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An Indian perspective

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Special Article

NITI Aayog: Bharathiya Approaches to Development

The Obama Visit

In Focus

बेटी बचाओ,
बेटी पढ़ाओ

Digital India Program- building a
knowledge economy, empowering
citizens

Green cover
exposed

हमारा लक्ष्य



हमने किसी संप्रदाय या वर्ग की सेवा का नहीं, बल्कि सम्पूर्ण राष्ट्र की सेवा का व्रत लिया है। सभी देशवासी हमारे बांधव हैं। जब तक हम इन सभी बंधुओं को भारतमाता के सपूत होने का सच्चा गौरव प्रदान नहीं करा देंगे, हम चुप नहीं बैठेंगे। हम भारत माता को सही अर्थों में सुजला, सुफला बनाकर रहेंगे। यह दशप्रहरणधारिणी दुर्गा बनकर असुरों का संहार करेगी; लक्ष्मी बनकर जन-जन को समृद्धि देगी और सरस्वती बनकर अज्ञानांधकार को दूर कर ज्ञान का प्रकाश फैलाएगी। हिंदमहासागर और

हिमालय से परिवेष्टित भरतखंड में जब तक एकरसता, कर्मठता, संपन्नता, ज्ञानवता, सुख और शक्ति की सप्तजाह्वी का पुण्यप्रवाह नहीं ला पाते, हमारा भागीरथ तप पूरा नहीं होगा। इस प्रयास में ब्रह्मा, विष्णु और महेश सभी हमारे सहायक होंगे। विजय का विश्वास है। तपस्या का निश्चय लेकर चलें। वंदे मातरम्।

- दीनदयाल उपाध्याय

(अध्यक्षीय भाषण, कालीकट अधिवेशन, 1968)

02	EDITORIAL	31	Achievements of the present Government in the Winter Session of Parliament <i>-Shubendu Anand</i>
	PM MODI'S VISION		
04	"Beta-Beti Ek Samaan" Should be our motto: PM MODI		
06	PM to Heads of Indian Missions		
07	"Youth ! unite the world"		
	GOOD GOVERNANCE:		
08	दीनदयाल उपाध्याय ग्राम ज्योति योजना:ग्रामीण परिवारों के लिए चौबीस घंटे और कृषि के लिए पर्याप्त बिजली		
	POLICY WATCH- DIGITAL INDIA PROGRAM		
09	Digital India Program- building a knowledge economy, empowering citizens <i>-Siddharth Singh</i>	36	Canisterised Agni5 ICBM Test fired successfull
11	Opening the floodgates: Digital India will deliver a real improvement in the quality of life of every citizen <i>-Ravi Shankar Prasad</i>	37	World Bank & IMF report on Indian Economy
		37	Unnat Bharat Abhiyan
	SPECIAL ARTICLES		
14	The Obama Visit <i>-Amb. Prabhat P. Shukla</i>		
19	NITI Aayog for Bharathiya Approaches to Development: Much awaited change <i>-P.Kanagasabapathi</i>		
	NATIONAL ISSUES		
23	बेटी बचाओ, बेटी पढ़ाओ- सिद्धार्थ सिंह		
25	Advocating Indigenisation - a Perspective <i>-Saurav Jha</i>		
	POLITICAL COMMENTARIES		
28	Green cover exposed		
29	About the message and the recipient <i>-Dr. Anirban Ganguly</i>		
			INDIA@NEW INITIATIVES
			"Make in Northeast"initiative Announced by DoNER
			Rejuvenating our Civilisational Anchors: National Heritage Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY)
			National Positives
			Canisterised Agni5 ICBM Test fired successfull
			World Bank & IMF report on Indian Economy
			Unnat Bharat Abhiyan
			INDIA'S WORLD OF DIPLOMACY
			Making Sense of 'Modi Operandi' - <i>Jayadeva Ranade</i>
			Modi Muscle in Foreign Policy <i>-Satish Chandra</i>

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EDITORIAL

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

"Beta-Beti Ek Samaan" should be our motto: PM MODI

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 Samridhi 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

BETI BACHAO, BETI PADHAO

- PM Modi launched the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao and Sukanya Samridhi Yojna today
- Scheme targets to improve child sex ratio from 918 girls to every 1,000 boys

ACTION PLAN

- Promote early registration of pregnancy and institutional delivery
- Ensure panchayats display gudda-guddi board with number of newborn boys and girls every month
- Hold panchayats responsible for child marriage
- Create parliamentary forum of MPs representing 100 districts



PM Modi and HRD minister Smriti Irani present Sukanya Samridhi account passbook to a girl during the scheme launch in Panipat

SUKANYA SAMRIDHI ACCOUNT

- Account opened in girl child's name any time before she attains the age of 10
- Minimum deposit required Rs 1,000; any amount in multiple of Rs 100s can be deposited subsequently, up to a maximum Rs 1.5 lakh in a year
- Govt will provide rate of interest of 9.1% for the savings account; no income tax will be charged
- 50% money can be withdrawn by the girl child after 18 years
- Account will remain operative till girl is 21 years

source: TOI, 23rd Jan 2015

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. He said that we cannot call ourselves citizens of 21st century by practicing such a Crime and urged for an end to the discrimination between sons and daughters because this is the key to ending female foeticide. Modi said, "We need commitment, compassion and

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.

responsibility to stop this sin (against girls). This is not going to change overnight. This sin is being committed for the past 50 years. We will have to create awareness for the next 100 years. It is not only about giving birth to a girl child. She has to get good nutrition, be given education, proper healthcare and rights".

The Prime Minister said that each one of us has a collective responsibility towards this national mission otherwise we would not only be harming the current generation, but also inviting a "terrible crisis" for future generations. Prime Minister

asked 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.

(SPMRF Desk)

PM to Heads of Indian Missions

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 "Swachhta" - 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 सवाल बराक से पूछा गया है, ओमप्रकाश 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 आह्वान करते थे। और वे कहते थे – ‘वर्कर्स ऑफ दि वर्ल्ड यूनाइट’ (workers of the world unite)। दुनिया के मजदूर एक हो 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 पहुंच है, इसको देखते हुए मैं यही कहूँगा कि यूथ, यूनाइट द वर्ल्ड (youth unite the world)। युवको, दुनिया को एक करो। मैं समझता हूँ, उनमें ये ताकत है और वे कर सकते हैं।

(Omprakash is studying Sanskrit at JNU. He belongs to Jhunjunu, 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 पर्याप्त बिजली

मोदी सरकार के द्वारा देश के सभी हिस्सों में चौबीस घंटे सातों दिन निर्बाध बिजली मुहैया कराना सरकार की बड़ी प्रतिबद्धताओं में से एक है क्योंकि आज भी ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में आधारभूत बुनियादी ढांचे की कमी की वजह से बहुत सारे गरीब परिवारों को बिजली की सुविधा उपलब्ध नहीं हो पाई है। देश के लाखों किसान अपने खेतों की सिंचाई के लिए पंप द्वारा भूजल का उपयोग करना चाहते हैं लेकिन बिजली नहीं मिलने के कारण वे ऐसा नहीं कर पाते। हालांकि इन सब समस्याओं के समाधान के लिये कई राज्यों ने ग्रामीण इलाकों में दी जाने वाली बिजली को उपभोग के आधार पर अलग-अलग करने के लिए कार्यक्रम तैयार किया, जिसके तहत ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में कृषि तथा गैर कृषि उपभोक्ताओं के लिए अलग-अलग व्यवस्था की जाती है। विश्व बैंक के द्वारा इस प्रकार की योजना के मूल्यांकन के अनुसार गुजरात ने इस तरह की योजना का बेहतर और शानदार क्रियान्वयन किया है।

मोदी सरकार के द्वारा प्रारम्भ की गई दीनदयाल उपाध्याय ग्राम ज्योति योजना (डीडीयूजीजेवाई) की प्रेरणा गुजरात सरकार द्वारा लागू इसी प्रकार की योजना से मिलती है। इस योजना के तहत ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में बहु प्रतिक्षित सुधारों को लागू करने में मदद मिलेगी। योजना के अर्न्तगत ग्रामीण घरों और कृषि कार्यों के लिए अलग अलग फीडर की व्यवस्था की जायेगी और वितरण तथा पारिषण ढांचे को मजबूत किया जाएगा। योजना में मुख्य रूप से अलग-अलग फीडर की व्यवस्था कर उप-पारिषण तथा वितरण नेटवर्क को मजबूत बनाना है और सभी स्तरों जैसे इनपुट पाइंट, फीडर और वितरण ट्रांसफार्मर पर मीटर लगाना है। इसी के साथ ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में सभी स्तरों पर बिजली के मीटर लगाए जाएंगे। इस योजना की सहायता से ग्रामीण घरों को तथा कृषि

उपभोक्ताओं को 24 घंटे बिजली मुहैया कराने में मदद मिलेगी।

इस योजना को 24 महीनों की अवधि के भीतर पूरा किया जायेगा। इस योजना के सफल क्रियान्वयन के लिये कुल 43033 करोड़ रुपये के निवेश की आवश्यकता है। जिसमें से भारत सरकार 33453 करोड़ रुपये की सहायता देगी। योजना के अनुदान का हिस्सा विशिष्ट वर्ग राज्यों के लिए 85 फीसदी और अन्य राज्यों के लिए 60 फीसदी तक है। सिक्किम समेत सभी पूर्वोत्तर राज्य, जम्मू और कश्मीर, हिमाचल प्रदेश और उत्तराखंड विशिष्ट वर्ग राज्यों में शामिल हैं। निजी वितण कम्पनिया एवं राज्य बिजली विभागों समेत सभी डिस्कॉम इस योजना के तहत वित्तीय सहायता के लिए पात्र होंगी। डिस्कॉम विशिष्ट नेटवर्क जरूरत को ध्यान में रखते हुए ग्रामीण ढांचागत कार्यों को मजबूत बनाने को वरीयता देंगी। इस योजना को क्रियान्वित करने के लिए नोडल एजेंसी ग्रामीण विद्युतीकरण निगम (आरईसी) होगी। आरईसी, योजना के लागू किए जाने की मासिक प्रगति रिपोर्ट को ऊर्जा मंत्रालय तथा केन्द्रीय विद्युत प्राधिकरण के समक्ष प्रस्तुत करेगी। इस रिपोर्ट में वित्तीय तथा वास्तविक प्रगति का ब्यौरा दिया जाएगा। ऊर्जा सचिव की अध्यक्षता में एक निगरानी समिति, योजना के तहत परियोजनाओं को स्वीकृति देगी तथा इनको लागू किए जाने की निगरानी करेगी। इस योजना के तहत अनुशासित दिशा-निर्देशों के अनुरूप योजना का क्रियान्वयन सुनिश्चित करने के लिए बिजली मंत्रालय, राज्य सरकार और डिस्कॉम के बीच एक उपयुक्त त्रिपक्षीय समझौता किया जाएगा जिसमें पावर फाइनेंस कार्पोरेशन एक नोडल एजेंसी होगी।

(एस.पी.एम.आर.एफ. डेस्क)

Digital India Program- building a knowledge economy, empowering citizens

• *Siddharth Singh*

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

• *Ravi Shankar Prasad*

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

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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 - 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.

Backing 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.

But when heads of state and government get together, they should, and did this time, talk about the larger strategic environment in which their engagement takes place - and in the current regional situation, no partnership is more important for India and its security than the

American one.

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

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 stand-point 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

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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

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 nonalignment 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

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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.)

NITI Aayog for Bharathiya Approaches to Development: Much awaited change

• *P.Kanagasabapathi*

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 0 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 dis-

cussion. 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 पूजने की बात कहने वाले हमारे समाज में आज भी बड़ी संख्या में बेटियां मां के गर्भ में ही मार दी जाती हैं। भले 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 सुदूरवर्ती गांव, जमीनी हकीकत कुछ और ही है। ये भेदी और घृणित सच्चाई आज के भारत की ही है और सच कहे तो हमारे आस पास की ही है। ना जाने कितनी ही बेटियां स्कूल जाने को तरसती हैं, स्कूल की इमारत में जाना उनकी हसरत ही रह जाती है।

अभी हाल ही में केन्द्र सरकार ने इस बदनमा दाग से अधिक आक्रमकता से निबटने का फैसला करते हुए

यह योजना एक राष्ट्रीय अभियान के जरिए प्रारंभ में सभी राज्यों और केंद्र शासित प्रदेशों के ऐसे 100 चुनिंदा जिलों में कार्यान्वित की जाएगी, जहां बालक-बालिकाओं का अनुपात बेहद कम है।

‘बेटी बचाओ, बेटी पढ़ाओ’ नाम से एक नई योजना का शुभारंभ किया है और इस योजना को एक आंदोलन की तरह चलाने की घोषणा की है। प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने 22 जनवरी 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 चुनिंदा जिलों में कार्यान्वित की जाएगी, जहां बालक-बालिकाओं का अनुपात बेहद कम है। खास बात यह है कि ‘बेटी बचाओ, बेटी पढ़ाओ’ योजना का शुभारंभ हरियाणा से इसलिए किया गया है क्योंकि

इस राज्य में बालक-बालिका अनुपात सबसे कम यानी सर्वाधिक खराब है। ‘कन्या भ्रूण हत्या’ जैसी घटनाएं बदस्तूर जारी हैं और इस पाप के लिये कोई और नहीं, बल्कि इन अजन्मी बेटियों के नासमझ माता-पिता या यूं कहें की इनके अपने ही जिम्मेदार हैं। चंद सिक्कों की खातिर डॉक्टरी के नाम पर कसाई का काम करने वाले कुछ शिक्षित या झोला छाप डॉक्टर भी इस अपराध में उतने ही भागीदार 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 वक्त आने पर, खासकर बुढ़ापे में उनका सहारा भी बन सकती हैं। निष्ठुर सोच वाले ये भी नहीं समझ पा रहे हैं कि अगर बेटियां कम हो गईं तो वे अपने बेटों के लिए बहुएं कहां से लाएंगे। सरकारी और गैर सरकारी तौर पर इस घृणित बुराई को रोकने के प्रयासों के बावजूद कन्या भ्रूण हत्याएं आज भी हो रही हैं।

‘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 भ्रूण हत्या की निर्मम 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 बयान करते हैं कि इस दौरान हरियाणा में यह अनुपात सबसे कम रहा जहां 1000 पुरुषों के मुकाबले सिर्फ 877 महिलायें हैं।

महिला पुरुष अनुपात दर की तस्वीर तो निराशाजनक है ही पर साथ ही साथ महिला साक्षरता की तस्वीर भी निराशाजनक है। 2011 में महिला साक्षरता दर 65.46 प्रतिशत तथा पुरुष साक्षरता दर 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।

‘बेटी बचाओ, बेटी पढ़ाओ’ अभियान के मुख्य बिंदु:

- सभी ग्राम पंचायतों में गुड्डा-गुड्डी बोर्ड लगाए जाएंगे। हर महीने इस बोर्ड में संबंधित गांव के बालक-बालिका अनुपात को दर्शाया जाएगा।
- ग्राम पंचायत हर लड़की का जन्म होने पर उसके परिवार को तोहफा भेजेगी।
- ग्राम पंचायत साल में कम-से-कम एक दर्जन लड़कियों का जन्मदिन मनाएगी।
- सभी ग्राम पंचायतों में लोगों को ‘बेटी बचाओ, बेटी पढ़ाओ’ की शपथ दिलाई जाएगी।
- किसी गांव में अगर बालक-बालिका अनुपात बढ़ता है, तो वहां की ग्राम पंचायत को सम्मानित किया जाएगा।
- बाल विवाह के लिए ग्राम प्रधान को जिम्मेदार माना जाएगा और उसके खिलाफ कार्रवाई होगी।
- कन्या भ्रूण हत्या रोकने के बारे में जागरूकता फैलाने के लिए स्थानीय स्कूलों और कॉलेजों को अभियान में शामिल किया जाएगा।

‘बेटी बचाओ, बेटी पढ़ाओ’ कार्यक्रम के तहत उन 100 जिलों का चयन 23 राज्यों केन्द्र शासित प्रदेशों में किया जायेगा जहां बालक-बालिका अनुपात 918 के राष्ट्रीय औसत से भी कम है।

‘बेटी बचाओ, बेटी पढ़ाओ’ 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 सम्मान करने और उन्हें सुरक्षा प्रदान करने पर भी केंद्रित होगी। इस दुनिया में अपना पहला कदम रखने के लिए तैयार बेटियों के जीवन की रक्षा करना और उन्हें शिक्षित कर अपनी जिंदगी में आने वाली तमाम चुनौतियों का सामना करने लायक बनाना ‘बेटी बचाओ, बेटी पढ़ाओ’ योजना का मुख्य उद्देश्य है। आने वाले दिनों में देश भर में जन अभियान के माध्यम से सामाजिक मानसिकता को बदल कर और इस विषय

विषय पर जागरूकता पैदा करके इस योजना को सफल बनाने की कोशिश की जाएगी। इसमें लड़कियों एवं महिलाओं से किए जा रहे भेदभाव को समाप्त करने पर भी जोर दिया जाएगा। बालक-बालिका अनुपात में बेहतर को सुशासन के एक प्रमुख विकास संकेतक के तौर पर शामिल करना भी इसका एक उद्देश्य है। इस योजना की मुख्य रणनीतियों में सामाजिक लामबंदी एवं संवाद अभियान 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 जिम्मेदारी आंगनवाड़ी केंद्रों पर गर्भावस्था के पंजीकरण को प्रोत्साहित करना, भागीदारों को प्रशिक्षित करना, सामुदायिक लामबंदी और आपसी संवाद को बढ़ावा देना, बालक-बालिका अनुपात को कम करने के अभियान में जुटे ‘चैंपियनों’ को शामिल करना तथा अग्रिम मोर्चे पर काम कर रहे कार्यकर्ताओं एवं संस्थानों को मान्यता और पुरस्कार देना है। स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय की जिम्मेदारी गर्भधारण पूर्व और जन्म पूर्व जांच तकनीकों पर कड़ी नजर रखना, अस्पतालों में प्रसव को बढ़ावा देना, जन्म पंजीकरण तथा निगरानी समितियों का गठन करना है। मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय की जिम्मेदारी लड़कियों का पंजीकरण, स्कूलों में लड़कियों की ड्रॉप आउट दर में कमी लाना, विद्यालयों में लड़कियों के अनुरूप मानक बनाना, शिक्षा के अधिकार अधिनियम पर सख्ती से अमल करना तथा स्कूलों में लड़कियों के लिए शौचालय बनाने पर विशेष ध्यान देना की है।

प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने बेटियों को उनका हक दिलाने के लिए इस अभियान की शुरुआत की है ताकि उन के साथ भेदभाव खत्म किया जा सके और कन्या भ्रूण हत्या रोकने का ठीक दिशा में तेजी से तथा प्रभावी कदम उठाये जा सकें। ‘बेटी बचाओ, बेटी पढ़ाओ’ यानी बेटियों का उनका हक दिलाने वाला अभियान निश्चित रूप से एक जनहित और राष्ट्रहित क्रांति है।

Advocating Indigenisation - a Perspective

• *Saurav Jha*

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

• Dr. Anirban Ganguly

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

• *Shubhendu Anand*

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 seat 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

Title	House of Introduction	Date of Introduction
The Delhi Special Police Establishment (Amendment) Bill, 2014	Lok Sabha	25-11-2014
The Textile Undertakings (Nationalisation) Laws (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2014	Lok Sabha	01-12-2014
The School of Planning and Architecture Bill, 2014	Lok Sabha	02-12-2014
The Repealing and Amending (Second) Bill, 2014	Lok Sabha	03-12-2014
The Payment and Settlement Systems (Amendment) Bill, 2014	Lok Sabha	08-12-2014
The Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Bill, 2014	Lok Sabha	10-12-2014
The Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Amendment Bill, 2014	Lok Sabha	11-12-2014
The Companies (Amendment) Bill, 2014	Lok Sabha	12-12-2014
The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2014	Lok Sabha	15-12-2014
The National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Amendment Bill, 2014	Lok Sabha	15-12-2014
The Anti-Hijacking Bill, 2014	Rajya Sabha	17-12-2014
The Lokpal and Lokayuktas and other related Law (Amendment) Bill, 2014	Lok Sabha	18-12-2014
The Regional Rural Banks (Amendment) Bill, 2014	Lok Sabha	18-12-2014
The Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2014	Lok Sabha	19-12-2014
The Constitution (122nd Amendment) (GST) Bill, 2014	Lok Sabha	19-12-2014
The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2014	Lok Sabha	23-12-2014

(Source: PRS)

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

1. The Apprentices (Amendment) Bill, 2014
2. The National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) 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
9. The Merchant Shipping (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 wind mills, 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

National Heritage Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) is a unique initiative that seeks to preserve and rejuvenate the rich cultural heritage of the country.

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.

(SPMRF Desk)

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 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.

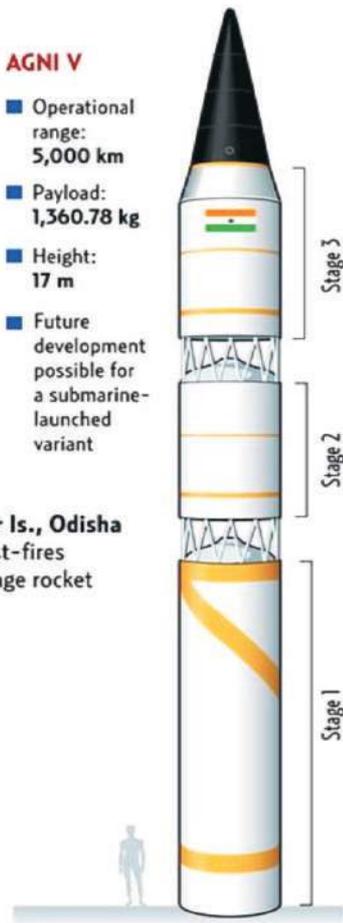
India's Agni V missile

The nuclear warhead-enabled Agni V is the fifth in the series of medium and long-range missiles made in India in the past fifteen years



AGNI V

- Operational range: 5,000 km
- Payload: 1,360.78 kg
- Height: 17 m
- Future development possible for a submarine-launched variant



AGNI MISSILE SERIES

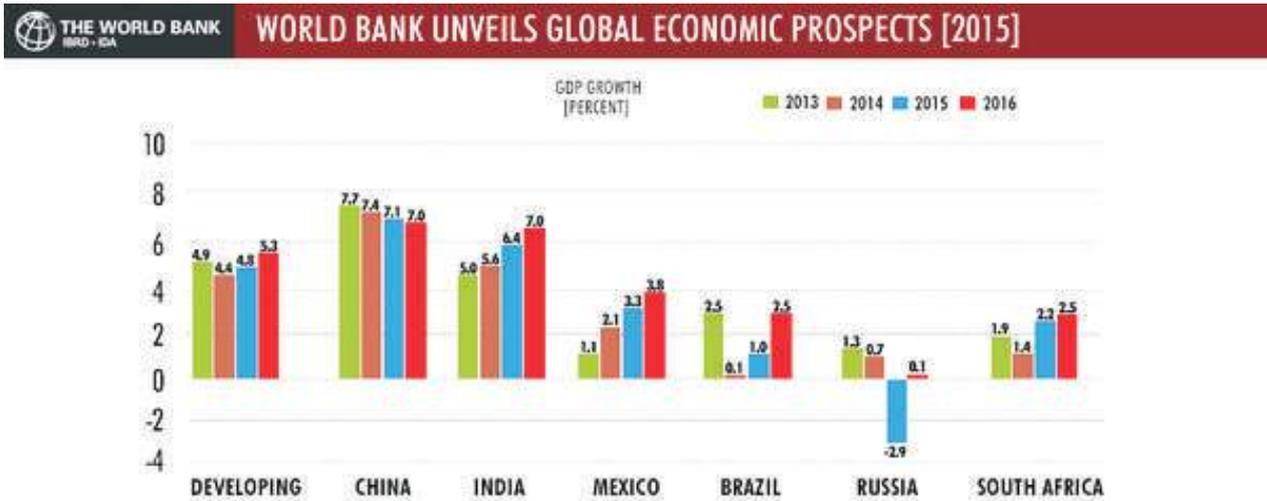
	Agni I	Agni II	Agni III
Range (km)	700	2,500	3,000
Payload (kg)	1,000	1,000	1,500
Height (m)	15	20	16.3

Sources: Indian Defence Research and Development Organisation, Globalsecurity.org, Visual Motion

Reuters/©Gulf News

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%.



GOOD NEWS FOR INDIA:

ACCORDING TO 'WORLD BANK'S GLOBAL ECONOMIC PROSPECTS (GEP)', INDIA WILL ATTAIN GROWTH IN THE GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP) FROM 5.6% IN 2014 TO 7% IN 2016.

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.

[Ever since he took over as Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi has imparted a distinct touch and approach to India's foreign policy confounding many analysts and practitioners who had predicted uncertain days in India's world of diplomacy. With his robust strategic approach, a defined civilisational vision and a clear feel of India's national interest needs, Prime Minister Modi has begun to redefine and re-lay the terms and framework of India's foreign policy. Making it reflect the reality of a 21st century world and Asian century, making it articulate the aspirations of a resurgent India have become the hallmark of this foreign policy approach. In this section we include two articles written by leading practitioners on Prime Minister Modi's foreign policy style and its new energy and new approach.]

Making Sense of 'Modi Operandi'

•*Jayadeva Ranade*

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

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.

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,

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

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 of 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)

Modi Muscle in Foreign Policy

•Satish Chandra

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 Navratra fast 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

of \$20 billion in the next five years, set up two industrial parks in India, participate in the country's rail modernisation and that steps would be taken to address the huge trade imbalance. In case of Japan, the Tokyo Declaration asserted that the Modi-Abe meeting constituted the "dawn of a new era" in Japan-India ties. Economic links are set to undergo a quantum jump with Modi and Abe targeting a doubling of Japanese foreign direct investment in India in the next five years to a level of 3.5 trillion yen in the areas of next-generation infrastructure, connectivity, transport systems, smart cities, rejuvenation of rivers, manufacturing, clean energy, skill development, water security, food processing and agro industry, agricultural cold chain, and rural development. Similarly, the India-US joint statement had a detailed section on economic cooperation envisaging a five-fold increase in bilateral trade, enhanced participation of US firms in Indian infrastructure projects, and US support for smart cities, for the sanitation and cleanliness drive, and for the modernisation of its railway network. In addition, Modi made a powerful pitch to the heads of several US companies to invest in India under his "Make in India" campaign.

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 HemaMalini, 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 is 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)

