

THE SECULAR CITIZEN

Vol.29 Issue No.33 ■ (Total Pages 24) ■ Mumbai, 17 - 23 August, 2020 ■ Rs. 10

A NATIONAL FAMILY WEEKLY

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The Pandemic Musical

By Father Austin Norris

And so: Here we are altogether as we sing our song, joyfully: calling out: Come by here O Lord: It's me, it's me, It's me O Lord standing in the need of prayer: and pleading: Christ come quickly there's danger at the door...

Feelings all bottled up, I cry out: Why me Lord, what have I ever done, Lord help me Jesus: And I hear the reassuring: I will raise you up on eagle wings: and bowing my head low I say: Thank you Lord for saving my soul!

As I look outside, I see Sunshine on my shoulders: and I think: I want to break free and I long for: Country Roads, take me home, to: the Green, green grass of home. Outside on the grounds I see: Girls just wanna have fun and little children skipping to: Ring-a-ring-a Rosie... and crazy footballers dribbling to Waka Waka...

Reminiscing about bygones, I belt out: Sweet Caroline and: You fill up my senses and I: hear my dad teasing: You'll be a Bachelor boy and I look plaintively at dear: Mother of

Mine. The cellphone tinkles and I revert to: Aah Ooh, What have we done to our earth and: How many Roads must a man walk down: before we say: He ain't heavy, he's my brother. And I think: Precious Lord, take my hand and: Abide with Me, even as our: World stands in need of liberation.

I think of the poor response of the government and: All I want to say, is that they don't really care about us...and turning my gaze at the front line workers and responders, I can only say: I cried a tear, you wiped it dry, I was confused, you cleared my mind and: Thank you, thank you, thank God for you - the Wind beneath my wings....

As children and teachers struggle with online classes, my prayer is Whispering hope and One day at a time.. oh yes.... We shall overcome..

As the intercom chimes I think of: Ring, ring telephone ring: and I hear: It's been a hard day's night and I wish it was instead: Put your sweet lips a little closer to the phone... and my mind locks into: There's a kind of Hush all over the land and I long for the sounds of: Chitty, chitty bang, bang..

The doorbell rings and there stands: Proud Mary requesting for dry ration help: and I: Count my blessings that I did not: Fall to pieces: meanwhile the table-boy pipes in Oranges and

Lemons laya: and I almost yell at him: Beat it.

As the day stutters on I see: There is a House in New Orleans: and I think of my would-be trip to California Dreaming, were it not for this pandemic. And I think of: Karma Chameleon as the spineless politicians and their pathetic response. The Church bells chime the Angelus and I stand and pray: Ave, Ave, Ave Maria... and feel peace and quiet.

As the evening dusks on, I do a: Thousand Miles, jogging and walking along hoping to stay fit and because I can't: Beat it, I'd rather go: Slow and Easy, One Day at a Time. How I wish supper was served with: Red red wine, but then the Zoom meeting won't get over and I have to tell the watchman - He'll have to Go....

Switching on the TV, I hear the anchor: Scream and my ears almost split with the theme of: Space Odyssey. I long for the: Sounds of Silence as I imagine: Silent Night, Holy Night and the Lord reassures me: Be not afraid, I go before you always..... From within me rises a prayer for: One World, One Heart.. and I want to sing: Reach out and touch somebody's Hand, make this world a better place if you can. Switching off the lights I hear the: Sounds of Silence, and I drift into slumber praying: Lead kindly light amidst the encircling gloom..lead thou me on.....

Next morning, I wake up to and: Listen to the falling rain and I look at my guitar, pick it up and play:

Day by day, dear Lord, for three things I pray: To see thee more clearly, love thee more dearly, follow thee more nearly, day by day, day by day....

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Vol.29 Issue No.33 17-23, August 2020 Rs.10/-

99, Perin Nariman Street, Fort, Mumbai - 400 001.

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Subscriptions Rate:

One year (anywhere in India) Rs. 500

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One year (outside India) Rs. 3500

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Why Does It Take An Adversity To Bring Out The Best In Us

by Don Aguiar

With the world in an increasing tight grip of COVID 19 there is the recognition of human vulnerability like never before. The image of once invisible Yama is not even hazy anymore. He is clear and spares no one – power, wealth, technology, nuclear arsenals and what have you... this proves of man's advancement stand simply humbled before a tiny virus, determined to teach humankind an important lesson on respecting Nature. The lockdown then is the time to cerebrate, not celebrate....

India is using all its resources to fight the deadly coronavirus. Hotels are being turned into hospitals. Trains are being converted into isolation wards. Leaders are becoming messengers. Police have taken the additional responsibility of keeping people inside their homes during the lockdown period. Opposition leaders are standing with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party to make sure that people follow the lockdown. **All in all, India stands united. Except one group — the BJP's IT cell.**

So why is their IT cell not using its abil-

ities to share with the masses correct and useful information on the ongoing health crisis instead of doing what it does best?

Indians are fighting against coronavirus and the BJP IT cell is fighting against Indians on top of everything else it does, such as engaging in vendetta politics and spreading the daily dose of hate against India's minorities. What can be achieved with this attitude?

It is obvious that the well-equipped IT cell with deep pockets hates any semblance of peace in the country. The IT cell must be disbanded after every election because that is the only time when the BJP may claim any need of this machinery.

Not to say it isn't so during polls, but beyond elections, everything the IT cell does makes it a permanent threat to peace and security overlooking the huge contributions of numerous scientist, physicians, artist and men of commerce and religion that have made our lives healthier, safer and more productive and pleasurable.

(Contd.. on p. 4)

(Contd.. from p. 3)

India is at crossroads today. Independence of Judiciary & Media has been severely compromised. Horse trading of MLA's is going on, without any fear or shame. India's Prime Minister collected thousands of crores in a fund and then made it private. Police are openly supporting rioters. Government and Media are systematically collaborating in spreading hate and mistrust between communities. The SC judgements are caused by the Hinduisation of India. What was suppressed under a secular atmosphere has come through into the open under the Hindutva air. **Please understand that your silence at this time is as deadly as the violence itself.**

Democracy is 'fragile' but it is also to be noted that it is invaluable. It is for this reason that people pine for democracy with all its imperfections. Democracy is rooted in the belief of the innate dignity of the human being. The dominant and intrusive state

cannot, by its nature, respect human dignity. The Leviathan cannot be considered the norm of an ideal polity.

Those with nationalist zeal and fervour are likely to argue that it is glory of the collective group, in this case it is the nation that is the greater worth than the fanciful idea of human dignity. **But an obedient population with no will of its own cannot claim dignity of life and without dignity life becomes a degraded form of existence.**

In this very year 2020 in which thousands of people have been struck by a terrible virus, when the pauperised masses without any food or shelter came begging crying for help, only to be turned away, as they were forced to take refuge back in their villages, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party fulfilled its longstanding promise of spending crores of rupees of building this grand temple devoted to the Hindu god Ram, on 5 August, 2020, on the spot where a mob had demolished a 16 century mosque in Ayodhya, the very place they have exiled the divine and banished the devout too.

This closes a chapter of the political Hindutva-isation of India that started with L.K. Advani's Rath Yatra in 1990 and the demolition of the Babri Masjid two years later, and ended with the sweeping electoral successes of Narendra Modi in 2014 and 2019, 12 years after the Gujarat riots.

Although our country has always upheld the age-old legacy of unity in diversity, the state takeover of the construction of the temple in the presence of the governor and the chief minister of UP is a negation of the secular democratic character of the Indian republic.

Covid-19 as well as economic recession and political Hinduisation of India have to be overcome so that people can regain control of their lives, and assert their freedoms, and the state becomes a symbol of national aspirations and wellbeing. It should not

become a jail warden overlooking a nationwide prison.

People can combat crises with greater will and zeal if their sense of dignity and self-worth is high. The liberal democratic state should remain same both the norm and the ideal, even if it is fragile. We cannot let our visions be darkened by the devastation caused by Covid-19 and political Hinduisation of India and look to the strong state as the divine dispensation which must continue to cast its shadow even after that of Covid-19 being lifted.

Like other great calamities, disasters and wars and economic depressions, this pandemic too will pass and we will survive. Meanwhile during this period of lengthy, indefinite and uncertain crises let's take the opportunity to help the poorest, jobless and homeless, daily wage earners and the sick, who during prolonged isolation may die of hunger even before the virus gets hold of them - while the government who have collected massive donations for this cause shirks its responsibility and instead chooses to use this money to topple state governments - a chance for those who only espoused benefits but lacked in charity, to get some divine redemption.

Overall there's never been a better time to introspect, retrospect and reminisce than now. Let's seize this opportunity to submerge our personal, ideological and political differences, ego and greed to make us all in this world responsible, healthy, united and peaceful.

If ALL people around us remain vigilant than we will conquer this pandemic and political Hinduisation of India. Remember this and ensure that all follow these guidelines and that we together fight for the social distancing and communal harmony.

We can bring a big difference in the life of 130 crores Indians if we understand the seriousness of this critical situation jointly in one voice.

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Pope Appoints 6 Women!

On 06 August 2020, Pope Francis appointed six highly talented women as new members to the Council for the Economy, which oversees Vatican finances and the work of the Secretariat for the Economy!

These women are high level experts in banking, finance, asset management, and international law from Britain, Spain, Italy and Germany. Among them are German law professor Charlotte Krechhof and Maria Kolak, presidents of the national association of German Cooperatives Banks. Maria Garaicoechea is the president of the board of Azora Capital, and independent investment manager, and Eva Castillo Sanz who is on the board of directors of Spanish Bank Bankia and elevator manufacturer Zardoya Otis. Ruth Mary Kelly served as Great Britain's Secretary of State for education under Tony Blair, and later worked for HSBC Global Asset Management. And also Leslie Jane Ferrar who was treasurer to Charles Prince of Wales, from January 2015 until July 2017. Besides she had been a trustee of the Archdiocese of Westminster for 19 years, and non-executive director of Income REIT for six years.

The Council for the Economy was established by Pope Francis in 2014 as part of his program of financial reform. According to its statutes, the Body supervises the administration and financial structures and activities of the Roman Curia, the Institutions of the Holy See, and the Vatican City State!

And if I may add, there were many women who helped Jesus and his disciples: "Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna and many others who provided for them from their resources" (Luke 8:3).

—Dr. Hazel Colaso,
Bandra (W), Mumbai.

End disrespect towards our National flag

Independence Day represents the true spirit of independent India and marks the patriotic fervour of all Indians across the country who celebrates this event with great enthusiasm year after year. On the occasion of Independence Day, we must remember the sacrifices made by those Indians who fought bravely for a liberated India. But it seems that the

Gandhian ideals that inspired India's independence struggles are no longer followed by the citizens today.

Each and every one of us respects Mahatma Gandhi and proudly addresses him as the 'Father of the Nation', but no one is prepared to tread the path adopted by him. Independence Day is a day for us to celebrate with the hoisting of our national flag, recitation of our national anthem, singing patriotic songs and organising social and cultural events.

The National Flag is symbolic of one's respect for the nation. However, there has been a new trend to sell flags, made of paper and plastic, as Independence Day or Republic Day approaches. With a sense of national pride, people buy such flags but the very next day, we find these flags being trampled on roads, in dustbins and elsewhere. By allowing this to happen, people forget that they are insulting the National Flag of the country. This disrespect towards our flag must come to an end.

—Jubel D'Cruz,
Mumbai

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Covid 19:

A Wake up Call for Unity among Faiths

by Dr M. D. Thomas

Frederick Engels, in his classic ecological work, 'The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man', observes that 'in nature nothing takes place in isolation. Everything affects and is affected by every other thing'. That would mean, continuous 'motion and interaction' compose the dynamics of nature. Therefore, 'everything is connected to everything else' is the ethos of environmental science.

The above environmental ethos underlines the metabolic dynamics in the human species, in terms of its essential relation with the external environment. The mutual interaction and relation between the duos, along with the humans themselves, cannot be ruled out, if existence on this planet has to be made meaningful. This gives a strong clue to how the epidemic corona virus came about, how to combat it and how to prevent similar instances in the future, as well.

It goes without a mention that Covid 19 has been causing immense havoc and misery in the human society. It has inflicted upon the humans incalculable confusion, panic, suffering and loss of life, along with the consequent downfall of economy and day-to-day life, from the homeless and labour class to employees and big industrial firms. Perhaps, the worst part of all that is the 'uncertainty' as to when the humans as a whole are going to be fortunate to take in a hygienic breath again.

I think, Covid 19 has done one good thing and it has to be profusely appreciated for the same. That is, when it was scheduled to attack the humans, it did not discriminate them, in terms of caste, class, creed, colour, ethnicity, gender, ideology, language,

nationality, senior-junior, ruler-ruled, rich-poor, great-small, theist-atheist, east-west, north-south, and the like. It spared only one group of people, those who were fairly strong in their power of immunity, mostly the young.

The dire fact stands out that it has not made a difference between a Hindu and a Muslim, a Christian and a Sikh, a Buddhist and a Jain, a Zoroastrian and a Jew, a Baha'i and an atheist, et cetera. Almost like death, it has levelled all considerations of high-low, good-bad, right-wrong and first-last. Those who came in touch with the affected got affected in return, by personal contact or by air. That's all. The 'equal footing' Covid 19 measured out to one and all is a major lesson for people of diverse faith-based and other affiliations, in shedding their divisive thinking and in sharpening their sense of mutual unity.

Further, Covid 19 affirms that 'everything is connected to everything else' and nothing in this world, human or environmental, is an isolated entity. Every item or entity has something to do with the other, whether species, group or individual. Everything is related to the other, in essence, although degree may vary. In other words, there is nothing like 'the other'. The so called 'other' is an extension of one's own being, brother or sister. Therefore, getting connected and interacting with, one to another, can never be ruled out, in any way, considering a meaningful existence on earth.

It is a matter of immense credit that the humans are endowed with intelligence, wisdom and discernment, in view of regulating life in the interest of one another. This creditable gift the creator has given them is to be geared towards conducting oneself, individual or group, by way of keeping the other as next of kin and in priority. 'Do to the

other what one would have the other due to one' (Mt 7.12), along with 'honour one another above yourself' (Rom 12.10), is the 'golden rule' of life for one and all. Could the humans act upon this golden rule and consider humans of other persuasions in esteem and reach out to him or her in need?

In addition, the ancient seers consider 'aham brahmaasmi', meaning 'I am brahman or god', and 'tatvamasī' (tat tvam asi), meaning 'you are that, you are god, you are part of god, it's you', etc (Brihदारanyaka and Chandogya Upanishads respectively). Similarly, divine wisdom has it that human beings are 'created in the image and likeness of god' (Gen.1.27-28) and that 'they themselves are god's temple and god's spirit dwells in them' (1 Cor 3.16). Both these celestial insights speak volumes of the inherent dignity and nature of the humans that apply to one and all, without exception and gradation. Therefore, the 'reciprocal relatedness' of human beings, clear of borders, is beyond the scope of being debated.

That would amount to state that to be inclined towards the other and to 'stay tuned' to and to be related to the other, through an incessant process of social 'interaction' is the basic ethics of human life, in line with the divine design. For that reason, one individual or community cannot exist, like an 'island', lake or pond, cut off from each other. The diverse streams of life cannot travel independently, like 'parallel lines' that do not meet, too. 'Walking together' and 'working together' is the way the different individuals or groups can make the best sense out of their lives as civilized human beings.

'Unity' is the watchword of a purpose-

(Contd.. on p. 10)

Mr. Yogi, You Have No Religion!

-Fr. Michael G., Vasai

When asked whether he will attend the groundbreaking ceremony of Masjid in Ayodhya as part of the supreme court's order last year, U.P. Chief Minister Mr. Adityanath said, "I will not go because I am a Yogi. As a Hindu, I have a right to live according to my method of worship..." This is not right. He ought to go for all ceremonies irrespective of religion for two reasons; first, as the Chief Minister of all people in the State; secondly as Yogi! Yoga means union; the union of the Self (Aatman) with the Absolute. (Paramaatman). 'Yogi' is one who has become one with the absolute. The Absolute has no particular religion, no shape, no name! Therefore Adityanath as Yogi should attend any religious functions. He can go for the Islamic ritual of Masjid in Ayodhya.

SANATAN DHARMA IS DEFILED

With the reign of BJP in the nation, many monks from the monastery came out and entered politics and social life with the intention of guiding society on the right path but in fact today have they achieved the goal? Another example is Ramdev Baba. He entered into the business of Patanjali Ayurved medicine and today he is involved in many corrupt practices. Just a few days ago the court slammed 10 lakh rupees fine for the misuse of one trade mark of a product. Many even Sadhus like Swami Agnivesh and thinkers like Justice Kolse Patil have concluded that these monks have maligned the true Hinduism. These monks have not guided the society by the values of Sanaatan Dharma or true Vedic culture like, Satyamev jayate, Vasundharev kutumkam etc. Adityanath had promised to do away with gundaraj in the state but in fact today his govern-

Can The Religious Retain Their 'Religiosity' In The Secular Life? That is required to guide society on the basis of the Gospel values of truth, justice and peace – not only go into heaven after death but to achieve Antyodaya; here and now, that the least person in the society lives life honourably.

ment stands supported by mafia. Mob lynchers and Gundas like Vikas Dube are protected by the state police!

THE RELIGIOUS IN SECULAR LIFE?

Let us reflect on our Christian clergy and religious authorities. Some years back a religious Carmelite Sister principle of a Catholic college in Patna was offered by the then Chief Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav, the Chancellorship of Patna University! To my surprise the venerable Sister declined the offer, saying that it is not possible for a Religious to be blameless in secular life! My question is: if a Religious cannot conduct his or her life morally upright as public officers, how can we expect the government officials to be incorrupt in the midst of all the corruption-prone occasions in public life? The religious should be able to maintain their 'holiness' even in secular life. That is the test of their holiness and a great model to the laity. That's like being 'light of the world' and the 'salt of the earth'! It is easy to be Holy in the convent and protected in the four walls of the Church institutions. It is difficult to practice religion in secular life. One closer look with the eyes of Jesus at our management of schools and other institutions, will uncover our

corrupt ways we deal with municipal and government officers! We defend ourselves by usual phrase: "O, you know no file moves without a paper-weight!" As a result even a piece of land for a church is to be bought with black money!"

I am reminded of my own experience in Vasai. We have The Bassein Catholic Co-Operative Scheduled Bank. It was founded by a priest, Father Monis hundred years ago; but today the Directing Board does not give membership to priests! I applied for the membership and was refused. Why? The dispute is going on for last three years and now even a case is pending in the High court! My intention was to give a little disciplinary note by my presence, to the management. Precisely that's the reason why the laity is not allowing the entry of the clergy in the Board of Directors. The laity is not willing to bring up moral reform! Of course again on the background of Adityanath my apprehension is whether the entry of the clergy will clean the public life. There are some priests-surpanchs and trustees of the Cooperative Societies; there much is desired in cleaning corruption and mismanagement!

So the question remains whether the religious monks can come out in secular life and still maintain their moral standard. Should priests be allowed to take part in politics and clean it? That is required to guide society on the basis of Gospel values of truth, justice and peace – not only go into heaven after death but to achieve Antyodaya; here and now, that the least person in the society lives life honourably.

May the Ram-Mandir bring soon Ram-Rajya!

WHETHER AS THE COVID PANDEMIC HAS CONTINUED WITHOUT RESPITE FOR NEARLY FIVE MONTHS, THE STATE HAS BECOME INDIFFERENT AS MILLIONS OF OUR POOR ARE GRADUALLY SLIPPING INTO INTENSE POVERTY?

by Eric D'Sa

India's labouring poor whom we named as the circular migrants, when the sudden lockdown was imposed in March this year, have largely disappeared even from the inner pages of newspapers and from television screens. It is as though, after the country has gradually unlocked and most migrants have returned home, the wrenching distress of mass hunger and sudden unemployment that racked their lives has somehow passed. The reality is entirely the reverse. The devastating impact of the unprecedented closure of the entire economy, which was already in recession, will endure for a long time. However, the immense suffering of the poor has been rendered invisible by the collective indifference of not only the state, but also the rich and middle classes.

Many activists of the right to food campaign countrywide, and volunteers for food relief, report conditions of even more worrying of poverty and deprivation from around the country. There are communities in the countryside — in small villages, forests, deserts, hills, river islands and Dalit - Tribal ghettos — who even in normal times survived on the edge of hunger. They used to an extent depend on remittances from migrants belonging to their families for their survival. These days they have to feed the migrants who have returned from the cities. Casual daily wage workers, weavers, artisans, home-based workers, rickshaw-pullers and street vendors in cities have always lived precarious lives too. But they have slipped much deeper into want. And there are millions of new entrants into the ranks of the hungry, including laid-off employees of small enterprises and eateries, domestic workers, sex workers, workers in the gig economy, and even teachers in low-income private schools and those taking private tuitions.

All of these workers, and tens of millions more, are bracing themselves for the ways that the dispossessed have learnt, from time immemorial, and that are hard-wired into their DNA, to live with chronic hunger. The first is to eliminate nutritious but unaffordable portions of one's diet, including dal, milk, vegetables, fruit, eggs and meat. Many families report that they are eating only coarse rice and roti with salt. The next step is to reduce food intake, cutting down on both the quantity eaten during each meal and the number of meals, teaching one's body to endure

**YOU THE CITIZENS
DECIDE:**

with less and less. As households slide further down this steep slope, there are increasing numbers of nights when they have to sleep hungry. Children who could earlier depend on the school or pre-school centre for at least one nutritious meal are now being sent out to work, including scrabbling through waste for anything which can be eaten or sold.

Unfortunately at senior levels of the Indian government, there is little acknowledgement of the depth of the crisis of hunger and the annihilation of livelihoods. To revive the economy and, in particular, MSMEs — the sector employing the most people outside agriculture — the Finance Minister relies mostly on credit rather than on fiscal transfers, unmindful that when both demand and production have crashed, credit will have few takers and can accomplish little.

Besides the state governments have also sought to revive the broken economy by excluding workers from regimes of labour rights protections, ostensibly for attracting foreign capital investment. Instead of atoning for the immense distress of unprotected workers and mitigating future

suffering by building sturdy legal walls for their protections, many State governments have used the pandemic to further weaken the scant protections, which the law currently provides informal workers. Some governments attempted to extend the workday to 12 hours, to suspend the protections of various labour laws for three years, and regulate the movement of workers across State borders.

Even prior to the pandemic, India slipped to the 102nd position in the Global Hunger Report of 2019 that ranked 117 countries. It had fallen behind its neighbours Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The economy was also stuttering, with unemployment at a 45-year high. In the midst of this smouldering crisis, the most stringent lockdown in the world was imposed, nearly halting both demand and supply overnight. As the COVID-19 infection spreads to States with the most broken public health systems, such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, and with the homeless and the poor being excluded from highly privatised health facilities in cities, the problems of the poor will further exacerbate. As the virus ravages bodies enfeebled by hunger and distress, they remain abandoned by the state, with no reliable access to care.

Through all of this, the political establishment, the media and the middle class remain culpably indifferent, preoccupied instead with buying legislators and toppling governments; purchasing military aircraft; jailing dissenters on false charges; and divisive agendas like the triumphalist construction of a Ram temple at the site of a demolished medieval mosque. With millions slipping invisibly into chronic hunger and intense poverty, India is hurtling silently into its gravest humanitarian crisis in over half a century. Reliable economists estimate at least 100 million of our population will slip below the poverty line in this financial year.

Fifth August 2020: A Lamentable Day Indeed!

Fifth August 2020: Sometime after noon, a 'bhoomi puja' will take place in Ayodhya; this will mark the beginning of the construction work for a Ram temple, at the site where the Babri Masjid once stood. The construction of the temple is expected to take three years and the costs, yet undisclosed, will surely run into astronomical amounts. The Babri Masjid-Ram Mandir fight, has been one of the most contentious issues in post-independent India. It has resulted in plenty of bloodshed, destruction, violence, hate and divisiveness. In November 2019 in a rather unpalatable, controversial, yet historic written judgement (which is still unsigned), the Supreme Court granted the entire 2.77 acres of disputed land in Ayodhya to the Hindu litigants. In that very judgment, for apparently 'balancing equities', the court directed the Central and Uttar Pradesh governments to allot an alternative five acres of land to the Muslim party to build a mosque. Many thinking citizens of India (mainly from the majority community) are not unhappy with the judgement but also the fact that the 'bhoomi puja' is taking place which will add to the polarization of an already divided nation! **A lamentable day indeed!**



BY FR. CEDRIC PRAKASH SJ

Fifth August 2020: The Prime Minister will be present for the 'bhoomi puja.' He will not go there as a private citizen but as a Constitutional authority who is expected to protect and promote the secular fabric of the country. Despite pleas from several sections of society that he does not participate in the event, he has thrown all caution and propriety to the wind, in order to display his threw colours (he stopped hiding them a long time ago) The majority of Indians are Hindu; but thanks to the vision and ideals of our Constitu-

ent Assembly secularism was allowed to flourish with (at least theoretically) all religions treated with respect and allowed to grow. In the pathbreaking judgment of 1994 of **S.R. Bommai vs Union of India**, secularism was recognised as part of the basic structure of the constitution; Justice Jeevan Reddy held that the constitution does not recognise or permit mixing religion and state power, and the two must be kept apart. The judgement states, "*if the Constitution requires the State to be secular in thought and action, the same requirement attaches to political parties as well. The Constitution does not recognise, it does not permit, mixing religion and State power. Both must be kept apart. That is the constitutional injunction. None can say otherwise so long as this Constitution governs this country. Introducing religion into politics is to introduce an impermissible element into body politic and an imbalance in our constitutional system. If a political party espousing a particular religion comes to power, that religion tends to become, in practice, the official religion. All other religions come to acquire a secondary status, at any rate, a less favourable position. This would be plainly antithetical to Articles 14 to 16, 25 and the entire constitutional scheme adumbrated hereinabove. Under our Constitution, no party or Organisation can simultaneously be a political and a religious party.*" With the PM actually being there at the 'bhoomi puja' makes it **a lamentable day indeed!**

Fifth August 2020: Exactly a year on 5 August 2019, in a move that is acknowledged by legal luminaires both in India and globally as blatantly unconstitutional, the Government of India, abrogated Article 370 and Article 35A, thus revoking Jammu and Kashmir's special semi-autonomous status guaranteed in the Indian Constitution.

It demoted India's only Muslim majority state to a Union Territory. For a year now Kashmir has become one big prison and placed under a months-long lockdown without practically no internet or communication facilities. Thousands including activists, lawyers and minors, were arrested; besides political opponents have been incarcerated, silenced and some even 'bought up'. The Government has destroyed what was once sacred to the state by making it now possible for all Indians to acquire rights to vote and buy land in J&K; it has initiated an exercise to redraw parliamentary and assembly constituencies that could tilt the balance of power to the Hindu-majority Jammu Division, and withdrawn an order that made it mandatory for Indian security forces to obtain a No Objection Certificate (NOC) before acquiring land in the region. Media has been silenced; those who speak up and take a stand for Kashmir and her people are branded as 'anti-national' or 'pro-Pakistan'. The losses to the J&K economy in the past year are conservatively estimated to be around Rs 40,000 crores. A sad anniversary: **a lamentable day indeed!**

Fifth August 2020: Rashid, the firebrand young activist from Kashmiri, an alumnus of JNU has been one of those voices who has, despite all odds, been trying to keep Kashmir on the nation's agenda. It is an uphill task indeed. In an interview to *HuffPost India* (4 August 2020) when asked "How do you feel one year after Article 370 was revoked?" Rashid said, "I straddle two very complex identities of Indian Muslim and a Kashmiri woman. In this new India, the space for me as a woman, as a Muslim, as a Kashmiri, and as a research student, is shrinking. The space to be different is shrinking. There is an attempt to paint everything in one colour and homogenise a very diverse coun-

(Contd.. on p. 10)

(Contd.. from p. 9)

try. One used to be afraid of being a Kashmiri in Delhi, now one is afraid of being a Kashmiri in Kashmir. It could be just psychological but that is what the government is doing. The biggest change is a feeling of insecurity. We have this feeling that Kashmir, our home, a distinct place where our culture could thrive, seems to be slipping away. That it is being snatched away from us. There is already a sense of nostalgia". There are other voices from civil society too, who no uncertain terms condemn the assault on the rights and freedom of the people of #KashmirCaged #StandWithKashmir #ReleasePoliticalPrisoners #Restore4G #EndOccupation .Making the reality there today: **a lamentable day indeed!**

Fifth August 2020: Nobody cares when India has the greatest spike in the COVID-19 cases and deaths on a single day worldwide. When the poor, the excluded and the vulnerable (particularly the daily wagers and the migrant workers) are on the receiving end of a system which has neither a heart nor a conscience! When human rights defenders, journalists, activists, intellectuals and all who take a stand

for Truth and Justice and stand up to the anti-people policies of the Government – are throttled, incarcerated and even killed! It is the eve of the 75th Anniversary of the Nuclear holocaust: first in Hiroshima (6 August 1945) and then in Nagasaki (9 August 1945). The world at that time said 'NEVER AGAIN' – a NO to every form of violence. India (which gave to the world the doctrine of 'ahimsa': non-violence) does not seem to have learnt. The ruling regime clearly espouses hate, divisiveness and violence: Kashmir today, the bhoomi puja today, are indicators of this! **A lamentable day indeed!**

There is a small book in the Holy Bible called the 'Book of Lamentations', the writer says, *"Moreover, our eyes failed, looking in vain for help; from our towers we watched for a nation that could not save us. People stalked us at every step, so we could not walk in our streets. Our end was near, our days were numbered, for our end had come. (4: 17-18) and further, "You, LORD, reign forever; your throne endures from generation to generation. Why do you always forget us? Why do you forsake us so long? Restore us to yourself, LORD, that we may return; renew our days as of old"* (5:19-21). Words worth reflecting on, this **Fifth August 2020: a lamentable day indeed!**

**(Fr Cedric Prakash SJ is human rights and peace activist/writer. Contact: cedricprakash@gmail.com)*

(Contd.. from p. 6)

ful life. But, in the society where unity seems to be the most difficult to exist is the faith sector. Perceptions, experiences and convictions are not easy to unite. A sense of reason and scientific temper has to reign over the faith sector, so that one believer can accommodate the other believer in one's world. 'Staying united with believers of other perceptions and convictions', realizing that they are sharing the one and only God, though slightly differently, is the litmus test for the realness of faith and quality of life, two-in-one.

Covid 19 is a 'wake-up call' for the humans, faith-based individuals and communities in special, to 'stay united'. It is a hard but an imperative lesson for 'thinking inclusively' of the other, learning from a different set of values, accommodating the other, respecting and loving the other, reaching out to the other in service and, at the end of the day, for 'living harmoniously' with the other. 'Unity among faiths', among believers and faith-based communities is the proof positive for having a faith that is worth the while. Unity of faiths is the yard stick for measuring the 'harmony quotient' (HQ) of a certain country and the larger society, as well, because 'every human being is connected to everyone, in the same divine essence'.

The author is Founder Director of Institute of Harmony and Peace Studies, New Delhi, Former National Director of Commission for Religious Harmony, CBCI. He is a thinker, speaker, writer, and most of all, an active promoter of harmony and peace among faith-based and social communities.

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Bhumi Pujan well timed?

A Ram temple at the disputed site is a reality with the Temple Trust organizing a Bhoomi Pujan – Foundation laying ceremony on the 5th August 2020 which was by no means disciplined or truncated. The nation was promised that the same will be conducted in a way that the guidelines in force will be adhered to strictly. What we saw was something different. The whole event commenced much before the arrival of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. There was no social distancing at all. The holy men and those specially and selectively invited were seen hurdled together with no social distancing in sight unless the guidelines were diluted for the day. Scores of persons were seen together and many of them without any masks. Among others, Baba Ramdev [famous for false Covid-19 cure claim] was without any mask unless his flowing beard and moustache served the purpose. Only when PM arrived that all guidelines seemed to have been followed scrupulously, perhaps only to show him.

No sooner he left the venue the social distancing went for a toss once again. Thereafter thousands of devotees thronged the streets and lanes of Ayodhya celebrating the important event which could change the course of history if all stakeholders turn a new leaf. As the PM had said earlier there are no winners or losers in this long drawn litigation. Even victory celebrations were either curtailed or discouraged. The wounds of the losing side will take a long time to heal so long as the old guard holds the fort for that community. The new generation may not carry the grouse too far in the years to come unless they are brainwashed by those in politics who do not want to bring closure. There was bickering on the timing of the ceremony. While the objection appeared to be genuine, the BJP has branded it as a typical political gimmick. They went ahead despite the death of a UP Minister and a BJP MLA on account of the corona virus. Bihar elections were more important. While Uma Bharati could manage to get invited, the main architects and icons of the mandir movement L.K. Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi were totally sidelined citing their old age. They could have been brought in the PM's aircraft. Their presence could have stolen the limelight from the PM. Remember they were

VIEWS on NEWS

similarly sidelined in 2014 when the cut off age was kept at 75 and denied even tickets to contest the elections and made Marg Darshaks whose guidance was never sought in six years. Their alienation and humiliation are complete as both of them are currently in their sunset phase. It is sad! But that is politics. They must be dejected men left to face the court and its verdict hoping the judicial decision will not come during their life time.

Assauddin Oweisi the fiery MP from Hyderabad and a prominent Muslim voice had a valid point when he asks if a sitting Prime Minister [representing all religions] should be a Chief Guest for a religious ceremony taking the centre stage. India being a secular country he should not be seen to favour/ promote one religion even if people maintain that he is a Hindu first and then a PM. Oweisi has raised a larger issue and even personally I always felt that pictures or idols of Gods should not adorn the walls of government offices or PSUs. It would have been another story if similar pictures/ idols of other religions were also allowed to be adorned alongside in such offices. Even pujas in public offices should be avoided. We have seen bank branches holding Mahapujas annually inside bank premises and the entire banking work is disrupted. This, on the face of it, looks inappropriate and should be avoided at all costs. Finally, the foundation timing was chosen to coincide with abrogation of article 370 last year which was largely seen as directed against a particular community. The temple will be ready in 2024 and a grand opening by the PM will be scheduled 'before' the Election Code comes into force. That is the whole idea. Such an event will pay tremendous dividend when the actual elections take place thus assuring the BJP yet another term [with absolute majority in the Upper House as well] to implement its policies, which at times, look dubious.

Mouthshut.com

This website address used to appear on autorikshaws some years ago and I always wondered which brainless person could ever think of having such an address for whatever reason. On hind sight, the man who thought of it must be a genius endowed with prophetic powers to peep into the future. He must have vi-



by Marshall Sequeira

sualized that one day all human beings will have to keep their mouths shut [using masks of different colours, designs, price etc]. Covid-19 made this possible. Today the whole human race moves about with their masks which when one hangs around ones neck resembles a bib. The next best thing for them is to keep their mouths shut and go about their limited business which also is controlled.

There is a famous Hindi dialogue which goes like " Duniya me kissi ko muha dikane layak na rahe" which means – we simply cannot show our faces to the world [society]. Of course, this is in the context of someone very close to you behaving in such a way that the family is highly ashamed. But in a situation that we are in today, all of us are in the same boat and there is nothing to be ashamed about it. With overgrown hair and even beard may be and a mask that covers your nose and face one can hardly be recognized. Looking at the way things are moving, it is unlikely that we could show our faces to anyone anytime in the foreseeable future except within the four corners of one's house. Very depressing!

Social distancing is here to stay and religious congregations will remain banned for a long time. Churches across the world are concerned especially in countries where religion plays an important role. Churches in India which see huge crowds are worried; especially the elderly who frequent the places of worship far more than the youth. In advanced countries they have been practicing social distancing for decades. Hardly anybody goes to Church. Someone from India was shocked to see hardly anybody for a Maundy Thursday Mass in Germany. The priest could barely find enough people to represent the 12 Apostles for washing of the feet. These people have mastered the art of social distancing over the years. Finally till things improve, just keep your mouth shut and live on.....

Yes! We K A N!

-*Fr Cedric Prakash SJ

Three significant observances mark 9 August every year: the anniversary of the 'Quit India Movement', the anniversary of the nuclear bombing of Nagasaki and the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. Though each of these observances have their own specificity, there is a deep inter-connectedness among all three, particularly in the values that they are intended to highlight on a day like this! Three underlying words emphasise this" Kranti (meaning 'revolution'), Adivasi (the Indian word for 'indigenous people) and Nagasaki (the bombed city)

KRANTI! A call to revolution! A call for change! A call for freedom. It was a clarion call given by Mahatma Gandhi, when on 8 August, 1942 at the Bombay session of All India Congress Committee, he introduced the resolution to start a 'Quit India Movement'. The resolution was unanimously passed at that historic meeting. Later, Gandhi gave a fiery speech at Mumbai's Gowalia Tank Maidan (today known as August Kranti Maidan) marking the beginning of the Quit India Movement. He said, *"There is a mantra, a short one that I give you. You imprint it in your heart and let every breath of yours give an expression to it. The mantra is do or die. We shall either be free or die in the attempt."* The next day on 9 August, the 'kranti' had begun; they were out on the streets demanding that the British should leave India immediately! Most of the leaders, who belonged to every strata of society were arrested. On expected lines none of the 'sanghis' who belonged the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) (founded in 1925) were there demanding that the British leave. There is enough of historical evidence to show how they 'toed' the line of their British masters. Sadly, they rule the country today and have destroyed India in every possible way. Gandhi's mantra for a new Kranti is today loud and clear, as never before!

ADIVASI! A people we need to acknowledge and celebrate today on the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. The theme this year (with an appropriate explanation from the UN) is 'COVID-19 and indigenous peoples' resilience'. Indigenous communities already face a host of challenges, and the unfortunate present reality is that the effects of the

COVID-19 pandemic are worsening these challenges further still. Indigenous communities already experience poor access to healthcare, significantly higher rates of diseases, lack of access to essential services, sanitation, and other key preventive measures, such as clean water, soap, disinfectant, etc. Likewise, most nearby local medical facilities are often under-equipped and under-staffed. Even when indigenous peoples can access healthcare services, they can face stigma and discrimination. A key factor is to ensure services and facilities are provided in indigenous languages, as appropriate to the specific situation of Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples' traditional lifestyles are a source of their resiliency and can also pose a threat at this time in preventing the spread of the virus. For example, most indigenous communities regularly organize large traditional gatherings to mark special events e.g. harvests, coming of age ceremonies, etc. Some indigenous communities also live in multi-generational housing, which puts Indigenous peoples and their families, especially the Elders, at risk. Furthermore, indigenous peoples already face food insecurity as a result of the loss of their traditional lands and territories or even climate change effects. They also confront even graver challenges accessing food. With the loss of their traditional livelihoods, which are often land-based, many indigenous peoples, who work in traditional occupations and subsistence economies or in the informal sector, will be adversely affected by the pandemic. The situation of indigenous women, who are often the main providers of food and nutrition to their families, is even graver. In India, the Government is making every effort to destroy the identity of the adivasis. The Draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) 2020 makes it easier for forests to be destroyed and natural resources to be looted by the Corporate Sector and the ilk of the ruling regime. Today the legitimate rights of the Adivasis (the original inhabitants of our land) are being denied to them; they cry out for Justice, Access, Inclusiveness: **JAI ADIVASI!**

NAGASAKI! Exactly 75 years ago and three days after Hiroshima was razed to the ground with the terrible nuclear bomb, the port city of Nagasaki met with a similar fate. It was not on the original list of cities that were meant to be bombed by the US and their allies. It was apparently a last-minute inclusion. Being a shipbuilding centre, it was the very industry intended

for destruction. The bomb was dropped at 11:02 a.m., 1,650 feet above the city. The explosion unleashed the equivalent force of 22,000 tons of TNT. The hills that surrounded the city did a better job of containing the destructive force, but the number killed is estimated at anywhere between 60,000 and 80,000 (exact figures are impossible, the blast having obliterated bodies and disintegrated records). The pain, the suffering, the destruction and the death will forever remain etched in human memory. The nuclear bomb had to be abhorred. Japan soon surrendered unconditionally. World War II ended some weeks later and the world said "Never Again!"

The day itself besides being replete with powerful historical significance and symbolism also holds a promise and hope for the future. There is something else which is very special about 9 August. On that day in 1942 (the very day on which Gandhi and his companions were arrested in faraway Bombay), Edith Stein was killed by the Nazis in a gas chamber in Auschwitz concentration camp. Born in 1891, Edith was a brilliant German Jewish philosopher who converted to Catholicism and later became a Discalced Carmelite nun(taking the religious name of Teresa Benedicta of the Cross). In 1998, she was canonized as a martyr and saint of the Catholic Church, and she is one of six copatron saints of Europe. A person whose entire life reflected that faith works, hope sustains, charity strengthens and truth triumphs. The Church celebrates her feast on 9 August a fitting reminder of what holiness is all about!

Barack Obamawas first elected President of the United States on 4 November 2008. That night in Chicago, he gave a memorable election victory speech which was heard and watched by millions all over the world! He also made constant reference to his popular campaign chant, "Yes We Can" He said , *"and tonight, I think about all that she's seen throughout her century in America — the heartache and the hope; the struggle and the progress; the times we were told that we can't; and the people who pressed on with that American creed: 'Yes, we can'."* Our pledge today re-echoes a similar sentiment: the Kranti which we need to usher in, the rights of the Adivasis and of all people which we must defend and above all in the context of Nagasaki to say 'NO' to every form of violence!

Yes, we KAN and we MUST!

**Fr Cedric Prakash SJ is a human rights and peace activist/writer. Contact: cedricprakash@gmail.com)*

Indian Christians who fought for the country's Independence

As we celebrate 73 years of independence on August 15 this year, the Christian community of India has reasons to legitimately feel proud of its contribution to the nation.

The Christian community of India has played an important role in the early phase of the Indian National Congress, especially at the third session of the Congress in the year, 1887 where, out of 607 participants, there were 15 Indian Christian delegates who actively participated in the deliberation. Some of the outstanding Indian Christian delegates were Madhu Sunder Das of Odisha who addressed the Congress on the question of expansion of legislative councils and N. Subramanian, who proposed and pleaded for a complete separation of judicial and executive functions by the government officials. The Indian Christian delegates continued their contributions in the four subsequent sessions of the Congress. Special mention should be made of Pandita Ramabai Saraswati and Kali Chandran Banerji too.

Pandita Ramabai Saraswati (1858-1922) was an outstanding Indian Christian woman. In the 1889 Congress session, there were 10 Christian delegates of which Pandita Ramabai Saraswati was one. She was one of the first Indian who championed the right of women to participate in national politics, eloquently articulating the pitiable history of Indian womanhood. Ramabai also played an important role in the third session of the National Social Conference in 1889 at which she supported a resolution condemning the practice of disfiguring the Hindu widows.

Kali Chandran Banerji is considered

one of the great leaders and founders of 'The Movement for Emancipation'. A writer of the third session of the Congress in 1887 had this to say: "Perhaps, the finest orator in the whole assembly was Babu Kali Chandran Banerji, who is a Bengali Christian."

In the 1889 session, Babu Kali Chandran Banerji was responsible for a resolution demanding improvement in the educational systems particularly university education. He was also instrumental in 1889 in protesting against the prohibition imposed by the government on teachers participating in the political movements. In the year, 1896, he again presented a resolution demanding improvement in the educational system, especially the university education in the country.



by Jubel D'Cruz

Brahmabandhab Upadhyay (real name George Thomas), the 'Hindu Catholic' sadhu and theologian was a leading player in the Swadeshi movement, and he was prosecuted on a charge of sedition in 1907.

C. Kumarappa (original name John Jesudason Cornelius, 1892-1960) was a veteran Congress leader. On May 9, 1929, he met Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (Mahatma Gandhi) at the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad and that resulted in their becoming close associates. He was a strong supporter of Satyagraha and encouraged Christian participation in the national movement.

Paul Ramasamy was another Christian who took part in the Indian freedom movement. In the year 1930, he joined the freedom movement during the Salt Satyagraha days. He pick-



CHRISTIAN Freedom Fighters of INDIA



eted the Bishop Herber College, Tiruchirappalli. He was arrested and sentenced to six months of imprisonment and was kept at Tiruchirappalli and Allipuram jails in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka respectively.

In the freedom and pro-democracy movement in Travancore in the 1930s and 1940s, prominent Christian leaders like T. M. Varghese, A. J. John, Anne Mascarenhas and Akkamma Cherian were pioneering forces. Philoppose Elanjikkal John (1903-1955) was another prominent member of the Travancore State Congress. Joachim Alva (1907-1979) was another outstanding personality in the history of the freedom struggle. John Francis Pinto and Jerome Saldanha also helped us to get our Independence. They were close associates of Mahatma Gandhi.

Then was Joseph 'Kaka' Baptista (1864-1930) too who was a close associate of Lokmanya Tilak. He was a Marathi Christian and belonged to the East Indian Catholic community of Mumbai. He was also elected as the Mayor of Bombay in the year, 1925. It was Kaka Joseph Baptista who coined the slogan "Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it" and not Lokmanya Tilak as we have learnt in school.

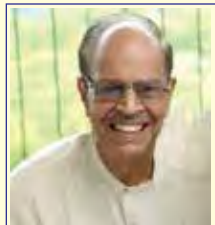
**A Paradise For Senior Citizens
Set Up A Lifestyle For Seniors-Solace For Senior Citizens-**



Senior Citizens Getting Homely Solace

South India in general and Coimbatore in TN in particular provide solace to the senior citizens when they are left alone by their children or if they chose to live independently, then Nana Nani homes come to their rescue. There are different types of old age people living in these homes. There are old couples living in such homes to live a peaceful life without worrying about their kith and kin and the ladies in general get rid of their kitchen work and live in a rather tension less life in these homes provided with all the facilities. There are single oldladies and single men, who lost their wives at this age of life and left without much support. They lead a happy life enjoying a serene atmosphere in the old age homes and spend their valuable time mingling around other seniors in these blocks.

This writer had an opportunity to stay in Ananya's Nana Nani Homes and spend some valuable time analyzing the lifestyle of seniors. There is a flat system with two bedrooms, Villa type with two bedrooms and Villa big type with 3 bed rooms for a comfortable living. Generally, people who sell their property in some part of the country or taking shelter from overseas countries come into this fold with an aim to spend their remaining time with a variety of people living in this well arranged settlement for senior citizens.



C.K. Subramaniam

The place called Dhaliyur in the outskirts of Coimbatore provides a beautiful location with mountains on both the sides to give you a scenic atmosphere to mingle with nature. The greenery all round gives the solace and the oxygen needed for easy breathing. Evenings are meant for walking and chit chatting by the wise men and women expressing their feelings and living a different life altogether from the busy life in big cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and some of them from London and from the cities of the United States of America. They mingle with each other and we come across unity in diversity with different strata of society coming together under one roof called senior citizen homes.

The area is totally secured and maintained cleanly on a regular basis by dedicated staff for sweeping and cleaning for several times in a day. Thus we are free from pollution. You cannot even find a dog entering



the campus for seniors and the cars and other vehicles should maintain a speed of 20 kms to avoid pollution and unwanted sound of the engine. The old home campus has Ganpati and Shiva Temples to welcome you with religious vibes and provide a pious atmosphere for a god fearing life. Daily prayers are conducted in this temple and prasadam are distributed daily in the morning and evening. The campus is having a medicare and a wellness block exclusively looking after the welfare of the inmates. A big park is there for an evening walk and the sitting arrangement for resting when you feel like taking rest.

BP and sugar levels of the seniors are taken periodically to monitor the health conditions of the seniors in a systematic way. A well maintained canteen is there to provide you healthy food and nearly 450 members take food in these canteens. Strict timings are followed for morning breakfast, lunch, evening tea and dinner. Club House caters to the needs of meditation, indoor games, gym facility and an ayurvedic centre for regular health check ups. Both gents and ladies beauty salons are there to maintain your look well. A mini theatre, Library and guest rooms are available to give the guests a place to stay and look after their parents during the vacation time. House keeping and regular maintenance is done and the premises are kept in spic and clean. Banks are there in the vicinity to provide transfer of funds from the children, near and dear. Dream homes for seniors provide a paradise for safe living at an old age.

C.K. SUBRAMANIAM senior freelancer of 50 years now at 70 visited the place and a report filed here.



Education in Transition - Covid 19, NEP 2020

is an option. All higher education will be governed by only one authority. UGC AICTE will be merged. All University government, private, Open, Deemed, Vocational etc will have the same grading and other rules. New Teacher Training board will be set up for all kinds of teachers, no state can make changes. Same level of Accreditation to any college, based on its rating, college will get autonomous rights and funds. New Basic learning program will be created by the government for parents to teach children upto 3 years in home and for pre school 3 to 6. Multiple entry and exit from any course. Credit system for graduation for students, credits can be utilized if break in course is availed. All schools exams will be semester wise twice a year. The syllabus will be reduced to core knowledge of a subject. More focus on student practicals and applied knowledge. For any graduation course if a student completes only one year he will get a basic certificate, if he completes two years then he will get a Diploma certificate and if he completes the full course can get a degree certificate. So no year of any student will be wasted if the course is discontinued in between. All the graduation courses of all Universities will be governed by single authority. It is clear that education will see major change in it's profile post 2020.

Transition seems to be the norm of year 2020, a year of revolutions; lives are facing incalculable changes and a sensitive one of these is EDUCATION which is now troubling our young people. Now, the education sector is facing a dimension that is unknown, the new 'National Education Policy- NEP 2020' just announced, set to rattle the entire system, further to the Corona Pandemic 2020. The holocaust since March 2020 is yet to bring lights at the end of the tunnel. Change is the law of life, a challenge often, accepting and adjusting to changes is the answer for good results and future.

ing lockdowns being imposed in the country, the education sector came to a standstill. This is an unprecedented, unexpected and unpredicted situation.

New Education Policy 2020

: In the recent weeks a new dimension is the Government bombshell over the confused education scenario and much is to be discussed, understood and tackled. Let us look at the basics of the new policy in a nutshell here. The 10+2 board structure is to



The educational institutions are more vulnerable to the spread of the disease due to the assembling in the classrooms. Until effective treatment and vaccines are invented, it is difficult to bring back the students to the schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions. Lockdowns to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic have posed many challenges for education globally and in India it is precarious. With vary-

be dropped. New school structure will be 5+3+3+4, upto 5 pre school, 6 to 8 Mid School, 8 to 11 High School, 12 onwards Graduation. Any Degree will be 4 years; 6th std onwards vocational courses available. From 8th to 11 students can choose subjects. All graduation courses will have major and minor..Example - science students can have Physics as Major and Music as minor also - any combination

Post Covid-19 : School and class learning will transform in the post Covid-19, blended learning will be a reality. The classroom will be supplemented by online coursework. Students may physically attend classes on

fewer days and will be free to study at their own pace. Training of teachers will be qualitatively different, all the teachers will have to be trained for online teaching as well. This will go a long way to ensure that they are comfortable with technology and will be able to seamlessly switch between online and offline modes of

(Contd.. on p. 17)

Man: "Oh Guru! Why is it that when I open my eyes in bed at night, I see an aura light around my wife's head? What does it all mean spiritually?"

Guru: "She's checking your cell-phone."

If a woman listens to you for 5 minutes, she's your daughter
If a woman listens to you for 15 minutes, she's your sister
If a woman listens to you for 30 minutes she's your mother
If a woman never listens to you, she is deaf.
Why unnecessarily bring wife into every joke

Getting your wife's attention is not difficult at all,
Just sit on the couch appearing to be relaxed and comfortable...!!

Best resignation ever from a girl to her senior .
Dear Sir ,
Thanks a lot for the opportunity provided to work for such a great organization. Working with you has been a very encouraging and learning experience.
Sir, I want to explore new challenges to test my skills, ability and further enhance my experience , So that I am getting married this year.
After due consideration, I have decided to resign from my current profile. Request you to kindly consider this email as my formal resignation and kindly relieve me from my duties ASAP.
With Regards/X

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Today, my neighbour's 12 year old son said , "I've lost half my Property due to the Corona lockdown."
I asked "How???"
He said, "My Mom's Pregnant..!!"

Finally.... finally
I have understood difference between Lock up & Lock Down
Lock up is Stay in police custody
Lock down is Stay in wife's custody.
One more thing.....
Lock up is bailable
Lock down is non-bailable..

Khatarnak, Jaanleva Technology problem-
Wife to husband – where were you on Saturday night?
Husband- ohh, there was a urgent work I was asked to finish, so had to stay back in office.
Wife – Ohh..Really? Then why your "Fitband" shows you burned 300 calories
and your heart rate was more than normal at 1 AM in Night?
Husband- Silent...
Wife-Violent...(*_*)

One day a wife checked the names/contact saved in her husband's mobile
Eye treatment
Treatment of lips
Heart treatment
Body Massage
Wife dialed her number in anger ...
Her name came named as 'incurable'.

Whatsapp from Husband to Wife
Dear Sweetheart,
I can't send my salary this month, so I am sending 100 kisses. My One and

only Cuddly-Wuddly Honey

Your husband

Wife's Response

Apple of My Eye,

Thanks for your 100 kisses, I am sending the expenses details.
1) The Milk man agreed on 5 kisses for one month's milk.
2) The electricity man only agreed after 10 kisses.
3) Your house owner is coming every day and taking 2 kisses instead of the rent.
4) Supermarket owner did not accept kisses only, so I have given him some other items
Plz don't worry for me, I have a remaining balance of 25 kisses and I hope I can complete the month using this balance.

Only Yours Cutie pie

Friend 1: Why is your eye swollen?
Friend 2: It was my wife's birthday yesterday and I bought her a cake.
Friend 1: But how did your eye get swollen?
Friend 2: Her name is Tapasya... but that cake shop idiot wrote "Happy Birthday Samasya!"

After great demands from all husbands.....
All new app called "Darr" is launched for Smartphones....
As you just speak..... 'Wife'.....and it closes all open websites,
hides all chats, shuts down all games,
hide all special folders and best of all.
puts your wife's photo as a wallpaper.
Also, your wife name run as screen-saver
When Smartphone screen is idle.

Husband & wife are like liver and kidney.
Husband is liver & wife is kidney.
If liver fails, kidney fails.
If kidney fails, liver manages with other kidney.

(Contd.. from p. 15)

teaching the curriculum. Soon, educators will have to discard the 'one-size-fits-all' approach that is mostly followed in traditional classrooms and use technology to offer a learning experience that is uniquely suited to a child's learning needs. The blended approach to learning, in turn will help all types of students, since they will have the opportunity to engage with different types of content such as video, audio, presentations, thereby increasing the ability to personalize learning. Interactivity and engagement in a physical classroom will have to be built into the online learning programs. Physical classrooms offer a high degree of interactivity with the teacher and also among students.

Social Distancing principles will have to be incorporated, as and when schools, coaching centers and other educational institutions open up after Covid-19. Schools might consider working in shifts, classrooms will follow strict sanitization processes. Unable to hang out with their friends, peers and classmates like they used to, and not being able to expend their energy on sports, will be a difficult matter. It is important to equip them with suitable coping mechanisms and help them to build and strengthen their connections with supportive adults, including their teachers.

This new policy no doubt opens a Pandora's box. On the face of it, all is good and promising, many recent Govt policies are so, but delivery is the catch. It needs all effort and integrity for a clean and green implementation to succeed and deliver in true measure to all classes of society without discrimination and any malice or neglect. Hope well and aim high, will be the mantra for the vast stakeholders.

—Compiled :
Ivan Saldanha - Shet.

Recipe:

Chocolate Cake

Ingredients:

400 grams granulated white sugar
250 grams all-purpose flour
80 grams unsweetened cocoa powder
2 tsp baking powder
2 tsp baking soda
1 tsp salt
3 eggs
240 ml warm water or coffee
240 ml milk
120 ml corn, vegetable, safflower or canola oil
2 tsp pure vanilla extract

For Chocolate Frosting:

180 gms semi sweet or bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
230 gms unsalted butter
230 gms confectioners (powdered or icing) sugar, sifted
2 tsp pure vanilla extract

Method:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (180 degrees C) and place the oven rack in the centre of the oven. Butter, or spray with a non-stick vegetable spray, two 9-inch (23 cm) cake pans. Then line the bottoms of the pans with parchment paper.

In a large bowl, whisk together the sugar, flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, baking soda and salt.

In another large bowl, whisk together the eggs, water (or coffee), milk, oil, and vanilla extract. Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients and stir or whisk, until combined (The batter will be quite thin). Evenly divide the batter between the two pans and bake for about 28-32 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the centre of the cake just comes out clean.

Remove from oven and let it cool on a wire rack for about 10 minutes. Then remove the cakes from



their pans and cool completely on a greased wire rack before frosting.

For Chocolate Frosting:

Melt the chocolate in a heatproof bowl placed over a saucepan of simmering water. Remove from the heat and let it cool to room temperature.

In the bowl of your electric mixer, or with a hand mixer, beat the butter until smooth and creamy. Add the sugar and beat until it is light and fluffy. Beat in the vanilla extract. Add the chocolate and beat on low speed until incorporated. Increase the speed to medium-high and beat until frosting is smooth and glossy.

— Shirley D'Cruz

(This Chocolate Cake has been prepared by my daughter, Sweta D'Cruz on my birthday which was on August 6).

Saint Bartholomew, Apostle And Saint

Skinned Alive for the Faith
Feast 24th August

“Once you begin to believe there is help “out there” you will know it to be true.” - St. Bartholomew.

Concerning Bartholomew’s missionary travels, having been to India on his route to Albania, his conversion of the Albanian emperor which led to his horrendous execution are all inspiring events to note.

The evangelical labors of the saint in the East were expended and identified with the name Nathanael and is only mentioned in the Gospel of John, where he is spoken of as Nathanael. Scholars and teachers have accepted him as Bartholomew, apostle of Christ. The Armenian Apostolic Church honors St. Jude Thaddeus and St. Bartholomew as their patron saints.

In the New Testament Saint Bartholomew is one of the twelve apostles of Jesus. In the gospel of John, the apostle Philip introduces Bartholomew as Nathanael to Jesus. (Jn.1:43-51). Modern commentators ignore the name Nathanael, and accept Bartholomew

His full name was Bartholomew of Ludaea. He was born in Cana, Galilee in the 1st century.

After the Ascension of Christ the apostles decided to travel and spread the message of the Lord. Bartholomew went on a mission to India where he took the gospel of Matthew. We discover through preserved documents that the saint journeyed Ethiopia, Parthia, Mesopotamia and Lycaonia. Legend informs us that Bartholomew preached the gospel in India and



moved on to Greater Armenia.

The apostle Jude “Thaddeus” and Bartholomew are both given credit for bringing Christianity to Armenia during the 1st. century. This made it possible for both saints to become patron saints of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Bartholomew spent much time with the king of Armenia talking to him about the story of creation, the Old and New Testament and also about the prophets. King Polymius decided to convert to the new religion of Christianity. His decision did not go well with his brother, Prince Astyages. On hearing of the monarch’s conversion the Prince plotted secretly and ordered Bartholomew’s torture and most horrible death, thinking it would please the Romans.

Bartholomew died a painful death by being skinned alive with a curved flensing knife and was finally beheaded. Paintings of the saint show him holding his flayed skin. Bartholomew is mentioned in the three synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. The saint was executed in Albanopolis in Armenia. Hagiography states that the apostle was skinned and the skin was ripped off his body while he was still alive.

In the 13th century an Armenian monastery was constructed at the spot where Saint Bartholomew was executed in Vaspurakan, Greater Armenia in south-eastern Turkey.

In 507 the mutilated body of the saint was sent by the emperor Anastasius to the city of Daras in Mesopotamia. Most of the pieces of his skin and many bones were kept in the Cathedral of St. Bartholomew the apostle in the Basilica San Bartolomeo.

In 983 a small amount of the relics was given by Otto II, Holy Roman Emperor, to Rome. St. Bartholomew was associated with medicine and hospitals. The skull was sent to the Frankfurt Cathedral. His arm was venerated in Canterbury Cathedral.

Many miracles have been performed by the saint before and soon after his death. Many miracles are connected to the weight of objects. Even today, many miracles have been sent down to us. Symbols connected with St. Bartholomew are: his skin and knives.

*“If you do not ask yourself what it is you know, you will go on listening to others and change will not come because you will not hear your own truth.”
St. Bartholomew.*



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Royal Christian Family MATRIMONIALS - GROOMS

7034. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in June 1988), Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 80 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.C.A., Software Engineer, working as an Software Engineer, Asst. Manager (IT), Only Sonm seeks alliance from Mangalorean RC Spinster, educated, working in Mumbai. Reply with full details & photofraph to email : ID : vivian1548@gmail.com Mobile : 9096141335

7157. PUNE : Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in September 1990) Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 75 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA (Marketing) & M.Com., working as a Senior Executive, Sales and Development. Contact email : amlahenry11@gmail.com

7088. MYSORE : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in March 1983), Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 70 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MBA. Marketing. well employed. Contact email : vishwasturners@yahoo.com

7110. MUMBAI : Goan + East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in December 1984), Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 85 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Sc. IT, working as a Server Engineer. Contact email :

fernandes.raymond@gmail.com

7079. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in December 1962), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 67 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., Inter MBA, working as a Manager. Contact email : archielewis.al@gmail.com

7083. MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in November 1985), Ht. 6', Wt. 68 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.Com., PGDLM, PGDSM, working as PPM & Data Engineer in Shipping Company. Contact email : ryan.intermilan@yahoo.co.in

7068. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in June 1983), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 58 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. HSC, working as a Customer Service. Contact email : cynthiad Almeida83@gmail.com

7061. MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in July 1989), Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 90 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. 12th, working for Central Railway Mec. Ftr II, Contact email : pkevindsouza@gmail.com

7032. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in November 1977), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 72 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. Degree in Electronics and Telecommunications, working as Telecom Engineer. Contact email : franky54@rediffmail.com

7017. MUMBAI : Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in March 1981), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 67 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA working as a Administrator. Contact email : matheanil@gmail.com

7032. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in November 1977), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 72 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. Degree in Electronics and Telecommunications, working as Telecom Engineer. Contact email : franky54@rediffmail.com

6531. POONA : Tamilian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in May 1975), Ht. 6', Fair Complexion, Handsome, Edn. M.Com., Having well established business. Contact email : tony137@rediffmail.com

7028. ABUDHABI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in September 1985), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 65 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Diploma in Mechancial Engineer, working as a Stores Officer in Shipping Company. Contact email : pjmpraveen@gmail.com

6797 MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in December 1987), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 72 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working for Five Star Hotel in Mumbai. Contact email : johnserrao14@yahoo.com

7025. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in May 1992), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 56 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.E. (IT), working as a Software Developer. Contact email : kevin92ster@gmail.com

6250. MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in January 1974), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 76 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.A., working as a Manager. **Contact email : cardoz.clint@gmail.com OR 9833563182**

7031. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in September 1985), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 60 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Undergraduate, IT Software, works at TCS. Contact email : josephavild@yahoo.co.in

6862. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in February 1983), Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 72 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., well settled working in Mumbai. Contact email : keith_peter1983@yahoo.co.in

6841 MUMBAI : Anglo Indian / Keralite Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in May 1991), Ht. 170 cms, Wt. 78 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.Com., working as a Sales Executive. Contact email : mrsannieroy@yahoo.co.in

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ceciliacookie@gmail.com

7066. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in June 1987), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 78 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.E., (EXTC) M.S. (International Business Management), working as a Consulting Manager. Contact email :

l2018anselm@yahoo.com

7131. DUBAI : Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1990), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 60 kgs, Tan Complexion, Edn. T.Y. B.Com., working as a Manager. Contact email :

rebecca.raj06@gmail.com

6741. MANGALORE : Mangalorean RC spinster, 26 years, 5' 3", Doctor, Qualification : MD. Very fair and beautiful. Belongings to an affluent business family. Email : sona68500@gmail.com

7128. MUMBAI : Affluent business family R.C. East Indian Spinster, (Born in 12-04-1988), Ht. 5' 2", very beautiful and pretty. Edn. MS General Surgeon, Doctor by profession. Contact email : drvd2019@gmail.com

7126. U.S.A. : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in January 1992) from Mumbai, Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 60 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.E. (Computers) from Mumbai, M.S. (Information Systems) from US. Possesses H1B visa and is working as a Technical Analyst with an MNC in USA. Contact email :

wilfyjoy1315@gmail.com or call +91 98603 02527 / + 91 9970172527

7095. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1992), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 55 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.Com + Import

Export Certificate Course, working as a Billing Assistant in Well known Hospital. Contact email :

perpetualdias7@gmail.com

7121. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in August 1988), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 55 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. Bachelor of Physiotherapist, working as a Physiotherapist. Contact email :

ryanbarboza806@gmail.com

7120. CANADA : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in April 1986), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 51 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., University of Toronto, working as a Customer Support for Canada Government. Contact email :

joafaria@yahoo.ca

7103. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Divorcee (Separated), (Born in October 1989), Ht. 5', Wt. 62 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working as a HR. Contact email :

mail2tinafernandes@gmail.com

7093. MUMBAI : Gujarati Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in July 1982), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 50 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working for Private Bank. Contact email :

annie.waghela@gmail.com

7092. MANGALORE : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in January 1990), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 56 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MBA, working as a Talent Acquisition. Contact email :

vinishadesouza@gmail.com

7089. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in January 1978), Ht. 5', Wt. 70 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.A., Government employee. Contact email :

celinefernandes2014@gmail.com

7094. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in June 1991), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 52 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, M.Com., working as a

Business Analyst. Contact email : roschelle256@gmail.com

7087. DUBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in July 1983), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 64 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working as a Customer Support in Dubai. Contact : escatravasso@gmail.com

7090. QATAR : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in July 1988), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 54 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., worked for Bank in Mumbai, currently working as a H.R. in International School in Qatar. Contact email :

loretta6479@gmail.com

7037. MUMBAI : Gujarati Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in June 1979), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 63 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. T.Y.B.A., Mumbai University, working as a Front Office. Contact email : lisamacwan3@gmail.com

7086. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in March 1991), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 62 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. 12th + Hotel Management Graduate. working as a Developer Manager in Insurance Company. Contact email : samanireena05@gmail.com

7036. USA : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1991), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 56 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.E. (E & T/C), M.S. (Tech. & Mgt.), working as a Strategic Consultant. Contact email : veronicadsouza27@gmail.com

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Bank Merger Not My Problem

BANKING AT ITS BEST

My personal opinion is mergers are good among Indian banks. As it will create larger banks, with larger resources and larger infrastructure. Advantage of economies of scale will be there. It is getting more difficult for smaller banks to fight against their big brothers. Mergers of banks are intended to make them strong. The public is not affected. The shareholders of some banks will suffer, and some other gain. The employees will not be terminated, promotion opportunities may come down. The general public is not affected.

According to me, I think that the merger option of the banks is good for a long time as it will clear all the banking system and its overall losses. This will also help to decrease fraud in the bankings system. It will also be easy to check the status of the person, company and any other who is approaching for the loan or any kind of funds while getting an overview history of the person. Lastly as it's difficult to handle too many students in a class for the teacher and so it is similar. It is difficult to watch every bank fraud, problem and steps where they are going wrong.



C.K. Subramaniam

Like every huge macro-economic decision, it has some pros and some cons. The most basic con is devoiding people of options and temporary inconvenience but in the long run, given the ever piling NPAs, this decision may pan out to be a very good decision. Less banks, means better control by RBI. Also, more autonomy can be given to banks as there will be only consolidated banks to scrutinize. So, we will have to wait a bit to conclude whether it is a good decision or not, but most likely it will prove to be a worthy decision.

I personally believe the integration of banks will lead to the following in the long run:

- Huge number of branches, slowly that would help to globalize the public sector banks.
- Ability to withstand financial shocks even in times of down time economy.
- Improvement in Recovery/Collections and Better approaches for Write offs.
- Not to start the origination from scratch as the other bank will have some presence.
- Availability of plenty of customer data which will help the bank to analyze the Credit Risk assessments.
- Appointment of CROs and reporting directly to the board (Not to the CEO). Separate functions in Credit Risk like Credit Strategies, Loss Estimation, Provisioning, Basel, Stress Tests, etc will get high focus.
- Emphasis on Digital Banking can also lead to a new world of Analytics/Data Sciences.
- Improved Tier1 & Tier2 capital ratios. Relatively better RWAs. Less NPAs. Better Working Capital. Too big to fail banks.

As it will create larger banks, with larger resources and larger infrastructure. Advantage of economies of scale will be there. It is getting more difficult for smaller banks to fight against their big brothers. The staff of one bank is under extra work pres-



sure and the staff of another bank is dying of pressure having no work. There is an imbalance of work.

The customer will lose the benefit of choices, but for bank staff it will be a breather. However, all those branches that will be closed should be shifted to such areas where banking is still a luxury and people are not getting services.

More the merrier may be good in some areas of life but bigger the better is very true for the Banking industry. Mergers will result in the Anchor bank getting higher capitalisation which will make it easier to attract and accommodate very large Corporate exposures. For the bigger the bank, it is better for competing in the international arena.



Whether it is for the RBI or Finance Minister - it is easier to deal with and monitor a lesser number of Banks.

(Contd.. from p. 22)

The synergy and best practices of the involved Banks will result in improving the quality and services of the Bank. Mergers may even result in lesser syndication of loans as the merged larger bank may be able to handle singly or with lesser number of Banks. Lack of and non sharing of information impacting the quality and monitoring of syndicated loans will reduce.

There will always be opposition and criticism against every and all changes brought about but time will prove that the mergers are more beneficial than disruptive. If the economy is stable and then a merger of banks happens then the bank would have not maintained its balance sheet can be assumed and still if the bigger bank is merging with it then it would become stable.

If the economy is unstable and there are a lot of outstanding NPA's then the bank has no other option than merging with the other then it's a burden on the other bank as well as NPA's get added to it. No account holder should lose his money is all I would say as an account holder.

In my opinion, merger of two or more corporations, which should be denationalised, is only done to defer the denationalisation and indulge in hanky panky, the politicians style. The fine art of this was developed when Air India and Indian Airlines were merged and made both companies sick and still not privatised. This practice was followed again in two stage mergers of SBI and now other banks.

The government's decisions are based on the need for doing good to a larger section of the society. Economies of scale can be achieved due to the merger. Unhealthy practices also can be avoided.

C.K. Subramaniam
Ex Senior Branch Manager

Our Lady of the Snows!

At the start of each of the 10 Videos in Bishop Robert Barron's "Catholicism" series, there is a scene in which thousands of white rose petals drift downwards from the ceiling of Rome's Basilica Di Santa Maria Maggiore. The view is symbolic of the "Miracle of the Snow" – This rare summer snowfall, according to the pious legend fell on the Esquiline Hill, one of the famed 'Seven Hills of Rome'. It is a sight that is recreated each year on 05 August, when the Basilica celebrates the Feast of Our Lady of the Snows!

The Catholic Encyclopedia tells the story of the Basilica's origins: - During the Pontificate of Pope Liberius, the Roman patrician John and his wife who were without heirs made a vow to donate their possessions to the Blessed Virgin Mary! They prayed that she might make known how they were to dispose of their property in her honor.

On 05 August, at the height of the Roman summer, snow fell during the night on the summit of Esquiline Hill. True to their vow, the couple built a Basilica in tribute to the Blessed Virgin Mary on the very spot which was covered with snow!

Inside the impressive Basilica, high on the side altar is a beautiful gold-plated relief depicting the story. Beneath the altar is a 'Confessio' with a kneeling statue of Pope Pius IX; and beneath that, St. Jerome Doctor of the Church is buried in what is called the "Bethlehem Crypt"; designed to simulate the cave where Jesus Christ was born.

—Dr. Hazel Colaso,
Bandra (W), Mumbai,

7 to go with E-life! But without E-go!

Our modern world is enveloped in the 'e', which is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as, "a prefix denoting the use of electronic data transfer, especially through the internet: e-cash. Here are at least 7 entities with the alphabet 'e'; and within each there are many more.

1. 'E' is the most eminent alphabet in the English language! Men and Women would cease to exist without the 'e' in them. House or home can't stand without the 'e'!
2. Nowadays we deal with e-mails, e-tickets, e-paper. It has also been extended towards e-governance, and e-commerce!
3. 'E' is in the beginning, middle and in the end of 'existence'; but only at the end of 'trouble'. So treasure the former!
4. 'E' is never in war, but is twice in 'peace'! It is once in 'hell'; but rewarded twice in 'heaven'! So seek the latter!
5. 'E' is represented within the most intimate relationships like – father, mother, brother, sister, spouse, friend and priest! Keep them close to you!
6. Our senses are incomplete without the 'e' – to see, hear, smell and taste. They originate in the eye, ear, nose, and tongue. But the 'e' is most important in sight, for we 'see' with two 'eyes'!
7. Finally, there is no 'life and death' without the 'e'! So never forget 'Eshwar' or God! And the 'e' in 'Jesus' our God! So strive for the 'e' in 'E-life' which Jesus gives and forgo your 'e' in ego!

—Dr. Hazel Colaso,
Bandra (W), Mumbai,

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