Malabar exercise helps ensure that India, Japan, US are ready to protect shared interests in the Indo-Pacific

MaryKay Carlson

Billions of dollars' worth of commerce and millions of tons of cargo move through the Bay of Bengal each year, but this week the Bay is especially active as vessels from the US Navy, Indian Navy, and the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force are in Chennai for the 21st iteration of combined naval exercise Malabar.We are honoured that India is welcoming thousands of US sailors who will build upon our countries' strong relationship and forge new friendships. This year's Malabar exercise will be the largest and most complex in years.

The aircraft carrier USS Nimitz and her strike group will participate, as will, for the first time, the Indian Navy aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya and the helicopter destroyer JS Izumo, the largest ship in the Japanese fleet. Malabar 2017 will involve over 7,000 US personnel on board four surface ships carrying close to a 100 aircraft.Starting July 10 and going until July 17, Indian, Japanese and US naval forces will come together to sharpen their skills. Experts will exchange best practices and crews will practise communication, search and rescue, antisubmarine operations, boarding tactics, and more.By spending a week working and training side by side, participants from all three countries will learn from each other, build interoperability, and make sure we are prepared to work together in any future mission. On shore, American sailors will experience Chennai's history and culture by visiting schools, seeing the sights, and playing sports with local teams.Exercises such as Malabar play a critical role in ensuring that those of us who operate in the Indo-Pacific region are ready to protect our shared interests, whether we are responding to the threat from piracy or to humanitarian disasters.This June, ships from the US and Indian navies rushed to Sri Lanka to assist with medical and disaster relief when floods gripped the island nation. Our navies are often the first responders when crisis strikes. Building maritime partnerships, enhancing interoperability, and increasing joint capacity help foster security and stability in the region.Two weeks ago when he met with President Donald Trump in Washington, Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted the Malabar exercise and the importance of freedom of navigation, overflight, and commerce. President Trump noted that our militaries are working every day to enhance cooperation, and both leaders encouraged more maritime security cooperation.The United States welcomes India's growing defence capabilities and its commitment to a common set of principles for the region, according to which sovereignty and international law are respected.The week of exercises and exchanges will be dramatic, with ships from three great seafaring nations assembling in the waters off Chennai and their aircraft crossing the skies. But as impressive as it is, Malabar is only a small part of the growing US-India partnership.Whether we are talking about our joint efforts to stabilise Afghanistan, the campaign to defeat international terrorism, the work of our scientists to combat emerging health threats, or efforts to spur global entrepreneurship, our two nations – and the world – benefit when India and the United States work side by side for common purpose.Once again, thank you to our hosts – the Indian Navy and the city of Chennai – for everything you have done to make Malabar 2017 a success, and allow me to join you in welcoming the sailors of the US Navy and the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force to India. Forward together!

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Date: 11-07-17

A loss difficult to digest

By Asitava Sen (The writer is senior agribusiness adviser, International Finance Corporation)

Global agriculture is facing new challenges, in terms of climate change, unstable food prices and labour shortage, amid conflicting demand for arable land for producing more food, animal feed and bio-fuel, which limit the effectiveness of a purely production-focused strategy. The critical policy imperatives of the day are how to feed a rising global population with shrinking resources such as land, water and labour, and how to increase farmers' income, a goal that sometimes may conflict with producing more.The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimates that globally one third of all food produced is wasted from farm to fork. Food loss and waste is responsible for 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions — six times more than the global aviation sector. While one in nine people remains malnourished worldwide, we use land equal to the size of China to grow food that is lost or thrown away.At $940 billion annually, food loss and waste is more than the entire GDP of Indonesia. In reality, we already produce enough food to feed 10 billion people, the projected population by 2050.

The World Bank estimates that a reduction in post-harvest loss of just 1% could lead to output gains of $40 million every year. It is also relatively more cost-effective to preserve food than to produce more. However, only 4% of the total investments in global food and agriculture goes toward reducing food loss. This apathy could be due to a lack of standardised and accurate measurement and visible impact of food loss and waste.

In developing countries like India, over two-thirds of food loss happens pre-harvest in the field or in the post harvest supply chain. About $15 billion worth of harvest is lost in India. Six crops — rice, wheat, banana, tomato, onion and potato — comprise around 40% of the overall food loss. India is one of the top global production hubs. But traditionally, it's small holder-dominated and infrastructure starved.Unless addressed seriously, increasing urbanisation will further increase food miles. And rising protein intake in diet, including dairy, fresh fruit, vegetable and meat, will require greater care in handling and logistics.An integrated cold chain is believed to be the most obvious solution for reducing post-harvest perishable food loss. While in the US, over 70% of perishable food gets refrigerated, in India, it's less than 4%. Ironically, India has the largest capacity of refrigerated warehouses in the world at 130 million cu m, 60% of which is concentrated in two states, Uttar Pradesh and Bengal, and over 75% used for potato alone.But to keep the integrity of the cold chain from farm to fork, India also needs near-farm pack-houses for onward transport and refrigerated vehicles.

According to a recent study by the National Centre for Cold Chain Development (NCCD), India needs about 70,000 pack-houses, while currently there are only about 250. India has less than 10,000 refrigerated vehicles, while the need is estimated at 62,000. Ministry of food processing industries' proposed new scheme for supporting investments in 'forward and backward linkages' to address these gaps is a move in the right direction.Agriculture marketing policy also needs to be further reformed uniformly across states. Farmers should not only be allowed, but also encouraged, to access direct linkages with private sector exporters, processors and retailers, thus creating a more integrated 'food system'. This will result in more demand-based production and a better economic case for co-investing for reduced food loss.Allowing large-scale modern commercial agriculture through leasing of land could attract suitable investments for reducing food losses.

Organising farmers and connecting them to markets is another step towards this supply chain integration. Connecting R&D to the field and building capacity for farmer training and advisory are also essential.India could leapfrog the cold chain revolution by adopting solar and other renewable energy technologies. Precision agriculture with satellite imaging-based analytics could also help in early detection of pests and waste. Consumer groups could be identified who are willing to pay a premium for quality and sustainability.Urban consumers could be sensitised about the impact of food loss through large-scale information campaigns. 'Zero waste' or 'premium quality' branding might help pay for refrigerated storage and logistics. Other initiatives could include financial incentives to supply chain partners for adoption of food loss reduction practices.Finally, wasted food material could be recycled to produce bio-fertilisers or packaging material, which can help enhance shelf life. There are a number of innovative technologies already available worldwide that can be scaled up through public-private partnerships.

जनसत्ता

Date: 11-07-17

जी-20 की राह

संपादकीय

जर्मनी के हैम्बर्ग शहर में जी-20 का बारहवां शिखर सम्मेलन पिछले हफ्ते, कई तरह के द्वंद्वों का सामना करते हुए, संपन्न हो गया। एक द्वंद्व अमेरिका तथा बाकी सदस्य-देशों के बीच पेरिस जलवायु समझौते को लेकर था। एक दूसरा द्वंद्व रूस और **अमेरिका** के बीच था, अमेरिका की इस शिकायत की बिना पर, कि रूस ने राष्ट्रपति चुनाव के समय उसकी घरेलू राजनीति को प्रभावित करने की कोशिश क्यों की। एक द्वंद्व अमेरिका और यूरोपीय संघ के बीच ट्रंप के **संरक्षणवाद** को लेकर भी था। एक द्वंद्व डोकलाम को लेकर भारत और चीन के बीच था। फिर, एक द्वंद्व सम्मेलन और सम्मेलन स्थल के बाहर लगातार हो रहे विरोध-प्रदर्शनों के बीच था। इतने द्वंद्वों से जी-20 की मुठभेड़ शायद पहले कभी नहीं हुई। इसमें कोई हैरत की बात नहीं है। शुरू में जी-20 का एजेंडा एकसूत्री था, पर अब उसमें कई नई मुद्‍दे शामिल हो गए हैं। इसलिए मतभेदों के उभरने की अधिक गुंजाइश रहती है, और न्यूनतम सहमति बनाने की कवायद में पहले से ज्यादा वक्त जाया होता है। कुछ लोग मानते हैं कि इस समूह की नींव पिछली सदी के आखिरी दशक में दक्षिण-पूर्व एशिया में आए वित्तीय संकट से पार पाने की कोशिशों के दौरान ही पड़ गई थी। पर जी-20 के मौजूदा स्वरूप ने आकार लिया था 2008 में। महामंदी से चिंतित अमेरिका के **तत्कालीन** राष्ट्रपति जॉर्ज बुश ने इसकी पहल की थी। इसे जी-7 के विस्तार के तौर पर भी देखा गया।दरअसल, उस वक्त यह महसूस किया गया कि विश्वव्यापी मंदी से पार पाने के लिए सिर्फ जी-7 की एकजुटता पर्याप्त **नहीं** है, भारत और चीन जैसे बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्था वाले अन्य **देशों** को भी जोड़ा जाना चाहिए। बहरहाल, जी-20 की अहमियत का अंदाजा इसी से लगाया जा सकता है कि विश्व के कुल जीडीपी का अस्सी से पचासी फीसद इसके अंतर्गत आता है और दुनिया की दो तिहाई आबादी का यह प्रतिनिधित्व करता है। दरअसल, उन्नीस देश ही इसके सदस्य हैं, बीसवां सदस्य यूरोपीय संघ है। मुक्त व्यापार और वैश्विक आर्थिक वृद्धि की **चिंता** जी-20 पर हमेशा छाई रही है। पर अब आतंकवाद तथा जलवायु संकट से निपटने के उपाय आदि भी इसके एजेंडे का हिस्सा बन चुके हैं। मेजबान देश जर्मनी की चांसलर एंजेला मर्केल की **कोशिशों** के चलते प्रवासियों तथा शरणार्थियों की मदद और संयुक्त राष्ट्र के सुझाए **टिकाऊ** विकास लक्ष्यों का मुद्‍दा भी एजेंडे में शामिल था।

प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने अपने वक्तव्य में आतंकवाद से निपटने के मौजूदा वैश्विक प्रयासों को नाकाफी बताया, और लश्कर-ए-तैयबा तथा जैश-ए-मोहम्मद को अलकायदा व आइएस के समान बताया। यह पाकिस्तान का नाम लिये बगैर उसे कठघरे में खड़ा करना था। जी-20 के

साझा बयान में आतंकवाद के वित्तीय स्रोतों को बंद करने तथा इंटरनेट पर आतंकवादी प्रचार सामग्री रोकने का आह्वान किया गया है। इससे भारत के रुख की पुष्टि हुई है। डोकलाम विवाद के चलते यह एक भारी उत्सुकता का विषय था कि मोदी की सीधी मुलाकात चीन के राष्ट्रपति शी चिनफिंग से होगी या नहीं। पर दोनों नेता **सम्मेलन** के दौरान अलग से न सिर्फ मिले, मुस्कराए, एक दूसरे **की** तारीफ की, बल्कि ब्रिक्स की अनौपचारिक बैठक में भी शामिल हुए। सितंबर **में** ब्रिक्स की शिखर बैठक चीन में होगी, जहां एक बार फिर मोदी और चिनफिंग मिलेंगे। उम्मीद की जानी चाहिए कि डोकलाम विवाद **शांतिपूर्ण** ढंग से सुलझ चुका होगा, और ब्रिक्स बैठक तनाव-मुक्त माहौल में संपन्न होगी।

The Indian EXPRESS
JOURNALISM OF COURAGE

Date: 10-07-17

Internal insecurity

Amid growing challenges within, India misses a modern security apparatus, strategic vision, long-term plan

Prakash Singh The writer was director general, Border Security Force, DGP UP and DGP Assam

It is unfortunate that even though we have a strong government at the Centre, the internal security situation of the country has not shown any marked improvement over what it inherited from the UPA regime. This has essentially been because the fundamentals of security management have not been given due importance and, like previous governments, the NDA regime has also preferred to swim with the tide in areas where bold departures were called for.Successive governments have not cared to codify the country's internal security doctrine and the present government has also ignored this vital area and taken ad hoc decisions on crucial matters. The US and UK revise their national security doctrines every year and place them in the public domain. We have done nothing of the sort, despite the fact that our internal security problems are far more complex. There is no long-term policy for Jammu and Kashmir, nor is there any strategic vision to tackle the Maoist insurgency. No wonder, while violence levels are periodically brought down, they spiral again, and it becomes a game of snakes and ladders.

Another inexplicable flaw has been the absence of an institutional response with whatever mechanisms are or were in place. The National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) was liquidated. Not that it was doing a great job, but then it is for the government to take the best out of a select group of experts from different fields. If they were made to vegetate, it was not their fault. Closing shop was not the answer. The NSAB has now been revived, though in an emaciated form.This government, like its predecessors, has also not paid adequate attention to strengthening the internal security apparatus.

The police continues to be in a shambles. The Supreme Court gave historic directions in 2006 for police reforms, but the states have been dragging their feet and now the apex court is also taking it slow. The Government of India never showed the kind of seriousness it should have for the implementation of judicial directions. It has yet to finalise even the Delhi Police Bill even though Soli Sorabjee had prepared the draft more than a decade back. It is distressing to reflect that the British imperialists had greater vision and they had one Police Act for the entire country while we are saddled with different acts and executive orders in different states. The prime minister's concept of a SMART police could never take off because of the indifference of the states.The founding fathers of the constitution had placed police and public order in the State List of the Seventh Schedule. They could not have foreseen the complex law and order scenario that would evolve in the

coming decades. With the emergence of organised crime and the threat of terrorism, it was obvious that the old order had to be revamped. As Fali Nariman said while addressing a meeting of the Indian Police Foundation, in the context of the police being misused and abused by the state leaders and the overwhelming dependence of state governments on central forces round the year, police should have been transferred to the Concurrent List. The anomaly, however, continues. Ruling parties are chary of amending the constitution for fear of the opposition they would face from the states.Such an apprehension has led to even important counter-terrorism projects being shelved. It was proposed to set up a National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC). True, the scheme had some objectionable features, but those could have been rectified and the NCTC put in place. The government has, however, been unwilling to disturb the hornet's nest. And so, the NCTC project remains in limbo.The internal security situation, as a consequence, is on a slippery slope.

Jammu and Kashmir continues to be in the news for wrong reasons with ceasefire violations by the Pakistan army, continuing infiltrations by terrorists, their audacious attacks on security forces, and radicalisation of the youth who have been challenging the security forces on the streets. The BJP's coalition experiment with the PDP has not delivered but the government seems unwilling to acknowledge its failure. It is high time that the government took the hard decisions necessary to strengthen our northern frontiers.On the Naxal front, the Conference of Chief Ministers of the affected states held in Delhi on May 9, came up with a new formula of SAMADHAN to tackle the problem with S standing for smart leadership, A for aggressive strategy, M for motivation and training, A for actionable intelligence, D for dashboard-based key performance indicators and key result areas, H for harnessing technology, A for action plan for each theatre and N for no access to financing. It is unlikely that this approach would lead to a resolution of the problem.

The Naxal problem is much too complex and requires a very comprehensive strategy which cannot be capsuled in an acronym.On the Northeastern front, the framework agreement negotiated between the Government of India and the Naga Socialist Council of Nagaland (Issac-Muivah group) in August 2015 appears to have hit a road block. Muivah continues to harp on "Naga sovereignty". Meanwhile, the terror threat is becoming more sinister. Al Qaida has, in a document entitled "Code of Conduct for Mujahideen in the Subcontinent", while laying down the do's and dont's for the mujahideen, declared that it will be targeting Indian security installations and leaders of Hindu organisations. It also said that "all personnel of the military are our targets, whether they are in the war zone or in barracks at their bases". The Islamic State in a video, the Bilad al-Hind, has threatened to wage jihad against India, and urged all Muslims to take revenge for the injustices to Indian Muslims in Kashmir and for the communal riots in Gujarat and Muzaffarnagar.Are we prepared to deal with these growing threats? It would be difficult to give an affirmative answer. A strategic vision and a comprehensive long term-plan are called for while the internal security apparatus is overhauled and modernised.

Date: 10-07-17

Smartness Isn't Enough

The re-imagined city must also be climate resilient at its core

Hem H. Dholakia The writer is with the Council on Energy, Environment and Water, New Delhi

Ninety cities are now under the ambit of India's Smart Cities Mission. However, bold policy measures and big infrastructure investments are likely to fall short if they don't factor in climate change. As Indian cities are becoming smarter, they are also getting hotter, facing erratic rainfall and experiencing extreme events. The deluge-like situation in parts of Gujarat, heavy flooding in Assam, heatwaves across northern and eastern India over the last two months, or the one-in-a-hundred year rainfall episode in Chennai in 2015 underpin the vulnerability of urban areas to changing climate.A recent analysis by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), University of East Anglia, Mott MacDonald and the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office

shows that temperatures in the smart cities of Madhya Pradesh are likely to increase by 1-1.5°C by the middle of the century. Another analysis by CEEW, IIT Gandhinagar and IIM Ahmedabad finds that extreme precipitation events are likely to increase in the future. These changes will test the capacity of urban infrastructure and associated services.A long life time, design and material considerations as well as sensitivity of performance to climate makes infrastructure vulnerable. For instance, heat may adversely impact the power output of gas-turbine and steam-based electricity generation, thereby creating a demand-supply gap. This could result in the need for installing additional capacity to meet power requirements when conditions are hotter. Similarly, high temperatures can damage road surfaces, bridges and railway tracks. It's, of course, well-known that heavy rainfall disrupts road and rail transportation services.The Smart City proposals show that these urban centres will rely much on information and communication technology (ICT). Energy use, transport, water, sanitation and solid waste management are also core elements of these proposals. Protecting infrastructure investments against a changing climate will entail at least four steps. First, carry out regular risk assessments. In the context of infrastructure, this means addressing questions such as the likelihood of buckling of railways under a 4°C temperature rise or a one-in-hundred year rainfall event. It also involves assessing the impacts on emergency services associated with electricity disruptions due to extreme heat.

The answers to such questions will help cities refine risk management programmes. Though climate risk assessments have been carried out for selected cities, there is apprehension that these would be one-time exercises. Given the dynamic nature of climate risks, the assessments need to be updated regularly.Second, adopt technical standards that consider climate change. City governments often share a request for proposals (RFPs) as part of the procurement process for various services.

These RFPs could specify technical parameters (for example, heat-resistant pavement materials) or standards (for example, ISO) that align with climate transitions. For instance, private companies bidding for road contracts could use polymer modified bituminous materials that can typically withstand temperatures in excess of 40°C. Or, information on future rainfall extremes could be used while designing city drainage systems.Third, address interdependencies. Infrastructure components are highly interconnected: Electricity failures could disrupt transport or ICT services, transport disruption, in turn, could affect emergency health services. The failure of one set of infrastructure can amplify risks across other sectors. It is important to map these interconnections as well as study whether current governance structures are adequate to address the associated risks.

Fourth, develop innovative financial instruments. Very often, infrastructure project finance does not account for future climate risks as part of the risk portfolio. New debt instruments such as climate-resilience bonds could be used to insure infrastructure against specific climate risks. Such bonds would spread risk across multiple investors while borrowing money from the debt market. Investors would receive market or higher rates of return until the onset of an adverse climate event, after which they would forfeit capital up to their investment liability. Prudent use of financial instruments could hedge against future climate risks.Our re-imagined urban future has to include climate resilience at its core.

THE HINDU

Date: 10-07-17

Corruption in the era of liberalisation

 With its tentacles spreading to every branch of the state, corruption's salience has never been higher

N. Ram

In 1987-1988, without much forewarning, we at The Hindu *found ourselves in the deep end, investigating grand corruption of a kind that India had not seen before," writes N. Ram, chairman of Kasturi & Sons Ltd., and former editor-in-chief of* The Hindu *and* Frontline*, in his new book,* Why Scams Are Here to Stay: Understanding Political Corruption in India*. Drawing on the experience of investigating Bofors, modern India's defining corruption scandal, he throws a spotlight on the intractability of corruption — in its pervasiveness, omnipresence, and multifariousness — under the prevailing circumstances in India, which is to say that without making deep-going and radical changes to India's political economy it will not be possible to prevent and eliminate corruption. Yet, he argues counter-intuitively, combating corruption is decidedly a challenge of the here and now. An excerpt:*

Gunnar Myrdal even came up with a 'sketch' of a theory of corruption in South Asia by offering some 'reasonable, though quite tentative' questions to be explored and hypotheses to be tested. These questions and hypotheses attempted to relate corruption in South Asian countries to general socio-economic conditions, to the stage of development, and especially to institutional and attitudinal problems. But Myrdal's sketch of a theory of corruption in South Asia was ahistorical in one critical respect: it failed to acknowledge the extent to which the colonial power had participated in and nurtured the corruption, and the conditions engendering corruption, that free India inherited. Interestingly, while Myrdal saw the *presence* of corruption in South Asian countries in somewhat static terms, as a legacy from pre-capitalist, traditional society, he related the *increase* in corruption to the processes of dynamic change in the social system, offering the insight that many of the changes that had occurred afforded 'greater incentives as well as greater opportunities for corruption'. Most significantly, he called attention to the active role of the business world in promoting corruption among politicians and administrators.

Socio-economically and politically, India is a very different country from the one Myrdal encountered during the decade he researched and wrote *Asian Drama* (1968). But his observation that many of the dynamic changes in the social system had enabled corruption on a bigger scale proved prophetic for the post-1991 era of economic liberalization and accelerated pursuit of neo-liberal policies. It is now well established that the facts of corruption, that is, its magnitude, spread, and effects in the polity and society, have increased exponentially over the past quarter century. While the folklore has kept in step, the anti-corruption arrangements and actions have been limping a long way behind.The problem in India, where moralistic approaches to corruption are common and often dominate public discourse, is that the gap between what the anti-corruption campaigners, many of them 'Gandhians', demand and what the polity and the legal system are willing and able to do is enormous. When corruption is not conceptualized soundly, in relation to socio-economic, political, and cultural

factors, but is presented in overly simplified moral terms, analysis of its causes and effects tends to go all over the place; and without accurate, theoretically sound and empirically backed analysis, prescription tends to be seriously flawed. The result is that anti-corruption institutional arrangements and actions habitually miss the mark; and mass campaigns against corruption, fuelled largely by moral outrage, make their contribution by raising the level of public awareness but are unable to sustain themselves beyond a point and fail to meet the lofty objectives they set themselves. The anti-corruption movements spearheaded by Jayaprakash Narayan in the 1970s and by Anna Hazare in 2011-2012 make the case strongly for the last point.

The past decade-and-a-half has seen a spectacular outbreak of corruption scandals, big-ticket, medium-sized, and relatively small. With its tentacles spreading to virtually every branch of the Indian state and to key sectors of the economy, and to the news media, corruption's salience in India's political economy and public policy discourse has never been higher.

28 scams and counting

For the period 2000-2013, Sandip Sukhtankar and Milan Vaishnav, researchers in political economy, have come up with a shortlist of twenty-eight scams, involving hundreds of billions of dollars, from the lists compiled by five news outlets. They calculate that for this list of early twenty-first century corruption scandals, 'the mean scam "value" was Rs. 36,000 crore, and the median Rs. 12,000 crore. A major omission from this shortlist is Vyapam, the mega-scam in BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh.There was a time when the stock explanation for corruption in India was the 'permit-licence-quota raj'— virtually everything could be attributed to it. The prediction offered by a legion of neo-liberal economists and political theorists was that deregulation and liberalization would lead to the prevention, containment, and eventual elimination of corruption. Precisely the opposite has happened: liberalization has ushered in corruption in a much greater variety of forms and on an unimaginably greater scale than anything seen under the so-called licence raj.

The interesting question is why and various answers have been put forward by scholars and policymakers. The essential neo-liberal answer is that many vestiges of the licence raj remain, enforcement capacity is still weak, and the reform process needs to be given more time to bring down the level of corruption. The evidence clearly and decisively goes against such ideologically led reasoning that often sounds like casuistry. The real explanation for the exponential increase in corruption in the era of liberalization and high economic growth must necessarily be complex and nuanced and, as we will see, it is to be found deep in the heart and entrails of India's political economy as it has evolved over the past quarter century.The short answer to the question is that with deregulation and liberalization, the state has played a different kind of role to the one it played earlier, providing access to scarce public resources as part of a process of promoting private sector-led growth at any cost and supporting without inhibition the omnipresence and play of private interests within the public sphere; and there is plenty of evidence to show that corruption tends to be greater when pro-business strategies of governments bring on or facilitate crony capitalism and 'when there is a state-engineered redistribution of wealth in favour of a few and at the explicit or implicit expense of the many'.

A political reckoning over burgeoning levels of corruption was due and it took place with a certain inevitability. Given the unprecedented levels of corruption witnessed over the previous decade, it was no surprise that the issue figured prominently in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections and was responsible, in no small measure, for the rout of the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance.

Date: 10-07-17

Is artificial intelligence fuelling natural stupidity?

 We are at a stage where the genial news environment committed to truth and public interest is under pressure

A.S. Panneerselvan

In 2012, there was an air of innocence when I took over as the Readers' Editor of this newspaper. Terms such as 'accuracy', 'fairness', 'authentic sources', and 'verification', and C.P. Scott's dictum "Comment is free, but facts are sacred" did possess a striking potential to keep journalism on the straight and narrow path. Algorithm was a part of mathematics and technology and it had hardly revealed its stranglehold on the information ecology. Artificial intelligence was a footnote. Albert Einstein's wry remark, "Artificial intelligence is no match for natural stupidity," was invoked sometimes to prove a point. However, the march of technology with its myriad participatory platforms, aided by people's desire to believe what they want to believe, has made the task of a news ombudsman difficult.Fake news, doctored videos, unsubstantiated inflammatory news content that further divide and polarise our society are increasing by the day. I am forced to think constantly of what new skills a news ombudsman must acquire to uphold the principles of journalism. While it is relatively easy to deal with the rancour that flows from ideological positions, it is an uphill task to address anxious questions from concerned readers who struggle to distinguish social media rumours from real news.

The ease of faking a news item

Two recent reports increased my apprehensions. "Slowdown in Software Central: Indian-Americans in the Silicon Valley" (Ground Zero, July 1, 2017) by Varghese K. George in this newspaper was an in-depth report on how automation threatens to alter the dynamics for all times to come. The article gave sufficient clues about the changing nature of the forces that control the information flow, and hence, the future of journalism as well.

The Economist's report, "Fake news: you ain't seen nothing yet", published on the same day, was chilling. It was about how technology aids in generating fake audio and video reports that are convincing. The report was about the generative adversarial network (GAN), a type of artificial learning algorithm, which is used to create a fake clip without fiddling with editing or any other manipulations. It explained how fake audio creation has become simple already and creating a fake video is well on the way to becoming child's play. While some experts feel that the day of fake YouTube videos is not very far, some feel it may take time. According to *The Economist*, it is only a question of "when", not "if". "We think that AI is going to change the kinds of evidence that we can trust," was the observation of one of the researchers interviewed by the magazine.

 There are multiple reasons to be alarmed by this spectre. We are already witnessing party spokespersons falling prey to fake news and displaying their ignorance during prime time debates on our television channels. Dubious forwards using social networking platforms like WhatsApp are on the rise. There is an exponential increase in the number of people who believe what is forwarded from their immediate circle of friends, relatives and colleagues. There are no trustworthy mechanisms to check every fake news, false catastrophe and phantom chicanery.The *Sunday Magazine* story, "On the origin of specious news" (July 2), profiled the fledgling fact-checking Indian website, 'Alt News', and brought out the multiple difficulties in checking the authenticity of viral videos. It read: "Tracing the origins of a widely circulated hoax can often be complicated. An image or video may not have been manipulated: rather, an entirely authentic piece of footage may be circulated under false contexts." The act of verification is central to journalism. But, what happens when that process is subverted by technology? Is journalism alone a victim of this subversion? What is the social cost?

In his novel, *Murther and Walking Spirits* , Robertson Davies observed: "Always in history there are those who are impelled, by reasons they think sufficient, to ruin, in so far as they can, what patient, indefatigable warriors of civilization and culture have built up, because they value other things and worship other gods." We are at a similar cusp where the genial news environment that is committed to truth and public interest is under pressure. We need to acquire both the tenacity and the competence to confront the threat from artificial intelligence to retain the space for journalism as a common good.

राष्ट्रीय सहारा

Date: 10-07-17

जी-20 में सफलता

समूह 20 या जी-20 के जर्मनी के हैम्बर्ग शहर में **संपन्न** बैठक की खासियत यह रही कि इसमें खुलकर बातचीत हुई। चाहे वह आतंकवाद का मामला हो या व्यापार संरक्षणवाद का या फिर जलवायु परिवर्तन पर पेरिस संधि का..हर विषय पर **विस्तृत** चर्चा हुई और जारी संयुक्त वक्तव्य में भी इनका जिक्र है। अमेरिका द्वारा **पेरिस** समझौते से अलग होने का मामला यहां उठा और **अमेरिका** अपने रु ख पर कायम रहा। मगर उसके साथ अन्य 19 सदस्यों ने यह राय जाहिर कर दी कि पेरिस समझौता अपरिवर्तनीय है। घोषणा में **अमेरिकी** विरोध को शामिल करते हुए भी साफ तौर पर कहा गया है कि पेरिस समझौते से पलटा नहीं जा सकता। यही स्थिति व्यापार के संदर्भ में थी।

अमेरिका के ट्रंप प्रशासन की ''अमेरिका फर्स्ट' नीति की भी वहां चर्चा हुई जो खुले व्यापार में बाधा है और यहां भी सर्वसम्मति में कठिनाई पैदा हुई, किंतु खुले व्यापार की नीति की वकालत अन्य सभी देशों ने की। इसमें परस्पर लाभकारी एवं एक-दूसरे के व्यवहार के अनुरूप व्यापार एवं निवेश की महत्ता स्पष्ट की गई, पर साथ ही व्यापार असंतुलन की चिंता को भी यह कहते हुए **रेखांकित** किया गया कि असंगत व्यापार आचरणों के विरु द्ध रक्षात्मक उपायों को अंगीकार किया जा सकता है। हालांकि, देशों के बीच विभाजन है किंतु उस पर बात करने और रास्ता निकालने की चाहत भी स्पष्ट रूप से **दिखी** है। विशेषकर आतंकवाद के मामले पर तो जी-20 ने पूरजोर एकता प्रदर्शित की है। प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी ने आतंकवाद पर जितनी खुलकर बात की उसका वहां असर हुआ और घोषणा पत्र के अलावा सभी नेताओं ने एकमत से आतंकवाद की कड़ी निंदा की और इसके खिलाफ एक साथ लड़ने पर जोर दिया।

देखा जाए तो यह भारत की ओर से रखे गए **प्रस्तावों** की स्वीकृति है। आखिर सम्मेलन के पहले दिन ही आतंकवाद से निपटने के लिए आतंकवाद से जुड़ी जानकारी साझा करने जैसे 21 बिंदुओं पर पर एक साथ काम करने पर जोर दिया गया। यह मोदी की ओर से रखे गए प्रस्ताव ही तो थे। देखना है आगे ये देश किस तरह मिलकर आतंकवाद के विरु द्ध काम करते हैं लेकिन भारत की नीति इस मायने में सफल रही कि उसने बिना पाकिस्तान का नाम लिये इस तरह का प्रस्ताव पारित करवाया और चीन वहां इसे रोकने की स्थिति में नहीं था।

नईदुनिया

Date: 10-07-17

जनसंख्या को डरावने स्वप्न की तरह देखिए

अमरीश सरकानगो

amreesh.sarkango@gmail.com

हर साल संयुक्त राष्ट्र विकास कार्यक्रम की कार्यकारी परिषद् द्वारा 11 जुलाई को विश्व जनसंख्या दिवस मनाया जाता है। इसका उद्देश्य दुनिया की बेतहाशा बढ़ती आबादी, लगातार घटते प्राकृतिक संसाधन, उपलब्ध सुविधाओं का अत्यधिक दोहन और निकट भविष्य में इनके कारण आने वाली विकराल समस्याओं के प्रति संपूर्ण विश्व के लोगों को जागरूक करना है।

विश्व की वर्तमान जनसंख्या तकरीबन साढ़े सात अरब है और इसमें हर 14 महीनों में करीब 10 करोड़ लोग बढ़ रहे हैं। इस विशाल जनसंख्या के लिए जरूरी खाद्यान्न और स्वच्छ जल, खासकर एशिया और अफ्रीका में लगातार घट रहा है। युवा पढ़ी-लिखी कर्मशील आबादी के लिए भी उनकी क्षमता के अनुसार कार्य नहीं है। इससे बेरोजगारी और सामाजिक असंतोष भी बढ़ रहा है। अंधाधुंध विकास और दोहन से पर्यावरणीय और पारिस्थितिक संतुलन खतरे के निशान से ऊपर है। इससे पृथ्वी पर खतरनाक स्तर पर पहुंचे कार्बन उत्सर्जन, तापमान वृद्धि, प्रदूषण और प्राकृतिक आपदाओं ने अपना असर भी दिखाना शुरू कर दिया है।

मध्य प्रदेश की जनसंख्या अभी 7 करोड़ 50 लाख है जबकि छत्तीसगढ़ की 2 करोड़ 60 लाख के लगभग। उत्तर प्रदेश, महाराष्ट्र, बिहार और पश्चिम बंगाल जनसंख्या के लिहाज से भारत के सबसे बड़े राज्य हैं। भारत के दक्षिणी राज्यों में इस मसले पर जागरूकता है और उन्होंने जनसंख्या नियंत्रण पर समझदारी दिखाई है। उत्तर-पूर्वी और पहाड़ी राज्यों में भी स्थिति बेहतर है। ऐसे राज्यों को केंद्र द्वारा हर तरह से प्रोत्साहित किया जाना चाहिए।

विडंबना ये भी है कि शहरी और कस्बाई लोग, जो विकास के लिए प्राकृतिक संसाधनों के दोहन के लिए ज्यादा जिम्मेदार हैं, उनकी जनसंख्या तो तेजी से बढ़ रही है, पर जनजातीय समुदाय, जो प्रकृति से पूरी तरह से तालमेल बनाकर रहते हैं, उनकी जनसंख्या तेजी से घट रही है। उनमें से कुछ तो विलुप्ति की कगार पर हैं।

बेतहाशा बढ़ती आबादी का असर लगातार महंगे होते खाद्यान्न, कुपोषण, जलसंकट, प्रदूषण, बढ़ती बेरोज़गारी एवं अपराध और बढ़ती यातायात समस्या के रूप में सामने भी आने लगा है। इस स्थिति से बचने के लिए परिवार नियोजन को लेकर पूरे देश में जागरूकता बढ़ानी होगी। आमजन को बढ़ती जनसंख्या से आने वाली समस्याओं के प्रति जागरूक करना होगा। परिवार नियोजन के साधनों की उपलब्धता हर जगह जहां तक हो सके, नि:शुल्क करनी होगी। ग्रामीण व शहरी क्षेत्रों में विकास का संतुलन बनाना होगा ताकि वहां की आबादी को शहरों का रुख ना करना पड़े और शहरों पर दबाव कम रहे। बढ़ती जनसंख्या एक डरावना स्वप्न है, जो सच होता जा रहा है।

(लेखक सामाजिक मामलों के जानकार हैं)