

Towards culture of innovation

President's address to the seventh Convocation of Defence Institute of Advanced Technology (DIAT) at Pune is a remarkable document aimed at inspiring our scientists and technocrats to induct new thinking and innovation into scientific researches. The address is thought provoking in more than one way. He began with a note of concern on security decline globally leading to a phenomenon that brings unprecedented responsibility on scientific and technological oriented resistance.

It is a reality that forces of disruption and destabilization of peace and progress in the world are trying to find new ways and means of perpetrating their crime against humanity. They are leaving no stone unturned to achieve their objective. This threat has become widespread and phenomenal and the President feels that the challenge has to be responded through new researches and innovations in the realms of science and technology. At policy planning level, there is the need of identifying and understanding the problems. This means that the boundaries of knowledge have to be widened and policy has to be made compatible with the goals set forth.

The threat of dwindling security scenario means that innovative faculty among the scientists and technocrats should be reshaped and remodeled. This cannot be achieved unless we create environment conducive to the goals that have been set forth. The desired environment does not exist in the country today. The level of excellence and innovative faculty is not up to the mark in our country. Millennia ago there were the days when Indian universities had dominated the intellectual world. But today no Indian university figures among 200 most prestigious universities in the world. This is a moment of introspection. It is true that we have developed a vast network of education in the country at all levels from elementary to the highest level. But with 650 degree awarding institutions and 33,000 colleges in the country we are confronted with lack of quality and quantity. This is a depressing scenario and we shall have to address it.

In his address the President has laid emphasis on the idea of development of culture of innovation. Our educational system has to be reformed and developed along the culture of research and innovation. It has two components: environmental facility and new approach to the phenomenon of acquisition of knowledge. It is pertinent to mention at this point that even the Prime Minister in one of his speeches at a convocation function of a university said that our standard of research and study had fallen and that was a matter of great concern. Holding degrees is not going to solve economic and employment problems of our youth. It is the creativity and innovation that would show the right path. The domain of knowledge has to be increased and creative capabilities have to be given exposure. It is also important that we adopt flexibility in conducting research and exploring areas where the faculty of innovation can flourish. How much we lack in innovative capability is explained by the fact that during 2011 only 42,000 patent applications were filed. In countries like China and the US this number was twelve times more. Why can't we develop a system that would vigorously increase the innovative faculty among our young scientists and technicians? We can say with fair amount of confidence that our young and budding technocrats and scientist do not lack the ability and merit to make innovations. The problem lies in providing them the environment conducive to their urges for innovation. Owing to non-existence of environment conducive to exploration and discovery, we are suffering from brain drain. Our talented youth want to find greener pastures and thus the country is deprived of their contribution, which is vital to the progress of the nation.

Speaking about the role of the DIAT, the President was very clear in stating that our defence preparedness was closely linked to research and innovations in defence technology. It means that India shall have to take big steps in the path of modernizing her defence system through new technologies if we mean to ensure that our security needs are fully met. The decade 2010-20 has been declared the decade of innovation. It means that ordinary people should feel the impact of a changing style of life and environment. Research institutions, universities and workshops have to put their act together and move in the direction of innovative decade. One could imagine that there has to be a pool of research institutions providing technological monitoring.

President's speech has also to be taken as a warning that slackness in the area of innovation especially in defence and security has to be taken seriously. India with huge manpower and widespread educational network needs to think of consolidating the effort for raising the level of research and study. That alone can help us address our economic woes and security threats.

Anganwadi workers protest
The protesting Anganwadi workers need to be heard. They have several complaints. These include roll back on the controversial order, release of pending salary and also providing salary in time, enhancement of wages of the workers and helpers.

Their protest started against increasing their working hours from four to six per day. The scheme is entirely sponsored by the Centre, and they demand that the guidelines provided by the Centre should be made applicable in their case in letter and in spirit. There is no enhancement of their wages. Their salaries are not paid in time. Even according to existing norms their minimum salary should have been rupees 11000 per month. Why should the State Social Welfare Department issue an order of changing the hours of work when the scheme is fully funded by the Center and also the rules are provided by that agency? Anganwadi workers are a link between the administrative structure and the people in the State. Instead of improving their lot in terms of employment and other facilities, adopting arbitrary attitude in dealing with them is not advisable. We would appeal to the Social Welfare Department to handle their case with sympathy and a touch of humanism.

China opposes pacific alliance move

Nantoo Banerjee

The developing economic and strategic alliance among four Pacific and Indian Ocean giants - Japan, the US, Australia and India - seems to be driving China mad. The communist country's latest verbal attack through its mouthpiece, People's Daily, against Japan and its democratically elected prime minister, Shinzo Abe, and calling him and the Indian prime minister, Manmohan Singh, currently in Japan, "petty burglars" display its growing frustration and intolerance towards other Asian powers and nervous reaction to growing Indo-Japan strategic ties.

For China, there is no issue when its soldiers sneak in at the middle of night to Ladakh to illegally camp inside Indian territory for weeks until driven out diplomatically. There is no issue when Chinese premier, Li Keqiang, visits the newly elected Pakistani prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, to ensure that the latter does not reach any closer to India in trade and diplomacy. At the same time, China objects to Abe's visit of its neighbour, Myanmar, whose military regime China has armed and befriended to drive away Indian and western influence on the predominantly-Buddhist Bay-of-Bengal rim nation. China has been creating a lot problem to India-Myanmar joint offshore oil and gas exploration programme as it did to a similar programme between India and Vietnam.

China has already encircled India through trade and strategic partnership with the latter's neighbours such as Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka, all bordering India, with a strong military intention. The world must stand up to face China's pre-1939 Hitlerite design to disturb peace in Asia by stopping trade with China to force a big hole into its ballooning economy, which feeds its military.

China's aggressive and hegemonistic posturing in the region have lately been a matter of concern of not only of India and Japan, but other littoral countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines and Thailand in the vast Asia-Oceanic expanse. China's bid to strategically control

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the Strait of Malacca, the East and South China Seas and even the Bay of Bengal pose a great threat to international shipping cargo movement through the historical sea route. China is also aggressively pursuing its economic cum diplomatic strategy to excise control over Indian Ocean rim countries.

Why does China want to control the entire Pacific and Indian Ocean region? Its fast expanding global trade is certainly a key reason. The country owes its economic and military might to international trade. China is the world's largest export and import house. It has the world's largest dollar hoard, estimated above \$ 4 trillion, and the third largest official gold stock after the USA and Russia. Trade is China's real strength. It boasts seven of the world's 10 largest sea and river ports. Trade and investment are being increasingly used as strategic tools by the Chinese state to expand its influence to even remote destinations in Africa and South

America, building roads, airports, sea ports, telecommunication networks and mining ore in economically sound countries such as South Africa, Kenya, Zambia, Nigeria, Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela.

Last year, China became the world's biggest trading nation, with the total value of

its exports and imports surpassing those of the United States. U.S. exports and imports of goods in 2012 aggregated to \$3.82 trillion, according to officially released U.S. Commerce Department figures. China's customs administration had recently reported that the country's trade in goods in 2012 amounted to \$3.87 trillion. This could not be achieved overnight. China's ambition to lead the global trade and economy has also turned it into becoming a global maritime nation. According to a UNCTAD report, China controls nine per cent of global shipping tonnage or sea-borne cargo carrying capacity as against Greece's 16 per cent, Japan's 15 per cent and Germany's nine per cent, the world's top four maritime nations by registered tonnage.

The world's second largest economy, averaging 10 per cent GDP growth rate over the past 30 years riding mostly on foreign trade, is still among the poorest when it comes to per capita

income - 87th by nominal GDP and 92nd by GDP calculated under the purchasing power parity (PPP) method. While China is increasingly focusing on raising the domestic consumption and domestic per capita income, foreign trade and foreign market will continue to play a very important role to sustain and grow its global ascendancy as an economic power. To this end, it has to exercise more control over the global routes, the seas and oceans.

China's growing irritation over the build-up of strong strategic relations between the world's third largest economy, Japan, by nominal GDP and the fifth largest, India, by PPP is understandable. India is also among the world's top five markets in terms of domestic consumption of commodities. Unfortunately, China has never tried to befriend India since the end of the Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai days. It considers India a major economic rival while Japan was always regarded more or less as an enemy. Now, the coming together of India and Japan threatens to stand in the way of China's ambition to emerge as an undisputed global economic and maritime power too soon.

The latest outburst of the Chinese Government-controlled People's Daily over Shinzo Abe's call to Japan, India, Australia and the US to jointly form a 'Democratic Security Diamond' to compete with ascendant China calling it an act of conspiracy of "petty burglars in China-related issues" is a combined Chinese expression of frustration, anger and fear over the possible coming together of Japan and India. Although, logically, China would have done well to win over India by addressing its geopolitical and trade concerns to build a formidable Indo-China union and, thus, preventing its rising southern neighbour from joining any other camp to ensure India's economic and external security. (IPA)

Law to fix "Shakuni's dice"

Advocate Rohit Kapoor

The dice was loaded. It seems it was made such that it would listen to Shakuni's command. And it would roll to whatever number Shakuni wanted. Shakuni played a key part in inciting the Pandavas to play the game of dice and made them lose their kingdom and everything else to Kauravas. This happened centuries ago. The excitement so awfully convincing, the Man has willy nilly relented to strong temptations.

Smoking: Prohibition in public places. Statutory warnings on cigarette packets to scare smokers.

Prevent accidents: Fear appeals on highways for safe driving. Assault on woman: Make stringent laws to curb the menace. Corruption: Make tough laws to get rid of this menace. And so on the laws.

And now the proposed Laws to rein in "temptations and excitement" to "fix" the fixing in sports.

Research findings suggest health message of various sorts can be more effective if they are framed in a positive manner. For example how to attain good health rather than in a negative manner e.g. risks from a hazardous product. Please evaluate this in the context of smokers. Despite statutory warnings on cigarette packets and print of scary lung cancer picture, how many smokers have stopped smoking? And I believe, corruption has increased many times and is growing un-abated despite special laws, special courts and even social embarrassment is not proving to be a deterrent. Has the harassment or assault on women come down despite what we experienced recently in the country? So many laws, and recent guide lines by the Apex Court on as how to prevent such incidents. I believe it has hardly yielded any perceptible change.

Evidence of match fixing is found throughout history of mankind. The ancient Olympic Games were almost constantly dealing with allegations of athletes accepting bribes to lose a competition and city-states which often tried to manipulate the outcome with large amounts of money. These activities went on despite the oath each athlete took to protect the integrity of the events and the severe punishment sometimes inflicted on those who were caught. Sports betting is the oldest known form of gambling on the planet. In the early days, it was played only as a simple pastime activity; nowadays it's a multi-billion dollar business.

Life time ban of well known cricketers in the recent past and their un-ceremonious exit from the world of cricket has not turned out to be a deterrent for others.

Governments often make laws to prohibit new kinds of Offences, when ingenious forms of anti-social activity are invented; it is perfectly possible to devise legitimate ways of banning them. Most modern financial crimes that includes Sports Fixing, has to be countered by appropriately designed legislation. Despite best of skills and commitment possessed by a cricketer, game of cricket is known a game of chance and rightly so owing to many inherent factors.

It may not be out of place to explain this by quoting Murphy's Law, an adage "Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong". Things that go wrong in the game of cricket generally are not a deliberate act. Now, Law or no Law, each overstepping by mistake, a catch missed or a missed opportunity to strike the ball is likely to be looked with suspicion. That is extremely unfair to all those genuine cricketers/sportsperson that outnumber the dishonest few. How the Law can restrain the doubt in the mind of a passionate cricket fan when "a catch is missed"? This suspicion is going to stay as for now. What has happened is extremely sad for the game, cricketers and their admirers. Criminal culpability of sport persons? It's sad.

What they needed? Money, luxury, fame, glamour and they had it all, fast and plentiful. Yet temptation & excitement so strong, the stupidity prevailed over wisdom and budding careers terminated with tarnished image and lifelong social stigma. No lessons learnt from the past. And it reminds me of:

"What win I, if I gain the thing I seek? A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy. Who buys a minute's mirth to wail a week? Or sells eternity to get a toy? For one sweet grape who will the vine destroy?"

William Shakespeare

Maybe, policy paralysis is good

Dr Bharat Jhunjhunwala

International agencies have warned that India's rating may be downgraded to junk status unless economic reforms are given a push. But the Government is not able to pass any legislation because there is a lack of consensus on the future vision of the country. The lack of political consensus is but a reflection of the lack of public consensus. The people see that economic reforms have led to unprecedented increase in wealth among the politicians, officials and businessman. The common man has indeed got some relief from programs like MNREGA and Direct Benefit Transfer but these improvements have paled into insignificance in front of the unparalleled increase in wealth of the rich. People are unwilling to support more reforms. The opposition parties have felt the pulse of the people and have preferred that no business be transacted at all in the Parliament instead of pushing bills that do not have support of the people. The Parliament, in fact, is successful by preventing transaction of business.

Daron Acemoglu of MIT and James A. Robinson of Harvard University argue that the purpose of parliamentary democracy is to prevent social unrest. The ruling elite provides a safety valve for the unrest to be released by the affected people getting a forum to voice their grievances which is then followed

by undertaking some redistribution. During the nineteenth century, they say, most Western societies extended voting rights which led to 'unprecedented' redistributive programs. Our Constitution likewise states that the fundamental duty of the State is to secure the welfare of its citizens.

The Government appears to be treading a different path, however. The policy is to run the economy in favour of large corporate houses and multinational companies as seen in the 2G Spectrum and Coalgate scandals. The welfare measures of Right to Education and Right to Food are designed to cover up this main objective by setting up a pro-poor façade. There is unhappiness in the country on the adoption of this development model. The happenings in the parliament are only a reflection of the underlying unhappiness. The people are essentially saying that we do not need more of this model, the status quo is better. A Government in coma is better than a working Government.

Adam Meiowitz of Princeton University says that effective functioning of a parliament requires that both sides share a common vision. Two partners in a business can fruitfully discuss whether to open two big showrooms or four small showrooms if they share a common vision of expansion of their business. It is difficult for them to reach a common understanding if one wants to bleed the business for

personal gain and other wants to use it to support his political ambitions. There is an absence of such common vision between the Government and the

The only choice before the opposition, therefore, is to accept the policies proposed by the government or reject them. The opposition is in minority hence they would be defeated in a vote. They have, therefore, taken the path of obstructing the Parliament-which appears legitimate to me given the rigidity of the Government.

Opposition today. The Government wants to develop the country by giving a free run to big corporate houses and multinational companies. The opposition is not in agreement with this policy though it does not have a vision of its own. The contest is between pro-rich policies or against them. Meaningful discussion cannot take place in this situation.

Meiowitz further explains that the two sides are "more disposed to vex and oppress each other than to cooperate for their common good" if

they have "externally motivated incentives." That is, if the real objectives of the parliamentarians are personal gain then both sides would have no incentive to cooperate with

party and the opposition located in Central Delhi have captured the resources of the country to the detriment of the common good. But neither can openly state this. Thus the debate takes place in the parliament very superficially-like oil on water. Both sides have unstated objectives that entirely different that what they say. As a result no meaningful debate can take place in the Parliament.

James Fishkin of Stanford University has shown that voting patterns change if voters are provided more information and if they discuss and deliberate among themselves before voting. This is the model of the Gram Sabha. People get together, discuss and vote. On the other hand the election process is 'blind' in the sense that each voter comes with his own set of information and there is no discussion. The Parliamentary system lies somewhere in the middle. Nominal discussion takes place before voting. True discourse and deliberation, as took place in the Constituent Assembly, rarely takes place today. The Government appears to have a fixed mindset and the only option the opposition has is either to accept or reject it. As a result the Parliamentarians are not able to reach a decision. For example, one partner may suggest that they open two showrooms so that management is easy; while the other partner may suggest that four showrooms will be good for image building. Deliberation

may lead them to adopt a franchisee model. Such deliberation is possible only if both sides are willing to listen to the other side and do not come on the table with holier-than-thou attitude. The Government, it seems, wants to smother and cast aside the opposition instead of deliberating and reaching a better solution. The Prime Minister seems speaks as if he knows all and others have only to follow the policies that he proposes.

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The basic requirements of democratic functioning are absent today. The policies espoused by the Government are more designed to enable a particular section of the society, especially politicians and bureaucrats, to extract resources of the country for personal gain. There is an all-pervasive distrust of the political system. In this situation the opposition has decided to take an aggressive stance and stalemate the Parliament instead of going along with the policies of the Government. Perhaps this is better because allowing the Parliament to operate would lead to more anti-people policies being implemented.

Discrepancy in electoral rolls

Sir,

The recent electoral rolls published by the J&K State Election Commission are in complete disorder, especially of migrants voters, of the Kashmir valley. They feel completely disappointed finding their names missing from the electoral rolls, after travelling a long distance to reach their camp offices at different places of Jammu during the scorching heat of the season.

It is a clear cut indication that most of the voters are being debarred from exercising their franchise, the essence of democracy.

Now it is humbly prayed that the full voter lists of the various constituencies of the Valley as

existed prior to migration be sent to various centres at Jammu as published in the Daily Excelsior dated May 3, 2013 so that the migrant community is also given a chance to participate in the voting process after more than two decades of exile. Those who have expired during these 23 years gap shall be deleted by the voter families themselves after complete and comprehensive voters rolls are sent to these centres. Thus the voters shall be relieved from the confusion in their minds due to pell-mell in electoral rolls.

Yours etc.....
K.L. Dhar
Durga Nagar,
Enclave, Jammu

Sir,

This has reference to World No Tobacco Day which was observed through out the world a couple of days back.

Health authorities throughout the world strain every nerve to teach people the harmful effects of smoking. Smoking is said to be the cause of a number of diseases including dreadful disease-cancer which is assuming horrendous proportions with every passing day. To keep people away from smoking. The Jammu & Kashmir Government some time back imposed ban on smoking at public places. But this ban is being flouted with impunity. It seems as if there is no ban.

Besides, there is ban on tobacco products like Gutka etc. But they continue to be sold in black market. Earlier, the users used to buy it at market rates, now they buy it at a higher cost. The only beneficiary being the shopkeepers and black-marketers.

It is right time the Government launches an awareness campaign through the State to sensitize people about this social evil.

Yours etc....
Ranbir Rasgotra
Shalamar, Jammu

Readers Write

Overcoming transmission losses

Sir,

Refer news item 'Vikar for effective mechanism to check transmission losses' DE June 1.

One of the major causes of power shortage in the State is huge transmission and distribution losses. The other being power thefts. To overcome the losses, a scheme 'Accelerated Power Development Reform Programme (APDRP) was floated in 2003 by the Central Government. The main objectives of th APDRP were improving financial viability of the State Electricity Boards, reduction of AT&C losses, improving customer satisfaction, increasing reliability of power supply, improving quality of supply and bringing transparency through computerization.

This scheme does not seem to have been launched in the State given the dismal power scenario in view. The Government should frame a policy in this regard and ensure a regular power supply in the Jammu Division during summer and in Kashmir Division during winter.

Yours etc.....
Surjit Kumar
Resham Ghar, Jammu