

The difference between a moral man and a man of honor is that the latter regrets a discreditable act even when it has worked and he has not been caught.

H. L. Mencken

Extending CPEC to Afghanistan

Report from Beijing says China has proposed to Kabul to extend the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), to Afghanistan ostensibly to better combat terrorism. India cannot but view the Chinese overture to Kabul with concern. When China has repeatedly blocked India's as well as the United States' move to declare Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar a terrorist by the United Nations, its intention to oppose Islamic terrorism is hypocritical. The real intention is not to oppose the ISIS and the Taliban but to draw Afghanistan into China's orbit of influence and neutralize Indian influence on Afghanistan.

The extension of the CPEC to Afghanistan will also help China immensely to enter the former Central Asian countries which were part of the Soviet Union till its dissolution in 1991. The US is trying to extend its influence to these countries while Russia is trying to keep them under its influence as before. Through Afghanistan, China will get access to the mineral rich Central Asian countries and offer them aid to develop their resources. Kabul will be quietly told that the extension of the CPEC to Afghanistan will also benefit Afghanistan. It will be a direct challenge to India which is helping the development of Afghanistan as best as it can.

The CPEC has as much strategic importance as economic. As the CPEC would pass through the Pakistan-occupied part of Kashmir which New Delhi has always claimed to be an integral part of India under illegal occupation of Pakistan, the construction of the CPEC would make it more difficult for India to ever free itself from Pak occupation. By building the CPEC through the PoK, China wants to nullify India's claim on PoK. The more the number of countries that join the CPEC project, the better for China. India can only lodge protests and do nothing else. Even now terrorists are armed by and working from Pakistan are regularly killing army men and civilians in Jammu and Kashmir. Their camps are just across the LoC.

The obvious course for India would be to destroy these camps. Any other country—like Israel for instance—would have done it long ago. But India quails before the open threat of Pakistan that in any war against India, it would use its nuclear weapons. No government in New Delhi could tell Pakistan that we will call your nuclear bluff and destroy the terrorist bases quantum meme. Pakistan has taken full advantage of India's weakness and continues its proxy war against India through these so-called non-State actors. The CPEC, in these circumstances, is going to be a fait accompli.

No impact of Skill India Mission

REFLEX ACTION

Dr Gyan Pathak

Skill is an indispensable instrument for improving productivity and addressing labour-market imbalances. It has been recognized even before independence of India however, the efforts rendered towards skill development have been highly fragmented and record a very appalling figure of 4.69 per cent of workforce with formal vocational skills in contrast to 60 per cent to 90 per cent in the developed countries. In this backdrop a new Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) was formed in November, 2014. The National Policy on Skill Development (NPSD) notified in 2009 was 'fine-tuned' to meet the challenges... a new 'National Policy on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship' (NPSD&E) was released on 15th of July, 2015, and finally 'Skill India' mission was launched with a vision to ensure sustainable livelihoods for all citizens in the country with high speed and standard. However, what is going on in the ministry suggests that the mission may fail in achieving its real objective of skilling. At best it can distribute the required number of certificates and produce beautiful documents and presentations. It is worth mentioning here that India has 54 per cent of its total population below 25 years of age. Over the next 20 years the labour force in the industrialized world is expected to decline by 4 per cent, while in India it will increase by 32 per cent who are not sufficiently skilled and employable. A conservative estimated figure shows that 104.52 million fresh entrants to the workforce need to be skilled by 2022 in addition to the 298.25 million working persons needing skill training.

Under the National Skill Development Mission (NSDM) the ministry is supposed to provide the overall institutional framework to train a minimum of 300 million skilled people by the year 2022. The plan funding was started with an outlay of Rs. 1500 crore in April 2015 and Training and Apprenticeship verticals of Directorate General of Employment and Training (DGET under Ministry of Labour and Employment) was transferred to MSDE on 16th April, 2015, followed by transfer of National Institute of Small Business Development (NESBD) and Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), Guwahati on

2nd May, 2015. The Mission Directorate is supported by three institutions - National Skill Development Agency (NSDA), National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), and Directorate General of Training (DGT). Even though the MSDE is very much committed to achieve the goal within a limited timeframe by 2022, it lacks ground experience and professional maneuvering. Let's not forget that the skilling process is a different ballgame and it is totally a performers' world which needs to be handled by competent professionals duly supported by their on-site field experience. It is too short a time to attain both the quantitative and qualitative aspects. The foremost challenge for DGT is the functioning of 1335 ITIs under Craftsmen Training Scheme. There are 126 trades covered under CTS but actually only Fitter and Electrician trades occupy 80 per cent to 90 per cent of the total seats available in ITIs (i.e. about 17.5 lakh seats out of total 22 lakh seats are only for Fitter & Electrician trades and rest 4.5 lakh seats are for remaining 124 trades). Private ITIs are interested to run Fitter and Electrician trade only for the reason best known to them. It casts a doubt on very existence of ITIs which have dominated Indian skill development system for over six decades. MSDE needs to take strong measures immediately to address this grievous issue. ITIs' presence in the high employment sectors such as Construction, Apparel, Food Processing, Chemical and Hospitality etc is very much negligible and as such even today these sectors are mostly catered by workforce working in informal/unorganized sectors. Out of about 2209 Government ITIs, the building and equipment and other infrastructure are very old and mostly obsolete. The basic ambition for effective learning is awfully missing. It is evident that out of about existing 11,000

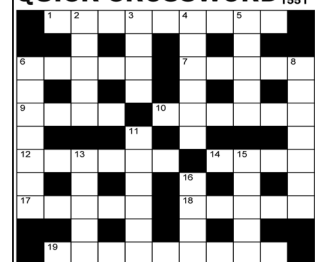
affiliated private ITIs, hardly 1500 to 1600 ITIs (about 15 per cent) are conducting regular training on day to day basis. Rests all (more than 80 to 90 per cent) are mostly functioning as certificate selling centres. Neither they have infrastructure nor any trainer and there is absolutely no monitoring from State / Central side. All India Trade Test (yearly twice) is another mockery under the supervision of highly corrupt racket. From mass copying to providing prepared job models from outside at the behest of the so call authorities are very common.

To overcome the challenges, more and more ISDS officers are to be recruited to work in the frontline administration, instead of engaging other services officers who do not possess technical expertise vis-à-vis industry experience to supervise the skill development process in the country. ISDS service needs to be extended to the State's training directorates also. In NSDA for core research and data analytic job, collaboration of core experts (from relevant occupations) with statistician and data analysts would probably fetch desirable outcome based on in-depth understanding with futuristic direction. ITI system for training under CTS requires complete overhauling and radical change. Cluster based Skill Training Institutes may be recommended to facilitate more on-job training under direct supervision of Master Craftsmen. Retired technical personnel from defence services (average age-35 to 40 years) may be roped in for ITI instructorship and NSDC training centres after giving them some induction training on Principle of teaching. Technical experts from market (Ustaads) irrespective of their qualification may be inducted in ITIs to supplement the dearth of technical expertise amongst the instructor. A special scheme should be formulated to pay them higher remuneration so as to attract them to provide practical training to the ITI / NSDC trainees. CII, FICCI and other leading industry associations are to be seriously involved for increasing the participation of private industries in apprenticeship training to facilitate engagement of more and more apprentices. (IPA)



Ananda Marga Pracarak Samgha take out a silent procession at Deshpriya Park to Bijan Setu to pay homage to the 17 Sanjayis and Sanjayis who were killed on April 30, 1982 in Kolkata on Sunday.

QUICK CROSSWORD



- Across**
1. Melted (9)
6. Tubes (5)
7. Brink (5)
9. Ballerina's skirt (4)
10. Riles (6)
12. Rounded up, mustered (6)
14. Supplication (4)
17. Cuban dance (5)
18. Villain (5)
19. Insect (9)
- Down**
2. Data fed into computer (5)
3. Winner's ribbon (4)
4. Amorous (6)
5. Spooky (5)
6. Large jug (7)
8. Leavens (anag) (7)
11. Comment (6)
13. Shakespearean lover (5)
15. Reasoned thinking (5)
16. Therefore (4)

Previous solution
Across: 1. Ancestor, 7. Niece, 8. Arrigo, 9. Inact, 10. Jeep, 12. Hawk, 14. Social, 17. Exile, 18. Gaffe, 19. Reporter.
Down: 1. Alert, 2. Clench, 3. Seam, 4. Olive, 5. Enlighten, 6. Compelled, 11. Sought, 13. White, 15. Infer, 16. Memo.

Tenuous unity bid of AIADMK factions

FOCUS

Kalyan Shankar

Can the two AIADMK factions reunite and continue to be relevant in Tamil Nadu? Almost seventy-five days after the split in the party, the AIADMK Amma (led by chief minister Edappadi Palaniswamy) and the AIADMK Puratchi Thalaivi Amma (led by former chief minister O. Panneerselvam who had revolted and split the party) have set up committees for merger talks. Even if the merger takes place after hard negotiations, can the party survive till the next elections? The unity move came after both the groups had realised that united they win and divided they sink. The EPS faction found that the Sasikala clan was becoming a liability. People were fed up after the income tax raids on the AIADMK minister Vijaya Bhaskar's house as well as the complaint that the Sasikala group was bribing the voters in the R.K. Nagar by elections which have now been countermanded. Their future is uncertain because Panneerselvam faction has asserted that the merger can take place only after the EPS faction dumps both the aunt and the nephew. Fearing that Dinakaran might stake claim for his chair, EPS is only too glad to go along. Interestingly,

neither Sasikala nor Dinakaran had put up any resistance about the ouster. Perhaps they treat this as a strategic retreat rather than a political option. Tamil Nadu is going through a political churning after the death of the AIADMK supremo Jayalalithaa in December. She is partly responsible for the present state of affairs as she had neither groomed nor named anyone as her successor. Her mentor MGR also did the same but Jayalalithaa who claimed his legacy was a charismatic leader. Even though the party split after MGR's death in 1987 and his wife Janaki took over, the Jayalalithaa faction emerged victorious winning 27 seats in the 1989 polls while Janaki won just two. Jaya had understood that to win the polls, she needed to mobilise the anti-DMK votes. Seeing the ground reality, Janaki left politics and Jaya was able to unite the two factions. In 2017, when the party split after the death of Jayalalithaa, the situation is entirely different. For one thing, there is no charismatic leader in the AIADMK in whose name the party can win the next elections and Panneerselvam is not Jayalalithaa. Jaya's companion Sasikala's bid to

take over the party had failed after the revolt of former chief minister Panneerselvam and the court verdict sending her to jail for four years. Thirdly, the money is with Sasikala who is in a Bengaluru jail and her plan to rule the party from the prison through her nephew Dinakaran has failed. He had allegedly attempted to bribe the Election Commission officials to secure the AIADMK symbol of two leaves. With Jayalalithaa dead and the two leaves symbol frozen, the two factions know it will be difficult to survive. The unity move came as an opportunity as well as a dilemma for both the factions. Though they may get cabinet berths, there is apprehension that they may be swamped by the EPS group. Also OPS faction would like to have some clarity about the ouster of the Sasikala clan. After all, his revolt is against Sasikala. As for EPS, this was an opportunity to get out of the clutches of the Sasikala clan. Once the Sasikala issue is settled, comes the question of

contain the Jallikattu agitation in January but it was with the full support of the Centre. He did not show any initiative when he was the chief minister three before. Neither OPS nor EPS can provide the kind of leadership needed to satisfy the party cadres who are used to MGR and Jayalalithaa. It will be difficult for the AIADMK to attract workers or voters with the aspirations of the young people changing. Whoever is the chief minister, he has to be on the right side of the Centre in view of the fragility of the party. OPS is said to have good relationship with Delhi and EPS is also trying to cultivate the BJP. While the BJP claims that it has no role in the unification of the AIADMK, it is clear that the BJP would like to deal with a united AIADMK minus Sasikala clan. The BJP would like to have the support of the AIADMK in Rajya Sabha where the party is in a minority for legislative measures and also for the upcoming presidential elections where the BJP led NDA needs about 25000 votes. For both factions of AIADMK, the task of restoring unity at first and then to maintain it till the next elections, is quite tough. (IPA)

SUDOKU: 1838

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

Yesterday's Solution 1837

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

DISCLAIMER

The views in the articles published here are absolutely the views of the author and The Echo of India does not stand liable for them.