

# A RITUAL MOURNING

Union government promised thoroughgoing national security reforms in the wake of 26/11. Little has happened

*The Indian Express, 28.11.15*  
**E**VERY NOVEMBER 26, Indians join in mourning the 166 children, women and men who died in the carnage inflicted by a Lashkar-e-Taiba terror squad in 2008, and the 18 police and National Security Guard personnel who died defending Mumbai. There are solemn speeches, wreaths are laid — and then, the nation chooses to forget. This newspaper reported, on Thursday, that one key coastal security outpost charged with protecting Mumbai consists of two police officers sitting in a bamboo shack; near-identical investigative reports have been carried each year. This month's massacre in Paris has served notice, if one was needed, that cities across the world are vulnerable to mass violence. The causes are varied: Terrorists seeking to coerce civil society or achieve political ends; nihilist death cults that simply wish to kill as many perceived enemies as they can; people with mental illnesses who happen to get hold of a gun. First responders — police, medical services, the fire brigade — all need to be prepared and equipped to deal with such scenarios.

The truth is this: though the Union government had promised thoroughgoing national security reforms in the wake of 26/11, little has happened. Though hundreds of crores have been spent on police modernisation, there has been no audit of how police capacity has developed. There are no metrics of performance state police forces are expected to achieve. Training standards are poor. Few officers get one session at a firing range in an entire year, due to budget constraints, let alone specialist training. India's police forces remain understrength — and this based on human-resource levels drawn up in the 1970s. The Intelligence Bureau has slashed training times by half to meet shortages, but remains 30 per cent understrength. To make things worse, the Union government ended funding for modernisation programmes this year, hoping the states would add enhanced Central funds they were given for that purpose. Not one single state government has done so.

In Paris, police responded to SOS calls in minutes, and ended the standoff in the Bataclan theatre inside two hours. Their special weapons and tactics units had rehearsed scenarios like these for years, studying, among other things, the Mumbai experience. Following the Boston marathon bombing, not one patient was lost after they arrived in hospital, because doctors had practised for just such an eventuality. Even though Singapore and London haven't had mass casualty attacks, they rehearse such eventualities several times a year. Perhaps India cannot aspire to these first-world standards, but it bears mention that many of them require expertise and practice, not large funds outlays. This November, it is perhaps time to stop grieving those we have lost, and instead demand that the government act to ensure the highest possible standards of safety for those who live.



# The Spectre Of Foreign Wapsi

*Angry reactions to Aamir Khan could redefine patriotism and its reverse*

*The Times of India, 28-11-15*  
Should Antonio Costa, the Goan-origin newly elected prime minister of Portugal be charged with sedition against the Indian state? Should industrialists like Ratan Tata or Lakshmi Mittal also be similarly accused?

In the sound and fury generated by reactions to Bollywood actor Aamir Khan's remark that his wife had asked him, in view of the growing climate of intolerance in the country, if it might be a good idea to go live in a foreign country words like 'sedition' and 'patriotism' are being given a twist that defies all dictionary definitions.

**just in jest!**

Though the actor has emphatically and earnestly declared his pride in being an Indian and affirmed that he has never contemplated leaving the country, he has been targeted for what might be called his suspect 'foreign wapsi' agenda of airing the option of emigrating from the country.

Indeed, for his 'thought crime' of even thinking that going to live elsewhere could be a choice available not just to him but to any citizen of this country, a case for sedition has been filed against him in a Bihar court.

This gives rise to the intriguing conclusion that if choosing to live in a foreign land is seditious, the entire Indian diaspora is guilty of the treasonable offence of having voted with its feet in leaving India and settling abroad.



Viewed in this light, the diaspora – of which we are so proud, and which contributes substantially to the economy through remittances – is comprised of a bunch of subversive elements who should be put in the dock instead of being feted in venues like Wembley Stadium and Madison Square Garden.

The diaspora apart, Indian industrialists like Ratan Tata who invest abroad could have their patriotic credentials scrutinised for possible signs of sedition. If found culpable, such people might also be included in that long and growing list of people being urged from various quarters – including that of the office of the current governor of Assam – to go to Pakistan for a variety of anti-national activities, such as eating taboo foods or wanting to play cricket with any team fielded by Nawaz Sharif.

What with the large number of people being egged on to go to Pakistan, Air India's Maharajah might well plan to lay on extra flights to that country to bolster the national carrier's sagging fortunes.

Whether Pakistan-bound or elsewhere, all foreign travel could arouse suspicion. In which case, will the finger of suspicion soon also point towards that indefatigable globetrotter whose frequent forays abroad have earned him the tongue-in-cheek distinction of being India's first NRI PM?



# First, Raise the Game in Manufacturing

*The Economic Times*, 28-11-15  
The government has reportedly nudged IIT Bombay to alter their normal placement schedule and give engineering, rather than financial or consulting, companies Day One slots, to pick up the best students. The motivation is to give a nudge to Make in India. The motive might be noble, but the move is misguided and fails to understand that pricing plays a vital role in sensible allocation of resources. The level of salaries companies offer reflects the quality of manpower they want to hire. The top talent skips the manufacturing sector, for the most part, opting for better paying service sector jobs.

If our manufacturing firms step up their game and require top engineering talent, they would offer competitive salaries,



as Chinese companies do. A Towers Watson study finds that an engineer earns in India half as much as in China and one-third as much as in Singapore. The kind of engineer required and the salary she commands depends on how advanced is the work she is called upon to perform. Indian manufacturing companies must

step up R&D to move beyond having maintenance engineers and machine operators. India lags in advanced manufacturing, whether in micro-electronics, materials or aircraft manufacture. India has just one Shyam Telecom doing indigenous R&D in telecommunications, which struggles to find state support and is dwarfed by the likes of China's Huawei and ZTE who develop standards and equipment for 5G mobile communication technologies. China's policies foster and accelerate innovation, and that is the way for India to go as well.

The US spends an estimated 2.8% of its GDP on R&D. In 2012, China's R&D was estimated at 1.98% of the GDP, China hopes to match US R&D spend by 2020. India's spend on R&D is a paltry 0.95% of a lesser GDP. Fix these problems, to Make in India.



# Two Political Ideals Worth Cherishing

We refer to secularism and socialism Indian style

*The Economic Times, 28-11-15*  
The Prime Minister did well to adopt a non-confrontational, accommodative tone for his contribution to the special debate in Parliament to commemorate the adoption of India's Constitution on November 26, 1949. He did well also to stress the inclusive essence of India's basic law, offering individuals dignity and India, unity. These are fine sentiments. Sentiments and sentimentalism are of little use, however, when a mob clobbers to death a middle-aged Muslim man on suspicion of eating beef and ministers of the Union government conduct themselves in a manner that violates the values of inclusion hailed by the Prime Minister in the abstract. Respect for the Constitution has to be shown in action, not by words, however eloquent.

But the main debate centred around two words, 'secular' and 'socialist,' inserted through the 42nd Amendment of 1976. Home minister Rajnath Singh, initiating the debate, alleged that secularism was now the most 'misused' word in our discourse. In this, he was being



true to the legacy of BJP stalwart Lal Krishna Advani who had earlier made a fine distinction between what to him, was real secularism and what he termed 'pseudo-secularism'. To the credit of India's population and the robustness of its Constitution, this debate remains largely academic: incidents like the Dadri lynching are exceptions and our secular fabric, a trifle the worse for wear, hangs more or less intact, as yet.

It is more doubtful how 'socialist' India really is. Its economy is dominated by a dynamic private sector; but the state intervenes in countless welfare schemes – as it must – in fields as diverse as water management and education. Socialism, as practiced, say, in the erstwhile Soviet Union, was never an option here. India operates as a mixed economy, or welfare state – with widely varied results. Secularism and socialism, India-style, are ideals worth cherishing and preserving. And the main responsibility for doing that remains with the government of the day. Opposition parties too contribute, by holding the government to account, and by their own conduct.



**सेमिनार** | बुद्धिजीवियों से चर्चा के दौरान देवेंद्र शर्मा बोले-

# महंगाई न बढ़े इसलिए किसानों की आय नहीं बढ़ाती सरकार

बिजनेस रिपोर्टर | भोपाल

महंगाई न बढ़े। लोगों को सस्ती दरों पर अनाज मिलता रहे। इसलिए सरकार ने 45 सालों में गेहूं का समर्थन मूल्य केवल 19 गुना बढ़ाया। लेकिन इस दौरान कर्मचारियों के



देवेंद्र शर्मा

वेतन 150 गुना वृद्धि हुई। नतीजतन आज देश के 60 करोड़ किसान बदहाली के शिकार हैं। अगर सरकार सचमुच में किसानों की स्थिति की चिंता करती तो आज गेहूं का समर्थन मूल्य 1450 की जगह 7600 रुपए प्रति क्विंटल होना चाहिए था। यह बात प्रसिद्ध कृषि विशेषज्ञ देवेंद्र शर्मा ने कही। वे गांधी भवन में आयोजित एक सेमिनार में शहर के बुद्धिजीवियों से चर्चा कर रहे थे।

शर्मा ने कहा कि देशभर में किसानों की आत्महत्या की संख्या बढ़ने के पीछे एक मात्र कारण उनकी आय न बढ़ना है। सरकार जब एक ही बार में एक चपरासी का वेतन सीधे

250 फीसदी बढ़ा सकती है तो वह किसानों की हालत सुधारने के लिए भी उपाय क्यों नहीं कर सकती। शर्मा ने कहा कि बेशक समर्थन मूल्य इतना बढ़ने से महंगाई बढ़ने की सरकार की चिंता जायज है। ऐसे में उसे चाहिए कि भले ही वह किसानों से गेहूं 1450 रुपए पर खरीदे। लेकिन किसान के खाते में 7600 रुपए ही डाले जाएं। इससे देश की विकास दर 25 फीसदी बढ़ जाएगी। सातवें वेतन आयोग की सिफारिशें लागू होने के बाद बाजार में आने वाले पैसे से तो केवल एक फीसदी जीडीपी ही बढ़ेगी। शर्मा ने कहा कि सरकार 2030 तक 30 करोड़ नए रोजगार के अवसर पैदा करने के नाम पर कृषि पर निर्भर आबादी को औद्योगिक मजदूर बनाने जा रही है। उसका तर्क है कि खेती पर आबादी का बोझ ज्यादा है। लेकिन अनुपातिक आय में बढ़ोतरी होती तो गांव से शहर आए लोग वापस लौट आए होते। यह सब विश्व व्यापार संगठन डब्ल्यूटीओ के इशारे पर हो रहा है। उसने 1995-96 में यह प्लान बनाया था। इसके तहत आने वाले सालों में 30 करोड़ लोगों को शहर में लाने का लक्ष्य बनाया गया था।

## बिहार चुनाव के कारण बढ़े दाल के दाम

शर्मा ने दावा किया कि केवल चंदे के चक्कर में चुनावों से पहले हर बार प्याज और दाल जैसी जरूरी वस्तुओं के दाम बढ़ाए जाते हैं। 2013 में प्याज का उत्पादन केवल 0.4 फीसदी कम हुआ था। लेकिन दाम 600 फीसदी तक बढ़े थे। इस कालाबाजारी से 8000 करोड़ रुपए बनाए गए। इसमें 4000 करोड़ चुनावों के लिए चंदे में गए। बिहार चुनाव से पहले मई से तुअर दाल में कालाबाजारी शुरू हुई। सितंबर तक इसके दाम बढ़कर 200 रुपए के आसपास चले गए। लेकिन जब दाल का मुद्दा बिहार के चुनाव के समीकरण बिगाड़ने लगा तब चुनाव के तीसरे चरण के बाद जमाखोरों के खिलाफ कार्रवाई शुरू हुई। देशभर में 1.22 लाख टन दाल जब्त की गई। दाम 55 रुपए किलो तक नीचे आए। अगर सरकार चाहती तो यह कार्रवाई जुलाई में भी हो सकती थी। लेकिन उसे लगा कि चुनाव में दाल से ज्यादा दूसरे मुद्दे अहम साबित होने वाले हैं।