

*If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail.*  
Abraham Maslow

## Step in the right direction

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at Surat earlier this week that the Government was contemplating introducing a legislation that would make it obligatory for doctors to write only generic names of medicines and that too in a clear and legible form. The current annual turnover of the Indian drugs industry is estimated to be over \$14 billion. The same medicine (generic name) having the same quality and the same efficacy is sold under different names (brand names) manufactured and marketed by different companies. It is the price of the same medicine which varies, from the very cheap to the very costly. The giant drug companies, often multinationals, have an advantage over their less fortunate competitors. The 'unholy trinity' of the manufacturers, their widespread string of salesmen (who call themselves 'medical representatives') and the 'gifts' liberally given by the manufacturers to the prescribing physicians always keeps the patient or his relatives at the receiving end. They have to buy what the doctor prescribes and what the doctor prescribes is dictated by the drug manufacturers.

The Prime Minister's announcement was like stirring the proverbial hornets' nest. Associations of drug manufacturers, organizations of doctors - all are up against the policy decision announced (not yet implemented) by the Prime Minister. Some say the choice of medicines in the proposed system will be shifted from doctors to chemists, not patients. As if now it is the patients who choose their medicines. In fact in the proposed new system it is the patients who will, for the first time, be able to choose their medicines. How? Well, the doctor prescribes a medicine by its generic name. The patient goes to the pharmacy and says: "Tell me how many medicines of this generic name made by different companies and sold at different prices do you have?" The pharmacist tells him and he makes his choice, depending either on the price or on the name of the company the patient trusts.

Already, dark warnings are being given that, making a tenuous difference between a 'safe and effective' medicine with a brand name and a 'similar' which may be neither safe nor effective, under the new prescription regime the chemists will be able to 'substitute' products of different manufacturers. 'Substitute'? What does it mean? Substituting which drug by another? And why should the patient (or his relatives) be supposed to be ignorant as not to distinguish the difference. The Prime Minister has taken a long overdue step in the right direction. He should stand firm and not allow the powerful drugs lobby to undo his decision by high-decibel anti-propaganda.

# Restraint should be the watchword for CPM

## REFLEX ACTION

P. Sreekumaran

It is gratifying to note that the unfortunate recurrence of the war of words between the CPM and the CPI has been halted with the call for restraint by both the CPM state secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan and his CPI counterpart Kanam Rajendran.

Kodiyeri's offer of talks to sort out the differences has been welcomed by Kanam. That is how it should be. What had led to the verbal spat was the rushing to the press by both sides instead of discussing the contentious issues at the appropriate forums like the LDF Coordination Committee. It goes without saying that opening air of differences provides the opposition with a powerful weapon to belabour the LDF Government. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that both the CPI and the CPM should avoid a washing of the dirty linen in public. Being the biggest partner in the coalition, the CPM has a greater responsibility in this regard. In his press conference to rebut Kanam's contentions, Kodiyeri has rightly stressed the need for avoiding public criticism of Government's policies and programmes. Allies should avoid the tendency to do so, emphasized Kodiyeri. But the Government has an equal if not greater responsibility to ensure that it does nothing by way of word or deed that provides ammunition to the Opposition. Kanam in his reply to Kodiyeri said that all that the CPI did was to strengthen the LDF Government and not to weaken it. He has a point. When the LDF Government goes against its declared policies, it is the duty of the allies to point out the lapses. And the CPI would continue to do that, Kanam averred, and rightly so. But care should be taken to see that there is no public exchange of hot words between the two principal LDF allies. It is also true that

Kodiyeri's reply to Kanam bristles with contradictions. On the one hand, he says that allies should not provide sticks to the opposition to beat the government with. But when the government does something wrong, the allies cannot remain silent spectators. Kodiyeri must realize this unless it is his contention that allies should remain tight-lipped even in the face of clear cases of wrong doing. Another point to be noted is that while Kodiyeri doled out dollops of advice to the CPI, he failed to pull up the CPM leaders who provoked the latest round of mutual criticism. It was the intemperate outbursts from CPM leaders EP Jayaraman and Power Minister MM Mami against Kanam and Revenue Minister Chandrashekhara respectively that triggered the latest verbal fireworks. These loose CPM cannons must be firmly kept on leash. Otherwise, all the efforts being made to restore normalcy and ensure smooth sailing of the LDF Government would be rendered futile.

In this regard, the central leaderships of both the parties have a big role to play. The central leaders must make sure that there is no open airing of mutual criticism any more. If necessary, a meeting should be held with the state leaders to enforce the 'ceasefire' strictly. Last but not the least, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in particular and the CPM in

general must change forthwith their style of functioning. It is the CM's autocratic style of doing things and proclivity to make ill-thought-out remarks and statements which had raised the hackles of the allies, particularly the CPI.

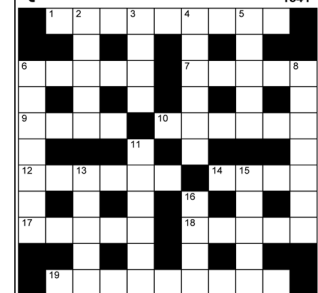
Particular mention must be made of the manner in which the police department, under the CM's direct control, is being handled. To say that the handling of the police department has been an unmitigated disaster is only to state the obvious. The glaring and inexcusable failure to restrain the police was evident in the way in which the police treated the attempt to stage a peaceful dharna by Jishnu's mother and his family members. The brutal way in which she was removed evoked criticism even from within the CPM. But the CM would hear none of it. He came out with an utterly ridiculous statement that the government is fully behind the Jishnu family. In the same breath, he defended the police excesses on the family when it tried to stage a sit in front of the DCP's office! Such double standards would only chip away at the base of goodwill which helped the LDF to assume power in the state.

The hallmark of a genuine politician is the possession of compassion and humility. Unfortunately, Pinarayi Vijayan has exposed himself to the charge of lacking both. This is an impression which he must erase at the earliest. That the police should run amok when a communist government is in power is unpardonable. The Government must act and act now - to ensure that the police become people-friendly and people-hostile. The LDF Government has been forewarned. It must read the writing on the wall and mend its ways. (IPA)



Princess Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge speaks with runners from heads together charity, ahead of the upcoming 2017 London marathon.

### QUICK CROSSWORD 1541



- Across**  
1. Bargain (9)  
6. Exile (5)  
7. Trunk (5)  
9. Spanish painter (4)  
10. Nebula (anag) (6)  
12. Gradually diminish (6)  
14. Pleased (4)  
17. Sailboat (5)  
18. Conscious (5)  
19. Be attorney for (9)
- Down**  
2. Vacate (5)  
3. Unctuous (4)  
4. Purpose (6)  
5. Ache (5)  
6. Enthusiastically (7)  
8. Late (7)  
11. Newspaper chief (8)  
13. Hidden store (5)  
15. Discover (5)  
16. A planet (4)

**Previous solution**  
Across: 1. Decision, 7. Charm, 8. Visor, 9. Exhale, 10. Stay, 12. Seam, 14. Domino, 17. Raise, 18. Stain, 19. Response.  
Down: 1. Death, 2. Comply, 3. Save, 4. Onset, 5. Accessory, 6. Greyhound, 11. Worsen, 13. Arise, 15. Inane, 16. Seep.

### SUDOKU: 1828

				8	4			7
					3	2	4	
		4	6			3	1	
3		7						9
			8		7			
6	2					7		4
	7	9			8	5		
	5	3	7					
8			1	5				

### Yesterday's Solution 1827

3	6	1	9	5	8	4	7	2
2	5	9	6	4	7	3	1	8
7	4	8	2	1	3	9	5	6
6	2	3	4	9	1	7	8	5
4	1	7	8	6	5	2	9	3
8	9	5	3	7	2	1	6	4
1	7	6	5	2	4	8	3	9
9	8	2	1	3	6	5	4	7
5	3	4	7	8	9	6	2	1

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# Mayawati, Akhilesh to take on BJP

## FOCUS

Deep Kapoor

BSP supremo Mayawati is now willing take support from Samajwadi Party and be part of the grand alliance to take on BJP after humiliating defeat in recent assembly elections. The initiative was taken by Samajwadi Party national president and former chief minister Akhilesh Yadav who had announced the willingness to take support from BSP even before the results were out.

As a part of the strategy, Akhilesh Yadav first consolidated his position in party as national president and changed the party constitution to extend the term of the office-bearers to five years. He is regularly meeting party leaders and workers not only from UP but from other states. He dissolved those units in UP who were responsible for sabotaging the poll prospects of official candidates. Akhilesh Yadav succeeded in getting his own nominee Ram

Govind Choudhry appointed as the Leader of the Opposition. However, Akhilesh Yadav's father and founder of the party Mulayam Singh Yadav and his younger brother Shrivardhan Yadav wanted Mohd Azam Khan as Leader of Opposition.

Mulayam Singh Yadav has also scoffed at Akhilesh's grand alliance talk, saying that the Samajwadi Party's drubbing in the UP Assembly polls should be a reason for no alliance in the future. "We are capable on our own", was the response from Netaji, who wasn't in the least touch with CPI national secretary Atul Anjan other important leaders from the Left parties. The biggest test before Akhilesh Yadav is to join hands with other like-minded parties to stop split of non-BJP votes in forthcoming by-elections for Assembly and Lok Sabha seats. If the grand alliance were formed before elections take place for the seats vacated by

UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath and his two deputy chief ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Dinesh Sharma it would be difficult for BJP to ensure victory for its candidates. It would be worth mentioning here that sitting chief minister TN Singh was defeated by Congress candidate Ram Krishna Dwivedi from Maniram in Gorakhpur district in the early seventies.

BSP supremo Mayawati's speech on Ambedkar Jayanti saying that she was willing to accept support from Samajwadi Party to stop BJP has made it clear that she was willing to join grand alliance for which initiative was taken by Akhilesh Yadav and

supported by Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee. The BSP, she said, had no reservations in taking the help of anti-BJP parties in its fight against EVM tampering and the BJP. "It is democracy which comes first... we have to keep democracy alive," she told her party workers in Lucknow on Friday. It may be mentioned here that Samajwadi Party and BSP had joined hands in 1983 to stop BJP and that combination was voted to power. Bihar former chief minister and RJD president Lalu Prasad Yadav has been saying for quite some time about unity of Samajwadi Party and Mayawati with other like-minded parties to stop BJP.

Although the normal practice is to give a new government six months time to settle down, but Akhilesh Yadav never leaves any opportunity to criticise Yogi government's decisions. (IPA)