

Recurrent Chinese intrusions

India and China are two big powers of Asia. They are also world's two most populous countries. They have a long common border and also share unprecedented maritime trade and security interests. Given their several millennia history in the past, there seems nothing that should cause irritation in their relationship. In the context of contemporary geopolitics largely conditioned by economic imperatives, we are inclined to think that India and China could offer ideal partnership in the development and reconstruction process of the nations in the region.

This concept of reasoned understanding between the two ancient and matured nations of the Asian Continent, India and China, formed the basis of Nehru's doctrine of Panchsheel way back in 1953 that was floated in Bandung Conference. It was in the background of this lofty concept that India proposed and supported China's membership in the UN Security Council.

Unfortunately, Chinese leadership was thinking the other way, and nursed feelings of rivalry against India. Chinese thrust across our eastern border in 1962 was most unexpected; it shattered the dream of those who thought that a new chapter was about to be opened in the history of international diplomacy when two big nations contiguous to each other had formally decided to live in peace and mutual respect. After Chinese *volte face*, a long stalemate ensued between the two countries and they drifted apart.

China adopted brazen hostile stance against us. First she entered into nexus with our western recalcitrant neighbour in pursuance of Maoist dictum that enemy's enemy is a friend. Then Beijing embarked on its ambition of territorial expansion, contending that its borders with India were illegally drawn by the British and that China repudiated the same. She laid claim to our eastern state of Arunachal Pradesh and also began intruding into Ladakh in J&K State without any provocation. She occupied Tibet by force of arms and sent Dalai Lama and his men on forced exile. Then she embarked on the policy of encirclement of India. Construction of Karakorum Highway connecting Xinjiang with Gawadar port in Makran coast of Pakistan, and building of Hambantota port on the southern tip of Sri Lanka and expanding naval ambitions in the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal are clear manifestations of her expansionist designs. She pressurized Vietnam not to sell coal block to India. She has been active in Myanmar trying to undermine India's interests.

Apart from these acts of stark hostility, China has, of lately adopted two- pronged policy. On the one hand she claims Arunachal as its territory and disputes the existing border not only in Arunachal but also in Ladakh around Daulat Baig Oldi in Despong valley. On the other hand, she conducts "strategic dialogue" with India to create the impression that the border intrusions are petty matters and should be resolved without much ado. In recent past China has been regularly intruding into our territories along the border. She intruder 20 miles inside in DBO and more recently on 19 August she repeated the practice in Chagalgam area of Arunachal. On being confronted by Indian forces, the PLA retired to their side.

What is China up to? Close examination and analysis of Chinese new tactics shows that Beijing has two objectives in resorting to intermittent illegal border crossing and encamping perfunctorily on our soil. One is to test whether India is prepared to react and retaliate or not. This helps her to streamline her border policy according to the expected reaction. Second motive is to keep Indian army spread out along vast border in Arunachal and Ladakh so that she cannot focus on her western border where Pakistani troops and jihadis acting in unison violate the cease fire agreement and open unprovoked firing on Indian posts. In this scenario, the bilateral talks farcically called "strategic dialogue" held last week in New Delhi are only a mask to cover Beijing's real designs. It should be now clear to the authorities in New Delhi that Chinese word has two meanings, one for them and the other for us.

One feels that India, when talking to the Chinese counterpart, is feeling shy of something. We don't know of what. We cannot have strategic dialogue in New Delhi/Beijing and 20 mile deep intrusion into our territory by the party with whom we shall be talking and bringing the perfidy to its notice.

ISI's fake notes perfidy

Yet another important conduit of ISI, working for the notorious organization in more than one way of subversion, has been arrested and interrogated by police authorities. LeT operative Abdul Karim Tunda has revealed that the entire supply chain of fake Indian currency was being run by the ISI. He has even mentioned the name of a Brigadier of ISI who is in the business of FICN and from whom he would receive the fake currency to be distributed through his network in India and Bangladesh. Fake notes are printed in Islamabad and Peshawar in Pakistan. Tunda, holding a Pakistani passport under a different name, had been an active operator and eluded the police for nearly 19 years when he was finally nabbed on Nepal-India border.

Tunda might have revealed more sensitive information, which the police would not be willing to share with media persons. But we think that a dossier be made out of this case that records in full the revelations made by this ISI operative as a proof of Pakistan's involvement in fake currency case. Now that Tunda has revealed the story in full, police authorities should spread out a network to nab all those whose names are reveled by the conduit. The entire conspiracy should be exposed and a dossier formed to be made available to crime branch at the International Court in The Hague for record and necessary action. A country-wide campaign should be initiated to nab the miscreants and anti-national elements who have become the conduit of fake currency.

India heading towards financial emergency

Nantoo Banerjee

What had changed of eminent economist turned administrator Kaushik Basu between April, 2012 and August, 2013? A lot, actually. Basu was then the chief economic advisor to the then Union Finance Minister, Pranab Mukherjee. The official positions of both have changed. While Pranab Mukherjee is now the President of India, Basu had moved on, well before his mentor occupied Rashtrapati Bhavan, to take up a higher responsibility at the Washington-based World Bank head office as the chief economist cum vice-president for development economics. In April, last year, Basu sang a different tune with regard to the situation of Indian economy. He likened it to nearly the 1991 crisis situation which he now denies despite further worsening of the state of Indian economy and a massive debt repayment crisis looming for the country's external commercial borrowers. Curiously, Basu's perception of India's current economic situation is now more on the lines of the UPA Government.

The World Bank chief economist's latest assertion that India's economic problems, including a wide current account deficit that has pushed the rupee to record lows, cannot be compared to the country's 1991 balance-of-payments crisis appears to be a contradiction from his earlier position when he matter-of-factly blamed the policy paralysis and indecision in the Government for the economic slow-down and felt that the situation would not improve till 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Basu's views, expressed before a learned audience in Washington DC, had stirred up a hornets' nest among Indian politicians, policy makers and intelligentsia to the embarrassment of the UPA Government and the Congress party, then. A few days ago, he said different things in Delhi.

This time, Basu cited a raft of economic data to show that the current situation was healthier than that of 1991, describing such comparisons (with the 1991 situation) as a "non-question," and suggested India should use its foreign exchange reserves to help stabilise the Rupee. Incidentally, Basu avoided mention of policy paralysis or the need for a fresh round of economic reforms considering the fact that the latest relaxation of FDI norms in a number of areas from infrastructure, civil aviation, defence, insurance, M&A to retail and real estate has evoked little response from foreign investors. But, the most surprising part of Basu's treatise on Indian economy was to rate the current situation much healthier than that of 1991 and his advice to release Dollar reserves to stabilize Rupee. Wasn't he clearly endorsing the UPA Government's position on the present state of economy?

It is difficult to believe that the World Bank chief economist is unaware of the quality and true worth of India's current foreign exchange reserves and the impact of the falling Rupee on the economy and people of the country, which is highly import-dependent for essentials such as petroleum, coal, fertilizer and inputs, edible oil, industrial raw materials, machinery and equipment, defence hardware, aircraft and ocean-going ships. The falling Rupee poses the single biggest threat to the stability of Indian economy.

The trend today is much worse than what it was in 1991, when the value of the Indian currency was much higher - Rs.17-19 to a US\$. Following the official devaluation of the Indian currency in 1992, the exchange rate was: Rs.24-31 to a US\$. The currency remained stable at Rs 31-33 for a US\$ till the end of 1995-96 which helped the process of the country's economic reform become a success. The currency has already breached the psychological barrier of Rs. 65 for a dollar and is still heading southward.

Similarly, there is little substance in the World Bank chief economist's suggestion that India could use its foreign exchange reserves to stabilize Rupee. Basu should know that India's present foreign exchange reserves of around \$278 billion are causing more agony than ecstasy to the national and international business community and financial institutions as a good part of it is in the form of FII investment in the stock market, which has lost massive value in the last few weeks due to FII panic sale fearing payment default and repatriation hurdles if the economy continues to sink.

A \$172-billion external commercial debt repayment liability alone by end-March will reduce the RBI's forex kitty to merely \$105 billion if the reserves don't get further depleted in the next six months. Considering that India's average monthly import bill is around \$50 billion, the forex reserves could be good for covering only two months' import bill after 31st March, 2014. It may very well be a warning to the next Government. Last year, India ran a trade deficit of over \$ 192 billion as against 1990-91 trade deficit of only around \$ 10 billion. In fact, RBI hardly has any surplus forex resources to play with in the market to stabilize Rupee. If it had, Rupee would not plunge in the first place the way it did in the last three months and the market also would not gamble with Rupee.

The yawning trade gap, alarmingly large current account deficit, uncomfortably high fiscal deficit, continuing high inflation for three years in a row, large external commercial borrowing by the Indian corporate sector, huge central borrowing, sharp fall in FDI as well as FII, economic slow-down in two successive years, dwindling foreign exchange reserves under pressure of luxury imports, Rupee's free fall, panicked stock market and the prospect of massive cost of implementation of food security bill through Government subsidy have turned the country's economic situation much worse than what it was in April, 2012.

Incidentally in 2012, Basu was not the lone senior Government functionary to raise the storm signal about India's impending economic crisis. Rahul Khullar, the then commerce secretary, who was rewarded by the Government with the post-retirement appointment as chairman of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), had told the annual general meeting of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in Mumbai that India's current economic issues reminded him of the situation it was faced with in 1989. "We all know 23 years have gone by. It is a sense of déjà vu, because it is the same problem all over again," he had said. Rahul Khullar, economist and a career bureaucrat, knew what he was talking about. So did Basu although he is singing a different tune now for reasons other than hard trade and economic data.

It seems the Government and it pet economists are simply clueless about how to tackle the current economic situation or lack courage to handle it requiring a series of radical steps which will eventually mean reversal of the liberal trade and investment policy showing the Government in poor light at both home and abroad. With Lok Sabha election only a few months away, return to a control and permit regime by Congress will sharpen its political opposition's attach and use it as a major poll campaign tool against the ruling party. Understandably, the World Bank chief economist chose not to extol the virtues of trade and economic control for India in a situation like this. It would have been also against the economic philosophy preached by the World Bank. (IPA)

If Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe were around !

Decades after the mysterious death of Marilyn Monroe, possibly following an overdose of sleeping pills, Astra had written a poem as tribute to one of the most captivating beauties of 20th century in which the star-struck poet wondered whether Monroe, if alive and around at the age past 50, would be as likeable as she once was and therefore, was it not in a way destiny's favour to Monroe to have lifted her away from our midst when she was still in the prime of her magic spell ! Today, the same could be said of Monroe's most famous boy friend, President John F Kennedy about whom several hitherto unrevealed facts have suddenly begun to be written about as the world observes 50th year of his tragic assassination that took place exactly half a century ago in 1963.

A new book titled "In these precious Days : The final year of Jack with Jackie" by Christopher Anderson, for the first time, perhaps, discloses in detail the tensions between President Kennedy and the first lady Jacqueline bordering on an imminent divorce on account of President's torrid extra-marital love affair with Marilyn Monroe. Incidentally, the tensions are said to have reached a climax just a few months before Kennedy's assassination. Now, this prompts one to visualise what would have been the probable fall-out or outcome of these simmering triangular tensions in Kennedy's personal life if only he had not gained immortality in the hands of an assassin's bullet.

TALES OF TRAVESTY
DR. JITENDRA SINGH

Kennedy was atonce an extraordinary personality. In possession of all the attributes in perfect combination which could sweep off her feet even the most unresponsive woman in the world. He was strikingly handsome, young, full of style, son of extraordinarily rich parents, blessed with an intellectual calibre acclaimed even by the likes of Dr Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, a public orator whose flawless delivery was heard in rapt attention as youngsters took out a copybook and pen to take down quotable quotes pouring from him and above all, a powerful visionary President who inspired a new hope in the minds of post-War world.

We, as very small children, were too small to grasp the nuances of world politics and yet all the school children bitterly wept when the news of Kennedy's untimely death spread like a wild fire and young women held photographs of Kennedy's four year old son standing up to salute alongside the President's guards as they paid their last ceremonial salute during the state funeral.

It was, therefore, nothing unusual for somebody like Marilyn Monroe falling head over heels and, as the above book by Anderson states, even dreaming of becoming Mrs Marilyn Kennedy and thus also America's first lady. While virtually every woman around looked forward to have an affair with him, John Kennedy too was very generous with women and obliged them with liberal flings. Infact, John Kennedy is said to have confessed to an aide that he was given to stressful headaches if

he did not have sex at regular intervals. Thankfully, video cameras or sting operations were not known then !

If only Marilyn Monroe had not allegedly committed suicide and lived long enough for the world to witness the withering away of her glowing glamour! If only John Kennedy had not succumbed to an untimely assassination and lived long enough for the world to witness the decline of the eternally graceful Kennedy aura! If only Providence had allowed Kennedy and Monroe to live their full natural lifespan to be around in 2013.....one in his nineties, other in her eighties, how would the world take it today? Or, did the call of premature death save both of them from the ignominy of later years. The common man, who has been witness to the era, will continue to baffle with such questions. And Umapathy would be deprived of the poetic drama that could have unfolded, if only Kennedy and Monroe had lived and waited little longer instead of bemoaning their failure to unite, a La Ghalib ".....Kuchh Aur Zinda Rahie, Tera Intezaar Hota !"

Maintain age-old unity

Dr Nater Singh

The recent violent incidents in the hilly districts of Kishtwar are not only posing great threat to the national integration but also to the aged-old traditions of social amity and hegemony. These principles are cherished the most by the people in this district. It is very surprising that people in such area can even think of resorting the arson, looting and burning of each other residential houses and business establishments. History bears the testimony that the people in that area, by and large, are peace-loving, hospitable, God-fearing, patriotic and deeply involved in up keeping social fabric and fraternity. As such, people alone are not to be blamed for this type of stigma. The local administration cannot be absolved of its responsibility in maintaining law and order, and peace in that area. The casual and polarized attitude of the concerned may be held responsible for giving air to the fundamental forces leading to present alarming situations.

Indeed this kind of lapse in maintaining law and order is dangerous for a pluralistic society of ours. It is desirable that Government should devise an effective mechanism to dispel rumours being spread in the area by rumour-mongers. Respecting the sentiments of the people of all denominations and castes, clean and impartial administration is required to be provided. The people should also be watchful in isolating the elements who want to create communal frenzy irrespective of the community to which they belong.

The incidents of violence leading to arson, looting and burning of houses/shops create a fear psychosis among the members of different communities. The social and secular fabric of the society need to be preserved at all costs rather the state of Jammu and Kashmir must lead as ever before as an apostle of secularism and communal harmony. Have the people of this area forgotten the tales of heroism and bravery of the Indian soldiers at the front and sacrifices made by the civilians particularly by the youth for the creations of district of Kishtwar?

Despite the fact that Kishtwar in the erstwhile Doda district remained mostly a neglected part of the region, it always remained a symbol of religious tolerance at most odd times. The role played by saints particularly in this part of the state has been so impressive that their teachings received with unparalleled enthusiasm. Being the Apostle of peace and spirituality, enlightened saints are the emissaries of God, who came on earth, to re-kindle the spiritual love and to re-inculcate the spirit of peace and universal brotherhood in mankind, in order to pay their obeisance, thousands of pilgrims every day visit Shrine of Shah-Asrar-ul-Din, Shrine of Shah Akhiar-ud-Din existing within the town and aged-old famous Hindu Shrine at Sarthal. Besides above, a number of Mosques, Mandirs and a Gurudwara exist in the town where people pay their obeisance for alleviation of the anguish and distress through prayers.

In the context of on-going crisis and to normalize situations some concrete and effective steps need to be initiated by the local administration. Inter alia, inter-community interface be held to instill trust and cement communal amenity and brotherhood in the district. Active participation particularly of youth representing all communities in organizing some relevant functions like Sarav Dharm Peace March, offering free Langar (Bhandara) to all at Choughan grounds and elsewhere would certainly go a long way in fostering communal harmony and fellow-feelings. It is time to re-dedicate and resolve ourselves to do our best in maintaining communal harmony and preserving our identity, honour and composite culture.

Toot Jayee Na Mala Kaheen Pyar Ki, Verna Anmol Moti Bikhar Jaayen Gaye
Tum Mano Na Mano Hamara Kaha, Hum Mussafir Hain Keh Key Chaley Jayenge'
(The author is former Principal)

Academicians, you owe us clarity

Garga Chatterjee

For a few years now, full-time faculty at Government colleges and universities have been drawing salaries based on the recommendations of the sixth pay commission of UGC. This puts all these people from the rank of assistant professor and upwards in the top 5 per cent income bracket of the country, whose people they are supposed to serve. How is an academicians whose salary is paid by the people supposed to serve the people? Here, a term, which I picked up in the West, comes in very handy. The idea is that everybody has to earn his or her keep. While everyone gets the fat sixth pay commission salary at the end of the month, it is not very clear whether everyone actually earns it.

The knowledge project that intellectuals and academicians are invested in, in so far as they are bankrolled by the people have to be intelligible to the people themselves so that they have an idea what they are paying for in the first place. Whether they like the content of the project is another question but at the very basic level, those who pay for my bread should know have an idea of what I do with their money, irrespective of whether they like what I do or not. Peasants produce crops - people eat that produce. Whatever the academicians produce, it needs to be eatable. By eatable, I also mean digestible. Surely, that is not too much to ask for.

A kind of human being derives strange pleasure in appreciating music that few others like. In fact, if too many people start listening to it, they get dejected. Their special thing has become too commonplace like a roadside tea stall. Such is often the case with those academicians and their acolytes who love big words and impenetrable sentences. They protect their rarified lens to the world with smugness. They are quick to defend their demigods who helped them build these lenses. Why would legitimate knowledge seekers be so invested in thinkers than thoughts themselves and whether such idolatry is healthy for frank and critical knowledge production is another question.

In the first year of my PhD at Harvard, I sat in a two-semester long statistics class. Professor Jim Sidanius, a former Black Panther, taught us concepts - breaking them down for us. But he also wanted to make sure that we were digesting the broken bits. He knew that hiding behind jargon is the best way to evade clarity. And he would have none of it. So, when he asked us questions, and we started replying in jargon, he would promptly cut us short and ask with a smile - 'How will you explain that to my grandma?' This was a crucial question. In many cases, it called our bluff and made us more honest to ourselves. This was more than knowledge acquisition. Jim was trying to drive in a characteristic that academicians and thinkers owe to society - clarity.

Clarity is something that ought not to be limited to knowledge acquisition, but also knowledge production and communication of ideas. But are not some ideas inherently so complex that an insistence of broad intelligibility would somehow make those ideas flatter than they actually are. And to this, a response came from Steven Pinker, another professor from our department at Harvard. To simplify is not to be simplistic, he said.

Fine, but why should we care about such issues at all? Ideas shape people, their ideas about themselves, other and the world at large. So, if certain kinds of ideas gain currency, it is important that these do not become received wisdom but are critically evaluated by the people. For that, it is necessary that knowledge and ideas are available to the people at-large, with clarity, in forms and sites they can best engage in. Academicians occupy the most privileged centre of knowledge production in our times - the university. Hence they have to be held particularly accountable in this regard.

When we look into the academic circles that elite subcontinental universities have been breeding, they seem to breed a pathetic tendency to jargonise and speak in tongues that are largely (and I daresay, intentionally) unintelligible to people. The intention is not necessarily conscious for most practitioners of this dubious art - it is something they pick up to be counted. This gulf between 'high-brow' knowledge and its public intelligibility is most acute in those practitioners to invoke that shameful phrase 'in our field'. Typically, this implies that one would take liberties about facts or be oblivious of contrary facts, not expose the underbelly of assumptions to scalpels, would discount fundamental criticisms as being ill-motivated or worse, expressions of 'power'. Such a petulant watertightness is typically seen in 'fields' full of '-isms' or those where sentences are peppered with things like, 'in a -ian sense/paradigm/view'. And so forth. The latter is a classic method of saying - I will tell this to you without explanation. Either you will not object as you want admit to not knowing what the '-ian view' is, or if you say so, I will give such an exasperated look and say, well all this has been known for so long, and you are not at an intellectual level where I deem fit to engage with you. And such elements still have the gall to say that society owes their keep to them. It takes an immense amount of hubris to think that ideas articulated in forms unintelligible by much of perfectly intelligent people have added that much to that understanding that it can demand funding in spite of being unintelligible. It is about time that the real world asked for explanations about what is being done with their money. The subcontinent is a hotbed of posturing by people who speak in unintelligible 'tongues'. It is time we asked them to practice that art at their own expense. Then we shall see, as an old Bengali saying goes - 'Koto dhaane koto chhaal'. (IPA)

The importance of being Milkha Singh

Suman K. Sharma

This essay is not a critique on the biopic on India's pride, Milkha Singh; it is rather a perception of the movie's significance. Milkha Singh is now 78 (born 1935), and the movie covers just the thirteen years of his growing up from 1947 to 1960. What is the relevance then, one might ask, of a sporting incident that had happened fifty-three years ago? As a nation, we are not overly fond of sports, though a one-day cricket match with our arch-rival Pakistan might prove a different matter altogether. For us, most field-and-track competitions are just that - won on the field and kept track of by sport enthusiasts and civil service aspirants mugging up for their General Studies paper.

Bhag Milkha...is important because in telling the story of an individual, it ends up telling the story of what a man of determination can achieve. Boy Milkha sees his parents butchered along with other villagers by horse-ridden, better armed and blood thirsty marauders. He runs away from his ancestral village for dear life. Forced to live in a tent of a refugee camp with his elder sister and her boorish husband (with only a thin piece of cloth to veil their marital bed), he has to nightly hear, in the silence of a dormant volcano, the humiliation of his sibling giving in to her spouse's naked desire. One day that volcano erupts and he gives his tyrant jija a sound thrashing before taking to the road once again. From vagrancy he takes an about-turn to enlist with the army. Here the steamroller discipline of the instructor and the unreserved camaraderie of the fellow recruits give Milkha a sense of belonging. His racing career starts with not one but two enticements - freedom from fatigues and a daily quota of milk and a couple of raw eggs! Soon enough, his aspirations rise. He wants to don the 'India blazer' (signifying the status of a national cham-

pion), set a record in his sport and in time to attain the prominence of a national hero such as Mahatama Gandhi. He achieves all - defeating his rival at a national event, setting a record of covering 400 meter sprint in 45.73 seconds (electronic time) - it took Indian athletes more than 38 years to break Milkha Singh's record, when Paramjit Singh, an inspector in the Central Reserve Police Force, ran 400 meters in 45.70 seconds (electronic time) in 1999 - and going by Bhag Milkha.... Prime Minister Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru declared a national holiday to honour our hero's victory over Pakistani sprinter, Abdul Khaliq. The huge success comes to Milkha Singh not without him straining himself to limits, following the arduous regimen set for him by his coaches, taking pain and humiliation in his stride and to a large extent, maintaining his animal spirits which refuse to admit defeat. End of the day, Milkha Singh is a man like everyone else. In one touching scene, he is shown slapping himself hard on his face a score of times for having indulged in dalliance when he should have been practicing on the field. The film begins and ends with Milkha Singh's reluctance to lead a sport delegation to Pakistan. It takes all the persuasive powers of his mentors, a Secretary to the Government of India and Prime Minister Nehru himself to make him agree to the proposal. Milkha Singh goes to Pakistan, confronts the ghosts of all those victims of 1947 mayhem and comes back home a winner! In the concluding scene, we see a smiling boy-Milkha running side by side his adult persona in the last lap of the historic race. Aspirations pacing with fulfillment!

But behind Milkha's smiling face is the cartography of his relentless pursuit of excellence - that perhaps is the importance being Milkha Singh.

