



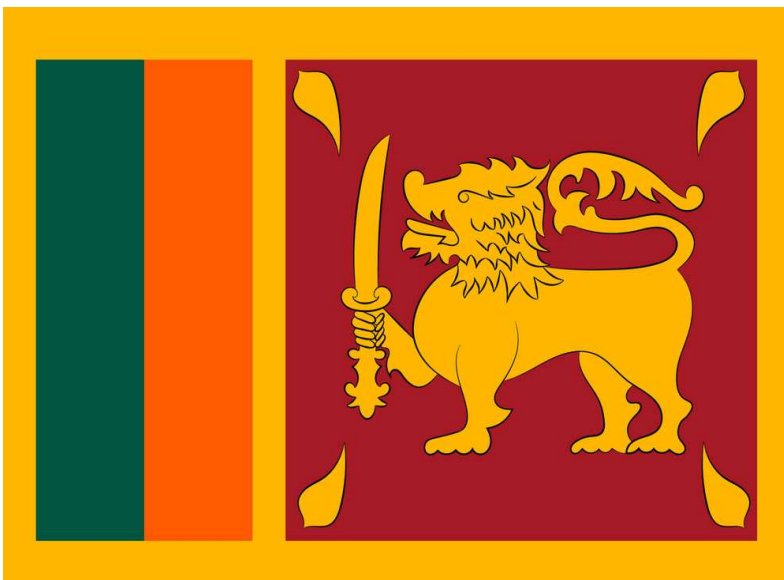
**THE TIMES OF INDIA**

*Date: 19-03-22*

## Helping Lanka

*But Colombo's economic woes won't be resolved easily, nor will knotty issues of the past*

### TOI Editorials



It's good that India has agreed to provide a \$1-billion line of credit for Sri Lanka in the midst of the latter's economic crisis. This is on top of the \$500-million line of credit for purchasing fuel and a currency swap of \$400 million that India has facilitated in recent months. Sri Lanka has a total deficit of \$9.4 billion in foreign exchange and is facing the worst economic crisis in decades. Its official reserves fell to \$2.36 billion in January with a sovereign bond repayment of \$1 billion due in July. Things have come to this pass because Sri Lanka accumulated excessive debt over the years, particularly on account of sovereign bonds. And its only strategy to repay this debt was to bank on its tourism industry and foreign

remittances.

However, Lankan tourism took a big hit due to the Covid pandemic. Add to this populist policies of the Lankan government such as implementing tax concessions amounting to 1.5% of GDP and other missteps like switching to 100% organic agriculture. This led to a huge shortage of dollars for import-dependant Sri Lanka, which in turn led to an acute crisis of essentials like fuel, medicines and food, and ballooning inflation which hit a record 25% last month.

In fact, the crisis-ridden Lankan economy has also made China circumspect about offering further financial assistance to Colombo. This, despite the fact that the current first family of Lankan politics, the Rajapaksas, is known to have a preference for Beijing. True, China did facilitate a yuan swap amounting to \$1.5 billion to shore up Sri Lanka's reserves. But there appears to be an understanding in Beijing that a lot of the loans it extended to Colombo were sunk into white elephant projects that neither helped the Lankan economy nor earned the Chinese a good reputation. This is precisely why Colombo is now looking to New Delhi for help.

But India needs to be careful here. While the present moment does provide an opportunity for New Delhi to enhance its strategic relationship with Colombo, fundamental issues remain. Sri Lanka's economic woes can only be resolved through IMF-mediated debt restructuring – something that Colombo now appears amenable to. Plus, there is also the Tamil issue and the implementation of the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution for devolution of powers. This has to be negotiated tactfully as overt Indian interference could once again create conditions for Sinhala nationalism to be deployed as a political tool. The Rajapaksas will try to play both New Delhi and Beijing. India, therefore, has to be smart.

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*Date:19-03-22*

## Working & Secure

### *There's a strong correlation between safe public spaces and women in jobs*

#### TOI Editorials

Women as a constituency provide a decisive edge in electoral contests. It's led to welfare policies and poll promises tailored to address their specific needs and subsequent analyses of the impact of these. Welfare, however, has limitations. It is a safety net, not a tool to empower women. Empowerment will come with jobs, which are often the gateway to financial security and a sense of self-worth, and political power. There are signs that political parties are now beginning to move beyond targeted welfare schemes to measures which can truly empower women.

Two recent examples are worth noting. Delhi's government is trying to get more women to own and operate public transport through measures such as reserving licences and joint ownership. In Tamil Nadu, the DMK's success in urban local body polls led it to appoint women as mayors in 11 of the 20 corporations, including Chennai. Important as these measures are they are not foundational. The precondition in empowering women is to impart confidence that they can access public spaces without fear. Data shows a strong correlation between perceptions of safety and women's participation in the workforce.

Gol's employment data for the last full pre-pandemic year, 2018-19, showed that 53.6% of the population in the 15-59 age group was in the job market. The discrepancy between women and men was stark. A mere 26.5% of the women were in the labour force as compared to 80.3% of the men. It's the regional variation that foregrounds the safety factor. Southern states, Goa, Maharashtra, HP, Chhattisgarh and Sikkim were among states with a relatively high percentage of women in the workforce. Among states trailing the national average were UP, Bihar, West Bengal and Delhi. There are other reasons why so few women look for work. But unsafe public spaces are the most important.

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# THE ECONOMIC TIMES

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## A Little Waiver Makes For a Little Victory

### ET Editorials

The compromise proposal for waiver of certain provisions of intellectual property rights (IPR) under the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to tackle Covid-19 is a small step in the right direction. In October 2020, India and South Africa proposed a comprehensive waiver for Covid vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics and technology. It had the support of developing countries but was unacceptable to the developed economies. In 2021, the US switched sides to support a waiver. The European Union (EU), Britain and other rich countries opposed it. They pushed for compulsory licensing, a complex proposition given the large number of components and attendant IPRs in vaccines.

A waiver limited to vaccines as the world prepares to 'live with' a coronavirus endemic may seem too little. There is a need to ensure universal access to affordable diagnostics and therapeutics. India and South Africa, and their partners, must not lose sight of this. The compromise gives six months from the adoption of the vaccine waiver to work out a deal for diagnostics and therapeutics. The low vaccination rates in many developing countries underscores the urgent need to provide affordable vaccines at a fast(er) pace. WHO reported in early February that 21 countries in Africa had fully vaccinated less than 10% of their populations, 16 less than 5%, and three less than 2%. The compromise gives the waiver to developing countries that account for less than 10% of global exports of vaccines in 2021. This puts the EU and China out of the reckoning, and provides countries like India an opportunity.

Two years of sustained efforts by India and South Africa, working constructively with developing and developed country partners, have led to this outcome. Though it might not seem like much, this is a good day for the global south.

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*Date: 19-03-22*

## Game Changing the Policy

*Karnataka HC's response to online gaming offers insights to how to regulate emerging technologies*

**MV Rajeev Gowda, [ The writer is ex-chairperson, Centre for Public Policy, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, and former Congress Rajya Sabha MP ]**



The Karnataka High Court's recent judgment overturning key provisions of the state government's ban on online gaming offers crucial insights into the challenges of regulating emerging technologies. Many states imposed blanket bans on online gaming because they were legitimately concerned about the negative impacts of gambling, especially the online medium's potential of worsening addiction to betting. However, blanket bans on all online games that involve money have fallen afoul of legal and constitutional doctrines. It will be timely to develop more nuanced regulations that balance moral and economic interests.

Consider the example of online fantasy sports (OFS). This emerging tech-driven domain has changed the way fans engage with sports. OFS is distinct from gambling. Fans create their own virtual teams

consisting of real-life players in an upcoming real-world match. These teams must include members from both sides.

Fans earn points depending on the on-field performance of their selected players. Rather than placing bets on outcomes of matches, fans select their teams after conducting research on variables such as past performance, weather, the pitch, etc. Participation is, therefore, skill-intensive. India has become the world's largest market for fantasy sports, with the number of users growing from 20 lakh in 2016 to 10 crore in 2020. OFS platforms in India have grown from fewer than 10 in 2016 to over 140 in 2020. Given such developments, careful regulation may be a better policy response than imposing a ban, which can drive activity underground. The economic dimension is that OFS can provide states much-needed revenue. OFS platforms paid an estimated ₹4,700 crore in taxes in 2020-21 alone, and are expected to generate ₹15,000 crore between 2019-20 and 2023-24. States may also be able to attract other hi-tech investments by demonstrating that their policies are supportive of new technologies. The Indian fantasy sports industry attracted FDI of ₹10,000 crore in 2020-21. This is projected to increase to ₹15,000 crore by 2023-24.

Innovation and job creation are likely to get a fillip from OFS. The online gaming industry's links with the digital economy and sports can provide impetus to the growth of the entire digital ecosystem. This is not to suggest that the economic potential of the domain overrides all other concerns. The balance between the moral and economic arguments lies in the details.

### All About Skill

A closer look at online gaming reveals key aspects that clearly distinguish it from gambling. Where gambling is a game of luck, gaming and OFS rely on expertise and experience and are, therefore, games of skill. A number of high court and Supreme Court judgments have definitively concluded that OFS are skills-based.

Judicial precedent has clearly established that games of skill are protected under Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution, as they fall within the ambit of business activities that are distinct from gambling, which receives no such constitutional protection.

Yet, some state policies focus entirely on the morality argument leading to imposition of blanket bans. Kerala's ban on rummy and Tamil Nadu's ban on both rummy and poker were overturned by their respective high courts on the grounds that these were games of skill and not chance. There is, thus, scope for a central model framework to iron out the inconsistencies in policies and judicial orders across states. For example, the High Court of Gujarat has held that bluffing and deception are elements of chance, and accordingly declared poker to be a game of chance.

The nuanced solution is to unambiguously define games of skill and games of chance and regulate each appropriately. This would allow for a ban on online games that entail gambling, while those that entail skill can be regulated. Policy myopia must not result in scarce public and private resources being diverted from priority areas toward efforts to challenging misguided legislation in courts.

Telangana appears to be taking the lead towards nuanced regulation by framing a model law for self-regulation of the online gaming industry. This step acknowledges several important issues — that blanket bans are not a solution; that there is a need to distinguish between various kinds of games; and that self-regulation of emerging domains, particularly those involving new technologies, offers flexibility and abalance between the interests of both the state and industry stakeholders. OFS companies have proactively incorporated measures to prevent overuse and possible addiction, further strengthening the argument for nuanced regulation.

The soft-touch, self-regulatory approach also prevents over-regulation of citizens' private lives in matters unrelated to social evils. Beyond legalities, other sociocultural dimensions to consider are the impact of such technologies on the overall growth of various sports. Like premier leagues have helped revive native sports such as kabaddi, OFS enhance fans' engagement and provide access to those excluded from physical sporting events.

### **Games Rules Play**

Regulating emerging technologies is challenging due to uncertainties and the need to examine policy issues either for the first time or from a completely new perspective. Yet, answers can emerge through a closer examination of global best practices. We require time to analyse how to best adapt them to suit specific contexts and assess their effects.

Both Union and state governments must be unafraid to proactively embrace new-age frameworks and strategies in parallel with existing traditional models. Without such approaches, India stands to lose out on the immense economic opportunities at the digital frontier.

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*Date:19-03-22*

## **Enter the passive subject, exit the active citizen**

*The passive subject is back, compromising democracy and making citizenship virtually redundant*

**Rajeev Bhargava is a political philosopher and the author of 'What is Political Theory and Why do We Need It'**

Something new seems to be emerging in India. A decade ago, democracy was thriving. People with scant interest in politics increasingly felt a pressing need to become more vocal in the public domain. Remember the first decade of the 21st century? The Congress-led coalition government was compelled by activists to grant everyone the Right to Information and Education and to launch MNREGA, or the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee. The dastardly rape and murder of Nirbhaya turned thousands of young women and men into political activists. Citizen journalists emerged capturing acts of injustice and sending them to TV channels that routinely put the government in the dock. And who can forget the anti-corruption movement that virtually paralysed the then government, catapulting into power not only the Bharatiya Janata Party but also the newly born Aam Aadmi Party?

In 2013, when we seemed to be on the verge of a democratic revolution, the active citizen appeared to have a bright future. Young men and women left lucrative jobs to join the movement for a new political future for India. They hoped to launch new parties, accountable to the people, committed to providing them what they really need.

Yet, in one fell swoop, the political climate in the country seems to have changed. The active citizen is now viewed as a villain, pejoratively called an 'Andolanjeevi'. Those who only the other day personified active citizenship, today, in power, appear to shut the door on it. Not only active citizenship, but the very idea of citizenship has plunged into crisis. Rightly or wrongly, some are ready to forego even their rights as passive citizens, prepared to accept or tolerate political subjection. Since subjects are rights-less people who live passively within the jurisdiction of their ruler, I am inclined to see this current moment as marking the birth of a new political subject.

### **Active and passive citizens**

It is important to understand what this means. Bringing out the contrast between three key terms may help us do so. Take active citizenship first. By definition, citizenship here is a matter of doing. An active citizen is able to (a) vote (b) publicly discuss the common good and use legally available means to influence public policy and law and if needed, to criticise, modify, even repeal them (c) run for public office.

This is in sharp contrast to passive citizens who rarely act in the public domain. They are either unable or unwilling to vote. They either cannot or could not be bothered to take a stand on public issues. Standing for public office is the last thing they imagine or want. They are mostly content with receiving things from the state — precisely why they are passive. Citizenship is defined here by what a person gets, not by what she does, regardless of whether this condition is forced upon or chosen by them.

But why still call them citizens? By virtue of two qualities — first, they still belong to a political community. They continue to be card-carrying members of a state that gives them an official identity. Second, they retain some basic rights — the right to protection against violence and those who need it, the right to a minimal package of subsistence goods. Moreover, while they make few demands of their own, they can complain when they fail to get what the state promises. Passive citizens are closer to being but are not political subjects.

### **The loyal subject**

At least two features distinguish political subjects from passive citizens. First, passive subjects do not have any rights. They live by the grace of the ruler and get protection and other benefits by being loyal to him. This dedication does not entail that subjects devote themselves to further only the personal interests of rulers. They could easily subordinate themselves to a project of common good, as long as it is defined by the ruler. Second, citizens never equate the state with current rulers. No democratic ruler can call the state his own. However, political subjects identify the state with the ruler, as does he himself. Belonging to the state means becoming a ruler's subjects.

Unlike a democratic body of equal citizens, the relationship between the subject and the ruler then is unabashedly hierarchical. Though the subject's condition is a mixture of subordination and servitude, he gratefully accepts it because of the protection provided by the ruler. He interprets the wishes of the ruler as commands and has no appetite for rebellion. The gratefulness on the part of subjects is matched by the exuberant munificence of the ruler. When a subject receives a small, negligible portion of the state's treasury, he believes it is charity flowing directly from the ruler's personal largess. Overawed by him, the subject cannot but be deferential to the ruler. Disobedience would amount to shameful betrayal.

I suspect that a substantial part of our political climate now approximates what I have described above. This is why I see the emergence of the new political category of laabharthi as the rebirth of the political subject. The laabharthi is a passive recipient of meagre resources, a beneficiary of the ruler's generosity. Laabharthis, no longer rights-bearers, are the exact opposite of ever-demanding, rights conscious active citizens. In the recently held elections, the Prime Minister rightly went to them with the expectation that they would vote for him. Hardly abnormal in this environment. He instinctively knew that those who had eaten his 'namak' (salt) cannot betray him. Namak halals do not easily turn into Namak harams, do they? Political subjecthood, nowhere on the horizon in 2013, is back now with a vengeance.

### **The citizen-subject**

I may have given the impression that today's political world is neatly divided between rulers and their passive, loyal subjects. I do not intend this crude portrayal. There exists an extremely large group of people who are neither rulers nor passive subjects. I would classify them as a hybrid called citizen-subject, for they are a mix of passive citizens and active subjects — active because they surrender aspects of citizenship and embrace subjecthood of their own volition.

They are citizens because they see themselves as belonging to a state that in part is independent of the ruler. But what matters most to them is a private life of consumption for which they are not dependent on the state. Even their life and personal property are protected by paid security guards. Since they make few demands on the state, active citizenship is of little value to them. Such people are happy to be passive citizens. They may even be indifferent to who the ruler is. This makes them starkly different from laabharthis, ever grateful subjects whose very survival depends on a particular ruler's generosity.

Yet, they depend on this very ruler/state to protect them from external aggressors and perceived internal enemies. For this purpose, they abandon their identity as citizens and choose to become political subjects — willing, unquestioning and loyal supporters of the ruler and his pet common projects. Here, state-dependent laabharthis and state-independent consumers converge. Both share a world in which some of their common benefits flow from the largess of the ruler and from the public display of loyalty to him.

Alas, just when the passive subject was beginning to be seen as a relic of the past, it has made a stunning comeback. And upon re-entering our political world, it has severely compromised our democracy and made citizenship virtually redundant.



*Date: 19-03-22*

## आत्मनिर्भरता जरूरी

**जयंती लाल भंडारी**

हाल ही में 13 मार्च को प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी की अध्यक्षता में सुरक्षा मामलों की मंत्रिमंडलीय समिति (सीसीएस) की बैठक में रूस यूक्रेन युद्ध के मददेनजर अत्याधुनिक सुरक्षा तकनीक के इस्तेमाल और रक्षा उत्पादन के क्षेत्र में भारत को आत्मनिर्भर बनाने के काम को प्राथमिकता देने के निर्देश दिए गए हैं। वस्तुतः इस समय वैश्विक चुनौतियों के चलते अर्थव्यवस्था पर बाहरी दबावों का जोखिम घटाने के लिए रक्षा क्षेत्र के साथ-साथ मैनुफैक्चरिंग उत्पादन, प्रौद्योगिकी विकास और कृषि उत्पादन सहित विविध क्षेत्रों में प्रोत्साहनों के आधार पर आत्मनिर्भरता के लिए तेजी से आगे बढ़ने की रणनीति सुनिश्चित की गई है।

निश्चित रूप से रूस और यूक्रेन संकट के मददेनजर भारत के लिए यह सबक भी उभरकर दिखाई दे रहा है कि चीन और पाकिस्तान से लगातार मिल रही रक्षा चुनौतियों के बीच भारत को दुनिया में एक सामरिक शक्तिशाली देश के रूप में अपनी पहचान बनाना होगी। गौरतलब है कि 10 मार्च को अमेरिका की हिंद-प्रशांत सुरक्षा पर कांग्रेस की सुनवाई के दौरान सांसदों ने कहा कि वास्तविक नियंत्रण रेखा पर भारत और चीन के बीच तनाव चार दशकों में सबसे खराब स्तर पर है। सामरिक रूप से महत्वपूर्ण हिंद-प्रशांत क्षेत्र में चीन की आक्रामकता बढ़ती जा रही है। ऐसे में भारत की मजबूत रक्षा तैयारी जरूरी है।



यद्यपि प्रतिरक्षा में आत्मनिर्भरता की दृष्टि से भारत की मौजूदा स्थिति निश्चित रूप से चुनौतीपूर्ण है, लेकिन भारत के पास रक्षा क्षेत्र में आगे बढ़ने के पर्याप्त संसाधन हैं और रक्षा क्षेत्र में भारत और भारतीयों की क्षमता का दुनिया भर में लोहा माना जाता है। रक्षा क्षेत्र में आत्मनिर्भरता के लिए हमें कितना आगे बढ़ना होगा, इसकी कल्पना स्टकहोम इंटरनेशनल पीस रिसर्च इंस्टिट्यूट के द्वारा 14 मार्च को प्रकाशित रिपोर्ट से की जा सकती है। रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक भारत और सऊदी अरब हथियार खरीदने में दुनिया में टाप पर हैं। वैश्विक हथियारों का 11 फीसदी भारत खरीदता है। यद्यपि हमारे आयुध कारखाने विशालकाय हैं लेकिन रक्षा उत्पादन में हिस्सेदारी महज करीब 10 फीसदी पर टिकी है। यह भी महत्वपूर्ण है कि भारत से रक्षा निर्यात भी लगातार बढ़ रहे हैं। भारत हथियार निर्यात के मामले में दुनिया में 24वें क्रम पर है। वर्ष 2019-20 में भारत का रक्षा निर्यात नौ हजार करोड़ रुपए था। इसे 2024-25 तक बढ़ाकर 35 हजार करोड़ रुपए करने का लक्ष्य रखा गया है।

ऐसे में रक्षा संबंधी आत्मनिर्भरता के मद्देनजर यह सुकूनदेह है कि भारत का रक्षा बजट लगातार बढ़ रहा है। वित्तमंत्री निर्मला सीतारमण ने एक फरवरी को देश का वर्ष 2022-23 का आम बजट पेश किया है, उसमें रक्षा क्षेत्र के लिए 5.25 लाख करोड़ रुपये का आवंटन किया है। यह बजट पिछले वर्ष के मुकाबले 47 हजार करोड़ रुपये अधिक है। चूंकि भारत के रक्षा तकनीकी विशेषज्ञों ने कई तरह के रक्षा कौशल हासिल कर लिए हैं, अतएव भारत दृढ़ संकल्प से लड़ाकू विमानों सहित विभिन्न रक्षा क्षेत्र की जरूरतों की आत्मनिर्भरता के लिए तेजी से आगे बढ़ सकता है।

भारत के लिए मैन्युफैक्चरिंग क्षेत्र में आत्मनिर्भरता के लिए तेजी से कदम बढ़ाने जरूरी हैं। गौरतलब है कि वित्तमंत्री निर्मला सीतारमण के द्वारा वर्ष 2022-23 का बजट पेश करते हुए कहा गया कि सरकार के द्वारा सेज के वर्तमान स्वरूप को परिवर्तित किया जाएगा। सेज में उपलब्ध संसाधनों का पूरा उपयोग करते हुए घरेलू और अंतरराष्ट्रीय दोनों बाजारों के लिए विनिर्माण किया जा सकेगा। जहाँ पीएलआई योजना की सफलता से चीन से आयात किए जाने वाले कई प्रकार के कच्चे माल के विकल्प तैयार हो सकेंगे, वहीं औद्योगिक उत्पादों का निर्यात भी बढ़ सकेगा। देश में अभी भी दवाई उद्योग, मोबाइल उद्योग, चिकित्सा उपकरण उद्योग, वाहन उद्योग तथा इलेक्ट्रिक जैसे रता के लिए कई उद्योग बहुत कुछ चीन से आयातित माल पर आधारित हैं। इसमें कोई दो मत नहीं हैं कि भारत को वैश्विक मैन्युफैक्चरिंग हब बनने की संभावनाओं को साकार करने के मद्देनजर प्रमुखतया 10 सेक्टरों को तेजी से आगे बढ़ाना होगा। इनमें इलेक्ट्रिकल, फार्मा, मेडिकल उपकरण, इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स, हैवी इंजीनियरिंग, सोलर उपकरण, लेदर प्रोडक्ट, फूड प्रोसेसिंग, केमिकल और टेक्सटाइल शामिल हैं। निःसंदेह देश में विशेष आर्थिक क्षेत्रों (सेज) की नई भूमिका, मेक इन इंडिया अभियान की सफलता और उत्पादन आधारित प्रोत्साहन (पीएलआई) योजना के उपयुक्त क्रियान्वयन से अधिक विनिर्माण के साथ-साथ निर्यात के बढ़ते हुए मौकों को मुठ्ठियों में लिया जा सकेगा और देश आत्मनिर्भरता की डगर पर तेजी से आगे बढ़ सकेगा।

निश्चित रूप से रिकार्ड खाद्यान्न उत्पादन और उसका निर्यात देश की नई आर्थिक शक्ति बन सकता है। देश में कृषि क्षेत्र के तहत दलहन और तिलहन उत्पादन के साथ-साथ खाद्य तेल के उत्पादन में आत्मनिर्भरता को उच्च प्राथमिकता दी जानी होगी। अब भारत को ऊर्जा क्षेत्र में आत्मनिर्भरता के लिए भी तेजी से आगे बढ़ना होगा। चूंकि भारत अपनी कच्चे तेल की आवश्यकता का 80 से 85 फीसदी आयात करता है, अतएव एक ओर देश में कच्चे तेल के उत्पादन को बढ़ाना होगा, वहीं दूसरी ओर कच्चे तेल के विकल्प बढ़ाने होंगे। ज्ञातव्य है कि देश के पास करीब 300 अरब बैरल का विशाल तेल भंडार है, लेकिन हम उसका पर्याप्त विदोहन नहीं कर पा रहे हैं। वैश्विक बाजार में कच्चे तेल की वर्तमान कीमतों की तुलना में चार-पांच गुना कम लागत पर कच्चे तेल का विदोहन किया जा सकता है। देश में इलेक्ट्रिक वाहनों

के तेजी से उपयोग करने की रणनीति पर आगे बढ़ना होगा। ई-वाहनों को भविष्य का बेहतर विकल्प बनाना होगा। नए स्टार्टअप्स को भी आत्मनिर्भर भारत की अहम कड़ी बनाना होगा।

हम उम्मीद करें कि रूस-यूक्रेन युद्ध के मद्देनजर चीन और पाकिस्तान से मौजूदा भू राजनीतिक व सैन्य चुनौतियों के बीच अब आत्मनिर्भर भारत केवल आकर्षक नारा ही नहीं रहेगा, वरन यह धरातल पर भी दिखाई देगा। हम उम्मीद करें कि प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी अपने अपने कुशल नेतृत्व और दृढ़ संकल्पों से जहाँ देश को सामरिक और आर्थिक दृष्टि से आत्मनिर्भर बनाने के लिए हरसंभव रणनीतिक प्रयास करने के लिए तेजी से आगे बढ़ेंगे, वहीं देश के हर व्यक्ति के द्वारा भी आत्मनिर्भर भारत के निर्माण के लिए अपने भगीरथ प्रयासों का हरसंभव योगदान दिया जाएगा।

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