

BULLETIN

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(GAYATRI VIDYA PARISHAD)

THE WORLD AT WAR WITH ITSELF new threats to global peace and security

In world politics the ambitious designs of great powers are, without doubt, the main cause for conflicts that take a heavy toll of life and property. Two years ago in the centenary year of the outbreak of the first world war scholars and historians recalled how it lasted for 1565 days claiming 17 million lives and rendering as many disabled and homeless. ‘Never again’ cried the traumatized people of Europe when the first global conflict ended in 1918. The victorious powers called it ‘the war to end all wars’. No less ironical was the fact that the treaty that followed came to be known as ‘the peace that ended all peace’. In less than two decades broke out the second world war in which 60 million people perished. The two world wars resulted in the collapse of empires, the loss of millions of precious lives, the destruction of property, private and public and drastic cartographic changes across the world. The two world wars bore testimony to the hubris and hypocrisy of the so called great powers.

Notwithstanding the two global conflicts the twentieth century witnessed the liberation of colonies, the rise of democracy, remarkable progress of science and technology and huge growth in population. It is now an overloaded and overheated planet facing such daunting challenges as poverty, backwardness, climate change and terrorism. From 1945, the year in which the United Nations was created ‘to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war’, till 2014 nearly 55 million people died in wars and conflicts in different parts of the world. Terrorism accounted for 170,000 lives in the first decade of the 21st century. The year 2014 witnessed a record 82% increase in deaths due to terrorist attacks numbering 32,727. In that year was born the Islamic State of Syria and Iraq which has risen with alarming speed as a dangerous terrorist outfit striking terror in different parts of the world, resulting in loss of innocent lives. Hard to imagine the intensity of destruction and damage across the globe if cyber attackers target the undersea cable infrastructure.

The cold war may have ended in the late eighties

but not the rivalry between the super powers. Russia, in spite of the collapse of the Soviet Union, is still a formidable power. The manner in which Crimea has been grabbed and Ukraine kept under check by Russia from getting into western domain confirms our worst fears about return of cold war politics. China is flexing its muscles in western pacific and Indian ocean area causing concern to many countries, the United States in particular. China’s territorial designs continue to expand and the ‘dragon’ shifts its strategic gears with dexterity. If it is ‘string of pearls’ strategy to strangulate India in this part of the world, it is ‘the first island change’ in the pacific encompassing the Philippines, Japan and Taiwan, all under the protective umbrella of the USA. How to deter China in the pacific and checkmate its rising influence in Asia is the biggest challenge for the United States. Let’s not forget that forty five years ago when Henry Kissinger on his sensational secret visit to China, shook hands with Premier Zhou En Lai the latter said “This will shake the world.” The USA, wrote Kissinger ‘is an Asian power as many Asian powers demand it.’ Today the US cannot hide its lurking fear that China may topple it from the pinnacle of global political hierarchy.

Wars and conflicts in the 20th century occurred mainly due to ideological and racial differences. The great powers indulged in persecution and exploitation of poor nations and peoples and asserted their superiority by controlling international organizations including the United Nations. As a scholar aptly quipped when two small countries fight and take the dispute to the UN, the dispute disappears; when a big power and a small nation refer their conflict to the world body the small nation disappears and when two super powers fight the UN itself disappears! Perpetual peace is a myth, history reminds us. If the human mind is the source of war and conflict, just a few of the nearly seven and a half billion homo sapiens are enough to blow up the planet to smithereens. Alas! not even one messiah of peace like Gandhi, or Mandela or Mother Teresa is around to give humanity hope and solace!

The Editor

The great men of the world have been those who have fought hatred and violence
and not those who have encouraged it. - Jawaharlal Nehru

INDIA AS A RISING POWER; THE MARITIME CONNOTATION

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A Macro Picture

While we, in India, are used to living in an environment of disparity and contrasts, foreigners are frequently surprised by what they see; and describe the phenomenon, with this cliché: “Every generalization about India is true. But so is the opposite.” They are right, because we have come to accept inequality as part of life, and the stark contrast between affluence and deprivation no longer moves us.

On a different plane; most of us were non-plussed when US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice declared, a few years ago, that America would ‘help make India a great power’. For the average Indian, engaged in struggles with issues of roti, kapda, makan, bijlee, pani, sadak, corruption and rising prices, one suspects that, any talk of ‘great power’ status would be akin to a slap in the face. However, as far as PM Modi is concerned, his foreign policy initiatives - from ceremonial inauguration onwards – have demonstrated a, rarely seen, grand flourish, which certainly conveys a signal of global ambitions.

There can be no doubt that India is, eventually, destined to take its rightful place amongst the world’s major powers. But the state of our chaotic democracy makes this notion seem, somewhat surreal, at this juncture. To the common man, it is obvious that, across the political spectrum, preference is given to short-term electoral goals over long-term national interests and strategic vision is rare amongst our ruling elite.

This may seem like an excessively bleak view, but others don’t hesitate to hold up a mirror to us. Some months ago, *The Economist* magazine ran a cover story, titled ‘Can India Become a Great Power?’ Its thought-provoking analysis highlighted many of the dilemmas and conundrums we face today and summed them up thus: “Since independence India has got away with having a weak strategic culture.

Instead of clear strategic thinking, India shuffles along, impeded by its caution and bureaucratic inertia.” This perceptive article raised many pertinent issues in the context of India’s putative ‘rise’, with the economy and population figuring most prominently.

The Economic Dimension

In the year 1700, India's share of world income was 22.6%; but the British plundered us so ruthlessly that the ‘brightest jewel in the British Crown’ was reduced to one of the poorest countries in the world, in terms of per capita income. For three decades after independence, India’s economy crawled, at a growth rate of 1%, which came to be known as the ‘Hindu rate of growth’. The acute financial crisis of 1990 forced the Government to take some radical steps, and it opened up the economy to globalization. By 2008, India had established itself as one of the world's faster-growing economies.

As of now, India’s economy is the 9th largest in the world by nominal GDP and the 3rd largest by purchasing power parity (PPP). In 2014 India became the world's fastest growing major economy, displacing China from that position. The World Bank’s growth outlook for 2016-17 has predicted a growth rate of 7.7-8% and the Indian economy is considered the “bright spot” in the global landscape. Optimistic forecasts say that, even with modest growth rates, India’s GDP of \$ 1.8 trillion could reach US \$ 50 trillion by mid-century; placing it amongst the first three world-wide.

While these rosy predictions are heartening, we need to keep our fingers crossed because India’s unique system of democracy has a habit of throwing up unpleasant surprises. For example, over the past two decades, we have had a series of coalition governments that were wrecked by internal contradictions; rendering them weak and irresolute in policy-making. The change of political dispensation, in 2014, brought, with it, huge expectations, but after the passage of two-years, the nation patiently awaits significant transformation in its fortunes. A dead-locked Parliament and continuing economic uncertainty have resulted in stalled development and rising unemployment; with social unrest as immediate fallout.

Useful manual labour, intelligently performed, is the means *par excellence* for developing the intellect.

- Mahatma Gandhi

India's unusual leap from being an agrarian to a service economy has left major gaps in industrialization. This will need to be remedied, to generate adequate employment; which brings me to the next factor that influences India's standing – its demographic profile.

India's Demographic Profile

Not long ago, we used to despair at our inability to curb spiralling population growth, and we envied the ruthless manner in which the Chinese Communists had enforced the draconian one-child norm. Now, India's baby boom is being hailed as the 'demographic dividend', and at a time when population in much of the developed world is declining, India looks forward to a growing proportion of youth in a productive age bracket.

India's 'baby boomers' of yesteryear will reach working ages in the next decade or two. By 2025 India is forecast to have 270 million people between the ages of 15 and 35. Consumption and saving rates, as well as productive potential will, then, be at a peak and are the source of great optimism.

However, lest we get carried away by our own rhetoric, it is necessary to face a harsh reality. India's so called 'demographic dividend' can be reaped only within a limited time-frame, in which the government must resolutely implement policies that will address issues such as skill development, job creation and raising of education and health standards, because we rate poorly in all four aspects.

It is obvious that the measure of effectiveness, of the recent budget as well as initiatives such as 'Skill India', 'Make in India' or 'Digital India' will be their ability to create jobs. If we miss the bus, and the dependency ratio starting to rise rapidly, the 'demographic dividend' could well turn into a nightmare.

The absence of strategic thinking and planning has become a hallmark of the Indian state and pursuit of vote-bank politics has become the bane of our lives. I will not go into these issues, but instead dwell briefly on our national security outlook, to provide an insight into the working and decision-making processes of the Indian state.

India's National Security Outlook

External observers often perceive a marked ambivalence in India's stance in international affairs. On one hand there is a powerful sense of hubris, which drives India to occupy moral high-ground and claim an exalted position in the global pecking-order. On the other hand, India is often seen to adopt a minimalist posture; which manifests itself in strategic timidity and self-imposed constraint in policies.

Armed with a nuclear arsenal and fielding a million and a half strong, conventional forces, India spent Rs. 2.5 lakh crore (over 40 billion USD) on defence last year. And yet, the common man is unsure whether; India's core national interests are being safeguarded, its borders and territories are inviolate, and are our citizens protected from the threat of terror-strikes?

The root cause of all this is simple; India's political leadership, in an unfortunate display of indifference, has distanced itself from national security issues. It has chosen to farm-out policy-making and strategy-formulation to bureaucrats, diplomats, scientists and technocrats. At the same time, the military has been excluded from decision-making forums and placed under the comprehensive control of a civilian bureaucracy.

Political detachment from national security issues is clearly demonstrated by the fact that since independence, neither the Government nor Parliament has considered it necessary that a defence white paper be issued or a national security review undertaken as is customary in other democracies. Such introspection would have clearly revealed that we had shown egregious neglect of our maritime security, and in doing so, we were exhibiting signs of our historical malaise of 'sea-blindness'.

The Neglected Maritime Domain

India's geophysical location and its burgeoning economy, make it as dependent on the seas as any island nation. However, a 'maritime awakening' occurred only in the past decade-and-a-half due to a series of developments, that included the powerful phenomenon of globalization, the dramatic exposure of India's soft coastal underbelly in November 2008, the trauma of rampant piracy and the looming menace

Nothing is more powerful and liberated than knowledge.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

of Chinese navy. All these brought home, to our decision-makers, the dire need to focus on maritime security.

Once our decision-makers began to acknowledge the navy's role as an instrument of state power, a clear-cut roadmap became necessary to synergise our national maritime endeavours. During the past decade, the navy has promulgated a Maritime Doctrine as well as a Strategy, with the aim of educating the political and security establishments and the media about maritime security and the utility of naval forces. On its part, the government has been committing funding for a series of acquisitions, that will place our navy amongst the top ranks of maritime forces world-wide.

India launched its first, indigenously-built, nuclear-powered ballistic-missile submarine in 2009, and a Russian nuclear-powered attack submarine was delivered in 2012 on a 10-year lease and re-named INS Chakra. The refurbished ex-Russian aircraft-carrier INS Vikramaditya arrived in 2013, and is now fully operational. A second new carrier is being indigenously built in Cochin. On order are; about 40 warships, six diesel submarines, eight maritime patrol aircraft, 45 fighters and 200 helicopters.

The recent International Fleet Review in Vishakhapatnam showcased the navy's international stature as well as operational capability. Both owe much to the fact that our warships are designed and built at home – the result of a significant decision taken by the navy's leadership, way back in the 1960s.

India's Neglected Maritime Sector

Having received a brief glimpse of the navy, it needs to be clearly understood by the reader that, contrary to popular perception, a country's maritime power does not reside, exclusively, in its navy. The 'fighting navy' is merely one amongst a number of components that contribute to maritime security. The remaining components; that include a large merchant fleet, a competent shipbuilding industry, efficient ports and infrastructure, exploitation of marine resources and trained human-resources have, inexplicably, been neglected by central & state governments. Without them, India cannot aspire to become a great maritime nation.

The term, 'maritime sector' is defined by the Ministry of Shipping and Transport as comprising of: ports, merchant shipping, shipbuilding and inland waterways. Other important components, integral to the maritime sector, do not find mention because they are farmed out to different ministries. For example; offshore exploration comes under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas; fisheries are with the Agriculture Ministry; seabed exploitation is looked after by the Department of Ocean Development and the Navy and the Coast Guard come under the MoD. There is no one to put this jig-saw puzzle together.

Today, due to an absence of strategic thinking at the political as well as bureaucratic levels, we find that India has utterly failed to capitalize on the immense potential that resides in the maritime sector. While the world has moved on, we continue to sit idly on a gold-mine which could generate huge employment and investment opportunities and actually transform our economy.

A Whole-of Government Approach

There are indications that governments have been well aware of the huge potential, lying unexploited, in the maritime sector. Three successive Ministers of Shipping have issued 'maritime perspective plans', namely: 'Sagarmala' in 2003, 'National Maritime Development Plan' in 2005, and 'Maritime Agenda; 2020' in 2012. A common thread running through these documents is their ambitious concept, unrealistic targets and absence of a roadmap or monitoring process.

As mentioned earlier, we lack a unitary government agency, which has either the span of responsibility or the authority to act as the focal point for India's maritime policies and interests. A critical pre-requisite of a national maritime strategy or policy would be the adoption of a 'whole-of-government' approach towards the maritime sector which would bring together all government agencies and activities under a single structure.

This would require the constitution of a Commission or Ministerial level maritime working-group that will address and take decisions on all cross-cutting maritime security issues.

Fear in citizens is the enemy of freedom from domestic misrule.

- Rajaji

Conclusion

India is peninsular nation with vital maritime interests; which are growing by the day. Many important aspects of our national life and economic progress depend on our commercial connections to the wider world, a majority of which are provided by sea-lanes of communication.

A strong and balanced navy, vital for protection of our maritime interests, will soon be a reality. But it is necessary for India's decision-makers to understand that the navy, by itself, constitutes just one pillar of maritime capability. Without the rest of the structure, the edifice of India's maritime power will remain hollow.

It is a measure of our myopic vision that we have failed to capitalize on our many natural advantages and create an efficient and dynamic maritime sector. While seeking a revival of maritime consciousness, in the country, we also need to conceive a maritime strategy at the national level, which will create synergies and draw maximum advantage from its neglected maritime sector.



WHAT CHINA'S RISE MEANS FOR INDIA

Shri Shivshankar Menon

Former Foreign Secretary and
National Security Adviser to the Prime Minister

The assertive China that we have seen since 2008 is here to stay for the foreseeable future, says Shivshankar Menon, Distinguished Fellow and former Indian National Security Advisor.

China's economic achievements in the last three decades of 10 percent-plus GDP growth have inspired awe around the world. We all know the consequences—the accumulation of hard power in all its forms, China as the world's manufacturing workshop, the trillion dollar foreign exchange surpluses, the ability to determine commodity prices in world markets, the presence of China in most global value and production chains, and so on. The speed and scale of China's transformation are astonishing. As a rising power, meanwhile, China is determined to have an independent say in the economic, political, and secu-

rity order around her and in the world.

What does China's rise mean for India?

Complicating the scene

Absent drastic modifications in Chinese or U.S. behaviour—which I consider unlikely—the rise of China promises an extended period of political and security instability in Asia and the Pacific. There will be no quick recovery for the world economy, and security competition between the United States and China will remain the principal contradiction, as Mao would have said. The assertive China that we have seen since 2008 is here to stay for the foreseeable future. Security dilemmas between China and Japan; China and India; China and Vietnam; and others will intensify.

In other words, the environment in which India pursues its interests will get more complex. And the very complexity of the situation in the Asia-Pacific gives India a choice of partners and collaborators to work with in the pursuit of its interests.

An assertive China is unlikely to seek an early settlement of the ongoing border dispute with India. Fifty years of stability on the border suggests that give and take on the status quo is most logical. But China's other interests—its relationship with Pakistan, suspicions about Tibet, and desire to maintain levers in the relationship with India—suggest that a border settlement is not a Chinese priority at present. (Nor, for that matter, does it seem to be a priority of the present government in New Delhi.)

China's other priorities—religious extremism and terrorism in Xinjiang, overland access to the Indian Ocean, keeping India in check, a window on Western arms technology, the Chinese commitment and presence in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir—have made Pakistan even more crucial to China's purposes. Pakistan's game is to suck India into confrontation, thus establishing Pakistan's utility to those who feel the need to balance India's rise (including China, the United States, and others). Today, Russia sells arms to Pakistan, the United States supplies arms and discusses Pakistan's nuclear weapons and Afghanistan's future with it, and China has committed \$46 billion to an economic corridor and Gwadar in Pakistan. Each of these represents an increased commitment to Pa-

An ancient Sanskrit saying says, woman is the home and the home is the basis of society.
It is as we build our homes that we can build our country. - Indira Gandhi

kistan which is an order of magnitude bigger than ever before. India asks the West to refrain from supporting Pakistan, but countries will act according to their own interests. So long as Pakistani terrorism is not a threat to them, they will not expend blood or treasure eliminating Pakistan origin terrorism for India.

China, meanwhile, remains dependent on the Indian Ocean and has suspicions about India-U.S. defense cooperation and strategic coordination. Taken together, all these factors make it likely that China will keep the border issue alive as a lever in its relationship with India. Nevertheless, the overall salience of the border in the relationship has diminished considerably, now that the Border Peace and Tranquility Agreement of 1993 and subsequent confidence-building measures have stabilized the status quo.

Room to work together

Bilaterally, China is now India's largest trading partner in goods, while the two compete for global markets. Today, over 11,000 Indian students study in China, and there are mechanisms to deal with issues like trans-border rivers, the trade deficit, and others.

On several global issues in multilateral forums—such as the World Trade Organization and climate change negotiations—the two have worked together, each in pursuit of its own interests. So prospects are good, overall—both bilaterally and by working together on the world stage.

Fundamentally, the relationship is simultaneously cooperative and competitive. That duality is clear in terms of core national interests. Both countries have an interest in improving on the existing security and economic order. This is why India has been among the founders of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and New Development Bank. But the two compete in the periphery they share, hence India's hesitation on the One Belt, One Road initiative and its sensitivity about Chinese military presence in the Indian Ocean littoral. And neither thinks the other has accepted its territorial integrity.

Maritime security is a good example of that duality. Both countries have a common interest in keeping sea lanes of communication open, but each will oppose any attempt by the other to control the seas and straits through which these sea lanes pass.

India, China, and the world

In this situation, the rest of the world can only be a limited enabler in India-China relations, using India-China competition for their own purposes. Ultimately the relationship is a critical one that will determine both countries' futures, and they alone can determine its trajectory. Today we seem to be entering a new phase in the relationship, and I hope we will be successful in smoothly attaining a new equilibrium.

The terms in which foreign and security policy are discussed in China and India...have become much more shrill.

In the short term, the cooperative-competitive pattern will likely continue. One troubling development, however, is the rise to power in both countries of conservative, authoritarian centralizers. Some of the national leaders who have risen to power since 2012 have little experience of central government and foreign policy, and hold strong ideological predispositions to nationalist and even chauvinist rhetoric. While they have been careful in their public utterances, the terms in which foreign and security policy are discussed in China and India (as well as Japan), have become much more shrill. Anti-foreign views, jingoistic slogans, intolerant ideas, and downright bad manners are now more common. These would not matter in normal times, but governments are under stress now—and leaders could seek external release from internal difficulties.

Another risk in India-China relations comes from the mutual gap between perception and reality. The China that I see described in Indian commentary bears little resemblance to the China that I have worked with, lived in, and seen on my visits. The same is true of Chinese perceptions of India, though to a lesser degree. The problem has become more acute recently, and narratives of inevitable conflict can be self-fulfilling prophecies.

Needless to say, I am convinced that we are at a moment of opportunity for India-China relations. This is due to the rapid development of both countries in the last thirty years, to what they have achieved bilaterally, and to the evolution of the international situation. It would benefit each country's core interests to work with the other.

India and China are unlikely to become cooperative partners, except in a limited opportunistic sense, any time in the foreseeable future. - Gautam Adhikari

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(The above is adapted from a speech delivered at the National Law University in Delhi on November 19, 2015.) *CPS conveys its grateful thanks to Shri Shivshankar Menon and Cmde. C. Uday Bhaskar.*



BRUSSELS TERROR ATTACK PART OF A PATTERN

Cmde. (Retd) C. Uday Bhaskar
Director, Society for Policy Studies
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The multiple terror attacks in Brussels on Tuesday (March 22) that have resulted in the death of 34 innocent people and serious injury to more than 200 have been claimed by the IS (Islamic State) and this is part of a diabolical pattern that began in early 2015.

It may be recalled that in January 2015 the IS had mounted a deadly attack in Paris on the French satirical magazine, Charlie Hebdo and a local supermarket and 17 people were killed including the three terrorists. France did not cow down and the firm resolve demonstrated by Paris and the robust global support that condemned the ideology of the IS led to a series of threats.

At the time in February 2015, the IS released a nine minute video in which it threatened to carry out fresh attacks in France and Belgium and asserted that the group had assets stationed in both these countries who were awaiting instructions to launch attacks.

Subsequently Copenhagen was the target of an attack in February 2015 and later in the year in November – Paris experienced a deadly 13/11 where more than 130 people were killed. The IS, also known as the Daesh described the Paris November 13 attack as the ‘first of the storm’ and claimed that more such attacks would follow.

Subsequently the French police traced the Paris attack suspects to Brussels and over the last month, an intense combing operation had been mounted to apprehend the suspects in Brussels. A prime suspect Salah Abdeslam – a Belgian of Moroccan origin was

apprehended on Friday (March 18) and a few days later the Brussels airport and metro were attacked – on Tuesday.

Various reasons are being advanced to explain the Brussels attacks by the IS and the revenge-reprisal theories are dominant. While the outcome of the investigations and the forensic reports will provide substantive evidence of the identity of the perpetrators and the manner in which the multiple attacks were carried out, some preliminary inferences and their relevance for India merit scrutiny.

Brussels was on the radar of the IS and the February 2015 IS distributed video was as explicit as it could be. Post the November Paris attack, one would have expected that the Belgian security and intelligence agencies were working in close coordination with their French counterparts and that the local security and surveillance would have been heightened had more resources been deployed.

However the manner in which the three attacks were carried out (two in the airport and one at the metro) and the fact that more explosives were recovered from other sites suggests a very well planned attack – and the high likelihood of insider support. A conjecture one could arrive at in relation to the airport is that the explosives had been smuggled into the premises and concealed with internal connivance. Could this plan have been foiled and the sleeper assets exposed so that the Brussels attack could have been preempted? These are difficult questions and only the Belgian and French security agencies will be able to answer them – perhaps in quiet bi-lateral consultations.

Some degree of EU cooperation exists in relation to terrorism – particularly the Islamic/ jihadi variant and this has become more urgent after the wave of refugees and immigrants from Islamic nations who are thronging towards a Europe that is very reluctant to accommodate them. However intel cooperation is a very opaque domain and it is often averred that more than intelligence sharing, what does occur is selective intelligence ‘trading’ – and that too in a very reluctant manner.

Another feature that constrains meaningful cooperation is the asymmetry in national capabilities.

The more we are able to appreciate the varied facets to the India – China relationship, the more we will be able to get away from the negative legacy. - Shyam Saran

France for instance has a much greater level of terror related expertise and in contrast Belgium has not been able to either provide adequate financial resources or recruit a sizeable police force and intelligence cadre.

Yet Belgium is a very special country when it comes to the terror associated with the IS/ Daesh. A country of less than 12 million – it is relatively much smaller than its neighbors – France and Germany. The shengen visa arrangement allows EU nationals totally unhindered access among member nations and the high-speed trains connect Brussels – the capital of the EU – to different parts of the continent in a seamless manner.

I have traveled from Brussels to Paris and back for conferences and it is almost as if the two cities are part of an extended EU urban sprawl and it is this ease of travel and related connectivity that has been exploited by the IS and its supporters. Muslim citizens are a relatively small minority in France, Germany and Belgium – but an increasingly disenchanting and often uneducated and unemployed category.

The ideology of the IS is an attractive alternative and some young EU citizens have joined the ranks of the Daesh – or have become part of the sleeper network. It is instructive to note that in relation to population, Belgium has the highest percentage of citizens who have joined the IS and it is estimated that many of them are clustered in the Molenbeek district of Brussels, where it is said the total number of mosques outnumber the churches. And the imams of these mosques are often imported from the Maghreb /West Asia and preach an ideology that resonates with the ideology of the IS.

The net result is that one district in the heart of Europe that has a population of about 100,000 EU / Belgian citizens of the Islamic faith has become a hub for the kind of terror, that the IS, which emerged from the Syrian debacle is now unleashing across western Europe.

The post Brussels mood in many parts of urban Europe is one of fear and powerlessness and it is likely that the anger and anguish that is now being witnessed will translate into harsh military and police action against the IS and its affiliates – in Europe and elsewhere. Right wing politics and latent Islamophobia

will become more rampant and a vicious cycle of reprisals can be expected.

A very patient and objective political consensus is imperative - both in Europe and among the major global powers - to deal with the threat of the nine-minute IS video. But if the messy and contradictory Syrian experience is any indicator – such political maturity and resolve appears elusive.



THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS ENSHRINED IN THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION

(Late) Shri Nani Palkhivala

India has never known true democratic freedom in its entire history except during the last 23 years. If Plato's dictum regarding political evolution is correct, our newly won freedom will have to be zealously guarded if it is not to be supplanted by dictatorship. In a nascent republic where freedom is not bred in the bones of the people, the danger of dictatorship is always vastly greater than in democracies which are centuries old.

In India freedom is not more than one election away from extinction. When an attempt to uphold the rule of law is called a manifestation of "vested interests"; and when the preservation of the sanctity of the Constitution is called the handiwork of "reactionary forces", it should be clear to any thinking mind that freedom is in peril.

Political freedom and civil liberty are the keystones of the Indian Constitution. Our Constitution is primarily shaped and moulded for the common man. The only persons who would be disappointed with our Constitution are those who believe in outdated ideologies which can only result in levelling down and not levelling up. The Constitution believes in the distribution of wealth, and therefore it not only permits but encourages the creation of wealth by enterprising individuals who with their vision and expertise are prepared to take risks and develop their country. That is why our Constitution confers on all

The relationship between the emerging and the enduring superpower is the greatest geopolitical question of our time. - Timothy Garton Ash

citizens the fundamental rights to acquire, hold and dispose of property and to carry on any trade, business and profession.

The great makers of our Constitution clearly intended that the integrity of the Constitution should be preserved against any hasty or ill-considered changes, “the fruits of passions or ignorance”. The essential purpose of our Constitution is to ensure freedom of the individual and the dignity of man, and to put basic human rights above the reach of the State and of transient politicians in power whose naked juvenile chatter is covered by the fig-leaf of demagogic claptrap.

With the growing powers of government all over the world, it is eminently desirable for any democracy to have fundamental rights which cannot be curtailed or abrogated. In the words of Mr. Justice Frankfurter, man being what he is cannot safely be trusted with complete power in depriving others of their rights. The protection of the citizen against all kinds of men in public affairs, none of whom can be trusted with unlimited power over others, lies not in their forbearance but in limitations on their power. At least such is the conviction underlying our Constitution.

With our varying and widely divergent creeds and ideologies, and a wide variety of religions and languages, our country is pre-eminently a country where inalienable fundamental rights are an absolute necessity. These rights have been called, not without justification, the ‘conscience of the Constitution’ or the ‘soul of the Constitution’. In material terms, they constitute the anchor of the Constitution and provide it with the dimension of permanence.

No time in India’s history would be more inopportune than the present for amending the Constitution and empowering Parliament to abridge or take away the Fundamental Rights. With the growing sense of insecurity in different States, when fanaticism of all sorts—regional, linguistic, communal and economic—is gathering momentum, it would be not merely a mistake but a betrayal of the fundamental freedoms to enable Parliament to trifle and tinker with them.

The right to property is often derided as the “least defensible” right in a socialist democracy. Yet a little reflection should show that this right is of the essence of a sound body politic and of a democracy which aims at marching forward economically.

Any attempt to abrogate the Fundamental Right to property would be erroneous, because it would run counter to the eternal laws of human nature. Men will sooner, Machiavelli said, forgive the deaths of their relatives [than] the confiscation of their property. It is a sad reflection on human nature that, generally speaking, a man will work for himself and his family as he will work for no one else. However, until this law of human nature is changed, the abolition of the right to property can meet with nothing but disaster.

There is no democracy anywhere in the world where as a matter of law and of constitutional practise the right to property is not respected. The right to property is enshrined in the Constitutions of the States where the rule of law prevails, as for example in the Magna Carta, in the American Declaration of Independence, in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and in the German Constitution. Even in Communist countries like the USSR, the right to private property in the fruits of personal labour and the right to inherit such property are recognized.

Under our Constitution the right to property is elastic and flexible—the Legislatures and the Executive are entitled to subject it to all such reasonable restrictions as are in the public interest. The right to property cannot be invoked at all against laws relating to Zamindari and other estates in lands or against other laws relating to agrarian reforms. Sixty-four Acts passed by Parliament and the State Legislatures are constitutionally declared to be valid although they may directly infringe on the right to property. The adequacy of compensation cannot be challenged in our Courts of Law. Far from there being any need to abridge the Fundamental Right to property further, the truth is that perhaps in no free democracy of the world does the right to property exist in such an abridged and attenuated form as it does in India.

Countries where freedom has become a way of life can do without the luxury of a constitutional right

The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. - Woodrow Wilson

to property. But in India where economic fanaticism has become a way of political life, it is imperative to retain the right to property.

It would not be too much to say that the right [to] property is, in a sense, the handmaid to the other fundamental rights. Of what avail is the fundamental right to the freedom of speech and expression to a newspaper if its property can be taken away without reasonable compensation; or the fundamental right to form associations or to religious minority is to be held on the sufferance of the party in power?

The myth has been sedulously propagated by wily politicians that it is the Constitution which stands in the way of the nation's economic progress and the uplift of the masses. This is the greatest fraud ever perpetrated on the people. The truth of the matter is that it is the wooden-headed and disastrous economic policies of the Governments at the Centre and in several States which are truly responsible for the miseries of the seventeen million unemployed and the many more millions who, though employed, are still living below the minimum subsistence level due to the erosion in the value of the rupee. There is not a single sound economic policy or scheme for social development of the masses which is in the slightest degree hampered or hindered by any of the provisions of the Constitution.

The significance of the judgement of the Supreme Court in the Privy Purse case is not so much for the Ruler as for the common man. The basic issues involved in the case were not concerned with Privileges and Privy Purses—with the booming of salute guns or the counting of our devalued currency; the basic issues centred round the sanctity of the Constitution and public morality. Could the Constitution be silenced and its mandate sacrificed at the altar of political expediency? If privy purses could be stopped by executive action, the most unsafe investment in the world would be the securities of the Indian Government. The funds of charities and trusts for widows and orphans, and provident funds of millions of workers, are invested in Government securities. If privy purses can be repudiated, so can the Government's obligation to pay the principal and

the interest in respect of Government securities, because the Constitution has used exactly the same words in guaranteeing privy purses as for guaranteeing the Government's obligation in respect of securities. What was at stake was nothing less than the nation's honour and its reputation for financial integrity in the eyes of the world.

The importance of the Privy Purse judgement from the point of view of the common man can be well gauged from the following passages in the judgements:

"The President cannot claim a total immunity for his acts from the scrutiny of the Court. Neither the paramountcy of the Grand Moghul who could give subhedarships to his Generals as he pleased nor the paramountcy of the British Crown has descended to him." (Per Hidayatullah, C.J.)

".... The Foundation of our Constitution is firmly laid in the Rule of Law and no instrumentality of the Union, not even the President as the head of the Executive, is invested with arbitrary authority." (Per Shah J.)

"Breach of any of the constitutional provisions even if made to further a popular cause is bound to be a dangerous precedent. Disrespect to the Constitution is bound to be broadened from precedent to precedent and before long the entire Constitution may be treated with contempt and held up to ridicule. That is what happened to the Weimar Constitution..... The basic issue arising for decision in these cases is of far greater significance than it appears at first sight. The question whether the Rulers can be de-recognised by the President is of secondary importance. What is of utmost importance for the future of our democracy is whether the executive of this country can flout the mandates of the Constitution and set at naught legislative enactments at its discretion. If it is held that it can, then our hitherto held assumption that in this country we are ruled by laws and not by men and women must be given as erroneous." (Per Hedge J.)

There is no doubt that the overwhelming majority of thinking men strongly believe in the

Like a miser that longeth after gold, let thy heart pant after Him.

- Sri Ramakrishna

Fundamental Rights and are deeply conscious of the outstanding role played by the Courts in preserving our cherished values. But unfortunately they constitute the silent majority. There are times in a country's history when inaction and silence can be a culpable wrong, and we are living in such times. It is not enough that we believe in our national motto that truth with ultimately prevail. We must take active steps to see to it that falsehood does not have a very long innings before the ultimate moment of truth arrives.

Source: February 1971 issue of *Freedom First*



FROM 'BRIDGES OF FRIENDSHIP' TO 'UNITED THROUGH OCEANS' – INDIAN NAVY'S IFR JOURNEY - I

Cmde. Srikant B Kesnur

Director of Maritime Warfare Centre,
Visakhapatnam and was among the group of
personnel actively involved in the conduct of the
International Fleet Review.

The culmination of the International Fleet Review (IFR) 2016 on 08 Feb with a spectacular multi-nation band concert brought the curtains down on a week of high voltage activity that characterized what was, arguably, India's biggest maritime event. The numbers by themselves are staggering – almost 50 countries including 22 Chiefs of Navies, 26 delegations and 100 warships including 24 foreign men of war took part in this multi-hued extravaganza at Visakhapatnam, on India's east coast that also saw more than a million spectators or footfalls. While marked by the pomp, pageantry, ceremony, precision and colour that invariably accompany such occasions, the IFR also had several takeaways in the political, diplomatic, military and civil society spheres. While analyzing all of them would constitute separate essays, a brief overview of the event may provide us some broad brush picture of the large canvas that was the IFR.

Historical Overview and Event Highlights

Historically, a Fleet Review is an assembly of ships at a pre-designated place for the purpose of paying respects to the sovereign of a nation and to

display their commitment to him. In turn, the sovereign by reviewing the ships reaffirms his faith in the fleet and its ability to defend the nation's maritime interests. In our country, the President of India, as the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, reviews the Fleet. Over a period of time Fleet Reviews in India have seen participation by ships, submarines and aircraft to emphasize the three-dimensional nature of the Indian Navy. Ships of the other government agencies such as the Coast Guard, government research vessels and Indian owned (flagged) merchant ships have also joined in paying respects to the President.

It is possible that our early maritime kingdoms such as the Cholas or Kalingas may have had their own versions of the Fleet Review given their oceanic excursions and endeavours. However, the earliest recorded Indian Fleet Review was in the 18th Century by the powerful Maratha Fleet consisting of 'Ghurabs' and 'Gallivats' under the renowned Sarkhel (Grand Admiral) Kanhoji Angre at the coastal fortress of Ratnagiri. In Britain, a Fleet Review was a precursor to setting sail for war or was conducted on special occasions like the coronation of a new monarch. In the USA, the 'Great White Fleet' meant to project American power overseas was reviewed by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1907, prior to departure, and once again in 1909, on its return to the United States.

Independent India had witnessed ten Fleet Reviews prior to this year's edition, with the last one held on 20 December 2011 in Mumbai. This included the first ever International Fleet Review in 2001, which saw large participation from foreign and Indian ships. The eleventh review in Visakhapatnam, thus, was the second International Fleet Review hosted by India. During the review, the President is received by a Guard of Honour prior to embarking the Presidential Yacht. This is followed by a 21-gun salute, after which the President, onboard the Presidential Yacht, steams past an armada of anchored ships from the various theatre Commands of the Indian Navy along with ships of the Indian Coast Guard and Merchant Navy. In addition to the anchored ships, a mobile column of warships steams past the Presidential column, offering similar salutations. IFR-16 also witnessed warships, sail ships and delegations from friendly foreign nations joining the ceremony and the accompanying festivities.

The great advantage of a hotel is that it's a refuge from home life.

- George Bernard Shaw

Shri Pranab Mukherjee, President of India, Shri Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister, Shri ESL Narsimhan, the Governor of Andhra Pradesh, Shri Manohar Parikkar, the RakshaMantri, Shri Chandrababu Naidu, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and other high Indian dignitaries, along with the naval heads of the participating nations attended the Fleet Review on 06 Feb, with collateral activities conducted from 04 to 08 February 2016. Apart from the Review itself, the mega event had a variety of programmes like the Maritime Exhibition that displayed our maritime heritage and technological achievements, an IFR Village that showcased India's cultural heritage along with entertainment performances and food stalls with multi-cultural cuisine, the International City Parade that witnessed men and women from many nations marching past in colourful attire, joint international band concerts, an International Conference that saw cogitation on matters academic and above all a high tempo operational demonstration on RK Beach – in all an extravagant show that guaranteed something for everyone.

Indian Navy, our Maritime Roots and the Genesis of IFR

It is often said that India is a young nation but an ancient civilization. Quite the same analogy can be drawn for the Indian Navy. It is a young service but imbued with a long and a glorious maritime heritage. Thousands of years before other parts of the world witnessed maritime activity, the Indian Ocean was a busy thoroughfare with India as its hub. An enduring relationship with the oceans had been established from as far back as the 3rd millennium BCE. Our hoary maritime past not only witnessed great feats in seafaring and ship building eons ago but also was informed by a vision that saw the world as one entity (VasudhaivaKutumbakam) strengthened by bonds of friendship, nurtured by trade and nourished by cultural exchanges. Closer home to the East Coast, the Bay of Bengal was a highway for many kingdoms in southern and eastern India such as Pandyas, Cholas, Kalingas, etc. to embark on cultural and commercial missions to lands all the way to Pacific Ocean. While the second half of the last millennium saw a decline in this maritime spirit, we picked up the threads in right earnest soon after independence with the Indian

Navy as the main embodiment not only of our maritime prowess but also of maritime thought. Thus, India's rich maritime past was characterized by an amazing range and depth of civilisational exchanges in an informal rule-based system that encouraged both commercial and cultural endeavours. The same impulses now mark our maritime outlook and our commitment to global peace today while adapting to the imperatives of current international landscape.

Post-Independence, in 1947, the Indian Navy, in acknowledgement of its maritime moorings, began to build up from a small entity it then was. Today, it is a truly global Navy – with a balanced force that includes modern ships including aircraft carriers, submarines and high performance aircraft - and is widely acknowledged as a professional three dimensional maritime force capable of undertaking several roles and discharging multifarious responsibilities. Over the last 25 years, the progress of the Indian Navy has been concomitant with the rise of India in the political, economic, diplomatic and technological spheres. This rise has been premised on the principles of peace, harmony, mutual co-existence and respect for universal values that have been at the core of India's beliefs. The Indian Navy has not only inculcated these values but has also been in the forefront of strengthening them through the common medium of the seas.

In an increasingly globalized and inter-connected world, India's national policies have emphasized cooperative international relationships for greater prosperity and well-being of not only of our citizens but humanity at large. The world of today is equally one of unprecedented opportunities and grave challenges. India's approach to increasing regional and global issues has been to build bridges of friendship with all the nations, with the Indian Navy as the principal instrument, to support our foreign policy efforts, in the maritime and security domains. Our approach to the global commons has always been one of seeking shared prosperity and security. In this endeavour, all the maritime nations of the world are our most indispensable partners in meeting many common challenges.

Against this background, the International Fleet Review (IFR) 2016 could not have come at a more

Kindness is a language which the deaf can hear and the blind can read.

- Mark Twain

opportune moment. IFR-16 was thus aimed at further broadening maritime engagement between India and the other foreign navies while providing renewed impetus and momentum to our global maritime partnerships. In the run up to the event, the objectives were aptly enunciated by Admiral RK Dhowan, the Chief of Naval Staff, who said, "The hosting of the International Fleet Review (IFR) by the Indian Navy in February 2016 can be seen as a significant event in the nation's maritime history. While showcasing our navy to the nation and to the Honourable President of India we also celebrate the time-honoured principles of friendship across the oceans, which are intrinsic to the seafaring community. The IFR serves to provide a platform for participating navies to interact with each other, strengthen bridges of friendship, towards developing a common appreciation of maritime challenges and the potential for addressing them through a united approach. This is in line with India's overall policy of strengthening cooperation amongst nations to meet common maritime security challenges and to render the 'global commons' safe and secure'. The coming together of many navies will be accompanied by several events and functions in a week of action and interaction. These are aimed at maximising the time spent together by the members of the seafaring community, to fulfill the aims and goals of the IFR. Thus, we seek to move ahead on the concept of the global maritime family with our theme 'United through Oceans'.

(to be concluded)



Seven Hundred Brides For The Island

Prof. Manoj Das

*(A seer among scholars, the venerable Prof. Manoj Das who lives in Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, has graciously permitted the publication of this essay from his book **My Little India**)*

The abode of Vishnu atop the Alagar hill on the outskirts of Madurai was as charming as a sylvan lap of Nature with a touch of antiquity could be. The tender waterfall was shared by pilgrims and a small troop of genial monkeys. Looking around from that eleva-

tion and scanning the distant temples and towers, some of them in ruins, was like confronting several chapters of a bulky book of history at the same time.

'Madurai is the oldest living city in the South, just as Varanasi is in the North. Historical evidence of the dynasties ruling the region and other activities of the city goes back to the 4th century B.C., but legends tempt us to look far back, to dateless times,' observed a scholar, a friend of Dr. Venkataraman.

'What's the age of Mahavamsa, the Ceylonese chronicles?' I asked him.

His face brightened up. 'My familiarity with that ancient work is rather thin. But that probably is among the earliest works bearing references to Madurai,' he said. We sat down near the 'golden lotus lake' inside the temple complex. On the banks of this lake functioned India's first academy of letters, the Tamil Sangam. A new literary composition, submitted to the Sangam, was thrown into the lake amidst the chanting of certain hymns. If the manuscript did not sink, it was presumed that it would not sink down time's surface either. It was then approved for circulation.

'We have forgotten those hymns. As a result, every piece of rubbish can float and pass on as literature,' observed the scholar.

'By the way, have you read the Mahavamsa?' he asked me. I had read Wilhelm Geiger's translation published (1950) by the Government of Ceylon, that is, Sri Lanka. And the most pathetic episode recorded in the work immediately stirred my memory.

The prince of Banga (Bengal) was wedded to the princess of Kalinga (Orissa)..They were blessed with a daughter - rather cursed - for it was prophesied that she would marry the king of beasts. The princess whom 'for shame, the king and the queen could not suffer,' one day joined a merchant's caravan. While the caravan was crossing a forest, a 'Simha' carried her away and obliged her to marry him. (He was probably a tribal chieftain though 'Simha' is popularly understood as lion.)

Unto the couple were born a son and a daughter. The boy, Simhabahu, when 16, asked his mother why she was so different from his father and learnt her antecedents. The boy was determined to return

If all our misfortunes were laid on one common heap, where everyone must take an equal portion, most people would be content to take their own and depart. - Socrates

to civilization. His mother too was concerned about her children's future.

One day, when the lion was away, Simhabahu put his mother and sister on his shoulders and ran away right into the society. Soon the lion, agitated over their escape but unable to locate them, ravaged the human habitations. He became a great menace, so much so that the king of Banga announced a big reward for anyone who could kill him. The young Simhabahu, despite his mother's efforts to restrain him, confronted the lion and shot an arrow at him. The arrow touched the lion's forehead, but because of his great love for his son, returned to Sinhababu and fell at the latter's feet. Two subsequent arrows also proved ineffective. But when he shot for the fourth time, the lion grew angry. His occult protection was gone and the arrow killed him.

Simhabahu succeeded his grandfather to the throne. Of his many sons, the eldest, Vijay, proved extremely unruly. With a gang he had mobilised, he plundered and harassed the citizens. 'Put Prince Vijay to death!' was the popular cry. The king ordered his exile. He and his followers, numbering seven hundred, were shipped out to an uncertain destination and destiny.

Their ships reached the shores of Lanka, inhabited by Yakshas. The daughter of the Yaksha chief, a warrior of great merit, could have destroyed the intruders, but she set her heart upon Vijay. With her help Vijay and his men vanquished the Yakshas. The survivors fled into the deep woods. The Yakshini lived with Vijay.

Vijay proclaimed himself the king of the island, now named Sinhala in the memory of king Simhabahu. But his position could be formalised only if a powerful king recognised him. His emissaries sailed to the Pandya king at Madurai and convinced him about the genuineness of Vijay's claim. They requested him for a princess to marry Simhabahu and 700 damsels to marry his lieutenants.

The king proclaimed with the beat of a drum: Whichever family had a daughter to spare 'should provide the girl with a double store of clothing and place her at their doorsteps. By this sign shall we collect them.'

The required number of damsels collected, the king chose a princess from the royal household to sail with them to Lanka.

No sooner had the ships teeming with brides been visible on the horizon with signals indicating success of then mission, Vijay summoned the Yakshini by whom he had already had two children. 'Go thou now, dear one, leaving the two children behind,' was his message.

The dear one stood stunned. But time was running out. Vijay Simha grew impatient. She had to leave, but she left along with her children.

No wonder that she should be literally torn to shreds the moment she was sighted by her kin. Her children, however, escaped. Their descendants are said to be still in the remote part of a forest and they hate civilization.

Vijay and his men duly married the brides imported from Madurai. As Vijay had no son, a nephew was brought from India to succeed him. Three generations later Mahendra and Samghamitra, the son and daughter of Emperor Asoka, initiated the Sinhalese into Buddhism.

The accuracy of this legend, of course, is questioned. But the fact is, the difference between the original inhabitants of Sri Lanka (after the Yakshas) and the later day migrants from the Tamil lands is rather weak, though the conflict between them is so stubborn.

There are only a few cities that could rival Madurai in richness of anecdotes, often historically corroborated and associated with its monument I had a greater opportunity to know them on a second visit to the city years later. In 1559 the Cholas attacked the city and the Pandya king took refuge at Hampi, the capital of the Vijaynagar Empire. The monarch of Vijaynagar sent the chief commander of his army, Nagam Nayak, to drive away the usurper and restore the kingdom to its original ruler. Nagam Nayak fulfilled the first part of his mission, but instead of reinstating the Pandya king, occupied the throne himself.

The angry monarch Vijaynagar called his generals, 'Who can capture the treacherous fellow and bring him to me? I don't care even if you don't succeed in

Imagination grows by exercise and contrary to common belief is more powerful
in the mature than in the young. - W. Somerset Maugham

bringing him alive. His dead body would suffice,' thundered the monarch All kept quiet, for to confront the crafty and skilled Nagam Nayak was to embrace death.

But the monarch did not have to wait for long. A young man took up the challenge. All were taken aback, for he was none other than Nagam Nayak's son, Viswanath Nayak.

Viswanath defeated his father and produced the captive before his master. The happy monarch offered Viswanath a reward of his choice.

'Release my unlucky father,' was Viswanath's choice. That was granted and Viswanath was appointed the administrator of Madura; the king's Viceroy.

The Pandya king continued to sit on the throne, but holding a sceptre that was no more powerful than any other stick of its size. Two generations later the throne, too, slid away from the Pandyas. Viswanath's grandson, Thirumal Nayak, declared himself the king. Vijaynagar was no longer in a position to take him to task.

Thirumal Nayak was a great lover of art. He would stand for hours gazing at an image emerging from a stone as the sculptor worked on it. He was keen to adorn old temples with new gopurams.

Alas, leaving scores of gopurams incomplete, one day he just disappeared!

Those who put forth the theory of his disappearance as a sudden whimsical ascent to the heavens probably knew what, by and by, grew into whispers to this effect: One afternoon, while the king was alone, a noble reported to him of a treasure trove found in a deserted shrine. The king followed him, without any escort, into a labyrinth and then into a dungeon through a small opening. The noble was later seen basking in the sunlight, but not his master. A huge slab was believed to have been clamped on the dungeon's opening.

A similar fate befell an illustrious lady of the Nayak dynasty, though rarely mentioned. She was Mangammal. For fifteen years she provided the kingdom with an ideal rule, as the resent of the infant prince. The subjects sang her glory, but the nobles resented her inclination towards a brilliant young Gen-

eral. The day the prince came of age, they demanded of the queen mother that she hand over her authority to him. She was ready to do that, but of her own will and at a time to be chosen by herself, not at the command of the envious nobles.

She was technically at fault. Captured, she was thrown into a special gaol with a single window. Every day she was shown some delicious dishes, which were promptly withdrawn, leaving her to die of starvation.

The remains of the gaol are still there. She was the last flicker of the powerful Nayak dynasty.

J. P. Lasrado Shenoy, of the British Indian Civil Service, wrote in his book Madura: 'European scholars sometimes refer to Madura as the Athens of South India and the title is not without some justification. As the seat of the Tamil academy, it attracted all the scholars of the south. Famous Tamil poets yearned for recognition from the Madura Tamil Sangam, and were not satisfied with their works until the latter had obtained the hall-mark of this academy. Madura is one of the few Indian cities which has maintained intact its connections with the past, and its growth is still dependent on roots firmly planted in soil that is 2000 years old. Thus, while Buddha might feel a stranger in modern Patna, the famous Tamil poet Thiruvalluvar would recognise in present day Madura, a good deal of the culture and civilization which distinguished her in the past. There is, therefore, no other place in India where the foreigner, anxious to have an insight into the religious life and traditions of the Hindus, would be so well rewarded as by a visit to Madura, and a close study of the Meenakshi temple.'

Shenoy wrote this in 1937. Even decades later the observation holds good to an extent.



TRIJATHA: BELOVED FIFTH COLUMNIST

Dr. (Mrs) Prema Nandakumar

The twentieth century saw the rise of feminism in India. Suppressed for long by a society that had turned quite patriarchal more than a millennium ago, Indian women woke up and looked for role-models to reshape their lives. It has been a generally held belief

Life only demands from you the strength you possess.
Only one feat is possible – not to have run away. - Dag Hammarskjold

that the Indian woman has been suffering from what was termed a Sita-Savitri syndrome and must come out of these mental shackles of being born subservient. Interestingly enough, a closer look at our classical heroines has revealed that it is these ladies who shine as role-models inspiring women with strength, courage, sincerity, compassion, knowledge and love. The very best in our great culture has been the gift of these women who are prepared to rebel against the Establishment in moments of crisis. Some of them are quite well known: Sita, Savitri, Damayanti, Draupadi. Great poets have retold their lives in many ways down the centuries and the heroines always appear contemporaneous, such is their presence in India. Sri Aurobindo has even given us a modern-day epic, *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol*. Of these heroines, Sri Aurobindo wrote to his brother Manomohan Ghose:

“Yet are these great figures, are Rama, Sita, Savitri, merely patterns of moral excellence? I who have read their tale in the swift and mighty language of Valmeki and Vyasa and thrilled with their joys and their sorrows, cannot persuade myself that it is so. Surely Savitri that strong silent heart, with her powerful and subtly-indicated personality, has both life and charm ... Sita is too gracious and sweet, too full of human lovingness and loveliness, of womanly weakness and womanly strength!”

He thought that taking up such great characters and re-writing their lives would be an inspiration.

“To take with a reverent hand the old myths and cleanse them of soiling accretions, till they shine with some of the antique strength, simplicity and solemn depth of beautiful meaning, is an ambition which Hindu poets of today may and do worthily cherish. To accomplish a similar duty in a foreign tongue is a more perilous endeavour.”

Yet it had to be done and Sri Aurobindo was to give us works like *Love and Death* and *Savitri* in English. Incidentally, even the ladies who walk in our epics and Puranas about whom not much is known, turn out to be ideal path-finders and there are hundreds of them, so vast is the received tradition of Sanatana Dharma. All of them face life with a stern

resolve; none of them runs away from life. In this sense, these classical heroines also celebrate life in a sublime manner.

Readers of the Ramayana are familiar enough with Trijata. She stands for the way a woman should speak out for her sisters in distress whatever be the calamitous situation. She is a lesson to those educated Indian women who are not prepared to give a helping hand to other women who suffer from so many ills in our society. As a one-woman army right in the heart of Ravana’s kingdom, Trijata guards Sita from giving way to despair. Our eternal gratitude to this gracious daughter of Vibhishana whose moral support to Sita is almost equal to that of Hanuman.

Trijata is seen first in the *Sundara Kanda*. Daughter of Vibhishana by Surama who was herself the daughter of the Gandharva, Kailusha, she appears to be sleeping when the ogresses threaten Sita with dire consequences and that they were going to eat her up. Valmiki writes that she wakes up and says:

“Gobble up yourselves, O evil ones!; you will never be able to eat Sita who is the beloved daughter of Janaka and the daughter-in-law of Dasaratha. I have had a terrifying dream. Look, my hair stands on end. Oh, I have seen the destruction of the rakshasas and the prosperity of Sita’s consort.”

The mental level of the rakshasis is one of obscurantist faith. They are immediately frightened for one may not disregard dreams. They give up torturing Sita with words and crowd around Trijata who is described as aged. Here “*vridha*” could also mean mature in understanding. Trijata then gives a detailed account of her dream in which she describes Rama and Lakshmana riding a divine palanquin drawn by a thousand horses, the princes dressed in white silks and wearing white garlands. They get united to Sita who is clad in white garments and is sitting on a white hill girt by the sea. Then the three move away towards Ayodhya on a white elephant. Trijata says these auspicious dreams recur in different forms. Once she had seen the three riding a chariot drawn by eight white bullocks. In yet another Trijata had seen them riding the Pushpaka.

It is more difficult to disintegrate a prejudice than an atom.

- Albert Einstein

In the same breath, Trijatha speaks of the darkness that was covering upon Lanka's noon.

"I saw King Ravana with a shaven head. He was dripping with oil, clad in red garments, drunk and still quaffing wine. He was wearing garlands of oleanders and had fallen down from the Pushpaka air-car."

Trijatha sees him again dressed in black, pulled by a woman on a chariot drawn by asses. Ravana in these dreams is drinking and laughing madly, and appears confounded by fear (hasan nrithyan, bhayamohitah). Presently Ravana moves around stark naked and disappears in filth and mire. It is a terrifying dream, and Trijatha was taking chances by recounting this dream of Rama's victory and Ravana's fall, as Lanka's administrative system was quite famous for its spy-system, with its own brand of Wikileaks. In fact, there is more to come. Trijatha boldly recounts Kumbhakarna's fall as well as the destruction of the many sons of Ravana. Indeed the whole of Lanka is in flames in the dream while very few live to tell the tale. One of them is Vibhishana who rides a four-tusked elephant which stands in the air.

Trijatha commands the rakshasis to desist from irritating Sita further. Rather, they should ask her forgiveness. Rama is sure to deal harshly with such offenders. Trijatha, who is well-versed in the received tradition, remarks that she sees auspicious signs on Sita and that she has no doubt about her being rescued by Rama. All these words are heard by Sita in silence. When Trijatha ceases, Sita says spontaneously: avochad yadhi tat thubhyam bhavyam saranam hi vah, if what has been recounted does happen, I shall definitely be your protector.

Words are never uttered casually by these epic heroines. Sita remembers this promise when the battle is over and Hanuman wants to know from her whether he should punish the rakshasis. They had not asked Sita for protection, yet when Trijatha's dream had become a reality, Sita remembers her promise to her, and says her famous verse full of divine compassion, kaaryam karunamaaryena ...

"An Arya (noble person) should be compassionate towards sinners as well as the good people. Why, even those deserving death need to

be protected. There is no one who has not committed a mistake."

Indeed, how can Valmiki's Sita forget what Trijatha and her mother Sarama did to shore up her spirits at crucial moments? The latter had consoled Sita in the Yuddha Kanda when Rama's severed head had been brought to her on a platter. Sarama told Sita that this was nothing more than a conjuring trick by the demon Viddhujihva. In that island of total insanity, these were the pockets of sanity on the side of Truth, women helping a woman in distress, a very risky act in the governance of pitiless Ravana.

Trijatha has an important place in the Ramcharitmanas of Tulsidas. He refers to her as a woman of perfect wisdom, nipuna viveka. Indeed, she dissuades Sita from entertaining ideas of suicide: "Listen, gentle lady, one cannot procure fire at night in Lanka"! Trijatha reappears in the Lanka Kanda when Sita laments that Rama is not striking Ravana down immediately, and gives a very interesting reason for the delay on Rama's part:

"Rama thinks that Janaki has been imprisoned in Ravan's heart. Well, Janaki's heart is His own residence! Since he contains the entire creation, if he aims a killer arrow, the entire creation will be struck down and perish."

A charming chinese-box image but it cannot comfort Sita, of course. So Trijatha tells her that the moment Ravana forgets Sita, Rama will kill him. And that is how events progress immediately after.

Almost all the poets who have retold the Ramayana have referred to Trijatha with great respect. Kamban refers to her in his Tamil version as one whose love was greater than that of a mother. It is Sita who wakes up Trijatha to know why her left eye is throbbing. Trijatha replies that she had been dreaming of Ravana's death, Lanka's destruction and just when she watched Lakshmi going into Vibhishana's house with a lighted lamp, she had been woken up from sleep. The poet says that Sita raised her palms in salutation and said: "Please watch the rest of the dream by sleeping again". Now Ravana comes with his ladies and converses with Sita. After he leaves the garden in fury, the canto concludes with Trijatha again

One way of defining diversity for India is to say what the Irishman is said to have said about trousers.

When asked whether trousers were singular or plural, he said,
'singular at the top and plural at the bottom.' - A.K.Ramanujan

predicting the victory of Rama. Thanks to these words, “the innocent, helpless Princess retained her life within.”

Kamban’s Trijatha reappears “as the fruit of tapasya” in the Yuddha Kanda when Sita is taken by Ravana’s henchmen to watch the battlefield full of dead monkeys and the senseless Rama. She reminds Sita of the illusory deer Maricha, the supposed killing of Janaka and the time when the Naga missile bound the army of Rama:

“Can you ever doubt
That dream seen earlier, the good omens,
Your own chastity, the sins of the rakshasas,
The heroism of your Lord who upholds
Dharma? Can there be an end to the Lord
And not to these evil-prone?”

Sita thanks Trijatha in sweet words and speaks of her as her “saviour-divine”. Such is the important place given to Trijatha ever since Valmiki brought out her presence in the Ramayana. In K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar’s epic poem in English, Sitayana, Trijatha gains an even more elevated place in keeping with the tuning of the narrative to the woman’s point of view. Trijatha thus becomes a constant companion to Sita, and quite, quite close to her unlike Valmiki’s who seems to maintain a distance. Iyengar prefers to have followed Kamban’s clue and proceeded with the urge of a political scientist to explain why Trijatha is the only good woman in the Ashoka grove:

“I’m Trijata”, she introduced herself
with a touch of nervousness;
“be not afraid, O virtuous Sita,
for you have friends in Lanka.
Vibhishana my father is the King’s
Younger brother; my mother,
Sarama, and my sister, Anala,
Are all for the verities.
My father’s position in Ravana’s
Court is something delicate,
Aye, like that of the soft sensitive tongue
Surrounded by the sharp teeth.
He has somehow persuaded Ravana
That I might be asked to join

The wardresses, and keep an eye on them –
Also be in touch with you.”

It is Trijatha who tells Anala to get information of what passes on in Ravana’s Council and report to her. Through Trijata Sita learns all about Lanka, the tapasya-rich Ravana and his family. Instead of the dream with its symbol-tones, we have descriptions of the good Mandodari, her loveable daughter-in-law Sulochana and other consorts who have sympathy for Sita.. Later we see the events of the whole of Yuddha Kanda through the reports of Anala. Trijatha’s visionary eye notes events like Vibhishana’s seeking refuge with Rama. Trijatha also refers to her earlier travels in India where she had been to the temple of Madhavi n Ayodhya. There she had seen Mythili and Rama and Lakshmana who had come to worship in the temple. Always a tower of moral strength for Sita, Trijatha says: “now all will be well – Grace has taken things in hand.”

In fact Trijata pervades the entire Yuddha Kanda of Sitayana. As Sulochana, the wife of Indrajit says:

More than once, the clairvoyant Trijata
Has lisped in accents of love
And adoration of the wronged Sita,
The sole cause of this conflict.”

Trijatha takes on the role of the Announcer about the coming age, in favour of the feminist principle, seeking a transformation of a society which has till now remained a woeful, abusive patriarchy. . As she tells Sita with the prescience of a seer:

“O all-suffering Sita, I but see
mother, sister, child in you;
I think I glimpse behind the wronged woman
The sole saviour Madonna.
Let this age waste itself out as it likes,
Let the Dark Ages to come
Enact their sundry self-wrought ironies
Of ambition, pride, defeat.
But Sita, your Yoga of Sufferance,
Your containment of Power
In the face of Evil Unlimited,
Must yet redeem the future.”

Trijatha’s speeches insinuate that man is

He uses statistics as a drunken man uses lamp-posts, for support rather than illumination.

- Andrew Lang

destroying Nature, the Material Mother which is nothing less than “purblind self-slaughter.” It is interesting to note that Trijatha reappears after the war is over and Sita has emerged victorious from the fire. The symbol of Trijatha’s dream in the earlier Ramayanas is transformed by Iyengar into a kind of Cassandran power which notes the indignities and tortures yet to come for womanhood. In this sense, Trijatha in Sitayana is a chorus too. She comes to the coronation at Ayodhya but is moody for she seems to sense the impending exile of Sita. When the rejected Sita, heavy with child is in Valmiki’s Ashrama, Trijatha hears of it in distant Lanka and comes to see her. So we take leave of Trijatha who decides to be with Sita always as a protective mother and spend her days in the lambent peace of the Ashrama:

“The dark withdrew, a mellow beauty dawned,
I saw you as in Lanka
Yet now bathed in ochre serenity
And glory of motherhood.

This new vision became a settled thing,
And I knew I must join you;
So after a brief stop at Ayodhya
I have found my way to you.

This was surely love beyond reckoning,
And with Valmiki’s consent
Trijatha stayed on in the Ashrama
And merged in its ambience.”



COMMUNITY BASED DISASTER MANAGEMENT (CBDM)

Dr. K. R. Sastry

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OBJECTIVE

Disasters happen all the time. We can’t always prevent them from happening, but disaster reduction efforts can limit the scale of devastation. One of the ways to realize this vision is through the involvement of communities in disaster mitigation measures. Thus, the role of the community participation in disaster management is imperative. When the community becomes a part of the decision making system, it

ensures the ownership and accountability. Consequently, the most important objective of community based disaster management (CBDM) is to reduce the impact of natural disasters on living conditions of the vulnerable communities in the disaster-prone areas. This could be achieved through ensuring that people are capable of withstanding the impact of any disaster initially for the first few days during the post-disaster phase, until such time the external assistance reached them; and, a long-term sustenance of their safety and livelihoods was attained.

Generally speaking, community is a set of habitats, livelihoods and social constructs. But in practical terms, community could be delineated as the population of a village or a hamlet. Several villages comprise a Gram Panchayat (GP), considered the basic unit for CBDM, which deals with making the villagers aware of the vulnerability by training the members of the community to become self-resilient in dealing with disasters. The National Disaster Management Plans, prepared under the auspices of the High Powered Committee (HPC), appointed by the Government of India, during 1999-2002, headed by Shri J.C. Pant, laid great stress on CBDM, to effectively deal with natural calamities.

FEATURES OF CBDM

1. The most important feature of CBDM is its people-centric nature;
2. Active People’s participation is an important element of CBDM;
3. The most vulnerable group in the community is given priority;
4. Risk Reduction measures are community-specific, and comprise an inclusive process;
5. CBDM is an integrated exercise covering activities of various development sectors;
6. Outsiders have only a limited role to play, since they support and facilitate during the initial stages following a disaster; and
7. Local people should take the responsibility of backing them-selves.

The condition upon which God hath given liberty to man is eternal vigilance.

- John Philpot Curran

From times immemorial, communities have been coping with disasters with some degree of success. Such mechanisms, indigenous resources and responses have been an integral part of the community. When the local resources and responses contribute jointly with capacity building of the neighbourhood, the final outcome is immense while building community's resilience. The impact of disaster is less in a prepared Community than in an unprepared one. Preparedness, therefore, minimizes the loss of life and property, which can be realized through the CBDM approach toward disasters.

The priorities of the policy makers and the expectations of the community with respect to disaster mitigation and actual relief administration are widely different. The CBDM will strive to offset this top down move toward the planning process. It will have a citizen controlled decision-making approach in place, where the local problems and needs are locally and adequately addressed. And this would eventually help lead to re-distribution of power to the disadvantaged sections of the population. As local knowledge, resources and services are made use of; and, thereby resulting in 'smaller financial inputs' and 'larger gains'.

Role of CSOs (i.e., NGOs, CBOs) and PRIs in CBDM

These institutions play an important role in the process of making a community self-sufficient with respect to dealing with emergencies or disasters. In other words, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), i.e., the non-government organizations (NGOs) and community based organizations (CBOs), have been working actively at the very local level, i.e., at the grassroots comprising one or more hamlets/villages and Gram Panchayats (GPs), in different parts of the country in managing disasters. CBOs are usually created at the very local level to address the demand for service of a particular work. The CBOs have been identified at the community level; and thus, are instrumental in the pre-, during-, and-post-, disaster emergency phases. Gram Panchayat, the lowest rung of the Panchayati Raj set-up, would provide the foundation for these bodies. Joining together, all these bodies become potential partners for a meaningful risk reduction at the community level.

PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL (PRA)

Participatory rural appraisal (PRA), an approach for rural transformation, pioneered by Robert Chambers, is an important tool in the process of CBDM. It helps in identifying the vulnerability of the community to a specific natural hazard, mainly in facilitating the community to find/develop solutions to the problems faced in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. With the help of the Civil Society, i.e., NGOs and CBOs, the local volunteers (members of the community) are trained in disaster preparedness; leading to development of a plan, based on peoples felt-needs. By making use of the PRA method the process leads to the formulation of the community plan to cope with disasters is documented. Village disaster committees (VDCs) are established to implement participatory processes comprising early warning, evacuation, rescue and relief operations. VDCs work toward reducing the impact of natural hazards. Funds are mobilized to create critical infrastructure to mitigate disaster effects. Moreover, the community action plan needs to be integrated with the ward/village, Gram Panchayat, Block/Samithi (in Andhra Pradesh, called Mandal Praja Parishad [MPP]) and Zilla Praja Parishad (ZP), i.e., the District level people's council and finally the State Contingency Plan.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The foregoing clearly establishes that the local people have to be trained to manage disasters they often face. One of the effective devices for a country like India is to prepare the community for an imminent disaster by carrying out education and public awareness programs at the grassroots, i.e., local level. This could be achieved through educating, preparing and supporting local populations/communities in their daily efforts to reduce risks and organize their own local response methods to tackle any crisis situations.

The community based approach in disaster reduction is a process of educating and empowering the local populations through sharing knowledge and information about different types of disasters and their likely risks as extensively as possible; so that people act suitably whenever a disaster strikes. As a

The first principle of a civilized state is that power is legitimate only when it is under contract.

- Walter Lippmann

rule, members of a community are the first responders and direct victims of the debilitating effects of a calamity. These people have the requisite knowledge about their local surroundings in terms of the most disaster-prone areas, the demography of their community and their social and traditional organisation. Leaders of the community can create area based action plans explicit to their needs. Such plans should include the hazard map, vulnerability analysis, mock drills and other critical techniques, skills and information essential in the preparation for an impending disaster.

To recapitulate, Community Based Disaster Management will be successful, if only the attitude of the community changes from being dependent on help and relief from outside to becoming independent in coping with the disaster situations. The community's immediate needs in terms of restoration of livelihoods or alternate livelihoods are to be realized. The solutions to the risks should be practical, simple and doable. They should be within the reach of the community. Community solidarity is an important feature for the success of CBDM. Once the camaraderie is effectively built, CBDM will be sustained. Once a community succeeds in managing a disaster, CBDM will be successful as well as the much needed sustenance achieved. Taken as a whole, CBDM ought to be a people-centred, people-led and people-owned scheme, all rolled into one.



BOOK REVIEW:

INCARNATIONS - INDIA IN 50 LIVES

SUNIL KHILNANI - ALLEN LANE An imprint of
PENGUIN BOOKS 2016 pp 636 Rs 999-00

Sunil Khilnani's *The Idea of India* published in 1997 was widely acclaimed for its incisive analysis of Indian democracy's 'unexpected achievements and unforgivable failures'. Almost two decades later the distinguished professor, presently Director of the India Institute at King's College, London, has come up with *Incarnations – India in 50 Lives*, a tome of 636 pages as against 263 of the earlier work. It is said on the blurb of the cover that 'Indian history remains a curiously unpeopled place' and *Incarnations* 'fills that

space'. In the words of the author himself: 'The essays in this book move headlong across 2,500 years of history, from the political and moral preoccupations of India's earliest historical personality, the Buddha, to the late twentieth-century capitalist imagination of the industrialist Dhirubhai Ambani. On the way, we meet kings, religious thinkers and freedom fighters, as well as poets, painters, mathematicians and radical social reformers'. The rationale for presenting such a comprehensive work is unequivocally stated by the distinguished author: 'A civilization able to produce a Mahavira, a Mirabai, a Malik Ambar, a Periyar, a Muhammad Iqbal and a Mohandas Gandhi is a place open to radical experiments with self-definition. It is particularly worth recalling that history and creative energy at a moment when some in India seek to transform the ferment of ideas over what India is and should be into a singular religious concoction'. The release of the book is well timed. The importance of such a balanced and meticulously researched work cannot be overstated. Khilnani's choice of fifty characters might appear surprising at first sight as some are obscure and a few unconnected with politics. Jawaharlal Nehru who figured so prominently in Khilnani's *Idea of India* does not find a place in the list. But the many references favourable, of course, to Nehru made in this work will surely embarrass, if not annoy, the growing tribe of Nehru's critics and the ruling NDA outfit.

The first two chapters are on the Buddha and Mahavira the founders of two great religions. The third on Panini focuses on Sanskrit 'a language of extraordinary precision'. Panini created 'a coded metalanguage borrowing the building blocks of Sanskrit'. His contribution was immense and innovative and according to Khilnani 'Panini's system is what is known as *generative grammar* in modern linguistics'. Sanskrit came to be known as the language of the divine. It is interesting to learn that Vikram Chandra a former computer programmer wrote a book about software and Sanskrit under the title *Geek Sublime: The Beauty of Code, the Code of Beauty*. Khilnani finds 'resonances between Panini's work and the way computer programmers operate'. Saying that Sanskrit's decline represents a serious break in

Too little brings stagnation, and too much brings chaos.

- Bertrand Russell

contacts with India's classical traditions. Khilnani ends the chapter thus: 'It's consoling to imagine it has a new purpose, helping to build a new cosmopolis, the global world of I.T.'

On Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, writes Khilnani " In the balancing act between liberty, security and prosperity, the *Arthashastra* places its weight behind the latter two." Kautilya's treatise 'eventually proved too radical in at least one respect: 'It showed no deference to Brahmanical conceptions of dharma, to religious ethics and moral duties'. Khilnani quotes Max Weber who thought that the radicalism of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* made *The Prince* of Machiavelli look 'harmless.' Kautilya, concludes Khilnani, "is the Mr Hyde lurking in every democratic Dr Jekyll." Ashoka transformed Buddhism into a world religion, 'transmitting its ethical vision across the subcontinent and the rest of Asia' for which he earned high praise from the later Buddhist writings as the 'monster of piety'. Stating that Ashoka's 'four lines' have become the currency – literally and metaphorically the currency of every Indian life. And his message of moderation and restraint remains in equal parts an admonition and an inspiration to Indians today, sums up the author. Akbar, writes Khilnani, continues to be a historical anchor for Indian liberals, some kind of secular precursor in the global context of his times. Rammohun Roy the renowned social reformer ill-treated his mother, legally and socially, to such an extent over property dispute that she had to sweep temple floors in her last years for her livelihood.

Dara Shikou, the "ill-fated Mughal Prince translated the Upanishads and other Sanskrit works 'that became a vital link not only between Hinduism and Islam but also between India and the West'. India, according to the author, might have experienced an intellectual renaissance 'had Dara's type of cultural inquisitiveness endured'. The chapters on Guru Nanak, Kabir, Jyotirao Phule and Periyar, 'Sniper of Sacred Cows', like that on Basava unveil their revolutionary ideas against orthodoxy and superstitions and their faith 'in the intrinsic value of people who happened to be born poor'. On the adivasi Birsa Munda of the Chotanagpur region Khilnani writes movingly. It is a touching portrayal of the plight of the tribal people

exploited by everyone including the British government which captured the fleeing twenty five year old Birsa Munda and put him in jail where he died in March 1900.

The chapter on Gandhi begins with Gandhinagar, the capital of Gujarat 'named after the region's most famous son Mohandas Gandhi, the Mahatma'. Mahatma Gandhi, writes Khilnani, 'didn't renounce politics, he redefined it. He never saw himself as a model. He saw himself as an incitement. His entire life was an argument – or, rather, a series of arguments – with the world'. The author recalls how some years ago he happened to watch a film there about the plot to kill Gandhi. 'As the screen assassin pumped bullets into Gandhi's body, the audience erupted into wild applause and cheers'. "Protect me from my friends, flatterers and followers, Gandhi once said. But these days he has as many foes, especially in India. Hindu right-wingers, whose glee I heard that evening in the city that carries his name, despise him as an appeaser of Muslims, and blame him for India's Partition. Others regret his induction of Hindu rhetoric and symbols into Indian nationalism, revile him for his refusal to disavow caste, believe he betrayed the laboring classes, and are appalled at his views on women", writes the author.

B.R.Ambedkar's drafting of the Constitution observes the author, 'marked not the end of a story but the beginning of a history – involving the pursuit of a still out of reach democratic equality. In May 2015, a young man visiting a small town in Maharashtra was beaten to death on receiving a call on his mobile. Other villagers set upon him when they heard his ringtone: a song praising Ambedkar. Thousands of stories of such violence fill the decades between 1950 and the present'.

Commending Raj Kapoor's skill in creating populist films Khilnani narrates how the left leaning Raj Kapoor had a legion of admirers in India and abroad. As shown in many of Kapoor's films 'the faults of the poor spring from the wrongs of the rich'. A line from a character in Raj Kapoor's film *Awara* says it all: 'Capitalist, black marketers, profiteers and moneylenders: Who are they? All thieves like me'.

Unselfishness is more paying; only people have not the patience to practise it.

- Swami Vivekananda

Raj Kapoor's legacy of 'the deft command of romance endures'. A striking full page picture of Satyajit Ray focusing on a scene as director appears on page 546. Khilnani describes him as 'the first truly modern film maker we have, though his career in India might not have continued past its first few films had he not been celebrated in the West'. Ray, writes the author, was 'an unusual modernist, India's most internationally respected film maker'.

Indira Gandhi, 'after Margaret Thatcher, was the most powerful woman of the twentieth-century' writes Khilnani. 'To the intelligentsia, there is no political figure in independent India more loathed. She's seen as malevolent, megalomaniacal and responsible – to use Salman Rushdie's line about her betrayal of India's founding ideals – for 'the smashing, the pulverizing, the irreversible discombobulation of the children of midnight'. However, her policies, particularly on the economy, had supporters (J.R.D.Tata, then chairman of the Tata business empire, found them 'refreshingly pragmatic and result-oriented')'. Khilnani, certainly not an admirer of Indira Gandhi, thinks that her political legacy was to 'imprint on the political imagination of Indians the vital necessity of democracy'.

No less interesting are the other portrayals in this fascinating work such as Malik Ambar 'a gifted seventeenth-century Abyssinian slave turned Deccan warrior king' and Chidambaram Pillai a Tamil nationalist 'who took on the steamship might of the

British Empire'. The charge that Indians were indifferent to their history and were inept at independent thinking 'because of their attachment to doll-like gods and caste rituals', must have provoked Sunil Khilnani to take up the challenge of writing such a superbly researched and eminently readable work. It is a story of India's evolution from ancient times to the age of information technology and the renowned professor takes the readers on an intellectually stimulating voyage that is both rewarding and thought-provoking.

A. Prasanna Kumar

Centre for Policy Studies records with profound grief the passing away of Shri Challa Sivasankaram on February 4, 2016 at the age of 87. A devotee of Sri Satya Sai Baba, Shri Sivasankaram wrote books and articles on Baba, published articles on all major religions including Hinduism, Christianity and Islam and on ethical values. The well known scholar was a regular contributor of articles to the Bulletin of Centre for Policy Studies. His last article titled *Pure Selfless Love* was published in the February 2, 2016 issue, two days before his demise. CPS conveys its condolences to the members of the bereaved family.

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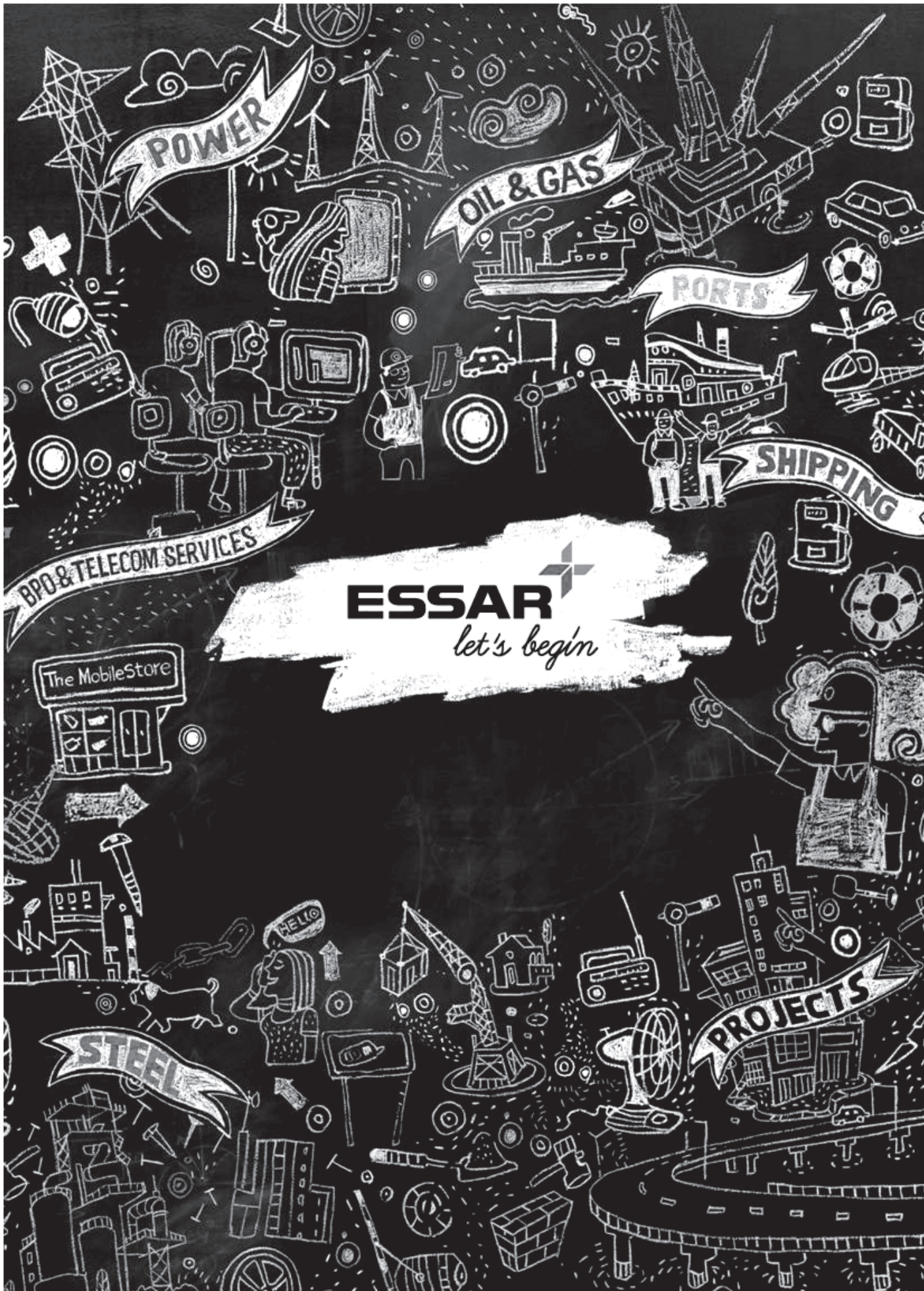
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