

INDIA'S OIL SECURITY

Ever wondered why our External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar flies too often to countries? He definitely must be the most travelling Foreign Minister in the world today. The reason is simple and yet profound. The need for energy for a nation of 1.4 billion people have to met despite the geopolitical turmoil due to the seemingly unending wars, especially one in the Gulf region. It's because of his deft diplomacy and the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi that, India is today able to manage its oil supplies and even sell some to the crude after refining to the world for profit. India managing its affairs has not only helped the country but also is a single big reason behind the crude prices not going through the roof despite turmoil, Can you guess from how many sources India gets its crude oil supply? India meets its 80per-cent oil needs through imports and therefore any fluctuation in the prices impacts India's import bill to a great extent. India today gets its oil supplies from 40 countries. This is because of India's foreign policy and promptness is preventing a crisis.

VANDE MATARAM!

The respect for Vande Mataram, the poetic masterpiece reflecting reverence of the female divinity that is at the core of Indian civilization and philosophy was long overdue. The ode of Mother – call it earth, nation, native land, soil that supports life – is a universal song celebrating mother earth, the nurturer of life and civilizations. It was due to the imported idea of ‘secular politics’ of those days that this beautiful song was allowed to become butt of controversies. Finally, the Indian parliament has cleared the Bill making any disrespect to the national song a criminal offence. During the debate in the Parliament, again, voices against it were heard. But these voices are in minority.

India's education system needs its next leap

JS Rajput

Independent India, born amidst the trauma of Partition, began its journey with a population of nearly 340 million and a literacy rate of barely 12 per cent. Within two years of Independence, the Constitution placed before the nation an extraordinarily ambitious educational mandate. Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy declared: "The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years."

Although this constitutional goal could not be achieved within the prescribed decade, its inspirational force has shaped India's educational journey. Today, despite the addition of more than one billion people to the population, India's literacy rate has risen to nearly 81 per cent. This remarkable transformation reflects the enduring commitment of successive governments, educators, and society at large to expand educational opportunities. The framers of the Constitution clearly recognised that education would be the principal instrument for nation-building. It had to embrace India's extraordinary diversity while nurturing a deep appreciation of its underlying unity. Emerging from the bitterness and human tragedy of Partition, India needed an education system capable of healing divisions, strengthening democratic values, and preparing future generations for rapid social, scientific, and economic change.

Fortunately, the nation benefited from visionary scholars, scientists, and statesmen who undertook a comprehensive review of existing educational structures and formulated forward-looking policies. Their recommendations received the support of political leadership that understood education as the foundation of national development. During the first two decades after Independence, three landmark commissions laid the intellectual

foundations of modern Indian education: the University Education Commission (1948-49) under S Radhakrishnan, the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) chaired by A Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar, and the Education Commission (1964-66), popularly known as the Kothari Commission, led by D S Kothari. Their reports continue to influence educational thinking even today. India formulated its first three comprehensive education policies in 1968, 1986 and 1992, and each one of these has stood India in good stead. The 1968 policy prescribed a common core-curriculum to be studied by both boys and girls.

It may appear a fairy tale to young persons of today that till then, girls were given the option to quit science and maths, and opt for to home science, spinning, weaving, arts and crafts, etc., as science and maths were perceived too tough for the girls. Today, more girls qualify in the much-sought after NEET competition than boys. This is an achievement that deserves a grand national celebration. The nation must be grateful to the eminent physicist and spiritually-endowed educationist DS Kothari.

The May 2026 NEET exam paper leak was a great systemic failure. It hurt the conscience of the nation. The re-examination was conducted without any blemish. The culprits have been identified and the prime minister has assured strict action in the matter. Instead of creating a national consensus on how to make such exams leak-free, attempts are being made to politicise it. There are daunting challenges before the education system, and these need to be paid far greater attention by all concerned. The NEET paper leak inflicted shame on the system, and created tragic instances of suicides. Everyone was apprehensive on whether the re-examination could also be compromised! It was successfully completed. The right query should have been: why the machinery was so careless the first time? The academics and scholars free from ideological constraints should have analysed

the situation, brought out a plan of action for the government to consider and implement it in all sincerity. The government could have called a meeting of the Central Advisory Board on Education: CABE; obtained its inputs and presented to the nation the outlines of risk-free examination system. CABE could come out with instructions on issues like teacher preparation and recruitment, curriculum concerns, center-state relationships, the issues of leadership, and much more. One wishes the concerned organizations seriously plan for the future, devise action plans, and ensure that unscrupulous and uncommitted are dexterously kept miles away from the hierarchy created for the conduct of the exams. One wishes that the elected representatives of the people realize their obligation to deliberate upon educational issues over and above the party lines. FastTrack Courts

Unfortunately, this is not happening. One wonders whether some senior and seasoned parliamentarians could come together, converge into an informal yet effective Think Tank on Education. They could seriously scrutinize the implementation of the National Education Policy; the NEP-2020.

It could be pointed out that this is the task of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians, so why suggest another creation? What is being suggested is a self-motivated group that could think on educational improvements as their social, cultural and moral responsibility. They would be guided by their inner conscience, not by any ideology or politics. One is convinced this a pragmatic suggestion. The NEP-2020 was launched six-years ago in July 2020. Numerous deliberations and unprecedented consultations with the stakeholders clearly established the need for overhauling the education structure in full, 'including its regulation and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century education'. India has reiterated its commitment to the SDG-4: "ensure inclusive and equi-

table quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". To this the policy adds a very significant rider: "...while building upon India's traditions and value systems". It would be evident to every alert and active person that it fully resonates with the spirit of education for all promised by the Constitution of India. Are we really true inheritors to it?

One major issue that deserves serious attention of the nation is the fast-increasing divide between the Sarkari Schools and the much-sought-after private schools. Gradually, most of the Sarkari Schools have lost their acceptability, and are now patronised only by those unable to afford a private school. In practice, language learning and the rush for English medium schools remain unresolved. The conditions of teacher education institutions are indeed precarious. While paper leak is a shame, commercialization of teacher education, and also school education, just can't be tolerated for long. Quality and excellence in educational attainments must receive requisite attention and resources.

The decision makers and their opponents must realise it. There is no alternative to a respectful dialogical intent and initiative at the national level. Having observed the education system both at the implementation level as also at the policy formulation level for over six-decades, one simply rues he inability of my generation to adhere to the real spirits clearly contained in the Constitution: socio-economic or cultural background of the learner should never hander his education at any stage.

Jane Jacques Rousseau wrote in his immortal treatise on education, 'Emile': "How could I become wicked, when I had nothing but examples of gentleness before my eyes, and none around me but the best people in the world." India's young persons deserve such an environment. Let those who represent the will of the people of India realise their responsibility, and give them an environment they deserve.

THE INVISIBLE ENERGY THAT POWERS OUR LIVES

Rajyogi Brahma Kumar Nikunjji

As children, many of us played with magnets and discovered the quantum-electric fact that the magnetic positive poles repel each other, as do negative poles, while the positive and negative poles strongly attract each other. This attraction-repulsion phenomenon of electromagnetism is what makes the generation and usage of electricity practical in so many ways. Interestingly, the properties of electrical energy compare amazingly well with those of spiritual energy or the soul.

There are several interesting parallels between the two. A soul manifests its energy as the mind, intellect and sanskars (latent tendencies). Thought is an energy created by the soul, which is transmitted by the brain in the form of an electric impulse. Studies of human psychology confirm the role of electrons in neural messaging. Just pause and think: every time a thought is born in our mind, an invisible current begins to move.

So, if the thought is positive, the current feels warm, radiant and uplifting; but if it is negative, the same current feels heavy and draining. Our body, being a sensitive in-



strument, immediately registers this shift. That is why, after a few minutes of anger or anxiety, one feels physically tired even without any exertion. In this case, energy is never lost, but it simply changes form depending on the quality of our inner state.

There are certain things that are good conductors of electricity, while some other things are bad conductors. The quality of our inner connections, like the company we keep, the information we consume

throughout the day and the conversations we indulge in, also determines whether we act as good conductors of divine energy or poor ones.

When we associate with souls who radiate positivity, we naturally absorb their vibrations, just as a wire absorbs current from a live source. But when we surround ourselves with gossip, anger or materialistic influence, our inner wiring gets corroded. This corrosion is not visible like

rust, yet it quietly weakens our moral and emotional strength. Hence, spiritual hygiene is as important as physical hygiene. Regular introspection and remembrance of the Supreme act as cleansing agents of the soul. Just as solar panels absorb sunlight and convert it into usable electricity, meditation helps the soul absorb the divine rays of peace and love.

The more regularly we connect, the more charged we remain. The beauty of this connection is that the more you share the energy, the stronger the current becomes. Unlike physical energy, spiritual energy multiplies with giving. A kind word, a calm presence or a silent blessing instantly radiates vibrations that travel farther than we imagine.

Lastly, all electrical products and sources carry a note of caution for the safety of users. Similarly, to avoid shock, fuse, short circuit or tripping in life, use your mind with caution.

For smooth operation and troubleshooting, carefully follow the manual of spiritual wisdom and avail yourself of the consumer support services of the Almighty, who is the most stable and eternal source of power.

India's thin state: Too few, too well paid

Rupak Chattopadhyay

For more than three decades, India's economic reform debate has revolved around a familiar belief: the government is too large, the bureaucracy is bloated, and the public sector is a burden on taxpayers. The prescription has therefore been equally familiar - privatise, downsize and outsource. The evidence, however, tells a remarkably different story. Far from being overstaffed, India has one of the smallest public sectors in the world relative to the size of its workforce. The real challenge is not an oversized state but an understaffed one that pays a relatively small number of employees exceptionally well, leaving too little fiscal space to recruit the teachers, nurses, police officers, judges and technical specialists the country desperately needs. IndiaNews Portal

This combination has created a chronic deficit in state capacity that increasingly limits India's economic ambitions. India's public sector employs only about 3.3 per cent of the

country's workforce, even after including central and state governments, local bodies and public sector undertakings. In absolute numbers, this amounts to around 17-18 million employees, making it the second-largest public workforce in Asia after China. Yet, relative to the country's workforce of more than 550 million people, India has the thinnest state among major Asian economies. The contrast is striking.

Around 23 per cent of China's workforce is employed by the public sector. South Korea employs roughly 10.7 per cent, Indonesia about 8.9 per cent, while both Japan and Vietnam are close to 8 per cent. Contrary to popular perception, the stereotypical "bloated sarkari system" simply does not exist when viewed through an international lens. This shortage becomes most visible at the point where government actually meets the citizen. India has only around 150 police personnel per 100,000 population, well below the United Nations benchmark of 222. The judiciary has barely 21 judges per million people, com-



pared with 50 to well over 100 in most developed countries. Vacancies in government schools, primary health centres and rural development departments remain a persistent feature across states. Policies are ultimately implemented not by cabinet ministers or senior civil servants but by frontline workers. A district collector cannot compensate for an absent nurse, an unfilled teaching post or a missing agricultural extension offi-

cer. Administrative excellence at the top cannot substitute for the absence of people on the ground.

India's implementation deficit is as much a staffing problem as a governance problem. Yet this shortage exists alongside another anomaly: India pays its public employees extraordinarily well relative to the rest of the economy. World Bank studies show that public-sector wages exceed those in the formal private

sector by 62 to 102 per cent, while the premium over India's informal workforce ranges from 164 to 259 per cent. Development economist Karthik Muralidharan estimates that nearly 95 per cent of government jobs pay around five times the median Indian wage.

India spends roughly 8 per cent of GDP on public-sector wages, comparable to many OECD countries. But while advanced economies use similar expenditure to support a much larger workforce, India spends it on far fewer employees. The result is fewer teachers, doctors, police personnel and technical experts. East Asia offers a contrast. Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and China built capable states that coordinated investment, developed infrastructure, nurtured human capital and supported strategic industries. India's post-1991 reforms dismantled many controls associated with the licence-permit raj but did not build an equally capable developmental state. IndiaNews Portal

China has a deeply layered administrative system supported by spe-

cialised planning agencies and technical institutions. India increasingly relies on contracting out services while maintaining a relatively thin administrative backbone. The weakness extends to foreign policy. India's diplomatic cadre comprises only around 950 Indian Foreign Service officers across nearly 200 missions worldwide, while China employs several thousand career diplomats. For a country seeking global leadership and a larger strategic role, such limited capacity creates unavoidable constraints.

The Ministry of External Affairs inevitably concentrates its attention on a handful of relationships - primarily China, Pakistan and the United States - because it simply lacks the manpower to devote sustained attention elsewhere. Training officers in specialised areas such as climate negotiations, technology governance or artificial intelligence often leaves desks understaffed. India's global ambitions are therefore increasingly running ahead of its institutional capacity to support them.