

## TIME &amp; TIDE

## FINE EXAMPLE

**G**LOBAL software giant Infosys has carved out an example worth emulating by every corporate house as a social responsibility. It is heartening to note that the management of the software giant thought it its fundamental responsibility to safeguard nature and dedicate its efforts to conservation of environment. Out of this commitment to national cause the company has turned its sprawling 360-acre campus into a vast rain forest. It is apparent that much effort must have gone into raising this kind of green cover by way of man, material and money. But the company has seen to it that its dream project takes shape and be of use to the community in its vicinity. Very few such examples are available. Companies acquire vast tracks of lands for their projects. Mostly, these lands are either agricultural fields or have some kind of vegetation. What replaces them is a concrete jungle with very little concern for environment. If all corporate houses emulate the example of Infosys, vast lands under their possession could be turned into huge green cover.

## APT PUNISHMENT

**A**VERY interesting news report has come from Ahmedabad. In a first of its kind punitive action in the country, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation has fined a man for spitting pan masala at a public place. In this connection the corporation has put to good use the CCTV footage to pinpoint the delinquent person. Such punitive action can be extended to similar such civic offenses by citizens to remind them of their responsibility in keeping the environment clean. Soon after taking over as Prime Minister of the country five years ago, Mr. Narendra Modi had launched the 'Swachha Bharat' Abhiyan. While the idea caught the imagination of majority of people, leading to launching of campaigns all over the country, people still have not abandoned their dirty habits of spitting in public places and paying scant regard for cleanliness of their surroundings. This means that if citizens do not understand their responsibility civic administrations have to come down heavily on those defacing cities.



The Hitavada

They are slaves who dare not be  
In the right with two or three

Lowell

Nakshatra Shat-Taraka 08H 11M  
Moon Kumbh upto 28H.12M (Rajandekar Panchang)  
Paksha Chaitra Krishna Tithi Ekadashi 24H 14M  
Muslim Saban 24th Hijree 1440

## CHINA'S DESIRE

**A**SIGNIFICANT fact that cannot be missed by geopolitical analysts from the just-concluded 2nd Belt and Road Forum (BRF) in China was the selection of Pakistan Prime Minister Mr. Imran Khan as one of the only seven speakers who addressed the gathering of world leaders. Pakistan is a key partner in Chinese President Mr. Xi Jinping's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) that aims to join economies in Asia, Africa, Latin America, as well as Europe through road and sea routes. Pakistan is the host of the BRI's flagship project, the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), joining Xinjiang region in China with Gwadar port in Pakistan through rail, road and pipelines. It is now the principal vehicle of intensifying ties among the two 'all-weather friends'. Mr. Khan was specifically chosen to air potential dangers to the CPEC which implicitly needs India's comprehension and cooperation.

The frozen ties between India and Pakistan after the Pulwama terror attack by Jaish-e-Mohammad suicide bomber and a robust retaliation by the Indian Air Force on the JeM terror camps in Balakot in Pakistan have created an uneasy silence among the two neighbours. With bilateral ties between the two nations hitting nadir and no clear window in sight to resume dialogue between the political communities, an anxious Pakistan is seeking external help to break ice between Islamabad and New Delhi. Changing geopolitical equations after the rising clout of India among international fora have left Pakistan with clutching to China for a breakthrough, a hope expressed by Mr. Jinping during his meeting with Mr. Khan on the situation in South Asia.

China's suggestion of improving Indo-Pak relations by meeting each other halfway is a self-defensive desire emanating out of the perils of further flare-ups between the neighbours but it is difficult to translate into reality without Beijing's concrete steps to rein in its rogue partner. Precious little has been initiated in that direction by the Chinese leadership, starting from blocking a move to list JeM chief Masood Azhar as a global terrorist, to pumping in funds without clarity on its use by Mr. Khan's government. If China is serious about making the traditional neighbours come to the discussion table, then the onus is entirely on Beijing to walk the talk and bring parity in the situation.

At the moment, Chinese priorities are heavily skewed in Pakistan's favour, which has "tied itself to China with hoops of steel" as proposed by then Pakistan foreign secretary Saidu Khan Dehlavi in 1962. Beijing has remained the only benefactor for Islamabad after the drastic cut in military aid by the United States and imposition of sanctions on granting visa to Pakistanis. The US action has been consistent under the leadership of President Mr. Donald Trump. The US President is of a firm view that Pakistan's explicit support to terror groups operating out of its soil has not ceased despite threats of crippling sanctions by terror watch groups.

The latest misadventure by JeM was met with a tremendous response from the Indian Government that neither Islamabad nor the military bosses in Rawalpindi could surmise. India's action in Balakot inside Pakistan evoked support from the world community and a guarded but stoic response from China. It was a major statement for New Delhi's foreign policy, cultivated dexterously through suave diplomacy. It also resulted in swift release of India's captured pilot Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman within hours by Pakistan as a "gesture of peace".

The near-isolation by world community has left Pakistan not other recourse than to turn to China for mediation. Amenable ties between India and Pakistan are extremely essential for China's economic ambitions through the BRI. India's position on Mr. Jinping's desire must be based on the steps China takes with regards to clipping Pakistan's tacit support to terrorism.

BY NILANJAN BANIK AND G. VENKAT RAMAN

## INFORMED CHOICE

**A**S SOCIAL scientists, we are trained to assume every individual is smart. He takes all available information into account to maximise his objectives. For a consumer, the objective is to maximise benefit from consuming goods and services, for business, it is to maximise profits, for politicians, it is to win elections, and for the voters: Oh well, let's see.

Quick research on democratic elections provides ample evidence regarding the relevance of economic issues in determining electoral outcomes. For instance, in the US elections, research shows that there is a clear relationship between economic conditions and how the voters vote. Seth Masket, an eminent political scientist argues how growth in real disposable income per capita is a relevant indicator, favouring the incumbent.

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Others have attributed level of education as an important factor allowing voters to make an informed decision. This is particularly relevant for India, as it is very easy to sway voter's choice, using falsifying information through social media such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp. With two-thirds of India's 900 million voters connected through the Internet and with an easier availability of personal information, it is easy to undertake a demographic profiling based on household characteristics, namely, gender, age, religion/caste, and geography (proxies for cultural differences in a vast country like India) thereby influencing the voting choice.

If past voting patterns are any indication then national security narrative post-Pulwama may not work. In the past, Post-Kargil standoff, led to a political backlash against 'India Shining' as the perception was the then NDA-Government was focusing too much on growth giving emphasis to industry and services sector,

while neglecting the social/agrarian sector. Even post-Bangladesh 1971 war - which also saw India catapulted into the global arena through a host of events such as Pokhran 1 and launching of first unmanned earth satellite Aryabhata - did not favour the incumbent Congress Government which was defeated during the 1977 election.

Notwithstanding the national security pitch, voters' electoral choices have been primarily determined by their perception of who can deliver the basic 'roti, kapda aur makan,' and the newfound woe about 'naukri' and 'religion'.

Voters' preference changes depending on the place of their stay. For instance, a typical voter in Mumbai or in Delhi is more worried about factors affecting business.

Issues relating to GST, and ease of doing business, will gain currency over caste/religion. The case in point is the poor performance of Maharashtra Navnirman Sena during the 2014 State election. Other progressive cities like Chennai or Bengaluru will probably vote for local issues, for instance, water availability in Chennai, and a cleaner environment and less congested city for Bengaluru. Religion takes a backseat.

On the contrary, for some of the less progressive States with lower per-capita income, issues related to jobs and religion take a pivotal role. For instance, there is a growing sense of discontent among people in West Bengal that faulty land acquisition policy is a reason why jobs are not getting created. Anti-incumbent are also likely to exploit the perceived minority appeasement politics played by the ruling party in Bengal. By the same note, in Uttar Pradesh (UP) with a large section of the farming community who are also into livestock production may feel disgruntled for issues related to ban on cattle slaugh-

ter and timely payment made to sugarcane farmers. Rural distress has cost the BJP two States Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

Thanks to technology, voters are now more informed. They are more likely to appreciate good governance, job creation, and sustainable livelihood, rather than the short-term doles. As the case with Bihar demonstrates, the perception about improvement in governance, cleanliness, and State-level infrastructure are more likely to reward the incumbent. This is in contrast to the view that investing in infrastructure (Bijli, Sadak, Shyastha, and Pani) with far-reaching impact on sustainable development will reward any political party less than the reward associated targeted appeasement type social intervention such as delivering rice at Rs. 2 per kilogram.

The voting pattern associated with appeasement politics has its own pitfalls. When political parties from less progressive States sense the myopic behaviour of electorate and indulge in political mobilisation on populist lines, it leads to further downfall. This leads to trapping the State into underdevelopment and is not sustainable in the long-run.

In other words, though identity politics does play a critical role, it pays dividends provided weaved with economic factors. In 2020, the median age of India's population will be 29 years, making it the youngest population in the world. For these new-age voters, what matters is good governance, better health, and skills that will make them employable with an opportunity to move away from a low-productive agriculture sector to a higher productive industry and services sector.

(IPAA)  
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## Two trends in society

**L**IFE today has become very fast, where everyone is continuously running around to get hold of something that they really don't know. Each one of us is in a hurry to achieve something or the other. Every person is busy competing with the others and win over the world. But when we actually ask the person the ultimate goal, they are proceeding towards, majority get stuck up with the response.

It is because they actually don't know what they are marching for. It is now rightly said that the present age is the period of 'knowledge explosion.' The quantum of research, exploration and information, every year, is multiplying enormously so much so that it has now become an uphill task to keep full track of what new additions to knowledge have been made by all countries even in one single year. And, on top of all this, one finds that the rate of growth of scientific and technological know-how and 'the knowledge' in general is accelerating day by day and year by year.

Perhaps, this, in itself would not be too bad to cause any major worry. But what makes one

really feel alarmed is that there has been no parallel moral and spiritual growth of mankind. On the other hand, one clearly sees that there is a steep fall in standards of public and private morality.

The combination of these two factors poses a real threat to the welfare of mankind because while science and arts have placed in the hands of man enormous capabilities to do good or bad and have given him tremendous power to

## MIDDLE SPACE

BY BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJJI

make or mar the future of the globe, the will to be good and to do good has not been strengthened and the humane side of man's personality has not been developed.

The real danger, therefore, comes from the fact that, in the absence of neglect of human values, man can now work as a monster, capable of bringing doom and destruction on one and all like Bhasmasura. Science and technol-

ogy without a touch of spirituality have made man proud of his powers as a result of which he has become advanced in technical knowledge, but poor in ethics and values. Have these two trends, namely explosion of knowledge and erosion of values, any special meaning for us? Do they reflect on the present world condition and also give a true forecast of the future? Yes, they do!

In our blind race to achieve more and more, we have forgotten a fact that the pride of man will lead him to a situation of growing conflict and clash, leading ultimately to a major catastrophe. And the absence of values will invoke God to reinvigorate mankind with His divine knowledge. Both these are already taking the world to their logical ends.

The old order is heading for a bang and the new order i.e. the Golden Age of mankind is being firmly re-established even though in an incognito way. This is the hidden truth behind the two trends whether one realises it or not. So, let us see the signs of time and work and co-operate for a change so as to build a better world.

## Every Man in his Humour | Letters to the Editor

## Philosopher PM

Sir,

Prime Minister Mr. Modi's image has day by day become more of a philosopher. His recent interviews have proved that he is a great thinker as well as a Prime Minister. His devotion to the Himalayas during his youth, his sacrifice of worldly affairs, his reluctance for acquiring wealth, his experience as CM and PM, his touring the world, interactions with world leaders, receiving suggestions from every level of people within the country, having read a lot of great books and many other factors have instilled a great modern human philosophy in him. He says that we should have a person in our life with whom we could share our grief and happiness in loneliness, who in turn will spontaneously show us the right path which can turn the course of our life.

On one occasion, he has said that he overlooks the caste system and has a dream of making everybody in the society forward. None of the leaders has such a great philosophy or his vision. He is the only PM who urges the children of our country to keep drinking water on their roof for birds in summer. He has advised children to wash their hands before eating. He is inspired by Vivekananda's philosophy of acceptance of both, good and evil. Incidentally, his name has a resemblance with Swami Vivekananda's name "Narendra."

Abinash Kumar Das, Chandarpur

## Unsubstantiated claim

Sir,

This refers to news 'After Shatrughan Sinha, Majeed Memon lauds Jinnah' (April 29). The 2019 Lok Sabha election campaign has already seen an all time low. To this sorry state of affairs, there has been unwarranted entry of Jinnah. In a democratic electoral process, the ruling party is expected to showcase their achievements of last five years while the Opposition has the task at hand to dig a hole in it, based on facts, on the claims made by Treasury benches.

This does not seem to be the case in the instant election. This in turn may witness disenchantment in the voters as political parties are wasting time and energy on non-issues which will have no bearing on the day to day problems faced by common citizens. The moderate turnout in first three phases of this election should be the cause of concern to everybody. However, at present, political parties continue to neglect real issues. There is a danger of voters further keeping themselves away from the election process. After Shatrughan Sinha's 'slip of tongue,' NCP leader Majeed Memon said that Jinnah made a big contribution in freedom struggle. Fact of the matter is, Jinnah is no longer relevant for present day Pakistan. Why by force make him relevant here? As regards Jinnah's claimed big contribution to the freedom struggle, it would be appropriate to quote the observations of his one time friend and former Foreign Minister of India late M.C. Chhagla. He said, "As I have said before, Jinnah had no personal or human side to his character. He did not believe in friendship or human contacts. He was highly egocentric, interested only in himself and in politics only to the extent that it furthered his own personal ambition and gave him a sense of grandeur."

Satish B. Marathe, Nagpur

## ATTENTION

Readers please note the change in e-mail address. The Hitavada welcomes Middles (upto 550 words), letters for this page, and contributions to other sections also by e-mail at: [maindesk@thehitavada.com](mailto:maindesk@thehitavada.com); [editor@thehitavada.com](mailto:editor@thehitavada.com). The editors may rephrase letters for clarity of thought and constraints of space.

## Inspiration

**E**NFORCING discipline in one part of your life encourages discipline in all parts of your life. Abandoning discipline in just one little area will degrade your discipline in every area. Discipline is made up of actions, yet discipline also is an attitude, a way of approaching life. That's why even the smallest increase or decrease in discipline can lead to sizable results. It's tempting to let the little things slide, just this once. Yet inevitably that leads you to compromise the bigger things, and not just this once but every time.

By the same measure, it's easy to add a small, new disciplined behavior to your life. When you do, you'll experience the increased benefits of discipline being carried into other parts of your life. Discipline enables you to take control of your affairs, to have more positive influence in your world. The more you experience discipline, the more you're inspired to practice it. What small, disciplined regimen can you bestow upon yourself right now? Embrace new opportunities to discipline yourself, and your results will increasingly reflect your desires. There is a reason why you are here to live through this one-of-a-kind day. Do you know what that reason could be? Yes, in some way, somehow, somewhere you know. And the more you can connect with that reason, the more beautiful, fulfilling and meaningful this day will be.

Perhaps you have arrived at this point in order to learn something new and valuable. Perhaps you are here today to lend a hand or to give a lift to someone who would otherwise have no one else.