

Newspaper Analysis and Summary – 25TH September 2015**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY****Scientists observe anniversary by watching ‘The Martian’**

How do scientists from the Indian Space Research Organisation celebrate the first year of their spacecraft's reaching Mars?

On Thursday evening, which also conveniently heralded a three-day week-end, scores of scientists trooped into PVR Cinemas at The Forum mall along with their families for an unusual outing.

They watched Hollywood's newest sci-fi thriller, *The Martian*, about the travails of an astronaut lost on Mars, in an exclusive screening hosted by Fox Star Studios. Mars Orbiter Mission's Project Director S.Arunan was there, the studio publicist said. The film is yet to be released in the country.

Earlier in the day, ISRO Chairman A.S. Kiran Kumar released a compilation of 100-odd pictures of Mars and a few of Earth sent by the spacecraft's Mars Colour Camera since it left Earth on December 1, 2013.

Many prominent and unusual valleys, craters and landscapes of Mars are in the atlas, along with early pictures of Earth. The Space Applications Centre, Ahmedabad, has put the atlas together.

Mars images

The Mars images, some of them already released by ISRO, can be seen at <http://www.isro.gov.in/sites/default/files/article-files/pslv-c25-mars-orbiter-mission/celebrating-one-year-of-mars-orbiter-mission-orbit-release-of-mars/Mars-atlas-MOM.pdf>

‘Stroke is treatable, preventable; awareness is the key’

Our old movies might depict the elderly, albeit villainous person as most likely to get the curse of an unfortunate stroke, but in real life the young and the virtuous are just as likely to be cursed by this condition as anyone else. Concerned at the lack of awareness as well as facilities for treating the alarming increase in stroke victims, the Bangalore Stroke Support Group (BPSS) was formed here on Thursday by stakeholders of this disease.

“It has started affecting younger people of late because of changing lifestyles and advancing vascular risk factors. The good thing about a stroke is, it can be prevented with early lifestyle interventions and adequately treated in an emergency setting to minimise later deaths,” said Vikram Huded, secretary of the BPSS and head of Interventional Neurology and Stroke, NH Institute of Neuroscience.

He added that the group would have stroke specialists, physicians, rehabilitation specialists, healthcare professionals, hospital administrators, caregivers, stroke survivors, and public at large on a single platform to interact, share, and discuss issues related to stroke.

WATCH OUT FOR ...	
SYMPTOMS	FACT OF THE MATTER
➤ The blood flow to the brain is affected through formation of clot	➤ One in six people likely to get a stroke in their lifetime
➤ Numbness or weakness of face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body	➤ Around 30 p.c. of stroke-prone people are below the age of 45
➤ Confusion, difficulty in speaking or understanding	➤ In 2015, India will report 1.6 million cases of stroke annually
➤ Blurred vision in one or both eyes	➤ Smokers, inhalers of tobacco in any other form are more prone to stroke
➤ Difficulty in walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination	PREVENTION AND TREATMENT
➤ Sudden severe headache with no known cause	➤ A minor stroke, when symptoms are felt for about five minutes or even an hour is a warning to rush to a stroke-ready hospital.
➤ Diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity are all warning signals for a likely stroke	➤ Exercise, healthy diet can help prevent stroke

“Today, stroke is treatable and preventable. The only barrier is awareness. This group will educate the public, spread awareness about stroke, specifically focussing on the emergency nature of stroke, and the necessity of quickly reaching a nearby hospital for early intervention for better outcomes,” said Dr. Huded, adding that emotional and psychological support would also be given to the victims and their families.

The group will be organising a walkathon from Freedom Park to Cubbon Park on October 17 as a prelude to World Stroke Day, which will be observed on October 29.

ENVIRONMENT

Green road corridors planned

If Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari’s plan for Rs. 5,00,000 crore of investment in highways in the next four years comes off, Rs. 5,000 crore of this will go to the Green Highways policy.

The plan is to grow three layers of trees and bushes. The first will be of bushes so that if a vehicle goes off the road, it does not collide with something life-threatening. The second will be of medium-sized trees and the last will be of tall fruit trees. Only species indigenous to the area would be planted, Mr. Chhibber said.

“The benefits are manifold... The community will gain in terms of huge employment opportunities and entrepreneurship development, and there will be huge environmental benefits also... The local community will get the rights to the non-timber produce from the

trees,” the Ministry said in a statement.

A wide cross-section of agencies can participate in the project. Those eligible include government or private companies, NGOs registered as societies, trusts or private limited non-profit companies, and producer organisations.

The empanelment of these companies will begin shortly, according to the Ministry. Thereafter, the bidding for stretches of the highways will take place.

“Planting is best done in the beginning May or June. Our target is to have everything under way so that planting can start in at least one-tenth of the area envisaged by that time,” Mr. Chhibber said.

The government has also laid down strict targets for the companies growing and maintaining trees. The minimum survival rate is 90 per cent. Only after reaching this level will a company get the required money from the Ministry in the next year.

The government is concentrating on working with green contractors, separate from the brick and mortar ones. The projects will also be awarded on small stretches of 8-10 km. Pilot projects, to be carried out in each State, will first take place where there has been a good response from the local community, Mr. Chhibber said.

“It is best to go small and get it right in the beginning to show that the policy works and then scale it up,” Mr. Chhibber said.

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

Centre puts the brakes on JNNURM research projects, capacity-building

The Urban Development Ministry has asked 36 States to terminate their research and capacity-building measures under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), a move that will roll back the achievements of the scheme launched by the UPA government and render it defunct.

Under the JNNURM, the State governments established Reform and Performance Management Cells (RPMCs), a body of experts to guide municipal bodies in urban planning. The first outcome of the decision will be closing of RPMCs, though the Central government has invested Rs. 43 crore in them.

And then the States will have to fire several hundred employees — researchers, municipal engineers, sanitary workers and computer operators — and abandon a big line of research projects.

In a circular released on August 14, the Ministry’s message was blunt that “no structures of earlier missions will be supported.” It also directed the States to wrap up “individual” training programmes. In the early 2013, the Congress-led government realised that it could implement an ambitious scheme like the JNNURM only if the municipal bodies were efficient.

Centre banks on ISRO to curb illegal mining across States

The Union Ministry of Mines is planning to use remote sensing satellite data to curb illegal mining across States, Mines Secretary Balvinder Kumar said on Thursday.

Satellite imageries taken regularly would help to keep an eye on legal boundaries of mined areas. The Ministry plans to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Indian Space Research Organisation on using satellite data for mining.

The next steps would be discussed with the ISRO in early October, it is learnt. The Indian Bureau of Mines would be the nodal agency to implement the measures, which would form part of the reforms taking place in the mining sector.

Mr. Kumar was addressing the inaugural session of the 'Mining & exploration convention and trade show' organised by the Federation of Indian Mineral Industries.

The other plan is to use the GPS (Global Positioning System) to track major minerals that have been mined.

The use of satellite data in mining was one of the proposals discussed at the mega meeting of departments called in New Delhi on September 7.

Earth observation satellites are already used to estimate the kind of minerals and the extent of deposits present in an area. This information is used in exploration along with aerial surveys of mineral-rich areas. Major mining bodies such as Coal India Ltd. have also tried using GPS-based devices to keep watch on the mined ore and their transport.

Centre eyes offshore sand to fight shortage

As the southern States reel under serious shortage of sand for construction, the Centre is set to initiate offshore exploration and extraction of sand.

The proposed operation, to be taken up in 80 blocks in both Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, includes exploration and mining of rare earth minerals also.

The process of exploration and mining is expected to start in two to three months, according to Balvinder Kumar, Secretary, Union Ministry of Mines.

At the inaugural session of the three-day 'Mining & exploration convention and trade show', organised by the Federation of Indian Mineral Industries here on Thursday, Mr. Kumar said though permission was granted for prospective exploration and mining in 62 offshore blocks in 2012, the operation did not take off owing to legal problems. Also, the fact that rules under the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act had not been framed turned out to be an obstacle, he said.

E-auction

Mr. Kumar reiterated that all States would start the process of e-auctioning of the mines of major minerals on the lines of coal mines in about two months from now. Nearly 80 blocks would be auctioned in the first phase, including 15 in Karnataka, while another 90 to 100 blocks would be taken up in the second phase.

He said the Centre was also in the process of implementing mining tenement system under which everything related to mining operation, right from the grant of mining lease, mining plan, transport of ore as well as import and exports would be computerised within the next 10 months. More than 3,000 reports prepared by the Geological Survey of India (GSI) would be digitised and put in public domain.

Rajnath says CRPF brought down Naxal violence

Home Minister Rajnath Singh said on Thursday that Naxal violence has come down by 35 per cent due to efforts of the security forces.

“Due to the brave efforts of the CRPF personnel, there has been a 35 per cent reduction in incidents in the Left Wing Extremism (LWE)-affected States,” he said releasing a graphic booklet here.

The book depicts the valour and sacrifice of CRPF personnel during the battle of Sardar Post, Rann of Kutch, in the 1965 India-Pakistan war.

Mr. Singh lauded the role of the CRPF at Hot Springs in Ladakh and at other places in maintaining the country’s security.

On April 9, 1965, at the Sardar Post in the Rann of Kutch, two companies of CRPF stood their ground and resisted the attack of a full-fledged Pakistani Infantry Brigade, inflicting heavy casualties.

The retaliation by the CRPF men was such a profound shock to the Pakistani Army that they left behind 34 bodies, including that of two officers. Four Pakistani soldiers were taken as prisoners.

Dalit sub-castes seek reservation review

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat’s statement that there should be a review of who benefited from reservation and how much, has found support from groups of Scheduled Castes who have for years been demanding sub-quotas in favour of the most deprived Dalit groups.

These are associations of castes like Valmikis (sanitation workers) in North India, who cite data from government committees to argue that they have been swamped out from the benefits of quotas by the better-off leather workers’ caste.

“What is wrong in saying that reservation be reviewed? Everyone has a right to know what each caste got in these 68 years. We welcome this effort by RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat,” Rashtriya Dalit Bachao Andolan president O.P. Shukla, a retired bureaucrat of the Valmiki caste, said in a statement on Thursday.

Longstanding demand

The movement’s longstanding demand for a separate quota for Ati Dalits within the Scheduled Caste quota has not made much headway as some State governments’ efforts to provide this was judicially struck down.

For, the Constitution envisages a homogenous category of Scheduled Castes without providing for sub-division of it.

Mr. Shukla said the organisation is now demanding a review of reservation so that those who were “overrepresented” because of quotas could be excluded, and those who had been swamped out may benefit.

“Rather than excluding castes, it should be found out which groups have not benefited at all from Scheduled Caste quota and these should be given the first priority within the quota, after

which there should be an open competition among all Scheduled Castes,” Y. Chinna Rao, who teaches Social Exclusion at JNU, told *The Hindu* . There are over 1,200 Scheduled Castes in India.

Politically, this demand has been crucial for decades. For, while advanced and populous Dalit groups have been Scheduled Caste leaders in most States, and have already settled their political affiliations, political parties have sensed fresh opportunities to expand their votes into the most deprived groups’ demands.

In Bihar, Nitish Kumar as Chief Minister created the Maha Dalit Vikas Mission to reach out to Scheduled Castes other than Ram Vilas Paswan’s Dusadh caste. Ironically, Jitan Ram Manjhi, whom Mr. Kumar made Chief Minister in 2014 as a symbolic gesture, and who rebelled later and is now in the NDA camp, is jeopardising Mr. Kumar’s Maha Dalit experiment.

The Punjab government in the 1970s, and Haryana in 1990, provided sub-quotas. Rajnath Singh, as Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, tried to create a sub-category for the most deprived Dalit castes.

The Supreme Court, in the EV Chinnaiah case (2004), struck down such initiatives.

Tightrope walk

For parties such as the BJP or the Congress, it is a tightrope walk. They can’t afford to be seen as “anti-reservation”, particularly because “low caste” groups have often spawned regional parties that have challenged the two national parties, but at the same time, they sense the possibility of new vote banks in the smaller groups among the most deprived Dalit castes.

Jaishankar puts his imprint on MEA team reshuffle

With the largest shake-up in the Ministry of External Affairs’ recent history, Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar has put in place a team with his imprint, including prominence for many officers who have caught the Prime Minister’s eye in the past year. Chief amongst the leading lights of the diplomatic corps that have been moved around, is Syed Akbaruddin, an Additional Secretary in the MEA, who has received a ‘double promotion’ to be the Permanent Representative of India (PMI) at the United Nations in New York.

Normally, say Foreign Service officers who spoke to *The Hindu* , the prized post is reserved for Secretary-level officers. However, Mr. Akbaruddin makes up with his U.N. experience, as he served at the Geneva-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as well as in the PMI in New York in the past. He is famous for his last posting where he was the JS (External Publicity) and official spokesperson, pioneering the media blitz during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s first year of travels abroad after taking office. At present he has been entrusted with bringing together the heads of 54 African nations to the India-Africa summit in Delhi on October 26. His chief challenge would be squiring India’s push for a U.N. Security council seat during the 70th year of the U.N.

The other big change is the posting of Gautam Bambawale, who has been sent from Thimphu to be the next High Commissioner of India to Pakistan. Mr. Bambawale is among the MEA’s China specialists and worked closely with the Foreign Secretary when Mr. Jaishankar was Ambassador to China. Mr. Modi’s visit to Bhutan, his first trip abroad, was organised in part by Mr. Bambawale, who was then Ambassador-designate. Mr. Bambawale left an

impression, which many believe has led to his transfer to a more challenging position much before the normal 3-year tenure of an ambassador.

The biggest buzz in the MEA, however, has been over the way Mr. Jaishankar has dealt with the high-power secretaries in the Ministry, who are equal or just a bit lower in seniority to him. Secretary (West) Navtej Sarna and Secretary (East) Anil Wadhwa have been assigned London and Rome, respectively, while there is no change in Secretary (Multilateral & Economic Relations) Sujata Mehta's position .

Move raises eyebrows

The move of Mr. Anil Wadhwa has raised eyebrows, as Italy-India ties have been in the doldrums over the Italian marines' issue, and Mr. Wadhwa would have been expected to be moved to a more "high-profile" assignment. Mr. Wadhwa was credited with the expert handling of "Operation Rahat" that he oversaw to help evacuate the stranded Indians in Yemen. In recent months, corridor gossip in the MEA had hinted that Mr. Wadhwa, following the Yemen operation had acquired a formidable stature and was emerging as a power centre in his own right. The other upset has been the neglect of Sujata Mehta, one of the seniormost officials at the MEA, who, as secretary of multilateral and economic relations, had been expected to be the next PR at the U.N.

Most prized positions

Significantly with all the moves, the Foreign Secretary, who was himself specially chosen by Mr. Modi to replace Sujatha Singh in a controversial overnight move in January 2015, has managed to keep all the most prized positions with the Foreign Service. Given the importance of BJP officials in foreign policy making, many had speculated that positions in the U.S., Russia and the U.K. could see political appointees. The one exception may be Saudi Arabia, where it is learnt an IPS officer picked by NSA Ajit Doval has been chosen to serve as Ambassador. Given the ongoing Saudi diplomat case, this is a space to watch.

"The FS seems to have killed three birds with one reshuffle," a senior Foreign service officer told *The Hindu* , describing all the changes. "He has put distance between him and his rivals, staved off pressure from the political and security establishment, even as he has put his own favourite officers in place."

MPs are wise, they don't need advice: CJI

Parliamentarians are "wise people" elected by the public and naturally they know how to conduct themselves in the House. The Supreme Court should not cross the 'Lakshman Rekha' to advise them; nor is the judiciary expected to do so, Chief Justice of India H.L. Dattu said on Thursday.

The observations came during the hearing of a public interest petition seeking court guidelines to ensure that parliamentarians discharge their duties without falling into "disrepute and ridicule" at the cost of public money.

"It is not up to us to tell the Speaker how to run the parliament. This is a democracy. Parliamentarians know how to function. It is not for us to say 'you do this or do that'," Chief Justice Dattu remarked in court.

"They are all wise people, we elected them, and they know their responsibility," the CJI observed, dismissing the petition.

‘Unreasonable delay’

The petition filed by Foundation for Restoration of National Values, with the likes of Ratan Tata and E. Sreedharan on its advisory board, said it is time judiciary intervened to ensure that “the public at large and the exchequer are not adversely affected on account of parliamentary proceedings being unreasonably and unjustifiably obstructed, stalled and disrupted by its constituents.”

The petition pointed out that the monsoon session, convened from July 21 to August 13, had 11 legislative Bills for consideration and nine new Bills for introduction, including Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Second Amendment) Bill 2015 and the Constitution (122nd Amendment) Goods & Services Tax (GST) Bill 2014.

Union Secretary visits Manipur to take stock of law and order

More than a month since life was disrupted in Manipur over the passing of three Bills by the Assembly, the Union Home Ministry sent a senior official earlier this week to take stock of the situation.

Based on the report, to be submitted by Ashok Prasad, Secretary, Internal Security, the government will decide whether President’s Rule should be imposed in the State in the wake of the ongoing violence there.

A senior Ministry official told The Hindu that the Centre was inclined to dissolve the Assembly amid the deteriorating law-and-order situation but had decided to act “cautiously”.

“We have deputed Central forces to the State and it is up to the State government to utilise them as per their requirement. Secretary, Internal Security has come back after assessing the situation and he will be submitting a report to me on Friday,” Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju said. Violence erupted after the Assembly passed the Protection of Manipur People Bill, the Manipur Shops and Establishments (Second Amendment) Bill and the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reform (Seventh Amendment) Bill, which were seen as driving a wedge between the tribal and the valley population.

Soon after arrival in Imphal on Tuesday, Mr. Prasad was closeted with Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh.

The next day, Mr. Prasad went to Churachandpur district, where nine tribal people were killed in the violence.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**Modi begins ‘Make in India’ pitch**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s campaign in the U.S. to attract capital to the country and boost his ‘Make in India’ initiative kicked off with a meeting with eight influential figures in the key financial hub of the world on Thursday.

Put together by Jamie Dimon, CEO and president of JP Morgan, the participants at the roundtable were Blackstone’s Steve Schwarzman, Warburg Pincus’ Charles Kaye, KKR Co-CEO Henry Kravis, General Atlantic CEO Bill Ford, AIG Insurance CEO Peter Hancock, Tiger Global Managing Partner Chase Coleman, and NY State Common Retirement Fund’s

Vicki Fuller. “They control billions of dollars of investment and the opportunity to interact directly with the Prime Minister has given them further confidence in India,” Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Vikas Swarup said after the meeting.

Mr. Swarup said the Prime Minister took on board the concerns raised by the investors and promised speedy resolution to them. “The PM told the investment community that the massive scale of India’s development ambitions held forth the best opportunity for them in the world,” Mr. Swarup said, adding that Mr. Modi mentioned development targets such as building metro rails in 50 cities, complete rural electrification and housing for all among initiatives that would provide attractive investment opportunities.

Financial sector leaders flagged red tape, slow pace of deregulation, and unpredictable tax regimes, as their main concerns.

BUSINESS/ECONOMY

Will Apple ‘make in India’?

While promoting the Indian manufacturing sector is the key thrust of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s six-day U.S. tour that began on Wednesday, what could add some fizz to the efforts is Apple if the digital giant announces some India-based facilities. And that is possible, at least two sources, one a U.S. diplomat and the other an Indian business leader in Washington DC, indicated to The Hindu .

What feeds this hope among the diplomatic and business communities is the announcement in early September by Foxconn Technology Group, a Taiwanese company which is a major assembler of Apple products in China, that it plans to invest \$1 billion in India over the next two years. The company has manufacturing facilities in India already, but plans to add 12 more factories by 2020. The company’s focus in the new round of investments is start-ups, which is also Mr. Modi’s focus area during his Silicon Valley tour on September 26 and 27.

For a final word, one has to wait until the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Apple chief executive officer Tim Cook on September 27, but if the company has some India plans, it will add not merely muscle to the “Make in India” campaign but some glamour too.

RBI relaxes change in ownership norms

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has notified norms that allow banks to upgrade credit facilities extended to borrowing entities upon a change in ownership, so long as the ownership has been changed outside ‘Strategic Debt Restructuring Scheme’.

The decision will give banks more flexibility to bring in a change in ownership of borrowing entities which are under stress, RBI said in a notification to all banks.

The move would “further enhance banks’ ability to bring in a change in ownership of borrowing entities which are under stress primarily due to operational/ managerial inefficiencies despite substantial sacrifices made by the lending banks,” the central bank observed.

However, RBI said the ‘new promoter’ should not be a person/entity/subsidiary/associate etc. (domestic as well as overseas), from/belonging to the existing promoter/promoter group. “Banks should clearly establish that the acquirer does not belong to the existing promoter

group,” it said in the notification.

Further, it said that the new promoter should have acquired at least 51 per cent of the paid up equity capital of the borrower company.

RBI also said that “if the new promoter is a non-resident, and in sectors where the ceiling on foreign investment is less than 51 per cent, the new promoter should own at least 26 per cent of the paid up equity capital or up to applicable foreign investment limit, whichever is higher.”

Banks should also be satisfied that with this equity stake the new non-resident promoter controls the management of the company, RBI stipulated.

At the time of takeover of the borrowing entity by a ‘new promoter’, banks are allowed to refinance the existing debt of the borrowing entities, considering the changed risk profile, without treating the exercise as ‘restructuring’.

RBI also said that provisions held against the said account can be reversed if the outstanding loan/facilities of the borrowing entities perform satisfactorily during the ‘specified period’.

An exporter of talent, India undergoing revolution: Pichai

Sundar Pichai, CEO of technology giant Google, on Thursday said India has long been an exporter of talent to technology companies, but is now undergoing its own revolution that will have great benefits for the 1.2 billion people in the country.

Welcoming Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the Silicon Valley, the India-born CEO said there is tremendous excitement for his visit among all Googlers and the entire Indian community.

“The bond between India and the Silicon Valley is strong. India has long been an exporter of talent to tech companies. The products built by Indian graduates from IIT and other institutions have helped revolutionise the world. But it is India that’s now undergoing its own revolution,” he said in a YouTube video.

He saw great benefits for everyone in the country as “many people will come online for the first time, especially those in rural areas and Indic language speakers.”

It will also help girls learn new skills and have successful careers, power education of the next generation and help businesses of all sizes to find new customers, Mr. Pichai said. “We’re looking forward to your remarks at the SAP Centre in San Jose, and also when you come to Google...We hope your visit will energise people in the Valley, excite Indians all across the country, and renew and strengthen our partnership,” he said.

During his U.S. visit, Mr. Modi is also scheduled to meet Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and address a townhall question and answer session on September 27 at the company’s headquarters in California. He is expected to meet Apple CEO Tim Cook and electric carmaker Tesla’s CEO Elon Musk, among others.

In the next few years, about 50 million women and 20 million small businesses are expected to get online for the first time, he said.

“Prime Minister Modi’s Digital India vision is central to this revolution. It focuses on connecting the 1.2 billion people in India,” Mr. Pichai said. Highlighting Google’s role, Mr. Pichai said the company as well as many others around the world are passionate about playing their part.

“Some of our initiatives include making our products work on low bandwidth and even offline, making the web accessible in Indic languages, providing low-cost Chromebooks in Indian schools, investing in core infrastructure and affordable smartphones with Android One,” he said.

Centre plans to liberalise Tea Act

The Centre is planning to liberalise the Tea Act, so as to increase tea production and productivity by bringing additional areas under cultivation.

R.R, Rashmi, Additional Secretary, Union Commerce Ministry said here on Thursday that while it is proposing to amend the Tea Act to waive the present stipulation of obtaining permits for bringing additional areas under tea cultivation, the state governments would also need to match the initiative by easing its process of granting permissions.

“We are yet to get a response from the West Bengal government in this matter,” he told reporters after addressing the Tea Research Association’s annual general meeting.

“Our move is aimed at increasing production, which is among the three areas of concern for the government with regard to the Indian tea industry. We would like the West Bengal government to have flexibility in giving its no objection certificate,” he said.

This was needed mostly in this state where there are restrictions on land-use.

Tea production has to grow vertically (through productivity increases) and horizontally (through land expansion), he said.

Pointing out that ensuring quality and increasing exports were the two other areas of concern, he said that C-DAC (Centre for Developing Advanced Computing) is presently working with TRA on a spectrometer which will enable tea growers especially small ones to detect traces of pesticides early. On the minimum wage issue, he indicated that there was need to evolve a package which integrated the cash and ‘kind’ components in tea wage so that the statutory costs (on account of benefits given to labour on account of the Plantation Labour Act) could be met while also incorporating minimum wage, but without affecting competition.

Centre to exempt foreign firms covered by double taxation treaty

In a big relief to foreign firms, government on Thursday said the Income Tax Act will be amended with retrospective effect to exempt from minimum alternate tax (MAT) the overseas companies that covered under double taxation avoidance agreements (DTAAs).

Foreign companies that do not have a permanent establishment in India will be exempt from paying MAT on profits from April 2001. The provisions of Section 115JB of Income Tax will not apply to foreign companies with effect from April 1, 2001, if they are resident of a country with which India has DTAA and they do not have a permanent establishment (PE) in India, said an official statement.

In case the companies belong to countries with which India does not have a DTAA, the MAT exemption will apply if they are exempted from registration under Section 592 of the Companies Act 1956, or Section 380 of the Companies Act 2013. “An appropriate amendment to the Income-Tax Act in this regard will be carried out,” said the Finance Ministry statement.

Earlier this month, the government had exempted foreign institutional and portfolio investors from payment of MAT on the capital gains made by them before April 1, 2015. Through the amendment the government will clarify that MAT provisions will not be applicable to FIIs/FPIs not having a place of business/permanent establishment in India, for the period prior to April 1.

EDITORIALS

Great power, greater responsibility

Prime Minister Narendra Modi embarked on his two-nation visit — to Ireland and the U.S. — on September 22. It is the U.S. visit that is clearly the more critical of the two. In the Prime Minister’s own words, “the visit seeks to build on the substantial ground covered” during their previous exchange of visits. On this occasion, the Prime Minister is to address the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Summit and attend the Summit on UN Peacekeeping hosted by President Barack Obama, apart from a bilateral meeting with the U.S. President. He will also meet a galaxy of U.S. CEOs and visit the Silicon Valley to meet up with the movers and shakers in their respective fields.

It is interesting that Prime Minister Modi will be in the U.S. at the same time as Chinese President Xi Jinping. U.S. dexterity in simultaneously dealing with leaders of the two Asian giants is certain to be carefully analysed. India-U.S. relations are today on an upswing. U.S.-China relations, for all the bonhomie on display, are not in the best of health. Prime Minister Modi is coming to the U.S. laden with gifts — the \$3.1 billion deal for attack and heavy lift helicopters, for instance. The Chinese President, on the other hand, will need to battle U.S. doubts about its cyber-snooping, and dispel increasing U.S. concerns about its aggressive intentions, the symbolism of the recent massive parade in Tiananmen Square, the display of state-of-the-art military hardware, as also China’s reiteration that it would not brook interference in its zone of strategic concern.

Negotiating text on UNSC reforms

Prime Minister Modi’s visit coincides with a propitious moment in India’s diplomatic history, namely, the adoption of a ‘negotiating text’ for UNSC reforms by the UN General Assembly. The resolution was adopted despite protests from China, Pakistan and Russia, and will now form the basis for further discussions at the Intergovernmental Negotiations Group. Prime Minister Modi will be hosting a Summit of G-4 leaders (India, Brazil, Japan and Germany) in New York in this connection and also raise the issue in his address to the Special Summit of the UN General Assembly. All this has given rise to hopes of an early entry for India into the Security Council.

It will be premature for India, however to sing hosannas just yet. There are many obstacles to be overcome. Significant among these is a patent unwillingness on the part of the current Permanent Members (P5) — the U.S., the U.K., France, Russia and China — to share or dilute their privileges for any newcomer. The five possess the ‘right of veto’, which gives them an exalted status. No less important is the degree of hostility and jealousy that prevails among countries across the globe to the upgradation of a select few to membership of the

Council. Objections derive from ongoing conflicts between certain states and differences of principle as to which country has the right to represent a region or a continent.

It has taken more than a decade for the G-4 to reach this stage. The G-4 idea dates back to 2004, and has witnessed some changes during this period. In the initial period, Germany displayed considerable enthusiasm but, under Chancellor Angela Merkel, it has proven less enthusiastic. Japan under Prime Ministers Junichiro Koizumi and Shinzo Abe — in his first term — was very keen, but after Mr. Abe stepped down as Prime Minister (in 2007), his successors showed less interest. President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil was a strong votary, but Brazil's economic problems in recent years have taken a toll. Buoyed by its economic resurgence, India did believe that the moment had arrived for reshaping the Security Council so as to better reflect current economic and geopolitical realities.

Even then, there were many sceptics who felt that India should not waste its energy on chasing a chimera. Apart from the unwillingness of the existing Security Council members to admit new entrants, each of the new claimants face opposition, individually and severally, from other claimants. Italy is hostile to the idea of Germany's inclusion. China is opposed to Japan's entry. Pakistan is against India's elevation, as also is China, but the latter tries to mask its opposition. Brazil faces opposition from other Latin American nations like Argentina. Africa demands a seat, but South Africa's claims are contested by countries like Nigeria.

Notwithstanding last week's UN General Assembly resolution, most of these parameters have not altered. The U.S., France and the U.K. even today remain less than enthusiastic about change. Russia's attitude seems to be changing. President Vladimir Putin and his aide, Sergei Ivanov, had previously pledged their support to India's candidature but now the support appears to be wavering. China's current enigmatic attitude hardly conceals its hostility to India's claim.

Hence, instead of waiting interminably for the final outcome, it might be advantageous for India to demonstrate to the world that it has the necessary credentials — and the gravitas — to occupy a seat on the Council. India needs to carry and express the conviction to the world that, apart from its recent economic resurgence, it is capable, and willing, to shoulder additional responsibilities regarding geopolitical and related matters.

Some modest beginnings are already evident. In the wake of the 2008 financial meltdown, India had been invited, and agreed, to be a member of the G-20 to help the world tide over a difficult situation. Around the same time, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Nuclear Suppliers Group invested India with the halo of 'a state with advanced nuclear technology' and sanctified India as a responsible member of the nuclear community. A great deal more, however, needs to be done. Unfortunately, there is an impression that India feels comfortable in its role as 'a recessed power' — more intent on treading the path of 'least activism'. This has to be dispelled. Towards this end, India must engage along many fronts. This should reduce resistance to its entry into the Security Council.

Scholarship as antidote to violence

Two issues immediately come to mind. One is the expanding writ of the jihadist group, Islamic State (IS), across a wide swathe of territory that is of crucial importance to India — parts of West Asia, Yemen and areas around the Caspian Sea, pockets in Central Asia, Afghanistan and Pakistan. India has possibly the world's largest population of moderate

Sunni Muslims, and a long history of Islamic scholarship. It is thus uniquely placed to deal with the challenge posed by the IS, which has baffled much of the world.

The choice of wrong means, including the use of armed force and bombing raids, has only encouraged more and more young elements to join the ranks of the IS. Only scholarship and an ideational approach can possibly blunt the jihadist group's offensive, one that masquerades as upkeep of purist Islamist ideology. India with its intellectual depth in Islamic matters can provide the necessary strategic flexibility.

The current refugee crisis in Europe also provides an occasion for India to showcase its inherent strengths, derived from ancient civilisational traditions. The European crisis has all the makings of a monumental human tragedy. The avalanche of refugees (in terms of numbers) is fast approaching what we witnessed during the East Bengal crisis in the early 1970s. India had then shown both capability and remarkable resilience, and India's experience would prove useful for countries in Europe, and the European Union itself, which has, so far, proved to be totally inept.

India could make common cause with Germany — the one country that has demonstrated a spirit of willingness to accommodate hundreds of thousands of refugees — and mobilise global opinion to help deal with the crisis. Additionally, India with its human resources and skills could offer to help out. The important point is that by doing so, India would demonstrate that it is both willing, and eminently suited, to take on global responsibilities, and of a kind that very few other nations can.

If India succeeds in enlarging the ambit of its role, the world will begin to view it through an entirely new prism. Apart from the relevance of size, ancient wisdom, culture and current economic strength, India's role as a vital 21st century problem solver cannot but add weight to its claims to membership of the Security Council.

(M.K. Narayanan is India's former National Security Advisor and former Governor of West Bengal .)

Restoring the law in courts

This week, the lawyers of Tamil Nadu received a public chastisement from the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Appraised of recent incidents of unseemly behaviour by a section of the Bar, the head of the judiciary remarked on how low the Madras High Court has fallen.

Last Monday (Sept. 14), some lawyers, with wives and children in tow, spent the day bringing down the image of the judiciary in general, and the Madras High Court in particular. They held placards inside the Court of the Chief Justice, and remained there for the whole day. To refresh themselves for such arduous work, they consumed snacks and beverages inside the court. When they refused to vacate at the end of the day, they were arrested and remanded.

They were demanding that Tamil be declared the official language of the Court; they should have known that the Chief Justice of the High Court is not the deciding authority for this. If their true purpose was to grab headlines and get themselves photographed, they succeeded. If another motive was to embarrass the Court, they failed since the court carried on its business, ignoring their presence.

Another recent issue illustrates the slide further. Some time back the High Court at its Madurai Bench passed an order mandating the wearing of helmets by riders of two-wheelers. The order was passed in the interest of public safety, taking into account the deaths and serious injuries from road accidents when these protective devices are not worn. For some reason difficult to fathom, a section of lawyers at the District Bar in Madurai were incensed by the order. They did not ask the Court to review and recall it, nor file any appeal; this would be the normal course of action for any one affected. Instead, the lawyers took out processions, put up posters and held meetings where the judiciary was denounced. Stung by the inflammatory nature of the speeches, the High Court invoked its power of contempt for scandalous behaviour against the President and Secretary of the Madurai District Court Advocates Association. The response was not surprising — court proceedings were disrupted, boycotts were called, and unruly behaviour witnessed in the court premises, and in the courts. The hearing of the contempt application in the High Court at Chennai last Wednesday (Sept. 16), drew a few busloads from that area, whose abusive behaviour towards the judges hearing the case became the news of the day. A small section once again became the face of all the lawyers in the State.

Endemic boycotts

Strikes, boycotts and processions have become a regular feature in our courts. They have been held for a variety of reasons. Very few were related to issues of the independence of the judiciary or the right of practice of the legal profession; some were for political issues such as the Sri Lankan Tamil issue, and many arose out of disputes and clashes between the lawyers and the police. So endemic has the boycott become that it is the first reaction to any issue. This is usually demanded by a minority, small but vociferous, and leaders of the Bar Association are usually unable to resist. The majority watches helpless and stays away from attending the courts, not wanting to antagonise the striking lawyers and fearing verbal abuse and even physical reprisals; indeed, some lawyers have been assaulted for not heeding the strike call.

A once proud High Court has lost its pride of place. Litigants wonder how guardians of the law can be so lawless, and rue the day when they cannot get urgent orders because there is a boycott. Lawyers in general are aware that their stock has fallen in public esteem. Many in the profession are hardworking, anxious to do the best for their clients, and mindful that their conduct goes a long way to keep intact the dignity and power of the Court, the bedrock of the legal profession. Senior lawyers lament that standards have fallen, but more than that are the feelings of young lawyers who watch with dismay as the noble profession they thought they were joining is portrayed in a bad light. A few thousand lawyers have lost out by the actions of a couple of hundred.

The lawyers in these incidents can, however, rest assured that their transgressions have drawn an instant response from the Court to firmly deal with their disruptions of the proceedings. The Court's patience has run out, and we are now witnessing firm and resolute action. The Chief Justice of the High Court is displaying strength, other judges are not backing down, contempt notices are being issued, and security arrangements are strong. If such action had been taken earlier, we would not have come to the present pass, but now is better than later or never.

What is heartening is that these protestors are out of line with the mass of the legal community. They have alienated a wide section of lawyers who feel that things have gone too far, and if not corrected now, the downhill slide will be irreversible.

Remedial action

A few remedial steps will suffice. Processions and demonstrations should not be allowed in court premises, and action should be taken, especially against those responsible for organising them. Associations of advocates should conduct a secret ballot of all members before deciding on a boycott (the decision will rarely be in the affirmative).

Their leaders, and those of the Bar Council of the State, should resist strike calls, refrain from active support, and speak up against such transgressions. Holders of such offices have a special responsibility, more important than any privilege or influence. Senior lawyers, too, should speak up against this practice; as should others; our profession, pride and livelihood are at stake.

If a boycott takes place, the court should ensure that no lawyer who appears before it is put to any danger or any harm. This is crucial; if not done, judges cannot expect lawyers to place themselves at peril. And other remedial actions are necessary to protect lawyers' interests. Often the police are at fault for aggressive action against lawyers; a standing committee of judges and lawyers should intervene quickly to protect the Bar.

A systemic method of urgently addressing genuine grievances of the legal community should be established. And last, but certainly not the least, aberrational judicial behaviour, which breaks all codes of decorum and dignity, an atrocity in itself which should be prevented, should also be met with strong corrective action. While the Chief Justice of India is absolutely right in bemoaning fallen standards in the Bar of the Madras High Court, it should also be realised that the shoe can also fit some feet on the Bench.

This Court now has a crop of excellent judges. It has bright young lawyers and many competent and experienced ones. They all know that their professional standing, esteem and influence depends on the majesty, power and dignity of the Court; if the latter is eroded, the former sinks. The couple of hundred protestors should realise that their best interests too lie in upholding these values, that they are letting down their numerous colleagues by their actions, and that there exist legitimate forms of protest which do not disfigure court and community of lawyers. Both Bar and Bench should now act to restore the lustre of this Chartered High Court before it is extinguished.

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Now, Netaji gets a makeover

Seventy years after Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose purportedly died in an air crash on August 18, 1945, he could well be poised for a political makeover. Nothing else would explain the interest Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken in this problematic icon, who he has called a “*mahapurush*” (great man). He has already promised to declassify documents that could lead to a better assessment of Netaji. It is presumable that when Mr. Modi meets the descendants of the Bose family, who have been clamouring for full disclosure, it will not be an empty photo opportunity.

The signs are all there: three years ago, commemorating the Foundation Day of the Azad Hind Fauj, on July 6, also the birth date of Syama Prasad Mookerjee, Mr. Modi vowed, “we will keep history alive” and that personalities like Sardar Patel and Bose ought not to be forgotten. His national security advisor Ajit Doval quoted former British Prime Minister

Clement Atlee's statement that the British quit India spurred by fears of the "spark" that Netaji had lit among Indian soldiers. He cited the Karachi, Jabalpur, and Asansol revolts, which were triggered by the inquisitions of soldiers of the Indian National Army that was cobbled together by Bose during World War II. The implication: Britain had lost its grip over the armed forces and hence could not hold on indefinitely to India.

That the dispensation in Delhi was going to politically refurbish more new icons has also been evident in its recent treatment of Babasaheb Ambedkar. As far back as October 2014, Mohan Bhagwat, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh Sarsanghachalak, gave notice when he advised the "new policy makers" to "take advantage of the vision and experience of great Bharatiya leaders" from Swamy Vivekananda to Ram Manohar Lohia, including Mahatma Gandhi, Lokmanya Tilak, Netaji and Vinoba Bhave, among others.

Rehabilitating Bose

The rehabilitation of Bose obviously begins with the Justice Mukherjee Commission set up during Atal Behari Vajpayee's term. Justice Mukherjee was able to determine that the ashes in Renkoji Temple were not those of Bose but of Ichiro Okura, a member of the Taiwanese army who died of heart failure on August 19, 1945. Mukherjee adduced that Bose did not die in a plane crash. In fact, he found no evidence of such a crash in Taiwan. Neither did he find any documentation of the cremation of the others who purportedly died in the same crash, including the pilot, co-pilot, or the Japanese General allegedly also in the plane. He found the survivor accounts as furnished by Col. Habibur Rahman, Netaji's fellow traveller, unconvincing. Justice Mukherjee observed that the *Central Daily News* of Taipei did not publish the plane crash news, odd considering that several Japanese soldiers, including a general, reportedly perished in it. He concluded that the story was concocted to obviate Netaji having to surrender to the Allied forces.

The prism through which Bose, who had access to historical personalities like Mussolini, Hitler and General Hideki Tojo, has been viewed has so far been romantic, a tale filled with escapades, derring-do and boundless valour. Yet it is less well known that before the INA briefly unfurled the tricolour in the mountains around Kohima on April 14, 1944, INA's Col. Loganathan was already Chief Commissioner of Andaman and Nicobar islands, reporting monthly to the 'Prime Minister and the Supreme Commander of the Army of the Government of Free India in Singapore'. For Bose, it was not the easiest of posts to hold. From available accounts, he had to constantly goad Gen. Tojo into first announcing that Andaman and Nicobar, which had fallen into Japanese hands on March 23, 1942, would devolve to Netaji's administration and, thereafter, allow at least some peripheral part of the administration to come under Indian supervision. When it finally happened, it was freedom with serious caveats. Netaji himself drew it up, sitting across the table from Admiral Ishikawa, head of the Japanese administration, keeping Japanese objectives firmly in view. Col. Loganathan seems to have been so comprehensively stymied by the Japanese at every turn that he handed over the baton to another INA colleague, Maj. Alvi, and returned to Singapore under the pretext of ill health.

Overlooking brutality

It is a matter of deep historical irony that when Bose visited Port Blair for three days in 1943 he managed to overlook the sheer brutality and tyranny that the Japanese had unleashed on the islands and declared blithely that "These islands stood as a symbolic hell of British tyranny, where hundreds of freedom fighters had been treated with inhuman tortures." Netaji made no attempt to break through the cocoon of his Japanese minders to reach into the grim

reality of the islands under the Japanese bayonet. The Japanese made the English seem almost civilised. They used the Nicobarese as slave labour, much like in the infamous Death Railway, to build the runway in Lamba line, where Bose landed by plane to survey the ‘free’ part of India and declare famously that his visit to the Cellular Jail was akin to the storming of the Bastille.

It was also from the Gymkhana Ground at Port Blair that Netaji was to sound his “give me blood and I’ll give you freedom” bugle. Again, ironically, in what has been compared to Hitler’s Final Solution, on August 4, 1945, after the Japanese rule of the islands brought extreme deprivation and misery, hundreds of people were corralled into ships and taken off Havelock Island and thrown into the sea. Survivors were fired upon and sliced by the ships’ propellers. Days before the Japanese surrender, 300 more islanders were taken to Tarmugli Island, lined up, and shot. It is not clear if Netaji was able to wholly decipher the coded messages that Col. Loganathan sent that tried to speak of the true situation in that part of “free India”. Certainly there is some evidence that Netaji did attempt to intervene but not with any solid results.

Any credible rehabilitation of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose can only begin with a proper and clear-eyed reconstruction of his life. Can this government do that?

Revisit the sedition law

As ironies go, this one is rich. A circular in Maharashtra containing guidelines aimed at preventing the misuse of the law relating to sedition appears to endanger freedom of speech and expression. The Bombay High Court has now stayed the August 27 circular, pending a decision on its constitutional validity. The controversial aspect of the circular is that it seems to tell police personnel that strong criticism of public servants can possibly attract the sedition charge if it shows them as “representatives of the Union or State government”. The circular was an offshoot of a judgment by the High Court in March this year on the question whether the police were right in slapping the sedition charge against a cartoonist in 2012. Though the charge was dropped subsequently, the court reminded the authorities that sedition as an offence requires the element of incitement to violence and disaffection against a government established by law, and mere criticism of government policy or public servants will not attract the provision. The Advocate General had said the government would come up with guidelines as a circular to police personnel on when and how Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code may be evoked. It seems a point in the High Court order that sedition will not be attracted by words or signs or representations against politicians or public servants, unless they were shown to be representative of the government, was loosely translated in Marathi to the effect that any criticism against politicians and public servants representing the Union or State government would attract the charge.

The potential for mischief from the circular has been stalled by the court order now, but the fact is that police officers continue to invoke Section 124A indiscriminately. Flagrant instances in recent times include the registration of a sedition case against cartoonist Aseem Trivedi, one of the petitioners against the latest circular, for cartoons produced in 2012 highlighting corruption, and the attempt to book some Kashmiri students in a university in Meerut last year for cheering for Pakistan in a one-day cricket match against India, using a pre-Independence era provision that was meant to suppress the freedom movement. While the possibility of groups and individuals promoting disaffection against a lawful government still exists, there is little justification to invoke the sedition charge against political movements unless they promote violence and public disorder. Instead of *ad hoc* attempts to put in place

loose safeguards and guidelines, the government would do well to review such outdated penal provisions. Legislation exists to deal with unlawful activities and armed movements. There is no need to criminalise words spoken or written, however strong and provocative they are in their criticism of the state.

Bangladesh's imperilled writers

The threats issued by the Ansarullah Bangla Team, a Bangladesh-based Islamist group, against secular writers and activists pose a challenge to the polity of Bangladesh. The ABT, which has been blamed for a series of murders of secular bloggers, has released a hit list on the Internet. It names Bangla writers living in different countries, and threatens to kill them all unless its demands are met. It wants the government to revoke the Bangladeshi citizenship of the writers listed, who it terms "enemies of Islam, apostates... and unbelievers". This threat is a direct challenge to the state of Bangladesh. It comes weeks after ABT leader Abul Bashar and several other activists were arrested in connection with the murder of blogger Avijit Roy. Yet, the ABT has sent out a clear message that its violent campaign against critical thinkers and writers would only continue.

The secular bloggers are victims of an ongoing conflict between the ruling elite and violent Islamists. Ever since the Awami League government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina opened the trial of those who committed war crimes during the country's liberation war, Bangladesh has seen a steady rise in violence. The Islamist groups are steadfastly opposed to the trial, but they lack the political capital to influence either the society or the state. So they have chosen to vent their anger through violent street protests. The Jamaat-e-Islami, whose leaders were indicted in the trial, and the main opposition, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), led the protests, which worsened the law and order situation. It was against this background that rightwing fringe groups such as the ABT started targeted killings. They attack the bloggers as they know they are soft targets. Hitting government officials and others involved in the trial would invite the wrath of the state machinery. The government's response was on expected lines. Instead of immediately taking action against the assailants, the authorities advised the writers to "avoid provocative statements on sensitive religious issues". It took four murders this year for the government to finally start cracking down on the ABT; by that time it had grown in strength. The government has to crack down on such fringe groups that are threatening free speech. The very survival of Bangladesh as a secular-democratic country may be at stake. Mainstream parties such as the BNP should set aside narrow political calculations and back the government in the fight against religious fundamentalism. They should realise that teaming up with fundamentalists might fetch short-term dividends, but in the long term it would only weaken the state and rupture the society.

Puncturing wrong notions of the Northeast

Peace accords are always met with some amount of cynicism. The Naga Peace Accord signed on August 3 was no exception; it too had people just waiting for it to fail. Several of these people wrote long pieces in the media too. The problem with these experts is that they look at peace from the conventional prism of the state, putting so much pressure on militants that they eventually surrender. This method of bringing about peace in Nagaland was tried for several decades, but met with no success. This is because the Nagas want an 'honourable settlement', and that can only take place when the peace dialogue is among equals.

For someone living in what is conveniently termed a 'conflict zone', I may be forgiven for expressing hope that the framework agreement signed between the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah) [NSCN (I-M)] and the Government of India will lead to a process

where not just the NSCN (I-M)'s terms will be included but also the terms of other stakeholders in what could finally become a peace deal. The others include elected representatives of Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Assam; civil society groups; and factions of the NSCN, and other militant outfits in Nagaland. Those with dismissive attitudes towards the NSCN(I-M) are only betraying the mindset of many in this country, particularly those who head institutions of strategic importance.

Conventional wisdom says India has plenty of experience in the effective management of conflicts in the Northeast. But look at the result. Three-fourths of the Northeast is perpetually declared disturbed and dangerous under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA); there are over 4,00,000 troops deployed to hold the region together; the rule of law has virtually collapsed; there is rampant trampling of human rights. Does this make India proud? For those who believe that the Northeast is too complex and hence its problems can only be 'managed' and not resolved, such tactical management interventions have actually rendered the region untenable and the situation messy.

From management to resolution

Even the NSCN (I-M) talks began with the aim of 'managing' the violence. The present dialogue is a paradigm shift from 'management' to 'resolution', by enlarging the spectrum of engagement. At no point have so many disparate groups expressed their desire to be part of the peace dialogue.

Part of the problem lies in the fact that there seems to be serious doubts about the integrity of the citizens of the Northeast and Kashmir. AFSPA has been enforced only in these areas because these regions are 'disturbed areas'. Yet, despite the horrific uprisings in Central, Eastern and Southern India, those Maoist-hit regions are not seen as 'disturbed'. This says a lot. Also, how does the government sitting in Delhi expect a 'disturbed' region to behave normally when it comes to delivery of governance?

Kashmir has its inherent contradictions, but the people of the Northeast are, by and large, reconciled to the idea of nationhood even though they still battle with a past that privileges ethnicity over nation. Communal tensions are palpable, but the truth is that except for Nagaland and Manipur, the other five States are moving on an even keel despite the occasional gunfire. And the ordinary people in this region want a climate of peace where they can pursue their education and livelihoods without having to pay the militants an undue share of their hard-earned profit.

We are talking here of a region with disparate forces which had to be brought on board for the peace talks. This required a rather unconventional approach on the part of the government interlocutor, R.N. Ravi. The run-of-the-mill containment policy is passé. People here are tired of semantics from the warring sides. But they are also acutely aware of the entrenched orthodoxy in the higher echelons of this country, which is taking an uncharitable view of the Naga peace process. These people would like to believe that the Naga problem is merely one of law and order. In fact, the entire argument is based on the presumption that the NSCN (I-M) is Thuingaleng Muivah-centric and Mr. Muivah is a hold-over of the past; that his outfit is a debilitated entity; that its resonance is limited to the Tangkhul Nagas of Manipur. How far this is from ground realities!

'Sovereignty' also has other connotations that the two parties need to work out. For instance, the concept of sovereign power-sharing between the Centre and the States is not new; this is

the essence of Indian federalism. If the States have, in the past decades, ceded much of their powers to a willing Centre because they find it convenient to do so, then they have themselves to blame. When the framers of the Indian Constitution cogitated on the idea of federalism, they perhaps envisaged that strong States actually make a strong Centre and not vice versa.

On the issue of integration, it has been reiterated by the interlocutor that re-drawing the political boundaries of the Northeastern States is not on the agenda. He seems to be suggesting a safety valve for fulfilling the political aspirations of Nagas to live together in future through a democratic process and not by effecting integration under the shadow of the gun.

There are also security experts who assert that Naga Hoho, the apex body of the Nagas, has not endorsed the peace framework. This betrays their ignorance. The Naga Hoho has repeatedly endorsed it. Even the Nagaland Legislature has adopted unanimous resolution in its support.

It is no joy to puncture certain well-entrenched viewpoints that find expression in the mainstream media and speak of the Northeastern region either from a position of patronage or of ignorance. But it must be done and this article is one such attempt.

(Patricia Mukhim is Editor, The Shillong Times, and former member, National Security Advisory Board.)

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‘Sovereignty’ also has other connotations that the two parties need to work out. For instance, the concept of sovereign power-sharing between the Centre and the States is not new; this is the essence of Indian federalism. If the States have, in the past decades, ceded much of their powers to a willing Centre because they find it convenient to do so, then they have themselves to blame. When the framers of the Indian Constitution cogitated on the idea of federalism, they perhaps envisaged that strong States actually make a strong Centre and not vice versa.

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Codes And Conundrums

The government may need to face the fact that it will never be able to control and access all information. There will always be outliers. Since these outliers are few in number and will continuously innovate, policies directed at them.

Earlier this week, the Centre released a draft encryption policy, only to modify it and then withdraw it. There are many things to learn from this incident. It is important to remember that this was only a draft released for public feedback. The practice of putting up policies for public feedback, and following a consultative governance model, is commendable and the government should get some credit for its efforts. However, the overwhelming negative feedback that the policy received highlights certain basic truths that the government must bear in mind while regulating technology.

First, when the regulation is of technology, it is important never to dictate what technology must be used. This is because technology, especially in digital media, moves very fast. Even if the technological standard specified is the best available at that point, it may soon become obsolete. A good policy will always leave room for innovation. In the context of encryption, this is especially important since industry leaders have incentives to innovate and offer consumers more secure information services.

Second, the best that regulation can ever do is get most people to change their behaviour. For regulation that concerns the adoption of technology, a well-publicised government policy may be useful to help new or under-resourced players understand what technology to use. In addition, enforcement of a minimum standard may even help incentivise those who hold information to secure it. This is also a useful role such a policy can play, since consumers do not usually have the power to insist their information be stored securely. A policy aimed at forcing changes in the behaviour of all players is do-omed to fail. Regulators must face the simple truth that there will always be outliers — a small set of well-informed regulatory subjects who will successfully resist all attempts to change their behaviour.

The encryption policy was complicated by the fact that it was trying to achieve two objectives simultaneously. It was trying to set and enforce a technological standard that would ensure all information is stored with some degree of security. If the policy tried to achieve the securing of information through a minimum standard, instead of rendering it insecure by dictating a standard that might get obsolete, it might have handled this objective better.

The other objective is more difficult to manage efficiently. In the age of encryption, the government also needs to be able to access information needed to investigate national security threats and crimes. This is why the policy attempted to specify that information be

stored for a certain length of time, and in formats easily accessible. It is in the context of this objective that the government may need to face the fact that it will never be able to control and access all information. There will always be outliers. Since these outliers are few in number and will continuously innovate, policies directed at them may result in great information security costs for all other citizens. The plain-text storage obligation within the encryption policy was a classic example. If the state is able to reconcile itself to the idea of outliers, it might direct its energies more productively in streamlining the processes and formats through which law enforcement agencies ask for encrypted information, so that their requests are processed more easily and quickly.

It is encouraging to see the government take steps towards securing information. However, it will need to work on reconciling the information security and law enforcement goals better, and take on board basic truths about regulation of technology and behaviour. I hope it will continue to be consultative. It may help to begin with conversations with industry, academia, law enforcement agencies and privacy experts to ensure that the new encryption policy is built on the right principles.

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Rethinking 1965

The 1965 war remains the only war that Pakistan can still manage to reinterpret as a victory. If this was more easily possible in the years following the war, it is no longer so, thanks to Pakistani historians researching their books abroad. (Source: Express Archive)

Wars are a part of nationalism. Nationalism is an idea that binds people together. Almost always, this binding is done under fear — fear of an external enemy. The external enemy is, more often than not, the neighbouring state. The Pakistani nation seeks to bind itself by setting up India as the enemy “that never accepted Pakistan’s existence”. For India, it is China. For Bangladesh, it is more complex: Half of Bangladesh thinks it is Pakistan; the other half thinks it is India. In Sri Lanka, it is India.

War is a part of the nationalism package. The world fought its big wars when nationalism was on the boil. World War I was the peak of internecine European nationalism. The armies went to their death with bands playing by the roadside and young girls kissing their warriors off to war. There was so much death in this war that by the time World War II ended, the bands were gone, and Europe was going to be cured of nationalism, its most intense form represented by fascism. Armies are the climactic symbols of nationalism. Today, Europe is no longer “reckless”; its will to conquer and subjugate is gone. The Balkans, where nationalism was born and lingered, has also been disabused.

But nationalism has not gone from the rest of the world. South Asia tried to kill it through an “integrated market” called Saarc, but the project was merely imitative and didn’t take off. Maybe Asean is also imitative of Europe’s EU, but not too imitative. Southeast Asia is home to market states, and if the South China Sea becomes less divisive, Asean could really take off. Killing nationalism in South Asia will be less easy — unless “free market” leaders like Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Nawaz Sharif can overcome internal hurdles to undoing national borders through free trade.

Nationalism of the status quo is less virulent than nationalism of “revision”, with nervous armies willing to die. If a state is small but revisionist against a bigger, stronger state it can’t defeat, its army is heroic and willing to take over the state on the call of nationalism. Thus the smaller revisionist state is also permanently unstable. It seeks parity where there is none, and makes great, permanently damaging economic sacrifices to achieve “nuclear deterrence”.

That is where things go wrong. International sanctions kick in, and going nuclear together with the “enemy state” means the status quo is frozen. Nuclearisation favours the status quo power but goes against the revisionist state. From this point on, the revisionist state not only offends the rival by rejecting the status quo but also loses international support.

When wars are not won, they have to be presented as non-defeats. That’s why the 1965 war is “celebrated” in India and Pakistan as a “victory”. As long as the two neighbours don’t become normal states locked into regional trade, this strange practice of annual military pageants will continue. The 1965 war remains the only war that Pakistan can still manage to reinterpret as a victory. If this was more easily possible in the years following the war, it is no longer so, thanks to Pakistani historians researching their books abroad.

Historian Ayesha Jalal in her latest book, *The Struggle for Pakistan: A Muslim Homeland and Global Politics* (2014), narrates what, in fact, was Pakistan’s misadventure in 1965: “What followed was a bungled operation called Gibraltar, which was supplemented by Operation Grand Slam to take Akhnoor and threaten India’s hold over Kashmir. Significantly, the military high command remained lukewarm in its support for both operations, convinced that the conflict could not remain confined to Kashmir. But once Ayub [Khan] had bitten on the bait, there was no scope for dissent among the officer corps. If GHQ was a less than willing participant, most Kashmiris were too absorbed with everyday struggles to earn a living to risk taking on the Indian security forces.”

Awakened to internal disorder, Pakistan seems ready in 2015 to say goodbye to the revisionist nationalism of the early 20th century. This was revealed this September in a TV discussion from Islamabad, in which senior retired army officers were ready to look at the 1965 war more realistically.

A 2011 book by Tahir Malik, Richard Bonney and Tridivesh Singh Maini, *Warriors after War*, features strategy expert Brigadier Shaukat Qadir, who says: “The military is responsible for converting a genuine movement for an independent Kashmir into a jihad — the greatest damage that we could do and did. Both [the] 1965 and 1971 wars were acts of stupidity. Musharraf, like others of his ilk, is given to bragging. Our oft-quoted strategic location is strategic only if commerce flows through it in all directions.”

Pakistan’s geographic location underpins its military strategy, but it depends on who is looking. Both the civilian and military leadership is in agreement that if India wants to reach out to Central Asia and Afghanistan, and look to Iran for gas, it can’t ignore Pakistan. A similar realisation may dawn on Bangladesh now that India has embarked on its Look East policy. But there is a cleavage in civil and military minds on whether Pakistan should be a facilitator or an obstacle.

The civilian mind, in league with the world outside, thinks of the economic benefit of being in the facilitating middle, which means Pakistan should focus on its economy and postpone its revisionist programme. The old mindset is changing as Pakistan finally gets ready to set

right its internal landscape of non-state actors doing an inverted jihad on Pakistan.

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Gandhi's Empire

Gandhi with the leaders of the non-violent resistance movement in South Africa. (Source: Wiki commons)

The South African Gandhi: Stretcher-Bearer of Empire, the book I co-authored with Goolam Vahed, has elicited widespread comment, mostly by people who have not yet read it. Rajmohan Gandhi, the grandson and biographer of Mohandas Gandhi, writing in The Indian Express ('Why attacks on Mahatma Gandhi are good', September 9), says the book contends that "Gandhi disdained black people and supported British imperialism" during his South Africa years. Rajmohan does not deny the allegations, but his main contention is that these issues are not new — which reveals much of his own way of viewing the liberation struggle in South Africa.

Rajmohan is keen to argue that once Gandhi realised that empire was bad (in the 1920s), he became its foe. But what does it say about Gandhi that during his time in South Africa, he saw empire as a benign, if not progressive, force? In Gandhi's time in South Africa, the British empire was at its acme. The Zulu kingdom had been decimated through plunder and pillage, while taxes forced African men off the land and into gold and diamond mines. Their wives and children were not allowed to accompany them. It was a brutal system.

What did Gandhi have to say about empire at work? One "where all races would be equal", as Rajmohan says he believed? He could only envision this because he wrote Africans out of history. When he did write about them, it was of the ways in which empire could further exploit and subjugate them. So it is not just a question of Gandhi's racism and belief in empire, but his view that Indians should be allowed to join whites in this system of racist super-exploitation. As for nursing the sick, his other passion besides empire, Gandhi did not care for those dying in British concentration camps. His ambulance missions were limited to showing loyalty to empire.

Did the empire's batons have to land on Indian backs before Gandhi realised its falsity in the 1920s? If so, this aggravates the charge that it took assaults upon those occupying the "Aryan" plane of civilisation to jolt him out of this most obvious error. It is like saying that Gandhi did not care about slavery (except for wanting Indians to be allowed their own slaves) because it was limited to Africans, but when Indians were turned into slaves he saw the fault and fought against it. Gandhi took up empire's cudgels to ensure that Africans were kept in their place. For us, this is what marked Gandhi — his begging to be the stretcher-bearer of empire in South Africa. And when tired of stretcher-bearing, he asked for guns to defend empire against the rebellious natives. Rajmohan goes on to argue that "the younger Gandhi [was] at times ignorant and prejudiced about South Africa's blacks... especially when provoked by the conduct of black convicts who were among his fellow inmates in South Africa's prisons".

"Provoked"? Were their black bodies a provocation, the same provocation that in a brutal racist system landed them in prison? Rajmohan then argues, "the struggle for Indian rights in South Africa paved the way for the struggle for black rights". In one sentence he writes out the history of African resistance to colonialism that unfolded much before Gandhi arrived on the scene and which he was quite keen to subvert by siding with white colonial power.

Rajmohan holds that “on racial equality, ... [Gandhi] was greatly in advance of most if not all of his compatriots”. This is a staggering claim. The South African Gandhi accepted white racist minority rule, and openly proposed that Indians and whites were more civilised than Africans, that they were lazy, and that they needed to have more taxes heaped upon them. Of his prison experience, he wrote: “We could understand not being classed with the whites, but to be placed on the same level with the natives seemed too much to put up with.”

Cherry-picking a quote here or there does not nullify this but does say much about Rajmohan’s own blinkers, which allow him to write so glibly about Gandhi’s siding with empire in the subjugation of Africans.

Rajmohan ends on this resounding note: “Some, however, seem to think that they are wiser than (Martin Luther) King or Mandela.” Mandela said many things. He aligned his name with arch-imperialist Cecil John Rhodes. And many have long gotten over the idea that Mandela’s words are gospel. In any case, given his South African prison record, would Gandhi have shared a cell with Mandela or King?

Rajmohan sets out to exculpate Gandhi but ends up revealing much about his own narrow, even racist, lens by arrogating for Indians a vanguard role and rushing over Gandhi’s complicity in the empire’s brutal project at the turn of the 20th century. Once we are clear and honest about this, we can turn our gaze to the false promises of empire and the provocations of Africans.

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Teach the teacher

When teachers are not trained to be genuine educators but perceive their job as merely guiding, however desultorily, their wards through the labyrinth of examinations, they cannot be expected to instil any values remotely connected to good citizenship in their students. (Source: Express photo)

Two events in the recent past are, in their own strange way, connected by a common thread. The first is the elevation of Sundar Pichai to the post of CEO of Google, and the second is the disgraceful behaviour of our parliamentarians.

Pichai’s achievement is undoubtedly one of the highest order, and a tribute to his qualities. But when reflecting on this event, we must consider a few things. Pichai achieved his success outside India. Would the Indian system have been able to spot and then nurture the likes of him? How many Pichais fall through the cracks?

As for the behaviour of our MPs, what could be a bigger indictment of our education system? It is an indictment of both voter and voted — the former for displaying singularly bad judgement (compounded by a serious lack of choice), and the latter for their complete abdication of responsibility. Is this what our education system has reduced the country to?

Whilst it is not my intention to analyse all that is wrong with the system, I would like to concentrate on one basic failure, which, to my mind, is perhaps at the root of the entire problem: Our failure to develop a scientific and progressive system of teacher-training. The preoccupation of all governments has been with developing high-profile institutes of higher education, such as medical colleges, IITs and IIMs. Somewhere along the line we seem to have forgotten or ignored the fact that the entire supply chain to these institutions stems from

our schools, and that if that product is flawed or not well prepared, there will be a huge attrition in the numbers of those who try to negotiate the challenges of higher education. The recent case of the expulsions from the IITs is a sad example.

There is yet another dimension to this problem. When teachers are not trained to be genuine educators but perceive their job as merely guiding, however desultorily, their wards through the labyrinth of examinations, they cannot be expected to instil any values remotely connected to good citizenship in their students. They lack the skills, and even when they have them, the examination-heavy system ensures that they do not have the time. Our MPs behave badly largely because they have been taught no better. India has a huge problem, in as much as, few opt for teaching as a first-choice career. We compound it by not training the ones that do.

So, what is the answer? It is to give teacher-training along modern, scientific lines top priority. We have to train our teachers to break away from mere curriculum-delivery and “teaching to the test” to challenge students to think critically, problem-solve, communicate, work as a team, use technology judiciously — and, most importantly, to place great emphasis on values like honesty, integrity, empathy and civic pride.

Teachers need to be supported by the entire system. Parents must understand that “the times they are a changing”, and that success in an examination is not the sole criteria for success in a globalised economy. Universities must synergise with the school system and both must think creatively about the certification and entrance processes.

It must be our effort to ensure that every school, right from the ones in the village to the high-end ones in the city, is manned by well-trained teachers. Each state must create and sustain a chain of teacher-training institutions manned by the finest faculty and steeped in research. For government schools, it might be worth considering a teaching cadre, driven not by ideology, but by skills and a passion to reach out to the young. Attractive salaries are essential, but professional training and an esprit de corps are also essential ingredients of professional pride. After all, the army jawan earns much less than some of his civilian counterparts, but can anyone get remotely close to the kind of pride that the jawan has in his uniform?

All that India is aspiring to be will remain a mere dream unless we invest in our teachers.

The writer retired as principal, Welham Boys School, Dehradun

Going Bicoastal

While Narendra Modi becomes the first Indian prime minister to visit Silicon Valley in 30 years, his third summit with US President Barack Obama in less than a year demonstrates the high-intensity engagement that has set the tone for a bold reimagination of bilateral ties. Although the big ideas on Indo-US relations came up under UPA 1, the Congress itself displayed ambivalence towards the US, as a result of which the partnership couldn't fully translate itself from paper to process. The BJP, too, had reservations about America in the past, brought home by its opposition to the civilian nuclear deal. Modi as PM, though, has swept aside many of New Delhi's traditional fears about the US and pushed ahead. Obama, for his part, has also responded positively. The result of this re-energised effort has been a rare and productive moment in the history of Indo-US relations.

The US-India Strategic and Commercial Dialogue, concluded in Washington DC this week, witnessed the transformation of this new approach into specific outcomes. This is reflected in expanded bilateral diplomatic cooperation, with a new mechanism for dialogue set up

between India's foreign secretary and the US deputy secretary of state, as well as a new institutional partnership between the state department and the ministry of external affairs. The trilateral with Japan has, likewise, been elevated to the ministerial level. India and the US have also decided to deepen their counter-terror cooperation and asked Pakistan to bring the perpetrators of 26/11 to justice, while Delhi and Washington are to build on their 10-year Defence Framework Agreement to deepen collaboration in defence and defence production via Make in India, even as the Union cabinet has just approved a roughly \$3 billion helicopter deal with Boeing. Among the other takeaways are India's aspiration for greater participation in internet governance organisations like Icann and the joint emphasis on climate change, looking ahead to the signing of a new five-year MoU on energy security, clean energy and climate change.

Modi, however, has to work harder to convince US businessmen — whom he is meeting in large numbers in New York and California — that the NDA can deliver on reforms to make it easier for foreigners to do business in India. Among the diaspora too, the uncritical enthusiasm for Modi is now tempered by the extension of India's internal divisions — as with the Patels — to the NRI community in the US. As far as the PM's challenge on the global stage is concerned, he has to signal a full reorientation of India's multilateralism away from its hitherto defensive approach to a confident pragmatism that is willing to walk the talk.

Grand scam auto

As far as India is concerned, the VW scandal may not have an immediate direct impact on consumers.

The emissions cheating scandal involving Volkswagen (VW), leading to the resignation of the chief executive of the world's biggest automaker, is no ordinary tale of corporate fraud. It's already being talked of as the auto industry's Lehman Brothers moment. The issue here is one of trust. How could a company symbolising the best of "German Engineering" — and owning iconic brands like Audi, Porsche, Bentley and Lamborghini — be caught for fitting some 11 million diesel cars with software that masks vehicular pollution, often 30 to 40 times the permissible limit? VW faces penalties of roughly \$18 billion from US regulators after admitting to systematically installing such software since 2009, apart from suffering a similar fall in its market capitalisation this week. But more than money, the real collapse is of public trust: If VW can do it, can one expect other automakers to be any different?

To be sure, this is not the first time that VW, or for that matter the automotive industry, has been caught cheating. In 1973, the US Environmental Protection Agency, which uncovered the latest scam, had penalised VW for installing a so-called "defeat" device to shut down the vehicle's pollution control system. In 1974, the EPA made Chrysler recall more than 8,00,000 cars after similar devices were found in their radiators. But despite the bans, such devices have survived and, in fact, become more sophisticated. Recognised global brands, including Toyota, Hyundai, Kia and GM, have also been found to be duping customers by either overstating mileage or understating emissions. Yet, what is remarkable in the latest scandal is the scale and kind of sophisticated software algorithms deployed, which can apparently recognise when a pollution test is being conducted and turn on full emissions control just for that moment. And there will be questions asked now on the viability of new-age diesel engines, which witnessed a renaissance after being projected as much cleaner than before.

As far as India is concerned, the VW scandal may not have an immediate direct impact on consumers. The level of fuel emissions allowed here are much higher than in the US or Europe. So, the cars being made and sold by the German auto major here may not meet the fate of VW or Audi diesel vehicles in the US. But there could be an indirect impact on the country's auto ancillary industry, which supplies a range of components to global vehicle majors. That impact may not be small, if the VW case turns out to be a mini-Lehman.

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