THE NATIONALIST
An Indian perspective

Special Article
NITI Aayog: Bharathiyar Approaches to Development

The Obama Visit

In Focus

Digital India Program- building a knowledge economy, empowering citizens

Green cover exposed
हमारा लद्दाह

हमने किसी संप्रदाय या कर्म की सेवा का नहीं, बल्कि सम्पूर्ण राष्ट्र की सेवा का प्रत लिया है। सभी देशवासी हमारे बांधव है। जब तक हम इन सभी बंधुओं को भारतमाता के स्पूत होने का सच्चा गौरव प्रदान नहीं कर देंगे, हम तुप्प नहीं बैठेंगे। हम भारत माता को सही अर्थों में सुजला, सुफ़्ला बनाकर रहेंगे। यह दशप्रभुराणधारिणी दुर्गा बनकर असुरों का संघर्ष करेगी; लक्ष्मी बनकर जन-जन को समृद्धि देगी और सरस्वती बनकर अज्ञानांधकार को दूर कर ज्ञान का प्रकाश पैदा करेगी। हिंदुस्थान और हिमालय से परिचितित भारतवंड में जब तक एकसमता, वार्ता, संप्रदाय, ज्ञानवत्ता, सुख और शत्रु की सप्तजाती का पुनःप्रवाह नहीं ला पाते, हमारा भागीरथ तप पूरा नहीं होगा। इस प्रयास में ब्रह्मा, विष्णु और महेश सभी हमारे सहयोगी होंगे। विजय का विश्वास है। तपस्या का निश्चय लेकर वाले। वे मातरमा।

- दीनदयाल उपाध्याय
(स्वतंत्रता याद, काजीवट अवस्था, 1968)
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When he began his campaign for the 2014 General Elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP under his leadership brought about a decisive and tectonic change in the political discourse of the country. The Party under his leadership had then made a rigorous and indefatigable analysis of the challenges before the nation and before its vast marginalized population and the youth and eminently succeeded in formulating and in offering a new vision, a new political lexicon and a fresh perspective for national progress.

Within days it had succeeded in altering a rancid habit of six decades, mostly brought about by the political practices of a now completely rejected political party, of dividing the nation in groups, of promoting conflict, of pushing segregated interests at the cost of cohesiveness, unity of purpose and national interest. A new dimension of focusing on aspirations and of working towards creating a distinct future map for the nation began in right earnest. Naturally such a decisive shift gradually worked towards diluting a certain kind of adverse politics and political mindset while compelling others to attune themselves to this new expression and shift.

In their struggle for the mandate of 2014 Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP succeeded in altering India's political discourse from one of conflict and confrontation to one of aspiration and hope. This was a seminal contribution to our national life - a contribution that has set the tone and direction for politics in the next decade and beyond.

While elections, victories, celebrations and introspections are part and parcel of our colourful and constantly evolving democratic framework, the march towards greater development, greater accountability, greater efficiency and greater implementation continues unabated under the Narendra Modi led government. The focus of governance and governance schemes in the last nine months have turned to the marginal, the neglected and the omitted, ushering in an era of greater inclusion and unity.

In his seminal treatise "Integral Humanism" Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay calls that a "rule of..."
Dharma" in which the Government ensures "basic necessities of life", education, health, affordable shelter to everyone. Where such an intention is absent, or falsely displayed, argues Pandit Upadhyay, there sets in the "rule of Adharma."

Prime Minister Modi has committed himself to bringing about a "rule of Dharma" inspired by the vision and concept of "Antyodaya." The shift in the political discourse which Prime Minister has pushed through, the various initiatives undertaken by his Government in the last months point towards an integral effort at bringing about such a state of being across the country. That resolve and march is now unstoppable.

As an aside it will be well to mention how ironical it is to see, in the just concluded Delhi Assembly elections, the CPIM, all of whose candidates lost their deposits, and which continues to unceasingly suffer from an acute dialectical confusion - after having failed to deliver an effective and responsive governance model in West Bengal, a state which it uninterruptedly ruled and ruined for three decades - latch on to another's victory, proclaiming it to be that of its own failed ideology, it is also ironical to see the Trinamool Congress - a party which has allowed its own ordinary electorate to be deprived and disinvested of their hard earned savings by allowing certain negative elements a free run - sermonize on the need to be connected with the masses.

A decisive mandate brings along with it great responsibility, responsibility which endorses stability and performance, it generates faith that the politics of confrontation and of disruption will finally be given up; such a mandate inevitably calls for a drastic and positive change of attitude and of action. One can only hope that such a state of being will soon be visible.

- Dr. Anirban Ganguly
To end discrimination against the girl child and to demonstrate a commitment to arrest and reverse a degenerative habit, Prime Minister Modi launched the twin programmes of "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" and "Sukanya Samriddhi Account" in a bid to encourage the birth and education of girls and tackle the abysmally low child sex ratio of 918 girls for 1000 boys.

Describing the desire to indulge in female foeticide as a "mental illness" Prime Minister Modi said that if this discrimination does not end then it could cause a terrible crisis soon because of the lack of women in the country leading to a dangerous situation and a great national imbalance. Prime Minister also said that we must fight female foeticide and celebrate the birth of a girl child and in his characteristic style appealed for making "Beta-Beti Ek Samaan" (equal treatment of boys and girls) our motto.

**Collective Responsibility:**

On the occasion of the launch of the National Programme "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao", Prime Minister Modi also made a strong
Prime Minister Modi also made a strong appeal to the people of India by saying that he has come in front of them as a 'bhikshuk' (mendicant) to beg for the lives of innocent daughters.

Prime Minister Modi also made a strong appeal to the people of India by asking the massive gathering that if daughters were not born, how one would get daughter-in-laws? In a frank manner he said that "There are people who want educated daughters-in-law, but those same people are reluctant to educate their own daughters. This hypocrisy must come to an end. People say in old age sons come in handy. Had that been true, so many old age homes would not have opened. Sons have cars and bungalows and yet, often, parents remain in old age homes. On the other hand, there are innumerable daughters who work hard to keep their parents happy. If girls get the chance, they perform better than boys." Prime Minister pointed out that girls were doing well in sports, in education, agriculture and health sectors and had a very significant contribution in our overall national growth and progress.

Societal pressure:

The Prime Minister said "it is our responsibility to wake up the society and to realise our responsibility. It is due to family and societal pressure that girls are killed in the womb. In a hard-hitting message to doctors who contribute to female foeticide, the Prime Minister reminded them that their medical education is for the purpose of saving lives and not for killing innocent daughters.

(Desk)
Taking up Responsibilities:

India has a great responsibility to help the world counter new threats to global peace. The present global environment represents a rare opportunity. Use this unique opportunity to help India position itself in a leading role, rather than just a balancing force, globally. The world is keen to embrace India, and India is moving forward with confidence. We should shed our old mind sets and we should be quick to adapt to changing global situations.

"Heads of Missions" are "shining vibrant representatives" (tejasvi, jeevant anshpunj) of India's glorious heritage. It is your duty to work ceaselessly and with a clear mind, on India's development priorities, and to advance India's interests abroad.

Messenger of Peace:

There are new "actors" and new "threats" to global peace and prosperity but India has always stood for "Vishva-Bandhutva" and peace - the brotherhood of the world - had a great responsibility in helping the world counter these challenges to peace.

Love for Nature:

The environment is part of India's cultural heritage, and therefore, India must take the lead in countering this challenge, and also work towards a change in global attitudes towards the challenges of climate change. Indian culture was replete with illustrations which indicated "Prakriti-Prem" - "love for nature." India must lead the fight against climate change because love for nature is part of Indian culture.

Showcase India's Rich Culture:

We should maintain digital libraries to showcase the best of Indian culture and we should also maintain regular contact with prominent individuals from countries abroad, who have visited or plan to visit India. Relationships have been important for all mankind throughout history, even as humanity has struggled to deal with challenges. We should prepare a compendium of best practices of Missions across the world, and spread them horizontally across the globe. Missions should also contribute towards developing a culture for "Swachhata" - cleanliness, and to remain ahead of the curve on digital diplomacy.
“Youth! unite the world”

Man Ki Bat

Omprakash's question:
The youth of new generation is a global citizen. He is not limited by time or boundaries. In such a situation what should be the approach by our leadership, governments as well as societies at large?

(Hon'ble Shri Barack Obama)
I think this is a very important question. When I look at this generation that is coming up, they are exposed to the world in ways that you and I could hardly imagine. They have the world at their fingertips, literally. They can, using their mobile phone, get information and images from all around the world and that's extraordinarily powerful. And what that means, I think is that, governments and leaders cannot simply try to govern, or rule, by a top-down strategy. But rather have to reach out to people in an inclusive way, and an open way, and a transparent way. And engage in a dialogue with citizens, about the direction of their country. And one of the great things about India and the United States is that we are both open societies. And we have confidence and faith that when citizens have information, and there is a vigorous debate, that over time even though sometimes democracy is frustrating, the best decisions and the most stable societies emerge and the most prosperous societies emerge. And new ideas are constantly being exchanged. And technology today I think facilitates that, not just within countries, but across countries. And so, I have much greater faith in India and the United States, countries that are open information societies, in being able to succeed and thrive in this New Information Age; than closed societies that try to control the information that citizens receive. Because ultimately that's no longer possible. Information will flow inevitably, one way or the other, and we want to make sure we are fostering a healthy debate and a good conversation between all peoples.

(Hon'ble Shri Narendra Modi): जो सबाल बराक से पूछा गया है, औमप्रकाश चाहते हैं कि मैं भी उस विषय में कुछ कहूँ। बहुत ही अच्छा जवाब बराक ने दिया है। प्रेरणादायक है। मैं इतना ही कहूँगा कि एक जमाने में, खास करके कम्युनिस्ट विचारधारा से प्रेरित लोग थे। वे दुनिया में एक आत्मनाम करते थे। और वे कहते थे - ’वर्कर्स ऑफ दि वर्ल्ड यूनाइट्ड’ (workers of the world unite). दुनिया के मजहूर एक ही जाओ। ऐसा एक नारा कई दशक तक चलता रहा था। मैं समझता हूँ, आज की युवा की जो शक्ति है, आज के युवा की जो पहुँच है, इसको देखते हुए मैं यही कहूँगा कि युवा, यूनाइटेड द वर्ल्ड (youth unite the world)। युवको, दुनिया को एक करो। मैं समझता हूँ, उनमें वे ताकत है और वे कर सकते हैं।

(Omprakash is studying Sanskrit at JNU. He belongs to Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan. He is convener of special Centre for Sanskrit Studies in JNU)
दीनदयाल उपाध्याय ग्राम ज्योति योजना: ग्रामीण परिवारों के लिए चौबीस घंटे और कृषि के लिए पर्यावरण विज्ञान

मोदी सरकार के द्वारा देश के सभी हिस्सों में चौबीस घंटे सालों दिन निवासी बिजली मुहैया कराना सरकार की बड़ी प्रतिबद्धताओं में से एक है क्योंकि आज भी ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में आपातस्थित बुनियादी झांकी की कमी की वजह से बहुत सारे गरीब परिवारों को बिजली की सुविधा उपलब्ध कराने का मुद्दा है। देश के लाखों किसान अपने खेतों की सिंचाई के लिए पंप द्वारा भूजल का उपयोग करना चाहते हैं लेकिन बिजली नहीं मिलते के कारण वे ऐसा नहीं कर पाते। हालांकि इन सब समस्याओं के समाधान के लिए कई राज्यों ने ग्रामीण इलाकों में दी जाने वाली बिजली की उपमोटों के आधार पर अलग-अलग करने के लिए कार्यक्रम तैयार किया, जिसके तहत ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में कृषि तथा गैर कृषि उपमोटीकरणों के लिए अलग-अलग व्यवस्था की जाती है। खाना-बैक के द्वारा इस प्रकार की योजना का मूल्यांकन के अनुसार गुरूवार के इस सरकार की योजना का भेदभाव और शानदार क्रियान्वयन किया गया है।

मोदी सरकार के द्वारा प्रारंभ की गई दीनदयाल उपाध्याय ग्राम ज्योति योजना (ढीडीगूँगीजेवाई) की प्रेरणा गुरूवार सरकार के लागू, इसी प्रकार की योजना से मिलती है। इस योजना के तहत ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में बहु महत्वशाली सुविधाओं को लागू करने में मदद मिलेगी। योजना के अंतर्गत ग्रामीण घरों और कृषि कारों के लिए अलग अलग फॉक्स की व्यवस्था की जायेगी और वितरण तथा पारंपरिक ढांचे को मजबूत किया जायेगा। योजना में युग्म रूप से अलग-अलग फॉक्स की व्यवस्था कर उप-पारंपरिक तथा वितरण नेटवर्क को मजबूत बनाना है और सभी स्तरों जैसे इलेक्ट्रिक पाइप, फॉक्स और वितरण ट्रांसफॉर्मर पर मीटर लगाना है। इसी के साथ ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में सभी स्तरों पर बिजली के मीटर तथ्यावर जाएगी। इस योजना की सहायता से ग्रामीण घरों को तथा कृषि उपमोटियों को 24 घंटे बिजली मुहैया कराने में मदद मिलेगी।

इस योजना की 24 महीनों की अवधि के भीतर पूरा किया जायेगा। इस योजना के सफल क्रियान्वयन के लिए कुल 43033 करोड़ रुपये के निवेश की आवश्यकता है। जिसमें से भारत सरकार 33453 करोड़ रुपये की सहायता देगी। योजना के अनुसार सरकार का इस्तेमाल विशिष्ट वर्ग राज्यों के लिए 85 फीसदी और अन्य राज्यों के लिए 60 फीसदी तक है। सिविल देश तीन और पूर्वी तीन राज्य, जम्मू और कश्मीर, हिमाचल प्रदेश और उत्तराखंड विशिष्ट वर्ग राज्यों में शामिल है। निजी वितरण कंपनियों एवं राज्य बिजली विभागों समेत सभी डिस्कॉम इस योजना के तहत वित्तीय सहायता के लिए पात्र होंगे। डिस्कॉम विशिष्ट नेटवर्क जंक्शन को ध्यान में रखते हुए ग्रामीण दांवागत कार्यों को मजबूत बनाने को दर्शाया देगी।

इस योजना को क्रियान्वित करने के लिए नोडल एजेंसी ग्रामीण वित्तियों करणाम (आरईसी) होगी। आरईसी, योजना के लागू किए जाने के माध्यम से प्राप्त होगी रिपोर्ट को उच्च मंत्रालय तथा केंद्रीय वित्त प्रभारी के प्रकाश प्रस्तुत करेगी। इस रिपोर्ट में वित्तीय तथा वास्तविक प्रमाण का व्याख्या दी जाएगा।

आरईसी, वित्तीय तथा वास्तविक प्राप्ति का व्याख्या दी जाएगा।

आरईसी, वित्तीय तथा वास्तविक प्राप्ति का व्याख्या दी जाएगा।
The Digital India Program is a cross ministry initiative which aims to transform India into a digitally-enabled and empowered information society and knowledge economy. Government of India has allocated more than a trillion rupees for its successful execution. The main goal of this colossal transformational initiative is to radically redesign and digitize government processes and make government services available and accessible electronically as well as to contribute towards new employment generation.

The vision of Digital India Program is centred around the following three key areas:

• Infrastructure as a utility to every citizen

• Governance and services on demand

• Digital empowerment of citizens

The first key area of "Infrastructure as a utility to every citizen" includes:

• High speed internet access to be made available in all gram panchayats with the view to digitally empower citizens;

• The provision of vital digital identity to citizens;

• Enabling citizens participation in the digital and financial space by means of mobile phones and bank accounts for their socio-economic empowerment;

• The second key area of "Governance and services on demand" encompasses the

IT for jobs

• 1 Cr students from smaller towns & villages will be trained for IT sector jobs over 5 years. DeitY would be the nodal department for this scheme.

• BPOs would be set up in every north-eastern state to facilitate ICT enabled growth in these states. DeitY would be the nodal department for this scheme.

• 3 lakh service delivery agents would be trained as part of skill development to run viable businesses delivering IT services. DeitY would be the nodal department for this scheme.

• 5 lakh rural workforce would be trained by the Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) to cater to their own needs. Department of Telecom (DoT) would be the nodal department for this scheme.
following:

- There should be a seamless integration across departments for providing an easy and single window access of various government services to various stakeholders.
- Government services should be made available in real time by utilizing online and mobile platforms.
- In order to ensure easy access of information, various entitlement of each citizen should be available on the cloud.
- Ease of doing business should be ensured and facilitated by creating digitally transformed government services.

The thrust of the third key area of "Digital empowerment of citizens" entails:

- Imparting digital literacy amongst Indian citizens;
- Making digital resources widely accessible;
- All government document/certificates should be made available on the cloud;
- Digital resources and services should be made available in regional languages.

In conclusion, the Digital India Program can be viewed as a truly revolutionary initiative because by providing the opportunity to educate and enhance the digital skill set of potentially the whole population, the program has the potential to create an environment of not just digital but overall social-inclusion. 

(Siddharth Singh is a Research Associate at SPMRF)

**Broadband highways**

- This covers three sub components, namely Broadband for All Rural, Broadband for All Urban and National Information Infrastructure.

- Under Broadband for All Rural, 250 thousand village Panchayats would be covered by December, 2016. DoT will be the nodal Department and the project cost is estimated to be approximately Rs. 32,000 Cr.

- Under Broadband for All Urban, Virtual Network Operators would be leveraged for service delivery and communication infrastructure in new urban development and buildings would be mandated.

- National Information Infrastructure would integrate the networks like SWAN, NKN and NOFN along with cloud enabled National and State Data Centres. It will also have provision for horizontal connectivity to 100, 50, 20 and 5 government offices/ service outlets at state, district, block and panchayat levels respectively. DeitY will be the nodal department and the project cost is estimated to be around Rs 15,686 Cr for implementation in 2 years and maintenance & support for 5 years.
Opening the floodgates: Digital India will deliver a real improvement in the quality of life of every citizen

President Barack Obama's just concluded historic visit to India has laid the foundation for a relationship of hope and promise between India and the US. Among other areas, I believe this relationship has immense potential in the field of ICT and digital connectivity. Already 60% of India's IT exports, worth $50 billion, cater to the US market. US companies, many of which already have backend operations in India, have continually expressed interest in expanding.

Digital India, a flagship programme, conceived within 100 days of the Modi government assuming office, has the potential to propel digital connectivity to new heights and reinforce Indo-US ties.

What is Digital India? It is an obligation we owe to India and a gift which we must offer to posterity. It aims to tap and channelise the vast potential of India's fondness for technology, coupled with soaring aspirations of a young India. Digital India is designed to bridge the divide between the digital haves and digital have-nots, between the poor and the affluent, rural and urban, literate and illiterate, employed and unemployed, and between the empowered and the disempowered.

Digital India weaves together a large number of ideas and thoughts into a single comprehensive vision. This vision is centred on three key areas: creation of digital infrastructure, delivery of governance and services on demand, and digital empowerment of citizens. It includes the ambitious programme National Optic Fibre Network (NOFN), aiming to link India's 2.5 lakh gram panchayats through over 70,000 km of high speed optic fibre in the next three years.
years - thereby enabling over 600 million Indians to harness the benefits of modern communication. NOFN has to be executed with the active partnership of state governments.

**A noteworthy feature of Digital India is that it is envisaged as a national non-discriminatory infrastructure available to all categories of service providers for wholesale bandwidth.**

I recently inaugurated our country's first high speed rural broadband network in Idukki district of Kerala. If 900 million mobile phones and 300 million internet connectivity can spring up in India without active government patronage, imagine what a far reaching impact a government backed programme would have if executed in a mission mode.

A noteworthy feature of Digital India is that it is envisaged as a national non-discriminatory infrastructure available to all categories of service providers for wholesale bandwidth. Telcos, ISPs, virtual network operators and cable TV providers can all plug into this network for offering next generation services to citizens.

Indians keenly observe the arrival of a technology and once they recognise its worth, they adopt it with enthusiasm. Digital India is designed to empower Indians with the power of technology.

Digital India architecture would compel change in governance processes for delivery of services. Along with the need for faster and timely service delivery, it is important to ensure that benefits of development reach each and every citizen of the country in equal measure. I believe that broadband access to all will open a new world of economic opportunities for rural Indians in areas such as e-commerce, outsourcing and back offices, marketing of agricultural products and traditional handicrafts, amongst others.

Domestically, India consumes up to $100 billion in electronics every year, most of which are imported, including products like mobile phones, computers, SIM cards, smart cards, set top boxes, LED lights, cameras, televisions, medical electronics and the massive electronic segment in defence manufacturing. There is a need for manufacturing electronics in India for the growing Indian market. Government has announced the Make in India programme, which complements Digital India by
encouraging local and foreign manufacturers to manufacture in India - for the domestic market and for exports.

Foreign companies should not restrict themselves to back office operations but instead look to manufacturing their high-end products in India. Make in India has conveyed to the companies that this scheme is more than a slogan - it is a commitment. Government is backing the Make in India proposal with financial incentives. Catering to the necessity of expanding the talent pool of IT professionals the Cabinet has already approved setting up an Electronics Development Fund to encourage innovation, research and startups.

Back ing up this innovation is the government’s programme DISHA, which focuses on the critical aspect of digital literacy so that even the poorest Indian can participate and contribute to this digital expansion. Floodgates of possibilities will open for the self-employed as well as small and medium enterprises.

I imagine a scenario where gardeners, plumbers, drivers, shopkeepers, tutors, tailors can all find new markets through their mobile phones.

We are in the process of finalising a policy on setting up BPOs in small and mofussil towns which will leverage digital connectivity and digital literacy to encourage employment and foster entrepreneurship.

Empowered citizens will have the power to make choices, to save time, lower their costs, add convenience to their days and improve their health.

The potential payoffs through

**Digital India architecture would compel change in governance processes for delivery of services. Along with the need for faster and timely service delivery, it is important to ensure that benefits of development reach each and every citizen of the country in equal measure.**

this revolution can certainly be measured in numbers - connections, devices, subscribers, downloads and so on - but the improvement in the quality of life of every Indian is the real change our government wants to bring. This task is enormous, challenges are onerous yet we shall overcome, as India after May 2014 is a different country.

*(The writer is the Union Minister of Communications and Information Technology.)*

*Courtesy: TOI Blog, February 2, 2015*
The Obama Visit

Amb. Prabhat P. Shukla

The hype over the nuclear deal has obscured the main achievement of the Obama visit: this is in the Joint Strategic Vision Statement for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region, to give the full name of the separate document issued by the two leaders. This is not to gainsay the importance of civil nuclear cooperation, or the understandings reached on defence and economic cooperation.

The Vision document begins by declaring that a closer partnership between the two countries is indispensable for peace, prosperity and stability in the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions. The geographical sweep is also impressive: from Africa to East Asia, from Central Asia to South-East Asia. It also addresses the high-voltage issues of freedom of navigation and over-flights especially in the South China Sea by endorsing these principles and linking their legal basis with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea [UNCLOS]. As is well-known, China does not accept the applicability of UNCLOS to the South China Sea, but has its own claim to the entire Sea, based on flimsy and un-provable claims.

The document also endorses India's interest in joining the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation [APEC] forum, and enjoins on both countries the development of a road map to work together with other partners to face the diplomatic, economic and security challenges facing the region. The main Joint Statement also makes a reference to the Indian "Act East" policy and the US "Rebalance" and points to the American one.
synergy between the two. This is welcome, and presumably, will also cover the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the economic arm of the Rebalance, that the US is driving in the Asia-Pacific region. Several of our main trade and investment partners are in it, and if India were to be left out, it would stand to lose substantially in terms of trade and investment - of the order of tens of billions of dollars. We need to take account of the fact that there is a similar free-trade agreement being worked out with the European Union, which is another important market and source of FDI for India. The Chinese, the Turks, the Africans have all expressed their interest in being part of these new arrangements, but have been kept out so far. We, who have been invited to join TPP, are hanging back presumably because of the high-standard labour, environment, and IPR requirements - this needs to be rectified.

The only issue that causes some concern is the treatment of the AfPak region. The talk and references on this are lukewarm from the standpoint of our interests, and confined to bromides about stability in Afghanistan and the need to curb terror groups. The more troubling bit is about the energy linkage between South and Central Asia, which is a high priority for America. But it will necessarily involve transit through Pakistan, and that country will use this leverage for its strategic purposes. Indians should not get beguiled by all the talk about a new approach from Pakistan after the Peshawar school terror attack - towards India, nothing has changed. US media commentaries prior to the start of the visit exhorted President Obama to press India to resume the dialogue with Pakistan. Fortunately, the conditions-based approach to dialogue of the Government is firm, and will not change.

It would be important to be clear that Pakistan is not about to change its approach towards India, not until we take action to change the calculus in Rawalpindi of their costs and benefits of enmity towards India. And the closer we get to the

The document also endorses India's interest in joining the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation [APEC] forum, and enjoins on both countries the development of a road map to work together with other partners to face the diplomatic, economic and security challenges facing the region.
US vision in the Asia-Pacific, the more concern there will be in China as well, as was in evidence in the Chinese media during the visit itself. This is the real security contingency we need to prepare for, and need to know how far we can count on our friends and partners in the Asia-Pacific in such a situation.

In general, it needs to be

**Defence is also a sector of growing importance for bilateral ties and for strategic purposes. The US has emerged as the largest supplier of hardware in the last few years, and this trend is likely to stabilise. A few, admittedly minor, new "pathfinder" joint projects have been picked out to get the pump primed, and will lay the foundation for deeper collaboration in the future.**

emphasised that the US is still the driver of the global economy, and can thus be a stimulus for the Indian economy, especially for the "Make in India" campaign. If indeed manufacturing is to reach somewhere near the scale that the Chinese economy did with such success, India will need not just its domestic market, but will also need the huge market that the US represents. Even today, but for the US, China would have a deficit in its balance of trade with the rest of the world. Therein lies the true importance of the US as an economic partner. In a welcome decision, we have agreed to raise the Strategic Dialogue to a Strategic and Commercial Dialogue.

Defence is also a sector of growing importance for bilateral ties and for strategic purposes. The US has emerged as the largest supplier of hardware in the last few years, and this trend is likely to stabilise. A few, admittedly minor, new "pathfinder" joint projects have been picked out to get the pump primed, and will lay the foundation for deeper collaboration in the future. It is reported that the US has also revived its interest in the operational agreements like CISMOA, which had gone into deep freeze over the past few years. And, of course, there is the issue of military-to-military links, including the posting of an officer of the Indian Armed Forces at the US Central Command HQ. It is time to resolve all these and move on to the higher level of defence cooperation that the two countries need to achieve in their own respective interests. There is absolutely no threat to our cherished non-alignment or strategic autonomy in any of this.

Now for a brief discussion on the nuclear package. By way of back-
ground, it would be important to bear in mind that other industries do not get the kind of protection that the nuclear industry demands and gets. BP, for example, for an oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, has already been charged $8 billion, and is facing procedures for an additional $13 billion. The banks that were instrumental in the financial crash of 2008 have already paid a collective amount exceeding $25 billion, and further investigations are ongoing. And the reason is obvious: the nuclear industry itself recognises that the damage it can cause in the event of an accident is much greater.

Three issues have dominated the discussion on the subject - the maximum amount of liability; the right of recourse against the supplier; and protection of the supplier from suit by individual victims of a nuclear incident outside of the Law on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage [CLNDA], as provided for under Article 46. There was an earlier issue regarding tracking of nuclear fuel, but that has been settled along the same lines as those adopted in the case of the Canadians - that is that the IAEA will be permitted to share information with Canada after their inspections.

On the first two, there really is no room for confusion - all the extant international legislation allows for unlimited liability. In fact, the Indian law is the most categorical in fixing an upper limit on the operator, with the balance above that amount - if any - to be taken on by the Government.

The right of recourse is similarly expressly provided for in the Convention on Supplementary Compensation, which Government of India has signed, but not ratified. But here again, the liability of the supplier is limited, under the Rules issued by the Department of Atomic Energy, to the value of the contract or the liability of the operator, whichever is less.

It is the third point on which there is still some ambiguity. Government has issued some guidelines indicating that only the operator is liable under the relevant clause of the domestic law. Prime
facie, this is correct, because the text of the law only speaks of the liability of the operator. Nonetheless, it is open to doubt whether the operator could cover this liability under the right of recourse. This is why the final American word on this is that the individual companies will have to make their own risk assessment on this issue. The fair conclusion would be that Government has indeed gone a long way in clearing up any doubts that may have arisen. The Russians and the French have clarified that they are willing to work within the domestic law; it is now for the Americans to take their decision.

All of the above ignores the most fundamental issue of commercial viability. The US figure, as at present projected, is Rs 12 per unit, and this will clearly not be viable. Both sides have wisely focused on the need for commercially viable electricity generation, but we are far removed from this at the moment.

One last point on the visit needs to be addressed briefly: this is the "admonition" by President Obama supposedly to the Indian authorities over religious tolerance. After the play this issue received in the Indian media, an official of the US National Security Council told the Indian press that there was no such intent behind Obama’s remarks. Promptly, the next day, Obama gave the lie to this assertion, and informed us that Gandhi would be shocked at what was happening in India.

Never mind that much of this kind of criticism comes from people who proudly proclaim their own religious belief never mind that India has a better record of empowering minorities than any other country in the world; here is something for all those who seized upon Obama’s remarks to study and reflect upon, in the words of the Mahatma himself:

“(If) instead of confining themselves purely to humanitarian work such as education, medical services to the poor and the like, they would use these activities of theirs for the purpose of proselytizing, I would certainly like to withdraw. Every nation considers its own faith to be as good as that of any other. Certainly, the great faiths held by the people of India are adequate for her people. India stands in no need of conversion from one faith to another."

Wise words, indeed, spoken in April 1931. We would all do well to remember them today.

(The author is former Indian Ambassador to Russia, High Commissioner to Singapore & Australia and former Diplomatic Advisor to the Prime Minister of India. He is also member of SPMRF Advisory Board.)
One of the most significant economic decisions of the present government was to replace the Planning Commission with a new institution. Accordingly NITI Aayog, which would serve as a Think Tank of the Government, was announced on Jan. 1, 2015.

During the last sixty five years after the formation of the Planning Commission in 1950, lots of economic developments have taken place. As a result, the replacement has become a necessity.

The economic discourse has been dominated by the Western ideologies for a long time. The capitalist ideology was put forth during the late eighteenth century in Europe when there was large scale discontent in the society. The industrial revolution too could not fulfill the expectations of people; it rather created more problems for the working classes. In response to this the communist ideology was placed as the alternative during the second half of the nineteenth century.

After about seven decades of experiments, communism collapsed in Soviet Russia during the late 1980s. The other bastion of the communist ideology namely China, had already abandoned it during the previous decade. As a result, the United States claimed that its market centric ideology was the most suitable one for progress. But the countries that followed the policies advanced by the US have been failing in different places. Soon the global economic crisis in 2008 proved that the US model would no longer work in its own place.

As a result, many economists including those from the US admitted that their theories have failed to capture the realities and the 'one size fits for all approach' would not be suitable to all the countries. Even the multilateral agencies accept that different models might be suitable for different countries. Meanwhile, the performance of different economies during the recent years show that China and India have been growing faster than the others.

Meanwhile studies undertaken by western scholars during the last three decades point out the predominant role of India and China during the earlier centuries. Angus Maddison notes that India was dominating the global economy.
with a share of 32.9 per cent during CE, followed by China. India and China continued to dominate the world economy for the next eighteen centuries, with India remaining at the top, most of the time. India lost her position and ultimately became a poor country due to the colonial policies.

India and China could not have become the two most prosperous nations without their own native economic models. Besides, they remained the most sustainable economies for the longest period in the history. Such a performance would not have been possible without well-functioning systems in place.

Even before Independence, Gandhiji wanted to have wider discussions on the right kind of approach in free India, but the Congress leadership did not listen to him. After independence, the policy makers opted for the socialistic ideas to guide them in decision making. It was during that time that the Planning Commission was established based on the Soviet experience.

After more than three decades of socialistic experiments, the Government went in for a change in approach during the early 1990s. It chose to follow the western market ideology, again without much discussion. The consequences have been severe with the domestic markets being opened up without the required preparations and the basic sectors facing serious difficulties.

It is unfortunate that India, with a very long history of superior economic performance, has been guided by one or the other of western ideologies during all these years. Hence we have not been able to realize our full potential, based on our strengths. But in spite of confusions and contradictions at the policy making levels, the nation continues to move forward due to the strong fundamentals and the innate abilities of our people.

John Kenneth Galbraith, an economist, was the US Ambassador to India during the early 1960s. When he visited India during 2001, he noted: "I wanted to emphasize the point, which would be widely accepted, that the success of India did not depend on the government. ... We have seen many years of Indian progress, and that is attributable to the energy and genius of the Indian people and Indian culture."

Field level studies in different parts of the country indicate that India has her own unique models functioning at different levels. It is these models that are pushing the economy to continuously move
forward, despite the lack of clarity at the top levels. Hence there is little use of adopting the models of other countries.

In this connection, the Cabinet resolution passed to establish NITI Aayog notes that "...the institution must adhere to the tenet that while incorporating positive influences from world, no single model can be transplanted from outside into India." Besides, the resolution states: "We need to find our own strategy for growth. The new institution has to zero in on what will work in and for India."

The resolution is very clear when it mentions: "It will be a Bharatiya approach to development." This is a historic statement for all of us, as the functioning India has been longing for nation-centric approaches. It has taken six and half decades for the Government to state boldly that we would follow our own native approaches. Only a truly nationalistic and self-confident Government can do this.

Family base, higher savings, social capital, high level of entrepreneurship, non-corporate sector, native pool of local resources and the cultural backgrounds of our age-old civilization remain the fundamental strengths of our economy. The Government has for the first time identified the core strengths of our society and initiated steps to nurture and utilize them for economic development.

Social capital is recognized as a critical asset for economic progress and is given the required importance in many countries. Studies show that we have high social capital due to our cultural ethos and that is helping our economy as a major factor. The Government acknowledges its significance and notes that it "needs to be leveraged through appropriate policy initiatives."

The non-corporate sector remains the backbone of our economy, contributing the highest share to the GDP and providing 92 per cent of employment. There are more than 50 million small businesses, playing a very important role in the economy. Most of them are promoted by the ordinary sections of the society through their own initiatives, in distant parts of the country.

They have a huge potential and the ability to transform the lives of large sections of people, yet they are unable to perform to the full extent as they remain neglected. The cabinet resolution notes that "policy making must focus on providing necessary support to this sector in terms of skill and knowledge upgrades and access to financial capital and relevant technology."
The modern discourse has contempt for villages and neglects them in the policy making process. The resolution notes that "villages continue to be the bedrock of our ethos, culture and sustenance". Hence they "need to be integrated in the development process so that we draw from their vitality and energy." So the think tank would "develop mechanisms to formulate credible plans to the village levels and aggregate these progressively at higher levels of government."

The resolution notes that "the pool of entrepreneurial, scientific and intellectual human capital is a source of strength waiting to be unleashed to help attain unprecedented heights of success". Besides it says that the think tank has to ensure that India's unique middle class "remains engaged and its potential fully realized". Moreover it is stated that steps would be taken "to broaden the participation" of the non-resident Indians living abroad.

In the centralized policy making system, there was only one way of flow of policy from the centre to the states. It is "sought to be replaced by a genuine and continuing partnership of states". It is made clear that only strong states could make a strong India. Hence the new institution is "designed to evolve a shared vision of national development priorities, and foster cooperative federalism."

NITI Aayog would enable the country to face challenges by leveraging India's demographic dividend and realizing the potential of the youth. Besides, it would "provide chance to every Indian to live a life of dignity and self-respect".

India is a unique country with diverse backgrounds and hence a uniform model will not be suitable to all the states. The new body is expected to "embrace the specific demands of states, regions and localities". A resource centre is planned as a repository of research on good governance and best practices for dissemination to all those who require it. So far India did not have much of a role to play in the deliberations at the global level. The new body is expected to change it.

NITI Aayog aims to make India well developed economy utilizing all our potential with the involvement of different sections of the society through Bharatiya approaches. We hope that India would regain her glory and emerge as an economic powerhouse at the global level.

(Dr. P.Kanagasabapathi is a Professor and author based in Coimbatore involved in studying the functioning economic, business and social models)
‘बेटी बचाओ, बेटी पढ़ाओ’

• सिद्धार्थ सिंह

बेटियों को पूजन की बात कहने वाले हमारे समाज में आज भी बड़ी संख्या में देखा जाता है। नवले ही हम सब यह सुनते हुए बड़े हुए हों कि स्त्री देवी है, बेटियां पूजनीय हैं, लेकिन अब भी काफी जगह चाहे महानगर हो या सुदूरपश्चिम, जमीनी हंगामत कुछ और ही है। ये भड़ी और घूर्णित सच्चाई आज के भारत की ही है और सब कहे तो हमारे आस-पास की ही है। ना जाने कितनी ही बेटियां स्कूल जाने को तय हैं, स्कूल की इमारत में जाना उनकी जगह ही रह जाती है।

अभी हाल ही में केंद्र सरकार ने इस बदनुमा दाय से अभिक आक्रमकता से निवारण करते हुए यह योजना एक राष्ट्रीय अभियान के जरिए प्रारंभ में सभी राज्यों और केंद्र शासित प्रदेशों के ऐसे 100 चुनिन्दा जिलों में कार्यकर्त्ता की जाएगी, जहां बालक-बालिकाओं का अनुपात बेहद कम है।

‘बेटी बचाओ, बेटी पढ़ाओ’ नाम से एक नई योजना का शुभारम्भ किया है और इस योजना को एक आंदोलन की तरह चलाने की घोषणा की है। प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने 22 जानवरी को हरियाणा के पानीपत से इस अभियान की शुरुआत की या यूं कहें इस आंदोलन का शंखनाद किया। यह योजना एक राष्ट्रीय अभियान के जरिए प्रारंभ में सभी राज्यों और केंद्र शासित प्रदेशों के ऐसे 100 चुनिन्दा जिलों में कार्यकर्ता की जाएगी, जहां बालक-बालिकाओं का अनुपात बेहद कम है। खास बात यह है कि ‘बेटी बचाओ, बेटी पढ़ाओ’ योजना का शुभारम्भ हरियाणा से इस्लिए किया गया है क्योंकि इस राज्य में बालक–बालिका अनुपात सबसे कम यानी सबवधिक खराब है। कन्या भूण हराय जेसी घटनाएं बदतरूर जारी हैं और इस पाप के लिये कोई और नहीं, बल्कि इन अजमी बेटियों के नासमझ माता–पिता या यूं कहें जिजने अपने ही जिम्मेदार हैं। चंद सिक्कों की खातिर डॉक्टर्स के नाम पर कसाई का काम करने वाले कुछ शिक्षित या ज्ञाता छाप डॉक्टर भी इस अपार में उतरने ही माहीदार हैं जितने कि उनके माता–पिता।

जैसा कि प्रधानमंत्री ने कहा कि हम लोग भूल जाते हैं कि बेटियां भी अपने माता–पिता का नाम रोशन करती हैं और वर्क आने पर, खासकर बुधप्रेर में उनका सहारा भी बन सकती है। निष्पुर सोच वाले से ये भी नहीं समझ पा रहे हैं कि अगर बेटियां कम हो गई तो ये अपने बेटों के लिये बुझाएँ कहां से लाएँ। सरकारी और गैर सरकारी तीर्थ पर इस घूंघटित बुराई को रोकने के प्रयासों के बावजूद कन्या भूण हराए आज भी हो रही है।

‘बेटी बचाओ, बेटी पढ़ाओ’ योजना का मुख्य उद्देश्य ‘बालक–बालिका’ अनुपात बढ़ाना है। बालक–बालिका अनुपात से यह पता चलता है कि किसी भी राज्य या शहर या देश में हर 1000 बालकों के अनुपात में कितनी बालिकाएं हैं। एक दुखद सच यह है कि कन्या भूण हराय की निमंत्रण घटनाओं के चलते भारत में यह अनुपात लगातार घटता जा रहा है। वर्ष 1991 में हर 1000 बालकों पर 945 बालिकाएं थीं, लेकिन वर्ष 2011 में हर 1000 बालकों पर 918 बालिकाएं ही थीं। आंकड़े बताते हैं कि इस दौरान हरियाणा में यह अनुपात सबसे कम रहा जहां 1000 पुरुषों के मुकाबले सिर्फ 877 महिलायें है।

महिला पुरुष अनुपात दर की तरीक़े तो प्रतिसाधनकर ही है लेकिन भारत महिला साक्षात की तरीक़े भी प्रतिसाधनकर है। 2011 में महिला साक्षात का 65. 46 प्रतिशत तथा पुरुष साक्षात का 82.14 प्रतिशत दर्ज की गयी। बिहार में यह दर सबसे कम यानी 46.
40 प्रतिशत उत्तर प्रदेश में 51.36 प्रतिशत, हरियाणा में 56.91 प्रतिशत तथा राजस्थान में 47.76 प्रतिशत है।
• वेटी बच्चों, वेटी पदातियों अधिकारी के मुख्य विवरण:
  • सभी ग्राम पंचायतों में युवा-युवती बोर्ड लगाए जाएंगे। हर ग्रामीण इस बोर्ड में संबंधित गांव के बालक-बालिका अनुपात को दर्शाया जाएगा।
  • ग्राम पंचायत तहसील में कम-कम एक दर्जन लड़कियों का जन्म होने पर उसके पारिवार को तोहफा में भेजेगी।
  • ग्राम पंचायत साल में कम-से-कम एक दर्जन लड़कियों का जन्म होने पर उसके पारिवार को तोहफा में भेजेगी।
• अन्य ग्रामीण इंसानों को ‘बेटी बच्चों, बेटी पदातियों’ की सम्पूर्णता का जन्मदिन मनाएगी।
• किसी गांव में अगर बालक-बालिका अनुपात बढ़ता है, तो वहाँ का ग्राम पंचायत को समानित किया जाएगा।
• बाल विकास के लिए ग्राम प्रदेश को जिम्मेदार माना जाएगा और उसके प्रति खिलफ कार्रवाई होगी।
• कथा बृहस्पति रोकने के बारे में जागरूकता फैलाने के लिए स्थानीय स्कूलों और कॉलेजों को अधिनियम में शामिल किया जाएगा।
• वेटी बच्चों, वेटी पदातियों कार्यक्रम के तहत उन 100 जिलों का चयन 23 राज्यों क्षेत्र शासित प्रदेशों में किया जायेगा जहाँ बालक-बालिका अनुपात 918 के राष्ट्रीय औसत से भी कम है।
• वेटी बच्चों, वेटी पदातियों योजना महिला एवं बाल विकास मंत्रालय, मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय और स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय की एक संयुक्त पहल है। महिला एवं बाल विकास मंत्रालय के अनुसार यह योजना लड़कियों और महिलाओं के अधिकारों का समान करने और उन्हें सुखद प्रदान करने पर भी केंद्रित होगी।
• इस दृष्टिकोण में अपना पहला कदम रखने के लिए तेज बीड़ी उड़ खाने की शर्म करना और उन्हें शिक्षित कर अपनी जिंदगी में आने वाली तामाम चुनौतियों का समाधान करने लायक बनाना ‘बेटी बच्चों, बेटी पदातियों’ योजना का मुख्य उद्देश्य है। आने वाले दिनों में देश भर में जन अभिनव के माध्यम से सामाजिक मानसिकता को बदल कर और इस विषम विषय पर जागरूकता पैदा करके इस योजना को सफल बनाने की कोशिश की जाएगी। इसमें लड़कियों एवं महिलाओं से कुछ जा रहे मेदबोध को समाप्त करने पर भी जोर दिया जाएगा।
• बालक-बालिका अनुपात में बेहतरी को सुनाम के एक प्रभावी विकास संकेत के तौर पर शामिल करना भी इसका एक उद्देश्य है। इस योजना की मुख्य रणनीतियों में सामाजिक लाभार्थी एवं संवाद अधिनियम को बढ़ावा देना भी शामिल है ताकि सामाजिक मानदंडों में बदलाव लाने के साथ-साथ बालिकाओं को समान महत्व दिलाया जा सके।
• महिला एवं बाल विकास मंत्रालय की जिम्मेदार आंगनबाड़ी केंद्रों पर गर्भपात के पंजीकरण को प्रोत्साहित करना, बालीकों को प्रशिक्षित करना, सामुदायिक लाभार्थी और अपनी संवाद को बढ़ावा देना। बालक-बालिका अनुपात को कम करने के अधिनियम में ज़ोर ‘धैर्ययोग्य’ को शामिल किया तथा अधिकांश मौजूद एवं संस्थाओं को मान्यता और पुरस्कार देना है। स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय की जिम्मेदार गर्भधारण पूर्व और जन्म पूर्व जाँच तकनीकों पर चार्ड नजर रखना, अस्पतालों में प्रवेश को बढ़ावा देना, जन्म पंजीकरण तथा निगरानी समितियों का गठन करना है।
• मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय की जिम्मेदार लड़कियों का पंजीकरण, स्कूलों में लड़कियों की झूठ आउट दर में कमी लाना, विद्यालयों में लड़कियों के अनुरूप मानक बनाना, शिक्षा के अधिकार अधिकारिक पर सफलता से अमल करना तथा स्कूलों में लड़कियों के लिए सौचालय बनाने पर विशेष ध्यान देना की है।
• प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने बीड़ी को उनका हक दिलाने के लिए इस अभियान की शुरुआत की है ताकि उन के साथ मेदबोध खत्म किया जा सके और कन्या बृहस्पति रोकने का ठीक दिशा में से सरकारी कदम उठाये जा सकें। बेटी बच्चों, बेटी पदातियों योजना का उनका हक दिलाने वाला अभियान निर्मित सूचि से एक जननिहत और राष्ट्रीयता क्रांति है।
Advocating Indigenisation - a Perspective

In its first budget presented last year, the new Narendra Modi-led NDA government substantially increased the allocation for the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO). This move was a signal that the new government accepted that defence R&D in India had thus far been characterized by decades of underinvestment leading to a shortage of manpower and a dearth of critical testing facilities. Concurrently, it has also made aerospace and defence (A&D) a pillar of the 'Make in India' program recognizing the need to increase India's supplier base in this domain. Besides pushing for much greater domestic private sector participation it is also open to attracting 'FDI in defence' for that purpose. So clearly, military hardware indigenization has been adopted as a strategic imperative and the government seems to be proceeding on a twin track of pushing domestic R&D while simultaneously augmenting India's manufacturing base for defence equipment. This is a wise course of action since both paths reinforce each other. However to ensure the political sustainability of this process it is important to foreground indigenization as a national ideological pursuit.

Among the three pillars of the non-alignment movement, it was actually the erstwhile Yugoslavia under Tito that put the greatest emphasis on indigenization and his country emerged as a remarkable player in conventional arms in the post war period. Tito understood that true 'non-alignment' could only be pursued with as little dependence as possible on foreign powers for armaments. Nasser's Egypt and Nehru's India unfortunately did not and could not pursue indigenization with anywhere near that zeal. Post-1962, India for instance ended up heavily dependent on the Soviets once the Americans turned down Nehru's request for F-104 Starfighters and the era of license production in India began with the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) commencing domestic manufacture of the Mig-21 in mid-sixties. While license production has yielded benefits to India it has also calibrated India in the aerospace sector and induced a tendency in the defence public...
sector units (PSUs) and indeed in the military towards dependency on foreign technology besides the usual inefficiency issues that plague PSUs unless specifically addressed.

After all, as the T-90 production experience shows, transplanting a foreign design conceived in a different industrial eco-system, not to mention under a different doctrinal environment is never easy to do and keeps the importing country dependent on the supplier for maintenance support thereby curbing strategic autonomy. Mere diversification of sources of foreign technology does not address the dependency issue substantively while creating a diversity of types that can be a headache to operate and maintain.

Now while India need no longer call it 'non-alignment', to burnish its place as one of the major poles of the newly emergent world order, it needs to indigenize its military hardware pool. Whether it be to win the 'war on jobs', or to increase the overall technological capability of its economy (a must for winning future 'wars for jobs'), or to ensure unfettered energy security for its current economy, or to have an area of influence through military exports, or indeed to shape global trends autonomously, it simply cannot let its national budget leak into the hands of foreign players year after year through military imports.

Thanks to our strategic missile programs, where DRDO has clearly delivered, India does have key private players in the A&D space in addition to over a thousand small and medium players also participating. And it is not just strategic missiles, today almost Rs 200,000 crore worth of (non-strategic) DRDO developed equipment has been produced or is under production in India. A lot of this quantum actually comes from radar, sonar and other electronic warfare equipment all of which cannot really be imported on account of operational security considerations. Essentially, many thresholds have today been crossed and it is time to order what has already been developed in substantial numbers to bring about economies of scale and increase private sector participation in defence. The usual lament about a certain indigenously developed system having high import content can easily be addressed through better minimum order quantities.

After all the system level intellectual property (IP) which is what really counts in the hi-tech space resides in India for a domestically developed A&D
product enabling much easier modification of the design with new sub-systems. The way forward therefore is to facilitate the creation of greater domestic IP by supporting DRDO working with both the public and private sector and allowing it to recruit the fresh young talent it needs. Indeed, Prime Minister Modi’s suggestion of five laboratories headed by young scientists is important especially in light of developing technology for the new cyber, space and Special Forces joint commands being progressed by the military. Similarly the process for seeding centres of excellence focused on defence technology with DRDO handholding in places like the IITs has also begun.

Now while Swadeshi needs to be backed to the hilt with a clear focus on domestic R&D and larger orders for domestic equipment through a spiral development approach, Videshi too can be leveraged for the faster growth of India's A&D space. Indian companies have already been given the leeway to partner with foreign players while bidding for specific projects. Indeed, Prime Minister Modi must engage President Obama for specifically this purpose given that India's light combat aircraft (LCA) uses a General Electric engine. The LCA's MK-2 variant will also be eminently exportable to a host of South East Asian and African countries and in these markets it would be competing with the China-Pakistan JF-17 Thunder which is powered by a Russian engine. So ironically, while the Sino-Pak axis will offer a combat jet powered by a Russian turbofan, India could offer the LCA as competition whilst using an American engine.

Nevertheless, even as India follows a multi-pronged path for 'Make in India', the mindset must be firmly towards building domestic products. In any case domestic R&D has proved to be the only way to absorb foreign transfer of technology as the indigenization of the T-90s gun barrel shows. This is something that both China and South Korea have understood for a long time. In order to create an ecosystem where there is a decided focus on India A&D products the national psychological sphere must take pride in what is being done in India and understand the importance of Indian brand value. For that indigenization needs to be pursued as nothing short of an ideology.

[The author is a commentator on defence issues and has written extensively on these matters]
Green cover exposed
Illegal and unconstitutional directives by Rahul Gandhi to Jayanti Natarajan

With the Congress facing desertions in every major state, it was only a matter of time that Jayanthi Natarajan, former environment minister, who was unceremoniously evicted from the Union Cabinet on December 20, 2013, would hit back at the decaying party. Her letter of resignation, a tell-all tale of illegal, unconstitutional intrusion of the Congress top brass at either stifling or enabling clearances for a supposed quid pro quo, is a body blow to the party.

The question that needs an answer is whether the oath of secrecy taken by UPA Union ministers under the Constitution in Third Schedule has been violated or not. More than Ms Jayanthi Natarajan, it is Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi who must answer the issues that the former Minister for Environment and Forests in the UPA Government has flagged on certain contentious decisions she took while in office. Ms Natarajan has categorically said that she made those decisions on Mr Gandhi’s "directives".

It is true that as a Minister, Ms Natarajan had no business to treat the 'requests' of the Congress leader, who had no position in the Government, as directives, and that she was accountable in her official capacity to the Prime Minister alone. But then, given the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty’s hold over the Congress and the party’s Governments, her action was not surprising. And, she was not the only Minister to have done the party’s first family's bidding.

Therefore, what she says has added heft. The selectiveness of Mr Gandhi in prodding the then Environment Minister to take decisions demonstrates that the Environment and Forests Ministry was governed not by laid down policies but by the whims and fancies of Mr Gandhi and the like, which would include the Sonia Gandhi-led National Advisory Council. The Congress vice president must answer why he sought to directly influence decision-making in the ministry.

The larger issue here is the brazen interference in the Manmohan Singh Government's functioning by the likes of Mr Gandhi. The issue of Nehru-Gandhi family members' interference had been earlier exposed by Dr. Manmohan Singh's media advisor Sanjay Baru and former Union Minister K Natwar Singh as well.

(SPMRF Desk)
About the message and the recipient

Barack Obama's reference to freedom of religious practice and Article 25 was really aimed at the over-zealous soul-harvesting types in India

This January 26 provided an interesting as well as reassuring image. The leader of the world's largest democracy, a leader who once sold tea on a railway platform to passengers passing through his small town and who, working his way through the democratic process, rose to become the chief executive of his country was receiving the leader of the world's leading democracy.

The moment was poignant and was a tribute to India's civilisational spirit - a spirit which resisting strong efforts at periodic subversion has allowed and enabled a commoner, a man of the people, a 'small-town' boy and a constituent of the hoi-polloi, to rise up the ranks and to occupy that seat whose first occupant was an accented and erudite 'Harrowian'.

Not only is such a rise, a reflection of the essential civilisationally democratic spirit of India, which has in reality survived because of the predominantly Hindu worldview and ethos, but is also a reflection of the ways and perceptions of the myriad socio-cultural and service organisations in whose ranks the leader once worked and was groomed. Unfortunately the unilateral discourse hitherto forced on the country - which is finally slackening and dissolving - never allowed a balanced assessment of these organisations and of their societal and national contribution.

It sufficed for a section to simply blackout the legacies and contributions of these organisation and their efforts for national regeneration, by talking of hidden agendas and of raising the spectre of a 'fascist state'. In fact, whether he was aware of it or not, the American President was, in a sense, witnessing the spirit of the Indian Republic as it has been sustained, not so much by a system, but more by the ethos of the vast majority of this land despite adversities - both external and internal.

The American President was treated in the true Hindu spirit of treating guests. The Prime Minister himself took care of the details, was himself graciously present to receive the visiting dignitary and stood with great dignity till the American President's car left the
tarmac on arrival. It is these, apparently small gestures, which reflected the essential spirit of 'Bharat', a stark contrast to the usual Westernised way of doing and seeing things.

The aspiration of ushering in a tectonic shift in India-US relations, the urge to see this long stymied relationship rise to newer dimensions and evolve more intricate and fruitful strategies was palpable. Among the visions and statements that emerged out of the visit, from a civilisational-reach, perspective and strategy, the 'Joint Strategic Vision for Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region', in a sense, recognised India's legitimate aspirations for re-creating her civilisational space in the Asia-Pacific and beyond. The vision statement also recognised India's role in the Indian Ocean region and accepted the area as her unique civilisational sphere where, for millennia, she has generated waves, controlled currents while pursuing her civilisational goals.

The strategic vision for this region referred to a new partnership while calling upon India to become pro-active from Africa to East Asia. Interestingly, the area or spheres that the document refers to, regions in which it sees India becoming active and generating multi-dimensional partnerships have been areas where Indian traders, artists, philosophers and exegetes were most active, in the past, having an unfettered liberté de circulation.

Mr Obama himself seemed to have well absorbed Indian viewpoints. His much talked about reference to Article 25 and to freedom of religious practice and public order in India was surely aimed at those overzealous soul-harvesting types who, by their vigorous and insidious religious interventionism in the last six decades, have only generated disaffection while disturbing public order in India. The United States Commission for International Religious Freedom too could perhaps absorb the President's advice in the right spirit and prevent these public order disrupters from visiting India. Mr Obama was absolutely right on Article 25; his message was meant for the other side.

(Courtesy: The Pioneer, 02 Feb 2015)
Achievements of the present Government in the Winter Session of Parliament

The Winter Session of Parliament met from November 24th to December 23rd 2014. During this winter session, the Lok Sabha functioned smoothly while the Rajya Sabha lost significant time to disruptions caused by opposition parties mainly the TMC owing to the arrest of a state minister by the CBI (in relation to Saradha Chitfund Scam). While some legislative business was transacted during the session, both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha discussed various issues. These related to black money, natural calamities, India’s stand at the WTO, MNREGA etc. During this session, Lok Sabha in which the present Modi-led government has a majority worked for 98% of its scheduled time. 44% of its productive time was spent on discussing various issues, 35% on legislation and 14% on answering questions. However, Rajya Sabha worked for only 59% of its scheduled time. Rajya Sabha spent 34% on discussing issues, 33% on legislation and 8% on answering questions.

11 Bills were passed by both Houses during this session. These included three Bills related to higher education and two Bills addressing labour laws. 16 Bills were introduced during the session. Two of the 11 Bills passed in Lok Sabha i.e. Repealing and Amending Bill, 2014 and Payment and Settlement Systems Bill, 2014 were referred to Select Committees of Rajya Sabha on the last day of the session. The bills referred to Standing Committee by Lok Sabha were The Lokpal and Lokayuktas and other related Law (Amendment) Bill, 2014 and The Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2014.

Of the 37 bills lined up during the current session, the three crucial ones that hit roadblocks included the Insurance Bill, the Coal Bill and The Constitution Amendment Bill. The main reason for the obstruction is that while the ruling BJP has 282 seats in the 545-member Lower House of Parliament, it doesn’t have a majority in the 250-member Upper House, where it has just 43 seats. Thus the BJP depends on the Congress Party, with 68 seats, to push through bills.

The Insurance Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2008, if passed, would raise the limits on foreign investment in the
List of Bills introduced in the Parliament in Winter Session, 2014

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List of Bills passed by the Parliament in Winter Session, 2014

1. The Apprentices (Amendment) Bill, 2014
3. The Indian Institutes of Information Technology Bill, 2014
4. The School of Planning and Architecture Bill, 2014
5. The Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2014
6. The Textile Undertakings (Nationalisation) Laws (Amendment And Validation) Bill, 2014
7. The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Orders (Amendment) Bill, 2014
8. The Merchant Shipping (Second Amendment) Bill, 2013
10. The Labour Laws (Exemption from Furnishing Returns and Maintaining Registers by Certain Establishments) Amendment Bill, 2011
11. The Delhi Special Police Establishment (Amendment) Bill, 2014
insurance business to 49% from the current 26% and also formulate rules to permit foreign firms to invest in reinsurance. (Status: In the Rajya Sabha)

The Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Bill, 2014, would empower the government to auction coal-mining licenses to both private and state-controlled companies, and also enable the government to allow private companies, for the first time, to mine and sell coal. (Currently, licenses involve an application process, and companies can't sell coal, but only use it for their own needs.) The bill was cleared by the lower house on December 12. (Status: Pending approval in the Rajya Sabha)

The Constitution Amendment Bill 2011, or GST Bill, seeks to amend the Constitution to allow for the introduction of a uniform, national goods-and-services tax—potentially India’s biggest tax overhaul in years. The implementation of GST has been opposed by some states because they are reluctant to surrender their right to impose such taxes. In particular, some have objected to the inclusion of petroleum products and liquor-major sources of revenue—in the proposed GST. (Status: Introduced in the Lok Sabha during the current session)

As of now 66 bills remain pending in the Parliament. The Parliament is now scheduled to meet again on February 23rd for the Budget Session. Let us hope that good sense prevails over the opposition and they let Parliament function smoothly so that the BJP government which is dedicated to delivering its promises of good governance and development sees no hindrances in its functioning which is in the best interest of the nation.

(Shubhendu Anand is a Law student at University of Delhi and a Research Associated at SPMRF, New Delhi)
"Make in Northeast" initiative announced by DoNER:

Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) has announced Make in Northeast initiative. 'Make in Northeast' initiative is basically inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Make in India" concept. The following key points provide an insight into this multi-dimensional as well as unique initiative.

**Key points:**

- The initiative will, in the long run, seek to promote exclusive Northeast expertise in areas like tea processing, organic farming, food processing, exploitation of wind power through windmills, AYUSH, wellness therapies like spas, etc.

- In order to develop the Northeast as a destination for investors, holiday seekers and tourists, mega circuit and mega destination projects of the Ministry of Tourism in the area will also be pursued. A Brand Ambassador will be appointed, who shall personify the heritage and identity of Northeast and at the same time, inspire the rest of the country to look east and act east.

- A 2015 Calendar has also been issued by DoNER based on the theme of Northeast Festivals with each month displaying the traditional local festivals of each region in that particular season. When circulated across the country, this Annual Calendar shall serve as a document to introduce the tradition, culture and tourism of the region through one single document.

- The issue of connectivity in the Northeastern states is a matter of major concern for the country. Road and rail network in the region is still inadequate due to difficult terrain placing a lot of dependence on air travel. That is why the Government of India has requested airlines to increase the number of aircrafts and the frequency of flights to these states. The Government is ready to provide more incentives to the airlines.

- One of the most vital objectives of the 'Make in Northeast' initiative will be not only to generate revenue for Northeast but also to create job opportunities and to prevent the exodus of youth from that region to the rest of the country.

*(SPMRF Desk)*
Rejuvenating our Civilisational Anchor: National Heritage Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY)

Aiming to integrate and rejuvenate the cultural and civilisational dimension in nation-making the Ministry of Urban Development has launched the National Heritage Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY), a unique initiative that seeks to preserve and rejuvenate the rich cultural heritage of the country. HRIDAY seeks to promote an integrated, inclusive and sustainable development of heritage sites, focusing not just on maintenance of monuments but on advancement of the entire region that falls within the cultural parameter of the monument. With 32 UNESCO recognized natural and cultural heritage sites, ranking second in Asia and fifth in the world, the tourism potential of India is still to be fully harnessed and the new scheme will help in this regard. Rs.500 crore would be provided to 12 cities selected in the first phase under this 'Central Scheme' of HRIDAY. The Central Government will meet the entire expenditure under the scheme.

Sanction letters are distributed to the select 12 cities for spending over the next two years.

Based on the city population, Varanasi was allocated Rs.89.31 crore, Amritsar Rs.69.31 crore, Warangal (Telangana) Rs.40.54 crore, Ajmer Rs.40.04 crore, Gaya Rs.40.04 crore, Mathura Rs.40.04 crore, Kanchipuram - Rs.23.04 crore and Vellankini Rs.22.26 crore, both in Tamil Nadu, Amaravati (AP) Rs.22.26 crore, Badami (Karnataka) Rs.22.26 crore, Dwaraka (Gujarat) Rs.22.26 crore and Puri Rs.22.54 crore. Overall the HRIDAY scheme will promote tourism in the country in a big way, generate jobs and revenue and will, in the long run, focus and strengthen our civilisational anchors.

(�PMRF Desk)
India carried out the maiden canister-based trial of its most potent missile from Wheeler's Island off Odisha coast. The Canister would make the missile fully road or rail mobile, giving a great deal of secrecy and flexibility to the country's strategic strike capability. Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed scientists for the successful test-firing of 'Agni V' and said the missile is a prized asset for the country's forces.

![India's Agni V missile](image)

**National Positives**

**Canisterised Agni-5 ICBM Test fired successfully:**

Marking another milestone in the country's deterrence capability, India has successfully test fired its indigenously developed, intercontinental surface-to-surface nuclear capable ballistic missile 'Agni-5', which has a strike range of over 5000 kms and can carry a nuclear warhead of over one tonne.
India to Grow Faster than China in 2016: IMF & World Bank

India is projected to become the world’s fastest growing economy by 2016-17 with a growth rate of 6.5%, topping China’s 6.3%. This projection has been made by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its latest World Economic Outlook Update, released on 20 January, 2015. A similar projection had also been made by the World Bank recently which says that India will grow at 7% in 2017-18, a tad higher than China’s 6.9%.

Unnat Bharat Abhiyan

Unnat Bharat Abhiyan is a programme that has been started by MHRD with an aim to connect institutions of higher education, including Indian Institute of Technology (IITs), National Institutes of Technology (NITs) and Indian Institutes of Science Education & Research (IISERs) etc. with local communities to address the development challenges through appropriate technologies. The objectives of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan are broadly two fold:

1. Building institutional capacity in Institutes of higher education in research & training relevant to the needs of rural India.
2. Provide rural India with professional resource support from institutes of higher education, especially those which have acquired academic excellence in the field of Science, Engineering & Technology and Management

Under this programme, 132 villages have been identified for intervention by top 16 institutes of higher education so far.
Dispelling any doubts that the new Modi government had not formulated its foreign policy, Prime Minister Modi gave clear indications within three months of his swearing-in that the central pillar of his foreign policy will be to accord priority to India’s neighbourhood and pay particular attention to ensuring friendly neighbours. In the process, he simultaneously defined the contours of his government’s policy for India’s neighbourhood and outlined India’s geographic area of immediate strategic interest.

Breaking New Ground

The new initiatives were set in motion even before the swearing-in ceremony on May 26 when, for the first time ever, leaders of neighbouring countries, and those in whom India has an abiding interest, were invited to New Delhi for the event. This initiative immediately sent out a number of messages, including that the new prime minister will take active interest in foreign policy issues and

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would readily engage and communicate directly with these and other world leaders. The initiative strongly signalled that India...is eager to tap the existing
economic potential, by assisting in the development of its neighbours. It offers all these countries an opportunity to forge a closer, cooperative partnership with India, join in India’s growth and benefit from the enhanced economic opportunities flowing from India’s growth and rise. The resounding popular mandate, not seen in the past 30 years that his party, the BJP, received, strengthens the initiatives that Modi could take, and many relationships will be examined afresh, possibly breaking new ground.

"The ruling BJP's majority in parliament gives New Delhi a high degree of flexibility in crafting foreign policy."

The presence of Pakistan’s Nawaz Sharif and Sri Lanka’s Rajapakse at the swearing-in ceremony unambiguously clarified that India’s foreign policy would be decided by the Centre and will not be held hostage to local political considerations or by state governments...The ruling BJP’s majority in parliament gives New Delhi a high degree off flexibility in crafting foreign policy...

**Consolidating Commerce and Cultural Connections**

...Equally important was Modi’s decision to visit Bhutan and Nepal which rectified the absence of high-level diplomatic exchanges between India and these countries, and continued the engagement started at the swearing-in ceremony. Relations with both countries impact directly on India’s security. The existing close ties between India and these countries and persistent efforts by China to make inroads into Bhutan and expand influence in Nepal right up to Nepal’s borders with India, were undoubtedly major considerations. By making Bhutan the first foreign country that he visited, Modi emphasised the importance of this relationship to India. He received a warm welcome and met Bhutan’s King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and Queen Jetsun Pema. The emphasis was on enhancing and consolidating people- to-people ties and business interests, with trade as an additional area of focus.

"Cooperation, connectivity, culture and the constitution were the leitmotifs of PM’s Nepal visit"
...Modi’s two-day visit to Nepal in August 2014, the first by an Indian prime minister in 17 years, was aimed at emphasising traditional socio-cultural ties between the two countries. He sought to assuage Kathmandu’s concerns by expansively stating that India was open to all suggestions by Kathmandu, including on the Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950. Cooperation, connectivity, culture and the constitution were the leitmotifs of the visit, when he interacted with the full spectrum of Nepal’s political leadership, including CPN-Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal...and Chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal, KP Oli. He especially appreciated that the Maoists had given up arms and opted instead for the ballot box. He sought to subtly impress on the Nepalese leaders and people that certain benefits could only be provided by India.

In addition to extending a $1 billion line of credit, he emphasised the development of road transport and Internet infrastructure with India and hydel power projects. The first two directly highlight the employment opportunities that will become available once they are developed. Construction and exploitation of Nepal's hydel power reserves will not only give Nepal adequate power supply, but will provide the country an unceasing steady source of revenue. All three benefits can only result from closer cooperative Indo-Nepal ties...

Modi has outlined India's policy towards its neighbours early in his term... Clearly, the stress will be on building economic ties and cooperative relations, while seeking to dispel any apprehensions of interference by India. At the same time, Modi's government will be expected to ensure India's security interests by co-opting the support of its neighbours. The key to building good relations with neighbours will not only be India's willingness to adopt a large-hearted approach but, most importantly, the ability to conceive, conclude and complete contracted projects within an accelerated time schedule.

(Jayadeva Ranade is a Member of the National Security Advisory Board and former Additional Secretary in the Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India. He is President of the Centre for China Analysis and Strategy, New Delhi and is on the SPMRF Advisory Board)

(Courtesy: Diplomatist, Sept. 2014)
On assuming office as Prime Minister, there was much uncertainty as to what would be the style and substance of Narendra Modi's foreign policy. While some wagered it would be blatantly chauvinistic, others felt it was likely to be marked by diffidence. In a little over four months in office, Modi has set at rest all speculation and provided clear indications of the nature of his foreign policy and how he would conduct it.

In terms of style, Modi is his own man and will not let anyone including the external affairs ministry to set the tone or dampen his innovation. His invite to the SAARC countries and Mauritius for his swearing-in, the choice of Bhutan for his first bilateral visit, his reception of Xi Jinping in Gujarat, his packed schedule in the US bear the hallmarks of his personal touch. His unmatched communicative skills constitute an integral and valuable part of his diplomacy. This talent is especially well-suited to forging close personal ties with key players and will stand him in good stead over time. Projecting Indianness—whether by speaking in Hindi, worshipping at the Pashupatinath temple in Nepal and providing funds to build a dharamshala or maintaining his Navratrafast in the US—forms a novel element in Indian diplomacy that he has taken to a new level. As to substance, Modi's foreign policy is informed by the overarching vision that it must be relentlessly harnessed to build a more developed, prosperous and stronger India. In the backdrop of this vision, his foreign policy appears to encompass the following elements: primacy to dealings with neighbours; cultivation of all major players to leverage their capacities to develop India; hedging against a rising China; robust protection of Indian interests; harnessing of the diaspora for furthering Indian interests.

That dealings with neighbours will enjoy a very high priority in Modi's foreign policy was evident in the President's address on June 9 to both Houses of Parliament. He underlined that the invitation to the SAARC neighbours for Modi's swearing-in symbolised the government's "commitment and determination to work towards building a peaceful, stable and
economically interlinked neighbourhood which is essential for the collective development and prosperity of the South Asian Region”. Modi’s choice of Bhutan for his first bilateral visit followed weeks later by his Nepal visit is evidence of the importance attached by him to India’s relations with neighbours. The latter assumes great significance as the last visit to Nepal by an Indian Prime Minister was way back in 1997. Visits to both countries were a resounding success due to Modi winning the hearts and minds of all those who he interacted with, the content of the cooperative initiatives undertaken, and in part due to India’s largesse by way, for instance, of the $1-billion soft credit line extended to Nepal for infrastructure and energy development as per its priorities and requirements and the ‘$45 billion pledged to Bhutan for its 11th five-year plan.

Modi’s visit to Japan and the US greatly strengthened India’s ties with the countries particularly in the economic and commercial fields. Similarly, Xi Jinping’s visit was also used to upgrade Sino-Indian economic links notwithstanding the troubled relationship between the two. The joint statement issued during his visit indicates China would seek to realise an investment
The Indo-US and Indo-Japan joint statements also bring out that Modi has engaged in hedging against China. The former asserts that Modi and Obama intended “to expand defense cooperation to bolster national, regional, and global security” and that the two nations “would build an enduring partnership in which both sides treat each other at the same level as their closest partners, including defense technology transfers, trade, research, co-production, and co-development”. It also states the two leaders expressed concern about rising tensions in the Asia Pacific and “affirmed the importance of safeguarding maritime security and ensuring freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region, especially in the South China Sea”. Similarly, the Tokyo Declaration mentions the intent of India and Japan to upgrade and bolster defence cooperation through bilateral and trilateral maritime exercises, to cooperate in transfer of Japanese defence equipment like the US-2 amphibious aircraft as well as technology, and the belief of their leaders that “a closer and stronger strategic partnership” between the two is indispensable for their prosperity and for advancing peace and prosperity in the world, in particular, in the inter-connected Asia, Pacific and Indian Ocean regions.

Modi has imparted a welcome robustness to our foreign policy in protecting Indian interests. Thus, he has not hesitated in calling off talks with Pakistan when red lines have been crossed or in conveying that unaffordable costs would be imposed for its adventurism. With China he did some hard talking to Xi Jinping on the Chumar incident and secured a commitment from the latter for an early settlement of the border issue. With the USA he resisted pressure to renege on India’s blocking of the Trade Facilitation Agreement pending a permanent solution to stocking for food security, and with Japan he didn’t give in to pressures on nuclear related issues.

Finally, he intends to use the diaspora as a tool in rebuilding India. This explains his intensive interaction and calling on them in the US to return and contribute to India’s development.

The writer is a Former Deputy National Security Adviser, Government of India.

(The article courtesy: The New Indian Express, 20th October, 2014)
BJP Adhyaksha's Perspectives

"The BJP is always ready to give platform to people doing good work in all sections of the society"

As you are trying to build new leaders in Delhi will you do the same in Tamil Nadu? Will you give platform to outside leadership in your party?

Forget Delhi and Tamil Nadu, the BJP is always ready to give platform to people doing good work in all sections of the society be it Hema Malini, Shatrughan Sinha, Vinod Khanna or Navjot Singh Siddhu. They were not traditionally BJP workers. We gave them space. There are several people with good credentials who we have brought into the party. This is nothing new.

What is your reaction to President Obama's comment in his farewell speech wherein he said that India divided on religious lines cannot progress?

Everybody says that. Even we say it. Our Constitution says so. What is new in it?

He made a pointed reference.

He did not say such things are happening in our country.

Several statements coming from BJP MPs have threatened communal harmony......?

No, there is no threat to communal harmony. Communal harmony will be maintained. There will not be any disturbance.

You have moved away from your development agenda and caught on to gharwapsi, a divisive social agenda?

Development agenda and gharwapsi have nothing to do with one another. The way of thinking should be changed. Conversion is a problem. We believe that there should be a law on forcible conversion. Not a single so-called secular party has come forward on this. Should forcible conversion be stopped or not? I believe they should be. So those who want to stop forcible conversion should come with us. [But] no one comes forward. Not even you.

You want a law?

Yes. There have been enough debates since 1950 that forcible conversions should be stopped in the country. Enough is enough.

There us another controversy now on whether the words secular and socialist should be in the Preamble of the Constitution or not?

This debate too is meaningless. BJP believes that the Preamble as it stands today is fine. There is no need to change it.

India's relations have improved with a lot of countries but with Pakistan there is a setback. Would the ruling BJP want that there is forward movement in this direction too?

Definitely, Indian government had taken the initiative to talk with Pakistan but when their High Commissioner here talks to separatists...Pakistan should talk to India. It cannot talk with separatists. That is what is holding up talks.

Winning elections in Delhi will take you one step closer to Congress-mukth (Congress-free) India?

Delhi is already free of Congress (laughs).

Why do you want Congress-mukth Bharat?

We talk of India free of Congress ideology...not of Congress as a party.

[Excerpts from an exclusive interview that BJP President Shri Amit Shah gave to the Hindu]
"We do not wish it to be known that we are simply the torch-bearers of somebody else, because we have also our own philosophy and our ideology. The doctrine for which India has stood has been the doctrine of live and let live...there are certain fundamental and basic ideologies for which India has stood and even stands today. We stand for freedom of expression, for freedom of thought, for freedom of association and religion and our Constitution has been based on the sound principles of democracy...Today two things are vitally necessary. We have to strengthen our military position and if we cannot do it alone we shall have to do it in collaboration with others with whom we can stand on a common platform in defence of a common ideology. Then we shall have to strengthen internal strength and peace, and satisfactorily solve the economic problem...so that we can create that solidarity and stability which would be impregnable both from the national and international standpoints."

- Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee
(Discussion in Parliament on the International Situation, 6th December, 1950)