

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

May 2023



“Let us all work for the Greatness of India.”

– The Mother

Year 14

Issue 2

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SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella

Common name: Indian blanket, Blanket flower, Fire-wheels

Year 14

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A Declaration

We do not fight against any creed, any religion.

We do not fight against any form of government.

We do not fight against any social class.

We do not fight against any nation or civilisation.

We are fighting division, unconsciousness, ignorance, inertia and falsehood.

We are endeavouring to establish upon earth union, knowledge, consciousness, Truth, and we fight whatever opposes the advent of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth and Love.

– The Mother

(Collected works of the Mother, Vol. 13, pp. 124-25)

HIGHLIGHTS

DEVELOPMENTS IN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

The much-anticipated Ukrainian counter-offensive against Russia began subtly in the early part of June. Prior to that, reports of Russia's Wagner Group waging an offensive to capture Ukraine's Bakhmut area were pervasive. Major portions of Bakhmut were captured by Wagner private militia to be handed over to Russia. This may have come at a great cost to the Wagner group, as the divisions between the Wagnerites and the Russian Ministry of Defence widen, due to elite struggle over control of power.

Moreover, minor successes in Bakhmut have stood in sharp contrast to Russia's increasing inability to dent Ukraine and the widening gap between Russia's outdated military arsenal and the sophisticated weaponry provided by the West to Ukraine, visible in the ease with which Ukraine has repeatedly shot down Russian drones, even as Ukraine itself has perpetrated drone attacks within Russia in areas like Sevastopol, Rostov and Krasnodar. Interestingly, this was at a time when Russia's internal situation continued to deteriorate further.

This was visible by the refusal of several Governors – especially of Russian provinces bordering Ukraine – to celebrate the traditional Victory Day Parade on May 9th. Governors of some regions – like, Belgorod, Bryansk and Kursk – refused to hold the parade stating that it will aggravate Ukraine and make them the targets of Ukrainian offensive. This is significant, as it means that presence of Russian troop and military equipment was no longer a reassuring factor for

the locals – indeed, it was the opposite. This brings out Russia’s clear placement on the losing side.

This is also proceeding along side a rise in Ukrainian sabotage operations within Russia-controlled territories, in close cooperation with the Ukrainian resistance within those territories, including in Crimea. The Ukrainian resistance movement involves active local partisan support of hundreds of locals in Russian-occupied territories. These include explosions and detonations carried out intermittently, in particular targeting prominent Russian sympathizers in the region. The Ukrainian resistance has taken responsibility for most of these sabotage operations and has even published videos warning other officials who cooperate with the Russians that for “all traitors to Ukraine ... there is only one destination – the morgue.”

Such resistance movements and sabotage operations have made it difficult for Russia to retain control over occupied territories. In territories like Zaporizhzhia, in order to curb sabotage activities, Russia has attempted to introduce strict curfews and other security measures, such as forcing the locals to adopt a Russian passport, which majority have not done. Such measures are not succeeding in the face of the expanding resistance movement. An organization called *Atesh* – created last year and consisting of about 800 Ukrainian and Crimean members – has now vastly expanded its participation in sabotage and assassinations of Russian military personnel. Some of its members even recruit themselves into the front ranks of Russian military and pass on information to Ukraine.

Many of such sabotage incidents have also been happening in core Russian cities, beyond the occupied territories. In the past month, for instance, unknown persons blew up a power

line near St. Petersburg. In yet another instance of sabotage recently, 20 rail cars carrying petroleum products and lumber were derailed due to explosions on railway tracks in Bryansk region. The governor of the region claimed that an unidentified explosive device had “detonated” near the railway station causing the derailment. Similarly, in other Russian regions that share a border with Ukraine, such as Belgorod and Kursk, blasts derailed almost 80 wagons carrying fuel and other provisions for military purposes. In many of such sabotage incidents, often Russians closely cooperate with Ukraine for a variety of reasons, including financial benefits.

Even though Russia claims that such sabotage incidents do not impact it economically or militarily in any serious way, yet they show the declining capacities of Russia and its inability to explain why it cannot successfully provide security in the regions bordering Ukraine. This is rapidly spooking the locals, creating fear and leading to a loss of trust in Russian capabilities.

Diplomatically also, Russia’s power continues to dwindle at an alarming pace, especially in its neighbourhood. It feels itself rapidly being alienated from Kazakhstan. It is also losing its former control over Armenia and ability to dictate the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, with high-level mediation between the two parties taking place in Washington. Its window of trade is also reducing, as the EU is now planning to sanction companies in third-party countries – particularly Central Asian states like Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan – who export EU products to Russia.

All these developments together portend rising Russian losses in every quarter in this war.

DEVELOPMENTS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The race towards Artificial Intelligence and Metaverse continues unabated, with new developments taking place at a fast pace. In what has come as a boost to the Metaverse, Apple has now joined the list of big companies which have developed their own Virtual Reality headsets for an immersive experience in the Metaverse. The device developed by Apple is called Vision Pro and it offers much better immersive experience and new features as well. This is sure to trigger a further race among companies jumping on the Metaverse bandwagon, as its commercial value is sought to be realized.

Metaverse is not the only arena where such developments are happening. The field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) – nearly becoming all-pervasive in its scope – is also witnessing rapid changes. Through it even the most common AI apps users are posting fake images of celebrities and politicians, generating fake audio and video to incriminate others, and students are using Chat GPT and other “language learning models” to generate university-grade essays. AI is also heavily involved in the medical field, helping in analysis and diagnosis of various diseases and even surgeries. Now extremely small AI devices can be made to travel through the body where regular medical devices are unreachable. Apps like Auto GPT can be made to perform any task – it will keep on working till the task is complete. As autonomy of AI systems reach greater levels of perfection, systems like Auto GPT can, for instance, be commanded by criminals or companies to execute orders like making more money, enabling it to break into banking systems and compromise the entire economy.

As AI seeps into nearly all aspects of our lives, countries have begun the race for its regulation. While the European Union (EU) has worked out a landmark legislation to regulate AI, United Kingdom and United States are also not far behind. The UK is in talks with the US to work out a mechanism wherein it could host an international AI regulatory body with world-wide scope, akin to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for instance.

This is because while many optimists may continue to regale the world with the positive aspects of AI, the threats and dangers posed by it appear to weigh far more heavily. Prior to US-UK deliberations on the subject of AI regulation, a top minister in the UK government and in-charge of the AI regulatory efforts of UK, recently gave the dire warning that AI could become powerful enough to “kill many humans” in only two years’ time. He further elaborated that, in the short-term alone, AI could develop the potential to create cyber and biological weapons that could inflict many deaths, while in the long-run, it could wreak complete destruction.

For, the development of AI means creation of an entirely new species, apart from the human and animal species, much more advanced than humans. As this species becomes more and more autonomous, the future of humanity in the immediate as well as the long-term future will be more precarious. Indeed, many experts and pioneers of AI have warned that the risks of this technology should be treated with the same urgency as pandemics or nuclear war.

KARNATAKA ELECTION RESULTS

Assembly elections in Karnataka have thrown up yet another

surprise, propelling Congress to a grand victory and tanking BJP to a loss that had not been anticipated. The trend in Karnataka of the state not voting back the ruling party in power has been in place since 1985 and was seen even in the 2023 elections.

Party	Seats Won	Change from 2018	Vote (%)	Change from 2018 (%)
Congress	135	+55	42.8	+4.8
BJP	66	-38	36	-0.26
JD(S)	19	-18	13.3	-5.02
Others	4	+1	7.8	+0.48

The election results even defied the predictions of a hung assembly as well as many Exit Poll predictions, thereby giving the Congress a clear majority, enabling it to increase its vote-share (compared to the previous election) by nearly 5 percent. However, while the BJP saw a significant loss in seats, it retained its previous vote-share.

A few significant takeaways from this election are:

First, in terms of demographics, while the Congress received more or less uniform support across age groups, the BJP drew greater support from younger voters, especially college students. It also performed better in urban areas and among the wealthy as compared to Congress.

Second, the Congress was able to build a social coalition on caste and religions basis, consisting mostly of Vokkaligas, Kurubas, Dalits, Tribals and Muslims and was able to draw a third of Ligayat voters away from the BJP.

	Congress	BJP	JD(S)	Others
Upper castes	22	60	14	4
Vokkaligas	49	24	17	10
Lingayats	29	56	9	6
Kurubas	56	33	8	3
Other OBCs	34	37	17	12
Dalits	63	23	10	4
Adivasis	45	39	13	3
Muslims	70	10	14	6

Source: Lokniti-CSDS Post Poll Survey

The data above clearly shows that the state voted along caste lines, which heavily divided the Hindu vote.

Third, local issues and local leaders – which the Congress was able to raise and project – appeared to have had more impact than national party leadership role.

Fourth, corruption within the BJP government was successfully exaggerated by the Congress, while the response of the BJP remained muted. The fact that BJP was torn by infighting between rival factions constantly undermined the authority of the Chief Minister and further created negative public perception. The sidelining of Lingayat leader, Mr. Yediyurappa, did not help either.

The election results were a significant blow to the BJP, as they facilitated the loss of the only southern state which was under the party's control. The elections took place in a

tumultuous political backdrop and cultural churning. Issues such as hijab ban had created much polarization, as did other measures of the former government such as changing textbooks to remove the socialist-era distortions in our history and trying to undo the position of glory accorded to figures like Tipu Sultan by the Congress government. As a last minute measure, the former BJP government even announced the scrapping of reservation for Muslims.

However, despite all these interventions, the fact that the BJP lost massively to the Congress and the Hindu vote remains divided along caste lines should be an indicator of the uphill task before the party.

SUPREME COURT JUDGEMENTS: MAHARASHTRA AND DELHI

The Supreme Court in the middle of May delivered two significant judgements, bearing on the political situation in Maharashtra and Delhi. In both the cases, legal issues primarily arose out of the political tussle between the constitutional head of the state and the ruling regional government.

The Power Struggle in Delhi:

In the case of Delhi, the key question before the Court was under whose authority the services came – the Lieutenant Governor who is the representative of the Centre or the Delhi government which is led by Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). This involves providing an interpretation of Article 239AA of the Constitution which retains the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi's status as a Union Territory, but also grants it state-like features – unlike other Union Territories.

Timeline: Delhi Govt. Vs Centre:

2015 – Centre’s notification said that LG of Delhi shall exercise control over services.

2017 – Upon appeal by Delhi govt., Delhi High Court upheld the Centre’s notification.

2018 – A constitution bench gave a ruling in favour of Delhi govt. but referred specific matters to a two-judge bench.

2019 – A two-judge bench of Supreme Court delivers a split verdict and refers the matter to a larger constitution bench.

2022 – A three-judge bench referred the matter to a larger constitution bench.

2023 – A five-judge constitution bench unanimously ruled that Delhi govt. has executive and legislative powers over administrative services in Delhi.

The Centre’s argument was that Delhi’s status as a Union Territory meant that it was under the administrative control of the Centre. In its interpretation of clause (3)(a) of Article 239AA – which the Court had to decide on – the Centre argued that legislative powers of the Delhi assembly under this article were subject to the limitations given in the article itself, that is, the limitations of the provisions of the Constitution and limitation of being able to legislate only on those matters that are applicable to union territories as a whole. And Delhi being a Union Territory is no exception. Therefore, the Centre argued

that the power of Delhi government to legislate on matters related to State List are subject to only those entries on which Union Territories as a class can legislate. On the other hand, the Delhi government argued that without administrative control over civil servants, it will not be able to manage well the affairs of the Union Territory.

Taking the argument of federalism as a basic feature of the Constitution, the Court upheld the control of Delhi government over services viz. Entry 41 of State List. The Court gave the following arguments:

First, due to the 69th Constitutional Amendment Act which inserted Article 239AA, Delhi occupies sui generis or a unique position in the Constitution, and therefore, its status cannot be treated as being equivalent to other Union Territories.

Second, the proviso in clause (3)(a) stating that powers of legislative assembly in Delhi will be exercised on matters in State list or Concurrent list insofar as they are applicable to Union Territories, the Court pronounced that this proviso is irrelevant since State List and Concurrent List mention the word *state* and not *Union Territories*.

Third, the Court held that the proviso in clause (3)(a) of Article 239AA that it was subject to the limitations of the Constitution, was also not unique to Article 239AA and can be said to be true of most other constitutional provisions.

After a week of this verdict and as the Court went on a vacation, the Centre passed an Ordinance to nullify the effect of the judgement. The Ordinance bars the Delhi government from making laws on services regardless of what ‘any court’ says. Further, it creates a 3-member body, called the National

Capital Civil Service Authority, which will control civil servants in Delhi. This Authority will comprise of two Union appointees and the Chief Minister of Delhi and will make all decisions through internal voting. Notably, the Authority's decisions must be approved by the Lieutenant Governor who will have the 'sole discretion' to override it. This Ordinance needs to be passed within six weeks of Parliament convening again to become a law. Besides passing this ordinance, the Centre has also appealed against the SC verdict.

The politics behind this whole tussle is also incriminating. As soon as the Court gave its verdict, the Delhi government was quick to dismiss a bureaucrat who oversaw the entire investigation into liquor scam, renovation scam and numerous other corruption scandals of the AAP government. The Delhi government got his office sealed, perhaps with the intent of seizing incriminating evidence. But with the passage of the Ordinance, the bureaucrat was re-installed immediately within a day.

Government Change in Maharashtra:

In Maharashtra, the key question before the Court was whether the Governor was right in allowing the faction claiming majority of MLAs to form the new government by calling for a trust vote in Maharashtra legislative assembly, and the role of the Speaker in recognizing the break-away faction of the Shiv Sena. However, the Court refrained from interfering with the question of disqualification of MLAs who had broken away under the leadership of Eknath Shinde.

The initial petition was filed by Mr. Shinde in June 2022 after disqualification notices were issued by the then Deputy

Speaker of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly under the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution.

Another petition was filed by the Thackrey group challenging the decision of the then Maharashtra Governor to call for a trust vote and the subsequent swearing-in of Eknath Shinde as the Chief Minister. The election of a new Speaker, Rahul Narwekar, was also challenged.

On the basis of various petitions, the Court gave the following decisions:

First, the Court refused to pronounce a verdict on disqualification of MLAs saying that the Speaker is the authority under the Tenth Schedule to decide on disqualification petitions. The Court also said that MLAs have the right to participate in the proceedings of the House regardless of pending disqualification petition.

Second, the Court held that the Governor was not justified in calling upon the then Chief Minister, Uddhav Thackeray, to prove his majority in the House, because the Governor did not have any *objective material* before him to reach the conclusion that Thackeray had lost majority.

Third, the Court held that the status quo ante cannot be restored and Thackeray cannot be reinstated because he had resigned before actually facing the floor test. Therefore, the Court held that the Governor was justified in calling upon Eknath Shinde to form the government.

Fourth, the Court faulted the Speaker for recognizing Mr. Shinde as the Shiv Sena leader in the House, saying that when there is a split between the original political party and the legislature party, the whip appointed by the former should be recognized.

The Court gave the highly warped reasoning that an umbilical cord exists between the political party and the MLAs, as the MLAs contest elections and win through the platform of the political party to which they belong and that they cannot later simply disentangle themselves from it. This is very flawed reasoning, as many instances exist of MLAs defecting from their political party and when they contest elections after being disqualified, they still win. The Court is assuming that MLAs can win elections only based on the name of the political party rather than on the basis of their own candidate credentials – a reasoning which violates basic political logic.

A Comparison:

If we compare the Delhi and Maharashtra judgements, the contradictions in the reasoning of the Court become evident. On the one hand, in the Delhi judgement the Court is implying that Delhi government should retain control over the services as services are directly related to administration of public goods for which the elected MLAs are directly responsible to the people. Therefore, in the Delhi case, the Court said that there is a triple chain of accountability that makes MLAs accountable to people and which necessitates Delhi government control over civil servants.

However, the Court completely disregard this triple chain of accountability in the case of the Maharashtra judgement. Here, the Court implies that a political party is superior to the legislative party. In other words, the Court is implying that the MLAs are first and foremost responsible to the political party which gave them tickets instead of being responsible to the people who elected them. It seems that the chain of

accountability between the MLAs and the people that the Court put in place the Delhi case has vanished in its Maharashtra logic.

The two judgements are, therefore, mutually contradictory. While there is not much upshot of the Maharashtra judgement, the Delhi case is highly sensitive and the Centre has rightly appealed the same and passed an Ordinance to nullify its dangerous impact which would have made the Court an indirect collaborator in the corrupt sins of AAP.

CRISIS IN PAKISTAN

The prolonged political crisis in Pakistan appears to have decisively settled against former PM Imran Khan after highly tumultuous and unprecedented developments. Throughout this crisis, Pakistan has faced multiple events which may well qualify it to assume the mantle of a failed state. It all started with the economic crisis and indebtedness in Pakistan since more than a year, propelling it the Sri Lanka way, where many common people could not afford even basic necessities and inflation touched record levels. At the same time, the political crisis in Pakistan was always on a boil. The confrontation between ousted former PM Imran Khan and the new dispensation of Sharifs and Bhuttos, propped up by the military establishment, had been continuing unabated for several months. All attempts at political estrangement and disqualification of Imran Khan were proving to be counter-productive in the face of his immense popularity among the people.

His unceasing tirade and direct challenge posed to the military was also continuing. Under such circumstances, when the Pakistan Rangers suddenly arrested Imran Khan in early

May, things came to a head. He was claimed to have been arrested on the basis of a warrant issued in a corruption case, the famous Tosha Khana case and for illegal property holdings and sales. The arrest was followed by massive violence across Pakistan. Unprecedented scenes were witness as PTI workers and Imran Khan supporters took to the streets and attacked army assets and properties – something never seen before.

The judiciary came to the rescue of Khan and provided him with protection from arrest. However, the military took a strong position and began the systematic persecution of supporters of Imran Khan who were allegedly involved in attacking military assets. Thereafter, over the next few days, several of earlier loyalists, former ministers and governors and PTI members began leaving the party and deserting Khan, making it clear that military intimidation was heavy.

Based on these developments, the future for Imran Khan does not look bright. The Pakistan government has already declared that Khan will be tried under a military court for trying to incite mutiny. For now, he has lost the battle against the military. With his party members having deserted him in large numbers after the May 9th events, he is trying to send feelers to the Army, but to no avail.

The unprecedented events triggered by Khan may not meet success but they are significant in that, for the first time, there was a direct challenge to the Pakistani military establishment from within the Pakistani political class. It was a severe challenge and exposed the aggravation of the people with the military leadership. It may not bring about any immediate impact, but has certainly opened fissures in Pakistani politics.

CLOSURE OF ADANI SAGA

In a significant blow to conspiracy theorists, the Adani saga was brought to a decisive closure through the report of the Supreme Court appointed committee on the matter which upheld the SEBI investigation that there has been no regulatory failure or price manipulation in this case.

The Supreme Court committee was to investigate three questions:

First, whether there has been a violation of Rule 19A of the Securities Contracts Rules, 1957 (relating to maintaining public shareholding of at least 25%). This relates to whether 13 overseas entities including 12 foreign portfolio investors are compliant with disclosure of their beneficial owners. Here the SC expert committee said that *prima facie* the SEBI has not been able to make out a case that any of the 13 overseas entities violate public shareholding rules by failing to disclose their beneficial owners.

Second, whether there has been a failure to disclose transactions with related parties. Here the committee said that SEBI has identified 13 specific transactions which are being investigated. Therefore, no conclusion can be reached on this.

Third, whether there was any manipulation of stock prices in contravention of existing laws. Here the committee unequivocally said that SEBI has found no pattern of artificial trading or price manipulation.

Finally, the committee also held that there was no evidence of high market volatility after the crash of Adani stocks. It rejected the idea that there was any question of systemic risk posed by Adani stocks. It said that the Adani group had taken

several mitigating measures such as paring down debt, fresh infusion of investment by way of private equity etc., which helped to generate investor confidence.

The report of the SC-appointed committee not only brought a positive closure to the entire saga, but also came as a great financial boost to the Adani stocks. The market capitalization of the conglomerate crossed Rs. 10 lakh crore, which is the highest level after the valuations of the group fell in the wake of the Hindenburg report six months back.

The outcome is significant as it has decisively debunked the rootless political conspiracies that were being conjured up on this issue by India's Opposition parties. The Opposition may be silent in the wake of these findings, but it also stands badly exposed as an anti-national force whose only agenda is to latch onto superficial issues with the hopes of destabilizing the nation.

The Importance of the Veda for the Future of Humanity

“Perfection of knowledge is the right condition for perfection of nature and efficiency of life. The perfect truth of the Veda is the fundamental knowledge, the right relations with the Truth of things, on which alone according to our ideas, all other knowledge can receive the true orientation needed by humanity. The recovery of the perfect truth of the Veda is therefore not merely a desideratum for our modern intellectual curiosity, but a practical necessity for the future of the human race. For I believe firmly that the secret concealed in the Veda, when entirely discovered, will be found to formulate perfectly that knowledge and practice of a divine life to which the march of humanity, after long wanderings in the satisfaction of the intellect and senses, must inevitably return and is actually at the present dawn, in the impulses of its vanguard, tending more and more, but vaguely and blindly, to return. If we can set our feet on the path, not vaguely and blindly, but in the full light that streamed so brilliantly and grandiosely on the inner sight of our distant forefathers, our speed will be more rapid and our arrival more triumphant.”

– Sri Aurobindo
(CWSA 14: 98)