

Editorial

Perplexity trends

In an effort to keep up with the increasing pace of development and advancement in every sphere, our lives are being forced to conform and keep pace with these progressions.

With this hastened pace of existence, an inevitable change is taking place- what is now being accepted as the "quick-fix" mantra or instant gratification- instant food, instant drink, instant relationships and instant solutions. Such changes, borne out of necessity rather than a fad, bring with it various radical changes that cater to the needs and conveniences, most remarkable being the spawning of a whole new sector of packaged foods and drinks that can be used in an instant.

The increasing incidences of adulterated packaged foods and drinks being detected and reported, with the concerned Government officials seemingly waking up from their long slumber is a welcome and positive sign of the increasing awareness of the general public of the realities facing our society at present. The unanimous condemnations and protests, while understandable and desirable, could also spell a premature demise of a nascent industrial movement in the State. We should spare a moment to delve deeper into the actual trials and tribulations that a few of our pioneering people from the State are facing to bring about a revolution of sorts by fighting against almost insurmountable odds to turn their dreams into reality. Taking the trodden path has always been fraught with dangers and uncertainties, especially in a State like ours where only negativity and pessimism thrives, not to mention the teeming parasites lurking in the shadows, waiting for any vulnerabilities and weaknesses of fellow beings to take advantage of.

The Government should take proactive steps and help out these struggling start-ups to flourish and show the way to an industrialized society instead of taking a negative and punitive stand. It would be stating the obvious to mention the fact that the laws, measures, plans and steps of the Government at present is not conducive for the growth of industry- from investment and financing problems to the utter absence of support and encouragement which is vital for a sustainable and viable industrial atmosphere.

Bottomline- the Government and the public should make constructive criticisms, suggestions and extend a helping hand to the struggling industrial pioneers of this State if we are to usher in an era of industrial growth and prosperity.

E-waste management: Where impossibility is defied

BY-NEILANGAMGANGMEI

Agartala, September 12, 2017: Days are not far. A critical approach on the environment will be an inseparable part for the school goers. Courtesy Karo Sambhav school programme. It, precisely, aims at creating awareness on critical environmental issues e.g. Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) which will engage the academic fraternity in keeping the environment clean and fresh.

Organizers say the e-waste awareness initiatives, first of its kind across the country comprise strategies like circular economy, and inspiring the students and teachers alike to take actions in their daily lives. They say, "We have designed a curriculum which enables development of teacher's competence and empowers them to achieve the above mentioned goals."

For academic year 2017-18, the programme shall engage more than 1200 schools across the country in collaboration with the State Education Departments, and the State Pollution Control Boards which will enable them to boost the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan', 'Digital India', and 'Smart Cities'. The programme is expected to have a huge impact on the students,

their peers, parents, relatives, and communities. This is required to critically evaluate and consider the environmental impact of existing lifestyles, and move towards a creation of a circular economy.

Apart from it, those behind the initiatives believe that the programme encourages the students to lead a sustainable lifestyle, and inspires them to become the catalysts of change since the name itself suggests, Karo Sambhav!! said an organizer. They say that the entire program comprise three phases divided over a period of 4 months. In the initial phase, the teachers will be given a training on the specially designed toolkit for the purpose which comprises 6 exercises based on Circular Economy, Understanding Waste, Design for environment, E-waste introduction and Collection, Petitions and Potential career options in the field of Environment.

Then, the teachers will be working in their schools with the students on various activities, community projects, practical field-work.

The program will end with a huge celebration after the end of the efforts and the achievements of various schools, teachers, and students.

By: V.Srinivas

India's fight against corruption is led by a robust and time tested institutional and legislative framework including the Prevention of Corruption Act, an independent Central Vigilance Commission, the Comptroller and Auditor General, the Judges (Inquiry) Act, the Lok Pal and Lok Ayukta Act 2013, Whistle Blowers Protection Act 2011, Prevention of Money Laundering Act, Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act which cover a number of areas of criminalization and bribery. All civil servants are mandatorily required to declare their assets on an annual basis. The Elected Representatives are required to declare their assets every election cycle.

India's "zero tolerance to corruption" approach, as well as "minimum government and maximum governance" approach resulted in simplification of the governance model in recent years. Some of the steps included abolition of the system of attestation/ authentication by Government servants for submission of certificates, abolition of personal interviews for recruitments to lower level posts and weeding out inefficient public servants and those of doubtful integrity above the age of 50 years, prematurely. Further the Government demonetized high value currency to eliminate black money and corruption. A special investigation team was constituted to fight black money. Government also conducted online auctions of coal blocks. Cooperation sought international cooperation in G-20 meetings on ending tax havens in Europe and other countries. In bilateral meetings with Swiss authorities India has said combating the menace of black money and tax

Combating Corruption

evasion was a "shared priority" for both the countries.

In a recent visit to Jharkhand, the Prime Minister gave away a few smart phones to *sakhi mandals* (self help groups) in Jharkhand and said he was surprised by the answers he got from the villagers about the usages of smart phones. India's focus on "making government smarter" has been at the forefront of the Nation's Fight against Corruption. The same quantum of subsidy could benefit could be far more efficiently spent by a "Smarter Governance Model" than in a manual system.

The Jan Dhan Yojana provided universal and clear access to banking accounts with overdraft facility. In 2016, the Aadhar Act was promulgated to ensure targeted delivery of financial and other subsidies, benefits and services. The Act provided for an efficient, transparent and targeted delivery of subsidies to individuals, through assigning aadhar identification numbers. The third major step initiated by the Government was the introduction of BHIM (Bharat Interface for Money) which is a mobile application developed by National Payments Corporation of India. The BHIM application facilitates e-payments directly through banks and can be used on all mobile devices. Collectively the Jan Dhan Yojana- the Aadhar Act and the BHIM Application have provided for a smart government where subsidy flows reach the beneficiary in a timely and effective manner.

The Government has sought to promote preventive vigilance through the Central Vigilance Commission. Several preventive vigilance measures have been introduced by the CVC. Measures like Government E-Market (GEM)

have helped improve the accountability and integrity in public procurement. The Commission has sought to promote ethics through education of students and youth, observance of vigilance awareness weeks, process simplification to reduce discretion and interface with public servants, focus on training and skill development and awarding exemplary punishment in all cases of proven misconduct to create deterrence. The CVC has sought to create a people's movement against corruption through an e-pledge to be voluntarily taken by the citizens and organizations.

Further the Government has sought to strengthen the auditing and accounting processes. Some of the big changes introduced in financial governance are amalgamation of the Railways and General budgets, the merger of plan and non-plan expenditures, opening up of a number of sectors for foreign direct investment and the introduction of Goods and Services Tax. Looking at the enormity of the flow of funds to urban and rural local bodies, the C& AG has identified their audit as a critical area. The C& AG has also focused on the large volumes of digital information emerging from increasing automation of tax filing, assessment and recovery procedures.

There have been significant efforts made to promote transparency in Government. The Right to Information (RTI) Act is a rights based law that has created a durable stake for citizens in the administration of the Nation. The RTI Act has led to improvements in governance. By sharing information, the citizens have become part of the decision

making process, which leads to creation of trust between citizens and Government. The Prevention of Corruption Act is an Act to consolidate the law relating to the prevention of corruption. The law provides for punishments for taking gratification other than legal remuneration in respect of official acts. The investigative powers have been given to the CBI and State Police Authorities. Government has said that accountability standards for public servants have to be kept at realistic levels so that officers do not hesitate in taking honest decisions. In order to give statutory protection to whistle blowers in the country, Government made amendments to the Whistle Blowers Act in 2015. The amendments addressed concerns relating to national security and strengthened the safeguards against disclosures, which may prejudicially affect the sovereignty and integrity of the country. Further the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act, 1988 was amended to empower the Income Tax authorities to attach and confiscate benami properties. Besides, if a person is found guilty of offence of benami transaction by the competent court, he shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment and shall also be liable to fine. Several benami transactions have been identified since the coming into effect of the amended law.

To conclude, it may be said that India continues the Fight against Corruption and Black Money. These efforts led by the focus on smart governance are yielding positive results.

V.Srinivas is an IAS officer of 1989 batch, and is currently posted as Chairman Rajasthan Tax Board with additional charge of Chairman Board of Revenue for Rajasthan. Views expressed in the article are authors' personal.

National & International News

Rahul Gandhi visits solar research center in Silicon Valley

PTI Washington, Sep 13: Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi has visited a research centre in California and interacted with scientists to understand the utility of solar power for India. Gandhi, 47, spent several hours at

Sun Power and sought information on its advantages and disadvantages. "Idea (behind visiting the center) was to really understand implications (of solar system) in India," senior Congress leader Sam Pitroda, who accompanied Gandhi,

said after his visit to Sun Power's research center in the Silicon Valley. After his visit to the solar research center, Gandhi flew to Los Angeles. He is scheduled to interact with members of the think-tank

community and local leaders there. A day earlier, Gandhi visited the Tesla factory in Fremont in California. "To me, Rahul Gandhi is not just India's leader, he is a global leader. Today there is a vacuum of global leadership," Pitroda said.

Jammu-Srinagar highway reopens after two days for LMVs

PTI Jammu, Sep 13: The 300-km Jammu-Srinagar national highway today reopened for light motor vehicles (LMVs) after being blocked for two days following massive landslides, a traffic official

said. "Lighter vehicles have now been allowed to move from Nagrota towards Srinagar between 5 am to 10 am and from Ledorva to Qazigund between 10 am to 3 pm. Commuters have been directed to

cross Jawahar Tunnel, which connects Jammu to Kashmir, by 3 pm," the official said. The highway, the lone all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country, was closed for vehicular traffic on September 11

after a massive landslide at Morh Passi in Udhampur district damaged a bridge and blocked the road. Officials have been directed to ensure that vehicles are not parked in any landslide or vulnerable zones under any circumstances.

Myanmar's Suu Kyi to skip UN General Assembly amid Rohingya crisis

Reuters Yangon, Sept. 13: Myanmar's national leader Aung San Suu Kyi, facing outrage over ethnic violence that has forced about 370,000 Rohingya Muslims to flee to Bangladesh, will not attend the upcoming UN General Assembly session in New York, a party spokesman said on Wednesday. The crisis over the security forces' fierce response to a series of Rohingya militant attacks is the biggest problem Suu Kyi has faced since becoming Myanmar's leader last year. Critics have called for Suu Kyi to be stripped of her Nobel peace prize for failing to do more to halt the strife.

In her first address to the UN General Assembly as national leader in September last year, Suu Kyi defended her government's efforts to resolve the crisis over treatment of the Muslim minority. This year, her party spokesman said she would not be attending, although he said he was unsure why. "She's never afraid of facing criticism or confronting problems.

Perhaps she's got more pressing matters here to deal with," Aung Shin, the spokesman, told Reuters. International pressure has been growing on Myanmar to end the violence in the western state of Rakhine that began on Aug. 25 when Rohingya militants attacked about 30 police posts and an army camp. The attacks triggered a sweeping military counter-offensive that refugees say is aimed at pushing Rohingya out of Myanmar. Reports from refugees and rights groups paint a picture of widespread attacks on Rohingya villages in the north of Rakhine by the security forces and ethnic Rakhine Buddhists, who have put numerous Muslim villages to the torch.

But Myanmar authorities have denied that the security forces, or Buddhist civilians, have been setting the fires, instead blaming the insurgents. Nearly 30,000 Buddhist villagers have also been displaced, they say. The Trump administration has called for protection of civilians, and

Bangladesh says all of the refugees will have to go home and it has called for safe zones to be created in Myanmar to enable them to do so. But China, which competes with the United States for influence in the Southeast Asian nation, said on Tuesday it backed Myanmar's efforts to safeguard "development and stability". The military, which ruled with an iron fist for almost 50 years until it began a transition to democracy in 2011, retains important political powers and is in full

control of security. Suu Kyi has no say over those matters. The UN Security Council is to meet on Wednesday behind closed doors for the second time since the latest crisis erupted. British UN Ambassador Matthew Rycroft said he hoped there would be a public statement agreed by the council. However, rights groups denounced the 15-member council for not holding a public meeting. Diplomats have said China and Russia would likely object to such a move and protect Myanmar if there was any push for council action to try and end the crisis.

Warm morning in city

PTI New Delhi, Sep 13: Delhiites today woke up to a warm morning with the minimum temperature settling at 27 degrees Celsius, two notches above the season's average. According to the MeT department, humidity level recorded at 8.30 am was 75 per cent.

The weatherman has predicted partly cloudy sky later in the day. "The maximum temperature is expected to hover around 36 degrees Celsius," an official of the department said. Yesterday, the minimum temperature recorded was 25.8 degrees Celsius while the maximum temperature settled at 35.5 degrees Celsius.

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