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Complaining to ICJ

India is projecting as a diplomatic victory its success in getting the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to stay the execution of retired naval officer and alleged spy Kulbhushan Jadhav, in the custody of Pakistani authorities since last year. But the truth is a little more complex. First, the ICJ "stay" on the execution is hardly a confirmed verdict — although it is hoped that Pakistan will abide by the norms of the Vienna Convention and return an Indian citizen its agencies kidnapped, or lured, from Iran. The "stay" is actually a "letter" the ICJ has written to the prime minister of Pakistan, requesting that while the court's decision is pending, "(it) act in such a way as will enable any order the Court may make on this request to have its appropriate effect." Meaning, Pakistan shouldn't hang Jadhav at least until the ICJ delivers its verdict. Since there is no verdict so far, Pakistan can claim its hands have been only partially tied by the ICJ.

But perhaps the more interesting part of this story is that India chose to involve a "third party" in a dispute with Pakistan. This goes against the fundamental grain of India's foreign policy built on fiercely independent foundations as it struggled to get out of the shadow of colonial rule — and is the first time since an Indian Airlines plane was hijacked to Lahore in 1971. The fact that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has unshackled another of Jawaharlal Nehru's sacred tenets is not abhorrent in itself. After all, as the adage goes, nations have no permanent friends or enemies, only permanent interests. It's not even the self-conscious shift towards Chanakyaniti ("saam, daam, dand, bhed"), said to be the first "Indian" guru of strategic thought. It's about thinking through your high-profile action and seeing how your strategy will unfold beyond tomorrow's headlines.

The possibility of Pakistani retaliation — going to the UN against alleged human rights violations on Kashmir, for example — kept India away from that road in the worst years of the early 1990s and even in 1999, in the middle of the Kargil conflict when Pakistan mutilated and tortured Captain Saurabh Kalia. Going to the ICJ has blurred the "lakshman rekha". The truth is that India and Pakistan have to sit across the table and talk to each other like adults. Both nations are soon going to be 70 years old. It behoves them to sort out their problems, responsibly. Complaining to the ICJ may get India a few brownie points in the international court of public opinion, but it is unlikely to persuade Pakistan to give up Kulbhushan Jadhav, their precious prey. Picking up the thread of dialogue is the only credible alternative today for both neighbours.

Clinton tells a tale

Despite dark reports, the US presidency is actually having fun. Each day, while Donald Trump's administration ratchets up tension in the West Wing, former President Barack Obama delivers uber-smooth speeches on US campuses, his cool, unbuttoned-shirt look leaving audiences in raptures. And another former president is ready to thrill the US more. Teaming up with best-selling writer James Patterson, former President Bill Clinton will co-write his first novel. Expectedly, the political thriller will be about the pitter-patter of big feet in the power corridors of the White House — but knowing Clinton, the story could also be entirely unexpected.

And who would expect anything less from America's "Comeback Kid", the first Baby Boomer president, the third-youngest Supreme Commander after Theodore Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy? But Clinton was cooler than many buttoned-up leaders, with his warm Southern drawl, his saxophone play, his love for McDonald's burgers, his struggle from log cabin — he grew up dirt-poor in Arkansas, son to a single mother, who later married an alcoholic, abusive man — to the White House. Clinton's own story is terrific, for in his trials and travails, he was aided only by his brilliance — he won multiple scholarships, attending Oxford and Yale — and his chutzpah. So charismatic was "Bubba" of the South that even allegations of sexual misconduct couldn't dent his sheen. Clinton could fight off an impeachment following his alleged affair with Monica Lewinsky, returning to the Oval Office in a rosy glow, posing stylishly with Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat in a photo for the history books. Post-presidency, he staved off corruption charges around his Foundation, while remaining visibly energetic in wife Hillary's White House bid.

Given his own incredible tale, readers look forward to his stories now. Of course, where his facts and fiction might mischievously mingle will be hard to spot, but that very frisson — alternative facts, did anyone say? — could thrill some more. On balance, it's nice Bubba didn't become America's first gentleman. The White House's loss will be fiction's gain.

There are times when you see how ridiculous is this life, how ludicrous it is, you know, leaving your house every morning and being followed by paparazzi.

-----Johnny Depp

REINTRODUCTION OF FEE IN GOVERNMENT COLLEGES

The recent reintroduction of examination fee in under graduate courses in government colleges of Sikkim led many students to protest. A student participating in the protest through his Facebook post questioned "when the education has been declared officially free, why the fee has been collected again?" The stance by the college authority is that the fee is collected by the university. However, no such fee was collected until last year. A group of students reached HRDD office with placards in hands demanding justice. The protest was widely supported by the students including the students of other colleges in Sikkim, the pictures were widely shared on Facebook. It brought back the reminiscence of the vehement protest started by the students of college of SGC Tadong in the year 2014 against the almost 600% rise in semester fee, following which the fee was first rolled back first and later made to nil in a declaration made by the chief minister of Sikkim. In the declaration honourable chief minister declared that the education has been made free to all the students of Sikkim up to the graduation level. After the declaration there was no fee whatsoever in the college to the Sikkimese students. But an effort was made last year to collect admission fee of semester readmission. Students require to do readmission every semester. However, when the majority of students stood firm against the move the fee was rolled back. But a section of students said fee of Rs. 500 has been collected per improvement paper since last year. Some section of students feel this fee collection for improvement paper is direct violation of the official declaration of free education in Sikkim.

This regular attempt by the government to reintroduce fee in the colleges must be analysed in the backdrop of growing rampant privatisation and commercialisation of education in the country.

When privatisation of education began in India?

Its beginning dates back to the year 1986 when the congress led government at the centre with late Rajiv Gandhi as the prime minister introduced National Education Policy (NEP) on education. The government through this policy argued that education is an instrument of "unique investment". After this, various government at the centre under various prime ministers through numerous commissions like Ramamurthy Committee, N Janardhan Committee, Justice Punjaya Committee on University Education, Ambani-Birla Committee, National Knowledge Commission, Yashpal Committee and finally the National Education Policy (NEP) 2016, continued adding fillip to the ongoing process of privatisation and commercialisation of education in the country.

National Education Policy 2016

In a report named "some inputs for draft NEP 2016" uploaded in the official website of MHRD, the government seems to have recognised the problem of rampant privatisation and commercialisation of education. It says: "commercialisation is rampant both in school and higher education sub-sectors as reflected in the charges levied for admissions in pri-

vate educational institutions". However it does not recommend substituting it by well-funded government schools and colleges. Rather it declares: "in order to supplement the Government efforts, investment in education by private providers through philanthropy and corporate sector responsibility will be encouraged. The government will take steps for incentivizing private sector investment in education, such as, tax benefits and inclusion of education within the definition of infrastructure. In general, public funding will continue for core activities, whereas other functions can be through private funding. Private funding and FDI for R&D and other quality enhancement activities in education institutions will be pursued as an important strategy for mobilising financial resources".

It further says: "higher education institutions funded by government need to find ways of increasing their revenues through other sources, such as, alumni funding, endowment funding, endowment funding, tuition fee enhancement along with fee waiver for disadvantaged sections, and private investment". It is a sheer instance of government pulling its hands off the responsibilities of funding the education in India.

Why education has been privatised?

The world economy is at peril. No business is secure these days. Factories are closed. Markets of almost all commodities are shrinking very fast. Banks are going bankrupt. Many countries are in the verge of bankruptcy. Purchasing power of common people is going down. Too much production but no buyer as those who need has no money. At such juncture health and educations are two safe field to invest. In order to make education investment friendly, the government both at the centre and the state is putting all its efforts. Continuous increase of fee, no appointment of permanent teachers, and negligence in developing infrastructure of educational institutions are efforts in this direction.

Privatisation of education in Sikkim

When the whole country is surging in privatising education, Sikkim is not aloof either. Privatisation of education is rampant in Sikkim. The existence of 395 private unaided schools and four private universities in such a small state say it all. Only the lower and lower middle class family send their wards to government schools. People have no trust in the government institutes. As the qualities of these institutions are continuously dwindling. VIPs mostly send their wards to outside state or even country for education. Government aided Schools are mostly run by temporary teachers, who despite being highly qualified are forced to teach with a meagre salary. The state has no government engineering and medical colleges. Students of lower and lower middle class family even don't dream to go for medical or engineering courses owing to its high expenditure requirement.

The six times increase of semester fee in 2014 was an effort towards commercialisation of education. But the resistance from the students was so powerful that the government had to knell down amidst the resistance of students. Though after this many

attempts were made to reintroduce the fee. Relentless struggle from students has resisted thus. But isis only the matter of time. Fee will inevitably be reintroduced again.

Why education must not be privatised?

Education cannot be a commodity, nor can it be a property to be owned privately. Education is the vast treasures of knowledge, acquired through joint efforts and mutual cooperation of so many people down the ages. In every scientific invention or discovery, knowledge and ideas acquired earlier is put to use making it impossible to give absolute credit to a single individual. For example, had there not been laws discovered by Newton, Einstein would not have discovered his special theory of relativity and general theory of relativity, or had not there been Galileo's contribution Newton's law of motion would be an impossibility. Therefore it would be against the scientific spirit for one to use his discovery for his personal commercial benefit. Something similar argument was put forward by madam curie when she denied to patent her discovery of radium. She said behind her discovery there are contributions of number of scientists, the credit equally belongs to them all, therefore this discovery belongs to the society.

Education is the edifice of such contributions of number of people of different fields. Each chapter of each book, each theory, each principle, each law, each idea, each discovery, each art, taught in educational institutions has the contribution of various people of various countries, various races, and various background. Many have given up their life in accumulating the treasure house of knowledge that the human race possesses now. Therefore knowledge is the property of society. Everyone has right to acquire it. No one can deny this right to any individual. A person either rich or poor, black or white, Asian or American has right to acquire it. It is absolutely unethical from the part of the person or group to make it a commodity to sell. Due to greediness of a few people a vast multitude of people has been denied of this most important right of an individual. Progress of humanity and human civilisation is intrinsically dependent on it.

Conclusion

As stated by swami Vivekananda education is the life-building, man-making and character-building process. Without education all round development of a person cannot be fully realised. In order to build a harmonious society with fully developed citizens, secular and democratic education must be ensured to every individual. To make sure that education is accessible to every section of society irrespective of his economic background, it is the foremost duty of the state to remove all barriers which bar an individual to acquire education. Education must be made free and easily accessible to everyone. Therefore the struggle carried out by Sikkimese college students is a step towards the right direction.

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Kejriwal A Dangerous Idea: No Establishment Will Let Him Survive

By Saeed Naqvi

NEW DELHI: The wag has a point. The 2017 Delhi Municipal Corporation elections, we are being persistently reminded, were won by the BJP handsomely because of a single factor: a Modi wave. Fair enough. But the BJP won the two previous Delhi Municipal elections also. Who generated the waves then?

The anchors were hopping on their seats in orgasmic ecstasy. "Kejriwal routed, Kejriwal routed". One of them, his mouth protruding like he was about to burst a gole-guppa, thrust his three fingers forward in a gesture of uncontrollable excitement. "Kejriwal is coming third; Kejriwal is third."

As it turned out Kejriwal was not third. He came second with 48 seats. Third was Congress with 30 seats. BJP, of course, was way ahead of either with 181 of the 270 seats contested.

Terms like "routed", "swept away", "finished", "buried", "destroyed", "crushed", "smashed" were used for Kejriwal with such relish that one wondered what words would be pulled out from the Thesaurus for the Congress which had actually come third.

Moreover, how can Kejriwal and AAP be "swept away" from the MCD where they never were. Yes, Congress was annihilated, but the anchors seemed uncomfortable with that reality. They would register that detail in tones of unbelievable politeness.

This visceral hatred for Kejriwal in the media remains something of a puzzle for me. Having been a pen pusher and TV anchor for decades, I cannot for the life of me understand "hatred" as an ingredient in a journalist's make up. In journalism, as in diplomacy, the cardinal principal always was to keep ones balance.

The high decibel, partisan hysteria which is the staple at all prime time discussions these days, takes ones breath away: the anchor shouts at inconvenient panelists and hands lollipops to BJP spokespersons.

I hesitate to lay all the blame at the door of journalists who man today's media. They operate in a particular system of media ownership: he who pays the piper calls the tune.

Circumstances were not dissimilar a few decades ago. A proprietor in the classical mould, Ramnath Goenka, for instance, had abiding political interests. He, along with the RSS's Nanaji



Deshmukh, was one of the architects of what came to be known as JP's Bihar movement. Subsequently he had a proprietary interest in the Morarji Desai led Janata Government. But keeping these facts in mind, the paper's policy was enunciated by the powerful editor S. Mulgaonkar. There was credibility in the filtration process. The presentation was plausible.

It is not for a moment suggested that Kejriwal is God's gift to Indian politics, but he has been quite unambiguous in his opposition to corporate power, xenophobia, communalism and a general militarism. Surely this should be to his credit.

Little wonder none of this registers with the media which came into being in the wake of economic liberalization and accelerated globalization. It was designed to carry advertising which the neo liberal economic

policies would boost. A media in the image of Rupert Murdoch became a vogue. This Murdochized media was placed supinely in the service of crony capitalism which reveled in the two-party systems. Whichever party came on top was owned by corporates. I have personal knowledge of even the mainstream Left having its hands in the same till. Rampaging corruption enveloped regimes in Greece, Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, US, Indonesia, India, Pakistan — any country boasting of an electoral democracy.

A suffocated electorate began to break out of the two party strait jacket. The Left surfaced in countries where economic issues dominated — Syriza and Podemos, both communist parties, in Greece and Spain, for instance. Islamophobia and anti immigrant xenophobia were fuelled in Societies fearful of the

biggest migration in history from West Asia and North Africa following America's 9/11 wars. Marine Le Pen is the direct consequence of such fears.

The post Soviet global establishment, with the US as its central column, weakened considerably after the 2008 economic meltdown. But it is resilient enough to fight and contain the two extremities. The formula is simple: where possible, a right-of-centre formation should be supported. But in a situation where extreme Left is in competition with the extreme Right, it is the Right which will obtain the vote of confidence. In other words, xenophobia and racism are preferable to anti austerity politics.

In the recent French campaign, the Communist Jean-Luc Mélenchon surged ahead of most other candidates. Supposing the run-off on May 7 were between Le Pen and Mélenchon, the establishment would have thrown its full weight behind Le Pen. She would have won. But Emmanuel Macron is a crafty candidate of the establishment in disguise: his En Marche! (March ahead) party is brand new and yet as a former banker he is nothing if not the establishment.

Kejriwal's strength

and weakness derive from the same fact. He is truly anti establishment. It was extremely audacious of him to stand on that kind of a platform. The result is there for all to see. He stunned the nation winning 67 of 70 seats in the 2015 Delhi elections. He stood out all the more because his extraordinary success came within months of Modi's victory. He alarmed the establishment, Modi, BJP, Congress, Lt. Governor, Police Commissioner and, above all, the corporate media. Kejriwal, unchecked, was a dangerous idea. He had to be waylaid at every turn. He must be politically exterminated.

Providing free water and cheap electricity, mohalla clinics to Delhi's poor despite his hands having been tied behind his back, is no mean achievement. A fearful Congress and the Akali-BJP combine ganged up against him in Punjab but he came second, ahead of the Akali-BJP.

True, he does not have the please all skills of a Macron. It therefore remains something of a pity that a duplicitous outreach in multiple directions has to be placed in the category of a virtue for success in today's politics.

(Courtesy : IANS)