optimize our interests. Questions have no doubt been raised but we have assertively deflected those maintaining our sovereign right to calibrate our relations with different countries in an independent manner. That is the essence of Nonalignment which we so loudly professed in the yesteryears. There is no reason why the same principle should not be applied to our relations with Israel and Palestine without any hyphenation and need to indulge in hypocrisy.

Our commitment to Palestinian cause has always remained immutable. We fully support the aspirations of Palestinian people to an independent State and remain firmly opposed to illegal settlement activities in the Palestinian territories even as our relations with Israel have advanced to strategic level. Using the same logic, our principled stand on the Palestinian issue should not be allowed to impact on harnessing our bilateral relations with Israel insofar as those benefit our nation.

Our economic and business linkages with Israel have already grown to a robust level with crucial Israeli investments in agriculture and high tech areas. Annual bilateral trade is nearing US \$ 5 billion mark

without including the rapidly expanding defence trade. Israel has indeed proved to be a reliable partner and supplied the urgently needed defence equipment and ammunition to us during the 1999 Kargil War. We are already collaborating in the development of wide range of weapon systems including missiles, UAVs, night vision equipment and electronic warfare systems. Much of the technologies available from Israel are indigenously developed without any encumbrance of end-use requirement. Viewed differently, the entry of Israel in our defence supplies market puts competitive pressure on our erstwhile suppliers and it makes enormous business sense to fully leverage diversification of our options in order to secure most optimum terms for large defence purchases.

We have also expanded our cooperation with Israel in combating terrorism. Both our countries are targeted by Islamic terrorist organizations and it is only logical that we pool our resources and share intelligence in dealing with this menace effectively.

Despite our divergent approach towards Iran and Syria, we have not hesitated to develop close bilateral relations with Israel which have proved advantageous to us. The pragmatic handling of our ties with Israel indeed characterizes the growing maturity and confidence in the overall conduct of our foreign policy in the Middle East.

Prime Minister Modi's anticipated historic visit shall propel India-Israel relations to a hitherto unreached level and dimension. From civilisational friends we also evolve into pragmatic and strategic partners.

(The author served as Indian Ambassador to many countries including South Africa before his retirement from the Indian Foreign Service recently.

He opened the Indian Embassy in Israel in May 1992 and now holds the position of President of the International Cooperation Council, New Delhi. The views expressed are his own)

भारतीय जनता पार्टी के राष्ट्रीय अध्यक्ष श्री अमित शाह द्वारा उत्तर प्रदेश, उत्तराखंड, मणिपुर और गोवा में भारतीय जनता पार्टी की ऐतिहासिक और अभूतपूर्व विजय पर की गई प्रेस वार्ता के मुख्य बिंदु



■ भारतीय जनता पार्टी की इस ऐतिहासिक जीत ने देश में से जातिवाद, परिवारवाद और तुष्टीकरण की राजनीति का अंत किया है और पॉलिटिक्स ऑफ़ परफॉरमेंस के एक नए युग की शुरुआत हुई है।

■ यह जीत प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी जी की गरीब कल्याण योजनाओं, भ्रष्टाचार-मुक्त एवं विकासशील शासन और भाजपा की विचारधारा में जनता के विश्वास की जीत है।

■ मैं पांचों राज्य खासकर उत्तर प्रदेश, उत्तराखंड, गोवा और मणिपुर की जनता को पार्टी की ओर से हृदय से धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूँ और उनका अभिनंदन भी करना चाहता हूँ क्योंकि जो ऐतिहासिक जनादेश उन्होंने हमें दिया है, वह देश की राजनीति को एक नई दिशा देने वाली है।

■ मैं भारतीय जनता पार्टी के देश भर में फैले हुए करोड़ों कार्यकर्ताओं व शुभचिंतकों का भी धन्यवाद करना चाहता हूँ जिन्होंने कई उतार-चढ़ाव भरे इस चुनाव में अनेकों मौकों पर हमारा हौसला बढ़ाया है, हमारा समर्थन किया

है और हमारी मदद भी की है।

■ केंद्र सरकार की गरीब कल्याण की पांच प्रमुख योजनाओं उज्ज्वला योजना, जन-धन योजना, खुले शौच से मुक्ति का अभियान, फसल बीमा और गाँवों में बिजली पहुंचाने की योजना ने देश की जनता में प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी जी के प्रति गहरी आस्था का निर्माण किया है।

■ मोदी सरकार ने जिस तरह से लगभग तीन वर्षों में गरीब कल्याण की योजनायें बनाई और लगभग 93 से अधिक योजनाओं को समाज के अंतिम छोर पर खड़े व्यक्ति तक पहुंचाया, इस पर इन राज्यों की जनता ने अपनी मुहर लगा दी है।

■ पूरे चुनाव में विपक्ष के द्वारा प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी जी पर जो व्यक्तिगत हमले किये गए और भारतीय जनता पार्टी के खिलाफ जो दुष्प्रचार किया गया, इसका करारा जवाब इन राज्यों की जनता ने दिया है।

SPMRF & NMML Organised

A conversation with

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY

(UNION MINISTER OF FINANCE & CORPORATE AFFAIRS)

on **“TOWARDS A NEW POLITY: CAMPAIGN
FINANCE REFORM IN INDIA”**
at NMML on 8th March, 2017



LAUNCH OF 'PARIVARTAN KI ORE'



Book Launch of "Parivartan Ki Ore" by Shri Amit Shah (National President, BJP) at Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh on 18th Feb 2017



Discussion on 'Parivartan Ki Ore' with Shri Dharmendra Pradhan (Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas) & Shri Shyam Jaju (National Vice President, BJP) at IIC, New Delhi on 1st March 2017



Discussion on 'Parivartan Ki Ore' with the writers of the book on 4th March, 2017 at Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts

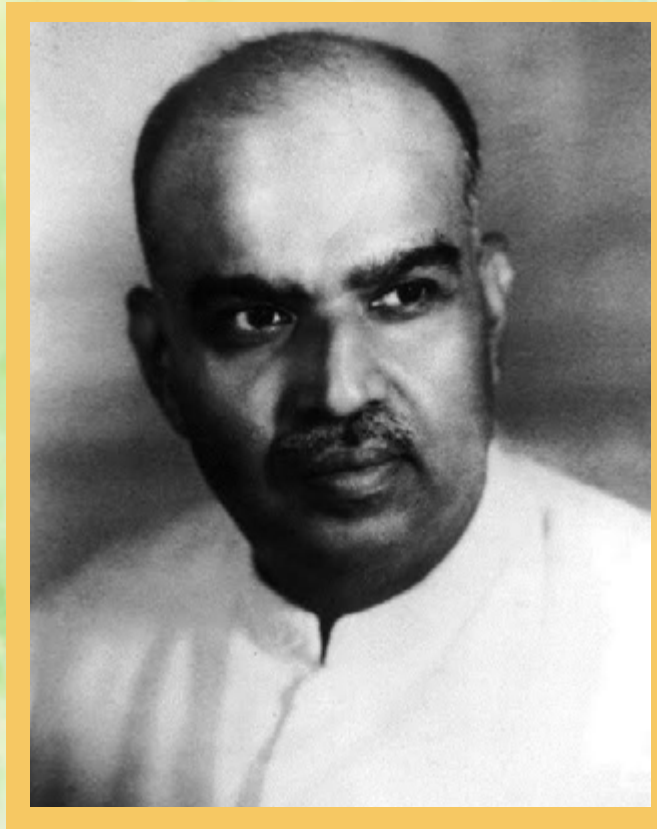
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A discussion on

“BUDGET 2017: REMONETISATION, RECALIBRATION & REFORM”

on 8th February, 2017





“The gignatic task of reconstruction, cultural, social, economic and political can be rendered possible thought coordinated efforts of bands of trained and disciplined efforts of bands of trained and disciplined Indians. Armed with the knowledge of Indian’s past glory and greatness, her strength and weakness, it is they who can place before their country a programme of work, which while loyal to the fundamental traditions of India civilisation will be adapted to the changing conditions of the modern world.”

-Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee
*Convocation Address delivered at Gurukul Kangri
Viswavidyalaya, Haridwar, 1943*

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