



A thought for today

Politics is war without bloodshed

MAO ZEDONG

Jaitley Vs Kejriwal

Time to get politicians out of sport, bring back Sports Bill

There are three separate dimensions to the no-holds barred fight between finance minister Arun Jaitley and Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal over allegations of wrong-doing in the Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA). The first is a pure political fight between AAP and BJP for the moral high ground and public perception, the second is how the crisis is impacting inner power dynamics within BJP and third, often forgotten in the daily cut-and-thrust of competitive politics, is the matter of saving the sport itself.

On the AAP versus BJP front, while Parliament was disrupted over demands for the finance minister's resignation, the prime minister said that Jaitley, like L K Advani after hawala charges, would "come through with flying colours". Jaitley is seeking Rs 10 crore in damages from Kejriwal and others. On the opposite side,



the Delhi government has set up a commission of inquiry headed by former Solicitor General of India Gopal Subramaniam, a special session of the Delhi assembly is discussing the matter and Kejriwal says Jaitley should "cooperate with the Commission of Enquiry and prove his innocence there". But what works against Kejriwal is that the charges against Jaitley came just after CBI raided Kejriwal's principal secretary Rajendra

Kumar. Eventually this case will be decided in the courts.

Curiously, on the internal BJP front, while the PM and BJP president Amit Shah have backed Jaitley, the party has so far gone slow on its Darbhanga MP Kirti Azad who is demanding a time-bound CBI probe into the DDCA during Jaitley's tenure. While the political tu-tu-mai-mai goes on, at a very basic level, this case once again highlights the mess in our sporting federations and politicians getting entangled due to the oversight functions they exercise. DDCA affairs were in such a mess that the India-South Africa Test match earlier this month was organised, on orders from the Delhi high court, under the supervision of Justice (retired) Mukul Mudgal.

It is time to clean up sport and revive the Sports Bill floated by then-sports minister Ajay Maken in 2011. It called for stringent transparency, time-bound tenures for office bearers and built-in safeguards against the perpetuation of personal control in the highest ranks of sport bodies. Manmohan Singh's cabinet vetoed that bill. NDA should bring it back. The marriage of power, politics and sport is at the heart of India's sporting mess and we must end it.

America's Indophobia

US Congress hurts Indian tech companies by doubling visa fees, playing on anti-migrant sentiment

The Indian IT industry has been sucker punched by a provision in a \$1.15 trillion omnibus spending bill passed by US Congress. It has doubled the amount that businesses must now pay for an H1-B or L1 visa, from \$2,000 to \$4,000 and from \$2,250 to \$4,500. This money will be used, under the "9/11 Health and Compensation Act", to fund healthcare for 9/11 first responders and a biometric entry and exit tracking system. By irrationally leveraging the animus against "job-stealing" Indians in a bill that exploits emotions around 9/11 and terrorism, US Congress traded on xenophobia and rendered resistance futile.

This change has occurred in an atmosphere where the ongoing presidential campaign has made immigration a flammable issue, with Donald Trump yanking the discourse to anti-immigrant extremes. Meanwhile a bipartisan tag team of Senators Chuck Grassley and Dick Durbin have been trying to enact legislation that effectively singles out Indian IT companies for punishment. They allege that outsourcing companies have gamed the system by paying their employees a wage that a comparably skilled American would not work for.

But the US, which argues eloquently against protectionism in other areas, should know that this logic applies equally to its workforce. Its own tech companies recognise that their global edge comes from skilled and creative workers, hired from around the world. These workers are not feeding off the American economy, they are contributing to its innovation and productivity. Jobs are no nation's monopoly; if Indians work hard and well they are not breaching any globally mandated caste system. Indian companies pay taxes and create jobs in the US too. These controversies are not new. But an effective counter to America's Indophobia remains to be found.



Profitable problems

For every bane that ails us, we invent a boon to gain us

Jug Suraiya



Love and fresh air were two things – about the only two things – that were free. Today, however, what with 'love jihad' and khap panchayats frowning on same-gotra alliances, love is no longer a free commodity. And, thanks to pollution, neither is fresh air. In fact, fresh air is becoming an increasingly expensive proposition. And the expense involves not just the outlay you have to make on buying a gas mask when you go out, but also what you have to shell out on an air purifier for your home.

Air purifiers – which cost anywhere between a few thousand rupees to a couple of lakhs – are the latest growth industry. Apparently, while the air you breathe outside is bad for your lungs, the air you breathe indoors is supposed to be even worse, presumably because it's trapped within an enclosed space.

The fear of indoor pollution is seeing an increasing rise in the sale of air purifiers, which supposedly take all the gunk floating around inside and deposit it outside, thereby adding to outdoor pollution. But, heck, that isn't your problem, is it? However, every polluted cloud has a silver lining, every problem that we create

for ourselves gives people a new opportunity to make a profit. Thanks to pollution, a lot of people are making money making and selling air purifiers.

Using problems to turn a profit isn't restricted to pollution. Any problem that crops up, eventually becomes a source of livelihood and gainful employment for someone, somewhere. Every bane that we bear becomes a boon for someone or the other.

Disease and ill health have created the hugely profitable industry called Big Pharma, not to mention super-speciality hospitals, doctors and medical procedures. Indeed the medical industry seems to be discovering newer and newer ailments for us to suffer from so that it can make even more money than it already does.

Wars? Where would the defence industry and the armed forces be without them? Scams, scandals, crime? Without them newspapers and TV channels would go out of business.

The real problem will be when we run out of problems to profit from. No problem? That is the problem.

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And Now, Jugaadnomics

Modinomics will have to wait till Rajya Sabha changes its composition or behaviour

Baijayant 'Jay' Panda



After last year's watershed elections, many had expected India to immediately enter a new economic era, and some even started giving it a name, Modinomics. It was, of course, modelled after Reaganomics and Abenomics, the eponymous homage to the economic rejigging of 1980s USA by President Ronald Reagan and present day Japan by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

That expectation had been based on both the campaign rhetoric as well as the new PM's track record as chief minister. But despite getting the biggest mandate and the first single-party Lok Sabha majority in three decades, his government's economic agenda has been marooned in the parliamentary logjam in Rajya Sabha.

That is not to say there has been no change in the economy. The government legitimately refers to India's 12-place jump in this year's annual World Bank index on ease of doing business. Going by the World Economic Forum's annual index of economic competitiveness, India has done even better, going up 16 places after five years of decline. And FDI is up significantly.

But the kind of quantum leap that would justify an epoch-defining moniker has been elusive. So what is a government to do? The perception that it had tried to bypass Parliament by issuing a large number of ordinances is misplaced. From Nehru's time Indian governments, including this one, have averaged around 10 ordinances a year.

One way is to fall back on a time-honoured Indian approach, jugaad. This familiar north Indian term nevertheless deserves some reflection. Wikipedia calls jugaad "a colloquial Hindi and Punjabi word that can mean an innovative fix or a simple work-around, used for solutions that bend rules, or a resource that can be used as such, or a person who can solve a complicated issue."

From using washing machines as industrial-strength mixers for making lassi, to paper clips holding skin flaps during



LARRY POND

surgery, examples of Indian jugaad are legion. In fact, several international academic papers and books have been written on jugaad, covering fields such as innovation, technology and management.

Now jugaad has arrived in India's lawmaking. As this column is being written the government has filed in Lok Sabha the long overdue bankruptcy bill, aimed at expediting and streamlining the winding down of unviable businesses. But this bill has a twist. It includes tweaks to tax laws, including income tax and customs and excise duties, thus making it a "money bill", which does not require passage by the Rajya Sabha.

Finance minister Arun Jaitley had first hinted at this as a fallback option back in August, when his bid to break the Rajya Sabha logjam got no support from the opposition. Several other democracies that faced such deadlock between two chambers of bicameral legislatures have resolved them by amending their constitutions. This was done by either

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reducing the powers of the chamber that is nominated or indirectly elected, the path followed by the UK and Italy, or by making that chamber directly elected, which the US did.

But key sections of the opposition remain resolutely against even discussing any systemic reform. Six members of Rajya Sabha have gone to the extent of filing a privilege and contempt motion against this author, for writing in these pages last month that it is time to debate such reforms in India.

The government's structuring of leg-

islation as money bills that might not in the usual course be so is a workaround, a jugaad way of getting things done. Will it pass muster? Some experts, including lawyers and retired senior bureaucrats, say it does. Even critics, while objecting to its propriety, tacitly admit it may be legally feasible.

For instance, retired Lok Sabha Secretary General P D T Achary has written that the Constitution requires money bills to have no non-money bill components, but also that the Speaker's decision is final in these matters. He further says that there ought to be stipulated procedures for how the Speaker should interpret what constitutes a money bill, but concedes there aren't any.

He cites precedents of Rajya Sabha accepting the finality of the Speaker's decision in this matter. And though he has reservations, Achary most tellingly quotes Nehru from 1953, "It is now clear and beyond the possibility of dispute that the Speaker's authority is final in declaring that a bill is a money bill. When the Speaker gives a certificate to this effect, this cannot be challenged. The Speaker has no obligation to consult anyone in coming to a decision."

It is quite possible that Nehru's successors will disregard his stand and try legal and agitative means to challenge the government's move. Nevertheless, it seems the latter has done its homework. And that the present ruling party, which in opposition had similarly crippled its predecessor, is determined to chart a different destiny.

The opposition is right to ask the government to reach out more and address its concerns. But unless it is also sincerely willing to find middle ground, it could find itself outflanked on all but the most exceptional bills like GST, which require constitutional amendments.

Jugaad is not the ideal solution, but it gets the job done in difficult circumstances. Until either the Rajya Sabha composition changes, or there is a breakthrough compromise, Modinomics will have to wait, but Jugaadnomics need not.

The writer is a BJD Lok Sabha MP. Views are personal

'Modi's policies are appreciated in Washington; India playing a role in the Pacific would be a good outcome'

Strobe Talbott is President of the well-known Brookings Institution in Washington DC and former US Deputy Secretary of State. Speaking with **Nalin Mehta**, Talbott discussed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's foreign policy moves, his personal bonding with President Barack Obama, the prospects of India-Pakistan peace developing today – and whether Donald Trump could be America's next president.

■ How do you rate PM Modi's foreign policy initiatives so far?

One of the big issues of our time, his instincts, approach and policies are appreciated in Washington. He is forthright on his concerns about Chinese policy. His personal relationship with PM Abe is desirable and helpful.

For India to develop not just a regional consolidation of its legitimate interests but to also play a role in the world and in the Pacific would be a good outcome for all.

I can imagine India as part of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and eventually Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). If we are going to have an open, fair and prosperity-driving world trade order, it may have to ride on the back of a network of transregional regimes.

■ What about the relationship between PM Modi and President Obama?

Our president is disciplined, highly

rational and pragmatic and he doesn't have a whole lot of time for glad-handing at the highest levels – it turns out that your prime minister is much the same.

In their first bilateral meeting, they hit it off – there was no small talk.

They both had to-do lists.

Q&A

Way up on Obama's list was climate change – he feels that PM Modi, while advocating India's interests, delivered in Paris.

US, China and India have to lead this process by example and by the actions they have agreed to.

Obama feels this is a personal bilateral relationship that is paying off.

■ With the new India-Pakistan peace process underway, do you think Pakistan will actually deliver on tackling terror now?

It is of the highest importance that all of us,

including people in Pakistan who believe that it is a dangerous chimera to distinguish between malignant and benign terrorists, see that all terrorists are malignant.

The experience of Pakistan itself makes that clear.

I fear this issue is going to be an impediment to the mutual diplomatic energy generated over the past few weeks if Pakistan continues to say, yes, we will go after al-Qaida, but actions show they are putting Lashkar-e-Taiba in a different category.

For everybody's sake, let's get rid of the distinction.

■ What are the chances of a President Trump in America?

Zero. To quote two of Churchill's quips, democracy is the worst of all systems except for the alternatives, and Americans will do the right thing after they have exhausted all the alternatives.

It is extremely unlikely that Trump will get the nomination.

I doubt it will happen because the



Katherine Lambert

dilbert



The Prophet Of Divine Love And Kindness

M N Kundu

Jesus Christ added a different dimension to life and living by incorporating divine love and kindness in what we do, say and think. He substituted a God-fearing attitude with a God-loving mysticism and ethical religious injunctions by spontaneous human kindness. In addition, he proclaimed the essential divinity of man by asserting, "The Kingdom of God is within you". The spirit of God hidden within can be known by removal of spiritual ignorance and washing away the filth of sins with the waters of divine love.

Once a woman accused of committing adultery was brought before Christ for his final verdict on her punishment. As per the law of Moses she was to be stoned to death for her actions. While all eyes were on Jesus who always advocated forgiveness and kindness under all circumstances, he asked those assembled, "He that is without sin

among you, let him cast the first stone." The crowd dispersed quietly.

The fearful woman awaiting impending death asked, "Why have you saved my life? I deserve punishment for being a sinner." Compassionate Jesus said, "Go, and sin no more." Forget the past and move forward. The message is to condemn the sin but not the sinner. Because every saint has a past and every sinner has a future.

Once a man came to Jerusalem, the birthplace of Jesus, during Christmas. He was delighted at the festive celebrations but was keen to see immortal Jesus in body and prayed for the same. In the night baby Jesus appeared before him and asked, "What have you brought for me as Christmas gift?" The overwhelmed devotee uttered, "I have brought my whole heart to give you." Jesus said, "Very good. But won't you give me something more?" The devotee

replied, "I will give you all that I have and myself too." Jesus said, "Excellent. But can't you give me something more?"

The man was puzzled, "What more do I have to give you, my Lord?" Jesus smiled and said, "Why don't you give me your sins as your Christmas gift?" With tearful eyes the man asked, "What will you do with my sins?" Jesus said, "I will forgive them all and relieve you of the burden of sins so that you may not look back and only move forward severing your psychological blocks and bondage with the sins."

Christ committed his greatest miracle on the cross. He was humiliated, tortured and crucified for spreading his spiritual wisdom. But with every hammer on the nail for his crucifixion he uttered the immortal prayer ever heard by mankind, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." His first commandment was to

develop unconditional divine love for God with all strength, mind, heart and soul and also loving neighbours (entire humanity) as extended self. Such mystic love executes complete self-effacement and absolute surrender to the cosmic will, "Let Thy will be done." This is the culmination of spiritual wisdom and also the ultimate stage of human devotion.

As a universal prophet Christ prescribed the essence of spirituality for practice by all, beyond sectarian rituals. From the depth of his profound feeling of oneness with the Absolute he said, "I am the light..." He gave a call to all seekers, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest... and ye shall find rest into your souls." That rest is the eternal peace of kingdom of God within.

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Greatest Force

Anger is the enemy of non-violence and pride is a monster that swallows it up... Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man.

M K Gandhi



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