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NEW WAR IN EUROPE

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16 "UKRAINE, OFTEN CALLED THE BREADBASKET OF EUROPE, IS HOME TO A THIRD OF THE WORLD'S MOST FERTILE SOIL."

28 MILK SACHETS, FUEL: BASICS SLIP OUT OF REACH FOR SRI LANKANS AS ECONOMIC CRISIS BITES

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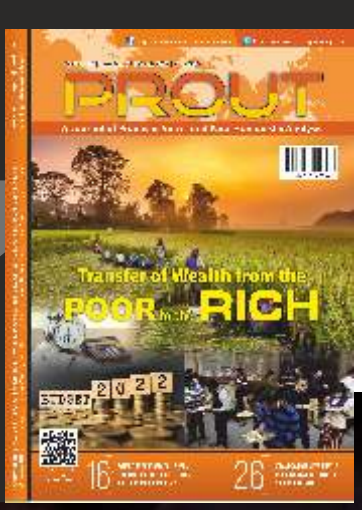
Contents

VOLUME 33 | ISSUE 04 | APRIL 2022



12

NEW WAR IN EUROPE

Feature

08 SOCIOLOGY
The Vipra Age

16 GLOBAL HUNGER
How Russia's Invasion of Ukraine Will Worsen War & Hunger

19 PROGRESSIVE CHANGES
Disrupting the Cow : The Transition to Cellular Agriculture

22 ONE WORLD
From Nationalist Wars to World Government-Part I

25 NEW ERA CURRENCY
Should We Encourage Crypto Currency?

28 ECONOMIC CRISIS
Sri Lanka Economic Crisis

31 INEQUALITY
Poor Country With Affluent Elite-India is Going Nowhere

33 INEQUALITY
Shepherds in Indian Himalayas Turn Backs on Traditional Livelihood

37 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
Water is Life

40 PROUT NEWS REPORT
Honour Killings Will Continue as Long as Iran's Laws Protect Killers

41 PROUTONOMICS
Prout's Qualified Market Economy

REGULARS

05 Editorial
06 Letters
07 Inspirational
46 Activities
50 Prabhat Samgiita

"War is the black spot of human character. One can struggle in an individual or collective life, but war is based on hatred and divisive tendencies. Struggle and war are not synonymous. While war springs from hatred, the struggle is part and parcel of life."

– Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

Fundamental Principles of PROUT

1. No individual should be allowed to accumulate any physical wealth without the clear permission or approval of the collective body
2. There should be maximum utilization and rational distribution of all mundane, supra mundane and spiritual potentialities of the universe
3. There should be maximum utilization of the physical, metaphysical and spiritual potentialities of unit and collective body of the human society.
4. There should be a proper adjustment amongst these physical, metaphysical, mundane, supra mundane and spiritual utilizations.
5. The method of utilization should vary in accordance with the changes in time, space and person and the utilization should be of progressive nature.

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The Ukraine Tragedy – Women Children Most Affected

The sudden full-scale war launched on Ukraine by Russia in the early hours of February 24 has taken a tragic toll on the people. Besides its cities being pulverized by modern lethal munitions from the air, the war has taken a tragic toll on human lives. What's even worse, it has affected millions of women and children, all fleeing to neighbouring European countries to the west and south. As per latest UN reports, the war has also caused internal displacement of 5 million people.

Ukraine is the second-largest country in Europe, after Russia. At 603,550sq km (233,031sq miles), it is one third of India with an estimated population of 44 million – the seventh-largest in Europe. However, the country's population has declined since the 1990s, with fertility rates among the lowest in the world. As of 2020, Ukraine's fertility rate was just 1.2. For context, for a population to remain stable, an overall total fertility rate of 2.1 is required. And with so many men being killed in the ongoing war, this has disastrous consequences for the future.

More than 2 million people have crossed borders into neighbouring countries that have offered refuge and solace. These numbers are rising and will continue as long as the war lasts. Cars have been backed up for several kilometres at some border crossings as authorities in Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Moldova mobilized to receive Ukrainians and provide shelter, food and legal help. The UN's High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, has called it the fastest-growing refugee crisis in Europe since World War II. Poland was already home to an estimated 1.5 million Ukrainians before Russia's invasion, which suffered greatly during World War II. Earlier, having suffered partition of the country thrice, she opened her generous arms to over a million refugees.

Most of them were women and children, as all men aged between 18 and 60 have been banned from leaving the country to take up arms and fight. It has affected the children parted from their fathers and women from their husbands. Many of the women carrying their children walked scores of kilometres over days in the bitter cold to border crossing areas. The UN said the number of people seeking refuge outside of Ukraine to other countries could rise to five million. Several European countries are preparing for an influx of Ukrainian refugees and have offered humanitarian help.

The World Bank has approved $723m in loans and grants for Ukraine as the country fights against a Russian invasion. The bank said it is continuing to work on another $3bn package of support in the coming months for the country. It also promised extra help for neighbouring countries taking in refugees, mostly women, children, and the elderly. "The war in Ukraine comes at a bad time for the world because inflation was already rising," he said. The war apart from killing thousands of civilians has destroyed $ 100 billion to road, bridges, residential buildings and businesses in Ukraine dealing a huge blow to the economy. And the economy will collapse as much as 30% if the war drags on.

On this, Prout's founder raised the question, "Who is responsible for the distress of these millions of refugees? Today the numbers of refugees are millions all over the world. And for their precarious existence, for the ignoble deaths of those millions of wretched people, only a handful of people – demons really in human form are responsible. They come to the world and leave it in great ruins".

It's time for the Russian President to realise that the war he started three weeks ago and thought would end in a few days, now with almost the entire world against him and crippling economic sanctions in place, he should not continue with the war and hope to win. He should order the troops to withdraw and the guns to fall silent so that the human suffering comes to an end. ●

God-Centred Philosophy

An excellent discourse by Prout's founder. He has clearly explained various prevailing current and previous dogma-centred philosophies. It is very important to do away with superstitions and dogma for human progress on rational lines. Among these, no doubt God-centred philosophy is the best. And its economic offshoot Prout needs to fill the vacuum — the sooner, the better.

- Savitri Sharma, Nainital

Wealth Transfer from Poor to the Rich

Undoubtedly genuine love for humanity will go a long way in alleviating economic issues rather than complex schedules by Nobel laureates in economics. It was already proved by the house-bubble burst in 2008 in the USA.

- Mahesh Prasad, Meerut

Cooperative Economy Transition

Communism has already collapsed. The fall of capitalism is indeed imminent, and that will provide an opportunity for the transition to a more sustainable economic model. Widespread cooperative ownership in an orderly fashion is the answer. Proutists should be prepared for it.

- Sahib Singh, Bhatinda

Prout March Issue

The March issue is remarkable, for which I compliment you all. Let us seriously consider how we can make Prout known worldwide and implemented (in any state, to start with), whereby we can end this Political Party-based pseudo-democratic governance system.

- Acarya Dhanjoo Ghista, USA

Learning Anytime Anywhere

An excellent article by Sohail. He has clearly shown the way to potentially new innovations in learning. It is an amazing pointer to the future.

- Tracy Sims, Ireland

Towards Total Unification

Undoubtedly, it is difficult for scientists to accept that science can describe consciousness. However, the revolutionary concept of Microvita would prove it in the future.

- SK Raju, Vellore

The Russia-Ukraine Ethno-Conflict

A very informative article gives the history of the two nations now at war. As predicted by the West, Russia invaded Ukraine in the early morning of February 24. It triggered a massive exodus of people fleeing to neighbouring countries for safety. The West did not come to Ukraine's rescue militarily but have resorted to sanctions and gathering international support to isolate Russia. It will not have any immediate effect, and Ukraine is paying the price for Russia's larger confrontation with Nato and the West. Even though the ideological conflict between communism and capitalism has receded into history, the issue of Russia's place in the world has not been fully resolved. For years, relations have deteriorated, and Russia says Nato's eastward expansion is a direct threat. The present crisis is also a direct result of this mistrust and seems to be the beginning of a new Cold War!

- Tarun Khanna, New Delhi

Tycoons and Economic Growth

It is an important question. Why does liberalism favour market-based capitalism and freebooting private enterprise? And in India, a small group of top businessmen seeking easy profits have no incentive to compete for international markets as the country provides a sheltered market for them. It only increases their profits but does little good to the economy per se.

- Sashi Sabharwal, Tatanagar

India's Gig Workers

It is said that these overworked, underpaid gig workers are so shamelessly abandoned. They are not even considered workers and are therefore open to exploitation under India's nebulous labour laws. They have already approached the Supreme Court. I hope their employers and the government agree to their fair and justified demands.

- Rana Thapa, Mumbai.

Manual Scavenging

It is shocking that manual scavenging still goes on when the country is about to celebrate 75 years of Independence. What's worse, thousands of women and children are being forced to do this kind of work. It's high time the government authorities take strict action and come down on this inhuman practice with a heavy hand.

- Sailen Saha, Howrah

Industrialized Farming

It is a serious environmental issue, which should be of concern to all. Insects are very much part of God's creation, and if they die before their time, it will upset the balance of the earth nay the universe.

- Rajesh Ramsevak, Indore

Inspirational

MOTHER'S LOVE

A REAL LIFE STORY IN VIETNAM

Women and children take cover in a muddy canal under intense fire during the Vietnam War that lasted from 1955 to 1975

The Vietnam War broke out. Following the heart, the young husband joined the military and sacrificed his life leaving behind his wife and kids. Life postwar was very hard, often with not enough food to eat. But, still young and beautiful, the wife refused to remarry and dedicated her entire life to raising her kids with the best possible care and education.

An opportunity came; the firstborn son immigrated to America, studied hard and became a NASA Engineer having a good life. The son sent home letters often, together with a lot of money for mom to spend. However, with many excuses, the son stubbornly refused to travel home to visit mom, Christmas after Christmas, New Year after New Year.

The son returned and organized a big funeral when the mother died, but people did not see him shedding tears.

Mother left behind a box that she always placed at the top of her bed. During the funeral, the son opened the Box and suddenly burst into tears, sobbed, embraced his mother's coffin, and screamed hysterically, "Mom! Mom!"

Everyone looked at each other and looked at the BBox. It was full of 100 dollar bills and a piece of paper that read, "Son, I don't spend too much money. I miss you a lot. Every time I heard a motorcycle passing by, I ran out the door but it wasn't my son. I saved this money for you in case you get sick". ●

- Michael Luong

All the great war mongers, the great politicians of the world, belong to this vipra gang of satanic intellect.

THE VIPRA AGE

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

As tens of thousands of anti-war protestors rioted in Chicago in 1968. President Johnson and his family watched from the bedroom at his ranch in Stonewall, Texas

The intellect of intelligent people can penetrate where the sun's rays cannot. Such people want to enjoy matter without being subservient to it. In other words, they want to control matter with their mental waves. It is not only kśatriyas who do this but vipras as well. The fundamental difference between kśatriya-hood and vipra-hood is that the ego of the kśatriyas draws objects of enjoyment to itself through a physical struggle with all opposing forces, while the ego of the vipras or their desire for enjoyment draws matter to itself either by the physical force of others through physical clash, or directly through psychic clash but avoiding physical clash, or through physical or psychic clash or both according to the demands of the situation.

The salient feature of vipra life is that they enjoy the glory of victory and avoid the ignominy of defeat. In their personal lives, they satisfy their desires for enjoyment without taking great risks. Like kśatriyas, vipras are constantly engaged in fighting, but their fight takes place on the battleground of the intellect. Thus, vipras are intellectuals.

They do not use their intellectual development only to accumulate material wealth; they also surpass all others in their capacity to accumulate subtle psychic wealth. Their intellectual endowment and intuitional longing are especially helpful in awakening agryábuddhi [pinnacled intellect]. And although there is no ideological difference between pleasure-seeking vipras and kśatriyas in terms of psychic dynamism, those vipras who develop a pinnacled intellect are very different from kśatriyas.

The awakening of the pinnacled intellect, together with the momentum of that intellect, enables it to reach almost the highest stance of subtlety, so its movement is in a straight line. Its momentum has speed and moves in all directions. It contains within itself all the varńas [mental colours], which is why vipras are the embodiment of whiteness – their colour is white. As they express themselves less through their motor organs than do

kśatriyas, blood-red, the symbol of spiritedness, cannot be their colour.

But how many white vipras are there who try to develop a pinnacled intellect? Most vipras are busy accumulating objects of enjoyment with the help of the physical strength of others, like parasites. In this chapter, when I use the term vipra, I mean this inferior type of vipra. I will talk later about the superior white vipras, or sadvipras, who try to develop a pinnacled intellect.

Vipra SocietyVipras make use of the back-breaking labour of the shúdras and the powerful personalities of the kśatriyas to achieve their objectives. Shúdras help build a society with their physical labour, and kśatriyas help with their powerful personalities. Enticing them both, the vipras exact the physical labour of the shúdras and purchase the personal force of the kśatriyas. Suppose they see a towering mountain blocking the path of social progress. In that case, vipras do not sit back in despair or worship the obstacle as a god (or worship a particular disease as a goddess – in a way worshipping their own helplessness – like the shúdras; neither do they leap fearlessly into the ocean of action like the kśatriyas. Instead, they use their intellects to plan victory over their enemies; the kśatriyas and shúdras translate these plans into action at the cost of their lives. The vipras march to the fore over the kśatriyas' and shúdras' dead bodies and proclaim to the world, "Look at what I did. Just see how I won." The pages of history are full of examples of the indirect struggles of the vipras.

The characteristic similarities and differences between kśatriyas and vipras are clearly evident in every aspect of life. Thus, Kśatriyas and vipras are identified not by their similarities but by their differences. The most important difference is that kśatriyas try to enslave matter directly by fighting with it. In contrast, vipras, using their intellect, try to enslave the kśatriyas (who can then triumph over matter). The path of the kśatriyas is straightforward – there is no scope for duplicity; the path of the vipras is crooked from beginning to end – there is no scope for simplicity. Whatever simplicity, vipras exhibit is merely a veneer to hide their crookedness. A body of people with a vipra mentality is called vipra society.

We should keep in mind that words such as shúdra, kśatriya and vipra [as used in this article] have no connection with the varńáshrama system of ancient Hindu society. However, it is a fact that those who became vipras by virtue of their intellect declared that the vipras were a hereditary caste in order to perpetuate their own authority in society. They showed the kśatriyas, whom they had defeated and who had submitted to them, a little mercy by giving them a social position just under themselves. (Actually, they did not do this out of mercy but so they could put them to work in the future.)

Intellectual Exploitation

Vipras use all their abilities for intellectual exploitation. They try to gain prestige in society and maintain that prestige by composing mythological stories which play on the weaknesses of the human mind; by preaching the divine power of certain gods and goddesses under certain circumstances; by convincing people of the vipras' social superiority; and by injecting the confusion of religion even into spirituality. They spend most of the mental resources of their precious lives scheming to gain prestige and plotting to maintain it.

If one reads the scriptures of any religious community, one will

find ample examples of this. Even if one undergoes austerities, practises ritualistic fasting, undertakes pilgrimages, bathes in holy rivers and springs, worships a sacred fire or studies the scriptures, one will not be blessed unless one also offers sacerdotal fees to the vipras. Only the vipras are authorized to recite even ordinary páncálii [long folk poems] about Laokik gods and goddesses – and needless to say, a vipra would never visit anybody to recite such poems without remuneration.

Occasionally, even sinful, antisocial elements are led to believe that if they frankly confess their sins to a vipra, the vipra, through his special efforts, will obtain a dispensation saving them from the consequences of their sins. Every intelligent person knows that a vipra will never act as an agent of God without some remuneration. Just see the way sins are condoned!

Even so, vipras have more capacities than kśatriyas. A kśatriya seeks happiness only through physical enjoyment, but a vipra is capable of some mental enjoyment as well, however little it may be.

Disasters occur when there is a lack of balance between people's physical and intellectual efforts. If the reins of society are in the hands of people who suffer from such imbalances, society as a whole will suffer the consequences of those disasters.

The amount of intellectual labour performed by shúdras is negligible compared to their physical labour. Although the intellectual labour of kśatriyas is not completely meaningless, it does not have much practical value.

Even if a vipra administration does not itself create disasters, it will not be able to prevent them from occurring for long. It is because what happens with the vipras is that [intellect] is given a higher valuation than the application of physical force. Thus under a vipra administration, others work to enhance the vipras' prestige and to maintain the vipras' standard of living, while the vipras use their intellect to live an unbalanced life and to suck the vitality of others like parasites.

Where there is more physical clash in life, the physical force will increase faster than intellect or the expression of intellect. Likewise, where there is much psychic clash, there will be only the expression of intellect, coupled with a gradual but eventually severe increase in physical indolence. From a psychological point of view, people dominated by the intellect in this way gradually become more and more atrophied, so whatever magnanimity exists at the beginning of the Vipra Age is lost by the end of the age. The result of this lack of magnanimity is that the vaesyas become dominant in society. At the beginning of the Vipra Age, the vipras provided advice about how to protect society as well as how to exploit it; they also took advice from others about how to protect and exploit it. But by the end of the Vipra Age, the vipras only give advice but no longer accept it, and the advice they give concerns only how to exploit.

Satanic Vipras

The development of human society that comes in the wake of the lustrous vitality of the kśatriyas becomes somewhat subdued among the vipras. That vitality gradually surrenders to intellectuality. The strength and sincerity demonstrated in the practical sphere by the kśatriyas in their efforts to conquer matter and consciousness are not matched by the vipras. Vipras certainly do use their intellect to try to acquaint themselves with consciousness. Still, they do not try to conquer matter by applying their own physical strength – that they also try to do using intellect as their capital. In fact, through their intellect, they use the strength of the kśatriyas to conquer matter.

At the slightest sign from the vipras, major wars break out in different countries and states. The vipras themselves do not fight. Instead, by the whispering of war in the ears of the king, they send kśatriya generals into battle. Kśatriya soldiers, running the risks for the vipras, wage war on land, on the sea and in the air, and the vipras, understanding their physical and mental weaknesses, entice them with food or money, or inspire them with hollow, idealistic-sounding slogans, and land them in a holocaust.

Thus in the Vipra Age, kśatriyas fight and die while shrewd vipra ministers receive triumphant ovations. It happens in every country where vipras play a dominant role. The names of vipra ministers are

A grieving widow cries over a body bag containing the remains of her husband, found in a mass grave containing civilians killed in Vietnam in 1968

blazoned across the pages of history. Still, history does not record the number of soldiers who died on the battlefield or how many of them saw their golden dreams fade into darkness under cannon fire.

When a vipra minister dies, the newspapers write it up elaborately. Condolence meetings are held; condolence messages come in by the thousands; flags are flown at half-mast, and marble statues are erected at intersections in public parks. But the press will never acknowledge the kśatriyas whose blood enriched the ground for the harvest of victory. And actually, why should they? How can so many names be published in a newspaper anyway!

All the great warmongers, the great politicians of the world, belong to this vipra gang of satanic intellect. At their command, or due to their fiery lectures or diplomatic intrigues, millions of foolish shúdras have lost their lives, and thousands of hot-blooded kśatriyas have served as instruments in the slaughter.

The pages of world history reveal that these satanic vipras plotted all the crusades and jihads of the Middle Ages. The shúdras took the beatings, caught in their intrigues, and the kśatriyas fought as religious warriors but never thought deeply about whom they were fighting for.

Was it only in the Middle Ages that this happened? In today's world also, satanic vipras, the protected agents of the capitalist vaeshyas, have led and are continuing to lead millions of people along the path of death and destruction. Evil vipras are fanning the flames of the vaesyas' insatiable, demonic hunger. Neither the shúdra masses nor the warlike kśatriyas are responsible for the problem of the millions of refugees in different countries; for the heart-rending cries of the mothers, wives, sons and daughters of the soldiers who died on the battlefields; for the blazing flames of communal riots; for communalism itself, provincialism, nationalism and casteism. The responsibility lies with a small group of shrewd vipras who, out of petty self-interest, have instigated the shúdras and kśatriyas to commit heinous acts.

The meanness and brutality of such vipras put on a ghoulish graveyard dance, seeming to make a mockery of the vipras' intellect. In the Vipra Age, the vipras drew power from this type of brutality, and through a staged display of black magic, vipras bestrode society. In the Vaesya Age, the vipras commit similar sins to shine like fancy shoes on the feet of the vaeshyas.

Have vipras only exploited others? Although they have done more to exploit others than to serve them, and although their service was motivated by the desire to exploit, the list of their services has been considerable. The kśatriyas conquered the physical world through a fight, whereas the vipras wormed their intellect into the wealth won by the kśatriyas. Whereas the kśatriyas' intellect was only capable of obtaining objects, the vipras' intellect in the Vipra Age was able to devour them.

But even in the vipras' action of devouring, there is one speciality, and that is, although they demarcated everyone's field of activity, they allowed people the scope to express themselves within that demarcated area. Even though the vipras exploited and enslaved the kśatriyas, they did not curb their martial nature or deny them the opportunity to display their heroism. And although they were reluctant to recognize the shúdras as human beings, they nevertheless allowed them to survive. In the history of human progress and the effort to establish human superiority over matter, we would overlook an important fact if we failed to mention this speciality of the Vipra Age. ●

EXPLOITATIVE WAR

NEW WAR IN EUROPE

Arun Prakash

Now that invasion has been launched, the lingering question is, where will it stop?

It was the early morning of October 16, 1964, that Indian Naval Ship Mysore steamed into Odessa harbour. I was then a midshipman just out of my teens trained on board. The previous day, we had crossed the Dardanelles and entered the Black Sea, having crossed the straits of Bosphorus past the beautiful city of Istanbul glowing in the early morning sunshine, with the continents of Asia and Europe on either side of the river. The very same day, Soviet Premier Khrushchev was ousted in a Kremlin coup. That was the first time a warship from India was calling on that vast country on a goodwill visit! In the state of Ukraine, Odessa was a beautiful city that we all loved, especially climbing the giant Potemkin Stairway, the entrance to Odessa city from the harbour and the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Not far away was the famous Opera house built in 1810, near where we saw Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake ", a dazzling performance with live orchestra by the renowned Bolshoi ballet from Moscow.

Over half a century later, it was most distressing to see on television visions of Odessa going through the effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Of course, by then, the Soviet Union had broken into independent states, and Russia became the biggest European country and Ukraine the next biggest. Russia has launched a devastating attack on Ukraine by air, land, and sea, a European democracy of 44 million people. Its forces are bombing city centres and closing in on the capital, Kyiv, prompting a mass exodus of refugees.

On February 24, Russia launched a devastating attack by air, land, and sea on Ukraine. Immediately, forces attacked airports and military headquarters, and then tanks and troops rolled in from Russia, Russia-annexed Crimea and its ally Belarus. It started with cruise missile and rocket strikes and aircraft bombing locations across Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin called it a special military operation, whereas Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky called it a full-scale war and declared martial law. Russian forces bombed city centres and are closing in on the capital, Kyiv, prompting a mass exodus of refugees.

Only last year, Putin wrote a long piece describing Russians and Ukrainians as "one nation" and the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991 as the "disintegration of historical Russia". He claimed modern Ukraine was entirely created by communist Russia and is now a West-controlled puppet state. Putin's pressure on Ukraine not to sign an association treaty with the EU in 2013 sparked the protests that ousted its pro-Kremlin president.

Despite warnings to the contrary by the USA and Europe, for months, President Vladimir Putin denied he would invade his neighbour, but then he tore up a peace deal and unleashed what Germany calls "Putin's war", pouring forces into Ukraine's north, east and south. In a pre-dawn TV address on February 24, President Putin declared Russia could not feel "safe, develop and exist" because he claimed a constant threat from modern Ukraine. Putin claimed his goal was to protect people subjected to bullying and genocide and aim for the "demilitarisation and de-Nazification" of Ukraine. There has been no genocide in Ukraine: a vibrant democracy led by a Jewish president. "How could I be a Nazi?" said Volodymyr Zelensky, who likened Russia's onslaught to Nazi Germany'sinvasion in World War II. Putin has even put his nuclear forces on high alert, days after threatening the West with "consequences the likes of which you have never seen" if it stands in his way. His long-term ambitions for Ukraine are unknown. He denies seeking to occupy Ukraine and rejected a UK accusation in January that he was plotting to install a pro-Kremlin puppet. However, one unconfirmed intelligence report says he aims to split the country in two. This invasion has brought some of the darkest hours since World War II for Europe's leaders. France's Emmanuel Macron has spoken of a turning point

in Europe's history, while Germany's Olaf Scholz has warned that "Putin wants a Russian empire".

Meanwhile, in an address to the Ukrainian people on February 27 night, Zelensky urged citizens in Russian occupied areas to fight back against Vladimir Putin's military. "Ukrainians! In all of our cities, where the enemy invaded, go on the offensive. Go out on the streets. We need to fight every time we have an opportunity," he said.

Ukraine forces are reportedly resisting invading Russian troops as they surround and bomb the capital Kyiv. But, according to US military sources, the Russian military may have been caught off-guard by the level of resistance by Ukrainian fighters, and more troops would likely enter the fray in the coming days. "Russia is clearly facing setbacks that it did not expect. It's taking casualties and Ukraine is taking prisoners, including some quite senior, at least one, possibly two, brigade commanders," said Nigel Gould-Davies, a former United Kingdom ambassador to Belarus and now from the International Institute for Strategic Studies. "It's quite clear that Russia has a very significant advantage. But the really impressive aspect of Ukraine's resistance so far is how strong and how wide it has been", he added.

Tom Bullock, an open-source intelligence analyst for intelligence information firm Janes, said Russian forces so far have not been able to capitalise on their vastly superior military advantage. "The trend we are seeing is that the Russians are incurring losses, they are losing equipment and definitely losing soldiers. But so are the Ukrainians. In some places such as the south it appears the losses are heavier on the Ukrainian side. It does appear as though the Russians were expecting less resistance from the Ukrainians when they entered. That clearly hasn't been the case."

The conflict in Ukraine as of the second week of March shows that Russian forces continued to shell the Ukrainian city of Mariupol despite agreeing to a ceasefire - throwing an attempted mass evacuation of civilians into chaos. Just hours after the truce was supposed to begin, Mariupol authorities announced they had postponed the evacuation because of the continued bombardment. The Black Seaport, the second biggest after Odessa, was the first Ukrainian city to fall to the Russians. In it, some 2,000 residents held protests against the occupiers. On March 4, Russian troops seized Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, the biggest in Europe, after a middle of the night attack that set it on fire and briefly raised worldwide fears of a catastrophe in the most chilling turn in Moscow's invasion yet. Russia also hit residential areas of Ukraine's second-largest city, Kharkiv, with heavy shelling on February 28th Monday. According to Ukrainian officials, it was a deliberate escalation of the war just as officials from both sides met for the first round of talks. March 6 saw the bombing of the civilian Vinitsya airport.

The immediate Western response was to impose economic sanctions but sent no soldiers or aircraft to help Ukraine. Sanctions hit the Russian economy hard, forcing the Ruble to fall by around 30 per cent to the US dollar. It would, however, do little in the immediate short term to stop the war as Russia has China on its side that has refused to take part in the implementation of the sanctions. Meanwhile, military help is pouring in from Europe and America through equipment, arms and ammunition. Germany will supply Ukraine with 1,000 anti-tank weapons and 500 Stinger surface-to-air missiles from Bundeswehr stocks to defend itself against Russia as fighting intensifies around its capital; the Netherlands will supply 50 Panzerfaust-3 anti-tank guns and 400 rockets. The Netherlands is also jointly considering with Germany sending a Patriot air defence system to a NATO battle group in Slovakia. "The Russian invasion of Ukraine marks a turning point. It is our duty to do our best to support Ukraine in defending itself against Putin's invading army," German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on Saturday. Berlin has also handed over a field hospital to Kyiv. "Germany has just announced the provision of anti-tank grenade launchers and Stinger missiles to Ukraine. Keep it up, Chancellor Olaf Scholz!" Zelensky tweeted. A defense official said that the United States and Western allies can still deliver arms into the country to bolster the Ukraine military, and Washington plans to send more in the coming days. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced on February 26 that Washington would provide $350m in additional military equipment to Ukrainian forces. "This package will include further lethal defensive assistance to help Ukraine address the armoured, airborne, and other threats it is now facing," he said in a statement. Finland, for example, announced on February 28 that it would ship 2,500 assault rifles, 150,000 bullets, 1,500 anti-tank weapons and 70,000 food packages to Ukraine. Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said, "We are answering the call from President (Volodymyr) Zelensky: 'he said we need ammo, not a ride' and that's exactly what we're doing... we'll provide 50 million US dollars to support Ukraine, lethal and non-lethal support... we're talking missiles, we're talking ammunition," Morrison said. A further $25 million will go toward humanitarian support and helping international organizations meet the needs of people fleeing violence inside Ukraine, he said.

The worldwide support has taken the form of increasing pledges of weapons and other military equipment and a concerted effort to make Russian President Vladimir Putin pay for the invasion economically. But Russia, over the decades, has grown both its capability and confidence, and the combination seems to have convinced Putin that he is in the best possible position to reassert his demands. Russia's military abilities have increased due to the program to reconstitute its power, and the Kremlin's confidence has grown because of the consistent failure of the West and Western institutions to

deter its geopolitical ambitions. But experts and Western officials said that the Russian leader's security demands were ultimately just a cover for his true ambition, which was to redraw the map of Europe. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said, "This has never been about Ukraine and NATO per se. What President Putin has made clear is that this is about the total subjugation of Ukraine to Russia. It's about reconstituting the Russian empire or, short of that, a sphere of influence, or, short of that, the total neutrality of countries surrounding Russia".

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky has repeatedly called a no-fly zone over his country in a video-link address to nearly 300 US lawmakers. He also pleaded for Russian-made fighter jets, which his country's pilots know how to fly, to help fight the enemy advance in his country. Zelensky also underscored the need for additional military support and humanitarian aid, but two of his other requests Nhave already been rejected by the US. Russian President Vladimir Putin warned that any attempt to impose a no-fly zone over Ukraine would be seen as participation in the armed conflict. Moreover, it effectively put brakes on NATO countries to affect a no-fly zone as the US did in Iraq, leaving Ukraine to face the brunt of the Russian onslaught and watching their country being ravaged and ruined by a much superior military power. Zelensky later lamented that the Russians are bent on destroying Ukraine and wiping it off from the map; therefore, enforcing a no-fly zone is essential for the country's survival.

Is there a diplomatic way out?

There seems very little chance for the moment, even if the two sides have held talks on the border with Belarus. Russia insists Kyiv lays down its arms and demilitarises - which is unlikely to happen.

Beyond the war, any eventual deal would have to cover the status of eastern Ukraine and arms control with the West. Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett travelled to Moscow to talk with President Vladimir Putin earlier. The two men have met several times before and appear to have a good relationship. The Ukrainian President Vololodymyr Zelensky had earlier called on the Israeli prime minister to mediate in the current conflict. Among those accompanying Bennett was Housing Minister Zeev Elkin, who has long served as a Russian translator for Israeli leaders. He was born in Kharkiv has relatives still in Ukraine. Following the talks, PM Bennett travelled to Germany, where he is set to meet German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

These are terrifying times for Ukrainians as bombs and rockets rain down on cities and civilians rush to Cold War-era bomb shelters. Thousands of civilians as well as soldiers have lost their lives. Even villages are not being spared. And Russian forces have stepped up night time shelling of cities. This onslaught has prompted hundreds of thousands of people to flee across Ukraine's borders. Poland, Hungary, Romania, Moldova and Slovakia are seeing a big influx, while the EU suggests more than seven million people could be displaced. The tragedy yet is, that on March 6, civilians fleeing a destroyed town near Kyiv have been killed by mortar fire.

On February 28, Ukraine's ambassador to the United Nations, Sergiy Kyslytsva, read out before the General Assembly what he said were the final text messages from a Russian soldier to his mother. They were obtained, he said, by Ukrainian forces after the soldier was killed. "We were told that they would welcome us and they are falling under our armoured vehicles, throwing themselves under the wheels and not allowing us to pass. They call us fascists. Mama, this is so hard."

Now that Putin has launched the invasion, the lingering question is, where will he stop? But while the

Casualties

The UN human rights body had confirmed 536 civilian casualties at the line of writing this article, including 136 civilians killed, of whom 13 are children. It estimates that of the 400 who have been injured, 26 are children. However, according to a news agency, Ukraine's emergency service pegged the number of civilian deaths at 2,000. Neither side's claims have been independently verified. But one American official put the Russian losses at 2,000, an estimate with which two European officials concurred.

"Given the many reports of over 4,000 Russians killed in action, it is clear that something dramatic is happening," said Adm. James G. Stavridis, who was NATO's supreme allied commander before his retirement. "If Russian losses are this significant, Vladimir Putin is going to have some difficult explaining to do on his home front." The Russian Defense Ministry spokesman, Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov acknowledged for the first time that "there are dead and wounded" Russian troops but offered no numbers. He insisted Ukrainian losses were "many times" higher. Ukraine has said its forces have killed more than 5,300 Russian troops. The Russian defence ministry confirmed that 498 Russian soldiers had died in Ukraine. Another 1,597 were wounded. As many as 2,870 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed and about 3,700 wounded.

When 'people' fight for their land, it is difficult for any aggressor to succeed. Ukrainians are out on the street to fight for their land, and it will hereafter be difficult for Russia to succeed. They might succeed militarily but might be unable to do so politically. It happened in Afghanistan too, when nearly 2,500 American troops were killed in over 20 years of war. For Putin, the rising death toll could damage any remaining domestic support for his Ukrainian endeavours. Russian memories are long — and mothers of soldiers, in particular, American officials say, could easily hark back to the 15,000 troops killed when the Soviet Union invaded and occupied Afghanistan or the thousands killed in Chechnya. Russia has deployed field hospitals near the front lines, say, military analysts, who have also monitored ambulances driving back and forth from Russian units to hospitals in neighbouring Belarus, Moscow's ally.

world is left guessing about the true extent of the Russian leader's ambition, history could give some indication. Putin has been in power for more than two decades as either president or prime minister. In that time, he has overseen several regional and international conflicts — from fighting Chechen rebels in the country's south in the late 1990s to propping up President Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria in 2015. Before the Ukraine invasion Michael McFaul, former ambassador to Russia, told NBC News. "In every single war, he has won," And that makes him more dangerous."

As the number of dead climbs, Russia's leader stands accused of shattering the peace in Europe. What happens next could jeopardise the continent's entire security structure. Such scenes are horrifying for the entire continent, witnessing a major power invading a European neighbour for the first time in decades. Recalling the Cold War, Volodymyr Zelensky spoke of Ukraine battling to avoid a new iron curtain closing Russia off from the civilised world.

As already mentioned, no one has come forward to help Ukraine in battle. Sanctions and other promised help from NATO or the EU will take time. Arms and other weaponry provided to Ukraine will take time to hit the front lines. Ultimately, it is Ukrainians who have to fight it out. The major lesson is that nations have to be prepared to face any situation independently. They must train and equip their armed forces well to face perceived threats. That goes for India, too, in any future conflict with China!

It's been over a month since the war started and it has become amply clear that the Russian President who started the war and hoped to end in few days and institute a regime change in Ukraine did not happen as planned, because of the resolute defence of their homeland by the Ukrainians. In between the war has taken a horrific turn with large scale bombing and rocket attacks on residential buildings killing many innocent civilians. Even this has not broken the Ukrainian spirit. Fierce fighting is still going on and the Russians are taking many casualties (estimated by Western intelligence to be nearly 7000 killed and many wounded). They have also lost four generals and other senior military commanders, and many planes, helicopters tanks, missiles and other military hardware. In desperation, on March 19, they launched a hypersonic missile to hit an underground arms depot and have also fired long range cruise missiles, against which Ukraine has no defence. The war has now reached a stalemate and such missile attacks will not help them to subjugate a free nation. With the whole world against them and crippling economic sanctions being enforced by the West, Russia cannot possibly win this unjust war unleashed on Ukraine, a militarily weaker nation. These are firm pointers for the need to have a strong World Government on the lines envisaged by the renowned philosopher Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, which would check the misuse of armed power. ●

DOGS OF EUROPE

From "Ode to W.B. Yeats," January 1939

In the nightmare of the dark
All the dogs of Europe bark,
And the living nations wait,
Each sequestered in its hate;

Intellectual disgrace
Stares from every human face,
And the seas of pity lie
Locked and frozen in each eye.

Follow, poet, follow right
To the bottom of the night,
With your unconstraining voice
Still persuade us to rejoice;

With the farming of a verse
Make a vineyard of the curse,
Sing of human unsuccess
In a rapture of distress;

In the deserts of the heart
Let the healing fountain start,
In the prison of his days
Teach the free man how to praise.

- Wystan Hugh Auden

How Russia's Invasion of Ukraine Will Worsen

WAR & HUNGER

"Ukraine, often called the breadbasket of Europe, is home to a third of the world's most fertile soil."

Thin Lei Win

A combine harvests wheat in a field in the Kyiv region in 2020. (Valentyn Ogirenko/ REUTERS) From higher prices in nations already struggling with hunger crises – such as Yemen and Lebanon to reduced harvests in disaster-prone Bangladesh, the food impacts of Russia's invasion of Ukraine will likely be long-lasting and felt across continents.

Economists and Aid officials warn that they're coming, on top of fast-rising global food prices – now at their highest levels in a decade – and with supply chains already stressed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and years of growing climate impacts.

Often called the breadbasket of Europe, Ukraine is home to a third of the world's most fertile soil. It is also a world leader in the production of sunflower oil, barley, and maize and – together with Russia – provides a third of global wheat supplies.

The invasion has come "just as the growth and planting season starts" in Ukraine and Russia, said Thomas Ølholm, a regional food security adviser for the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). "Many fields [in Ukraine] will not be maintained or planted. Many agricultural smallholders will be affected and lose their livelihoods for a period of time, or permanently."

Beyond the unfolding humanitarian crisis for Ukrainians, the wider fallout – from regional port closures, large-scale displacement within and out of Ukraine, and crippling economic sanctions on Russia – could be far-reaching and devastating, especially for poor consumers in countries dependent on food imports, according to experts.

Encompassing Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania, and parts of Russia and Turkey, the broader

Black Sea region "is critical for the food security in the Mediterranean area but also in the Middle East and North Africa, western Asia, and up to Pakistan," David Laborde, a senior research fellow at the Washington DC-based International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and co-author of a recent paper outlining the threats to global food security, told The New Humanitarian.

Experts said preventing the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine from setting off a full-blown global food crisis will require channeling more funds into food assistance in the countries likely to be hit hard. Further, they said, ensure that the sanctions imposed on Russia do not affect the countries relying on the Russian economy to feed their citizens.

"Governments need to do everything in their power to ensure food security for Ukrainian citizens, and step up social protections to insulate vulnerable people from rising food prices," said Olivier De Schutter, co-chair of the International Panel of Experts (IPES-Food) and the UN's special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights.

De Schutter said the crisis calls for re-thinking current food production and consumption models. "To build resilience to these shocks, countries ultimately need to reduce their dependence on imports of just a few key agricultural commodities, by diversifying their own local food production and food supply chains," he told The New Humanitarian.

'Food Poverty' in the Middle East

Parts of the Middle East and North Africa are expected to be hit particularly hard by the knock-on effects of the Russian invasion. According to crop forecaster Gro Intelligence, drought-affected countries in the region were expected to import record amounts of wheat this year. But these plans are likely to unravel due to the Ukraine situation.

According to the UN's latest regional overview, hunger levels in the Middle East and North Africa have already more than doubled since two decades ago. In 2020, 69 million hungry people were in the region, up more than 90 per cent since 2000. The report added that the latest figure is "close to the peak of 2011- when the region suffered from a major shock due to uprisings,"

"For some countries in the Middle East region, this conflict could drive millions of people into food poverty," warned Abeer Etefa, senior spokesperson for the Middle East & North Africa for the World Food Programme (WFP).

Impacts on many levels

Jan Douwe van der Ploeg, emeritus professor of rural sociology at Wageningen University in the Netherlands, said the impacts of the invasion would be felt across a spectrum of settings, with effects ranging from the problematic to the disastrous.

Firstly, poor people who generally spend a considerable percentage of their income on food will now find themselves even more stretched. Secondly, although it's difficult to draw a straight line, Van der Ploeg suggested that rising food prices– layered on top of other economic, social, and political frustrations – could help fuel social unrest, as happened across the Arab world in 2011.

"Thirdly, there are war-stricken areas and countries, like Yemen, eastern Africa, the north of Mozambique, Mali, and Myanmar," he said. "Here, the combination of violence, hunger, and little or no possibilities to intervene with humanitarian help will be disastrous."

There could also be longer-term impacts on agricultural productivity due to a lack of fertilisers, warned IFPRI's Laborde. Russia is one of the world's largest suppliers of fertilisers and related raw materials, including natural gas, potash, and ammonia. Belarus, a key Russian ally, accounts for an additional 16 per cent of the global market share of potash exports, he added. The fertiliser was already in short supply, and costs were soaring, even before the latest crisis.

According to Laborde, if fertiliser shortages continue in 2022, it spells trouble for 2023, especially in countries such as Bangladesh, which buys large amounts from the Black Sea for its smallholder farmers. Moreover, higher costs will lead to less fertiliser use, resulting in lower yields for staple crops such as rice, impoverishing farmers and turning them from net sellers of rice to net buyers, he said, adding: "All these shocks can bring people closer to the cliff."

Countries such as Yemen depend heavily on Russia and Ukraine for their wheat

In particular countries such as Iraq, which has one of the world's largest government-run food programmes, and Yemen – which imports 90 per cent of its food needs (and half of its wheat from Ukraine and Russia) – face higher costs and worsening food insecurity, she said.

Lebanon, meanwhile, relies on Ukraine for up to 60 per cent of its wheat and has only about a month's worth of reserves, the country's economy minister has said.

"We don't have enough food now [in the Middle East]. This is going to compound the situation," David Beasley, WFP's executive director, said in a video : "It is going to be, and it is, catastrophic."

Meanwhile, climate change is affecting food production around the world, too.

In Latin America, where hunger has been rising faster than anywhere, the La Niña weather phenomenon has significantly reduced soybean returns. Further, droughts have slashed wheat harvests in Iraq, Syria, and other parts of the Middle East, according to IFPRI's Laborde.

According to EU officials and parliamentarians, food production in Europe is also heavily dependent on imported fertiliser, natural gas, and animal feed from Ukraine and Russia. For example, 22% of corn imported by Spain comes from Ukraine.

"European countries, too, will not be spared – especially by rapidly escalating energy prices that will drive up the cost of basic food commodities," said Gabriel Ferrero, chair of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), a top-level UN forum. "This is not just a problem between Russia and Ukraine; it is a problem for all of us."

Time to change the system

Yet the current crisis is not a surprise, and governments and donors could have been better prepared, said Ølholm from the NRC. "All signs were indicating an armed conflict. [It] was predictable," he said. "Prepositioning of critical and lifesaving inputs/assets could have been put in place if there was a will to do it and not least fund it."

IFPRI's Laborde also said there could have been better coordination with big commodity traders and companies around logistics and food supply. "It kind of reminds me of the first months of COVID, where governments were making decisions without any coordination with the business sector," he said. "Everyone was trying to deal with the crisis on his own instead of having a coordinated plan."

For Van der Ploeg, "the fact that most countries in the world depend on food imports for feeding their population" has created "a web of dependencies".

"This web is basically controlled by a small set of large and powerful food empires," he said, adding that "food sovereignty will come to the fore as the most important beacon for agricultural and rural development policies" in the future.

Edward Davey, international engagement director of the Food and Land Use Coalition (FOLU), said the Russia-Ukraine crisis – as well as the latest findings of the world's top climate scientists – both point to the need for a global structure "where nations could come together at the highest level to predict and forestall, and improve the resilience of the food system." ●

The transition from meat to cellular agriculture: what are the possible impacts on health if by 2040 if 50% of all protein in the region is from lab-meat and alternative meat?

DISRUPTING THE COW

Sohail Inayatullah

THE TRANSITION TO CELLULAR AGRICULTURE

While it has been over 80 years since the world philosopher Shrii P.R. Sarkar suggested that in the future, scientific innovation would produce synthetic food in the form of tables to help solve the food problems of the world, it appears that day is coming near.

Key Messages

- Cellular agriculture and other no-kill alternatives to farmed meat are likely to be a dramatic disruptor to the global food supply chain.
- Proponents argue that a shift from conventional meat (the industrial meat industry) to alternative products (cellular agriculture and alternative meat) is a powerful climate change mitigation strategy.
- Given the dependence of many nations in the West Pacific on traditional agriculture – the industrial sector and smallholders - numerous harmful first and second-order implications are possible.
- The region could also be a global leader in cellular agriculture if it invests in science and technology. First and second-order impacts could lead to dramatic new food and other downstream technologies.

Cultured/clean/cell-based

meat, now broadly referred to as cellular agriculture, began over two decades ago through NASA funded work. The Dutch Government was instrumental in funding what was then called research into in-vitro meat. Civil society efforts that popularized this approach came in 2008 from PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), who offered $1m for the first group to sell in-vitro chicken that could not be distinguished from live-stock chicken. Price parity, a critical factor in moving from niche to mass, and poverty alleviation, is likely within ten years. "If renewable energy is used in its production, growing meat directly from cells is likely to compete on costs and have a lower environmental footprint compared to conventional meat production in under 10 years, according to a new pair of studies analysing the life cycle and techno-economics of commercial-scale cultivated meat production".

Food innovation, a desire to reduce greenhouse gases, i.e., climate change mitigation, the rise of the vegan movement, the fear of zoonosis, and institutional funding have all contributed to in-vitro meat going from an impossible emerging issue to a trend. Silicon Valley startups lead the current wave of cellular agriculture focused on meat alternatives and 3D printed foods. The next wave is likely to be led by the West Pacific Region, for example, with Singapore's approval of cultured meat products (Mischel, 2021). The alternative meat (plant-based) market is expected to rise in the region as health fears from traditional meat products rise. Wealth continues to rise as well. The Government of the PRC recently invested 300 million in an Israeli based cellular agriculture laboratory. Internally, Sun Baoguo, President of the Beijing Technology and Business University, argues that: "Cell-based meat analysis is a keyway to guaranteeing China's future meat supply and gaining a leading position when it comes to this production technology. It will also have important strategic importance for the country.

The drivers of food security - the rise of the vegan movement (meat alternatives, animal welfare), climate change adaptation, Covid-19 and the fear zoonosis, new profits, geo-politics (rising tension in the region) - all suggest that cellular agriculture could go from a niche industry to a dominant wealth producer. Moreover, while many regions need to make paradigm changes to adopt the novel, the West Pacific does not- as alternative meats already exist in the region's traditions and ecological beliefs. Depending on the farming sector, the implications generally for traditional farmers and the farming industry are likely to be devastating. Reliance on agriculture across the region is varied, with Japan at 1% and Australia at 3% and China at 10%. Even though this is low, political parties around agriculture have tremendous lobbying strength, especially with food security and safety, more and more of an issue. We summarize how this might play out in the following scenarios.

No change – Just Hype: In this future, cellular agriculture slowly disappears as it is seen as the hype and fake meat, or alternative

Grilled plant based vegan burger patties

No Change	Marginal Change	Adaptive Change	Radical Change
Just Hype	Joining the Food Chain	The New Gold	Real Home Cooking
Safety first	Niche market	Scientific breakthrough and market acceptance	3D printed foods for all
Regulation wins out	For the rich	Meat is a stranded asset	Global and local production and consumption

Using the futures method, Causal Layered Analysis (Inayatullah and Milojević, 2015), we summarize this possible shift.

CLA ON FOOD FUTURES	TODAY	2040
Litany	Meat challenged by climate change and new demographics	Shift to protein. Concerns for climate change. Silicon Valley leads the charge.
System	Food is industrial, managed by large global food corporation with local farmer markets. Negative health implications from life stock meat. Food insecurity.	A new food eco-scape – invitro and alternative meats lead the disruption. The West Pacific invests and leap-frogs other regions. Reduction in negative health implications of traditional meat. Healthier population. More affordable protein. Enhanced food security and food justice.
Worldview	Agricultural and Industrial	Fourth Industrial Revolution
Myth-metaphor	Meat, today, meat tomorrow, meat forever!	I create my own healthy food!

meat remains niche. Safety concerns become real issues or are overplayed by vested interests in the traditional meat sector. Their recent interest because of Covid-19 disappears. As the region gets richer, traditional Western lifestyle diseases spread.

Marginal Change – Joining the Food Chain: In this future, cellular agriculture and alternative meat will become niche players in the Asia-Pacific economy. Consumers see the new meats as inferior products (because of real or politically motivated adverse health reports), and thus market penetration stalls. On the other hand, nations invest in science and technology, citizens groups push these solutions to climate change, and young people become more and more vegan active.

Adaptive Change - Cellular Agriculture is the new Gold: In this future, the new technologies and food choices will become dominant by 2040. Consumers shift their food preferences, high paying jobs are created, nations see the benefits to health, zero-net emission pledges are fulfilled, and spin-offs from science and technology food startups become a serious source of wealth and health. Wellbeing becomes the regional measurement of success. Lifespans continue to increase. Breakthroughs (from AI and genomics) lead to cellular agriculture becoming the new gold. On the other hand, the traditional meat sector is ravaged by climate change concerns and has become a stranded asset.

Radical Change – Real Home Cooking: In this future, new products emerge from the food revolution, including 3D printed cellular agriculture. As in the Middle Ages, the home becomes the source of work and food production. Production and consumption are both local and global. ●

"Shrii Sarkar has given a broad outline for the gradual establishment of the world government."

From Nationalist Wars to WORLD GOVERNMENT-Part I

Dr. Ravi Pratap Singh

Abstract

The working of the European Union and the historical progress of regional economic/non-economic associations worldwide are indications of our aspirations for the establishment of world government. However, such efforts have always been a victim of low paced half-hearted, selfish and vainglorious ventures so far.

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar has given a broad outline for the gradual establishment of the world government, emphasizing certain supportive factors. His directions are of immense help in resolving ticklish issues in this multifaceted, diverse and multi-phased pursuit and inputting refreshing philosophical and practical insights in this ever-evolving effort.

Humanity has always been aspiring for liberation from bondage in the material, psychic and supra-psychic world, harmony through brotherly equality, global or even cosmic citizenship and peaceful coexistence. These aspirations will remain a dream unless the narrow sentiments of nationalism, racism, communalism, casteism, regionalism, linguism, and so many other 'isms' are channelized towards (and even rejected, if they prove detrimental to the broader ideals) of universalism. This aspiration has been evolving since the ancient days in the form of

- Vasudhaiv Kutumbkam' (let the whole earth be our home) of the Vedic India
- The internationalism of Rabindranath Tagore
- World Union of Aurobindo
- The Cosmic patrimony, cosmic brotherhood, universalism and inevitable world government of Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar (the propounder of Progressive Socialism or Progressive Utilization Theory—Prout).
- Mahatma Gandhi preferred nationalism as a stepping stone towards (gradual evolution of) internationalism.

Earlier, despite all such high aspirations, communication and

transport were severe physical obstructions for the materialization of this high ideal. However, science and Technology has speedily minimized these physical hurdles.

Shrii Sarkar has given a broad outline for the gradual establishment of the world government, emphasizing certain factors that support creating an amenable and amicable environment for the purpose. His directions are of immense help in resolving ticklish issues in this multifaceted, diverse and multi-phased pursuit and inputting refreshing philosophical and practical insights in this ever-evolving effort.

Re-Districting Our Living Planet

The very concepts of nation and Nationalism are unnecessarily aggressive and highly wasteful, destructive to the neighbouring countries everywhere and dangerous to world peace and prosperity. Therefore, the idea of a nation is now totally irrelevant in the modern world. Instead, the world should be organized based on socio-economic similarities (eco-regions/ bio-regions/samaj/social units) and not on power and political aggression.

Today, the nationalisms of Russia and the USA are in confrontation-almost the same applies to the nationalisms of Russia and Ukraine, the nationalisms of individual member-nations versus EU/NATO, the nationalisms of the USA and China, the nationalisms of India and China or Pakistan. Therefore, until an effective world government and parliament is formed, just like the European Union and European parliament Asia should also be organized as an Asian union and Asian parliament.

Nationalist Political Leaderships

Shrii Sarkar feels, 'Nationalism is fast getting out of date. Not only has national sentiment given humanity rude shocks in the world wars of the present century, but the social and cultural blending of the present age also shows the domination of cosmopolitanism in world affairs. Vested interests, however, continue

to cause certain fissiparous tendencies. Some fear the loss of their economic or political dominance and are directly responsible for these detrimental or retrograde reactions.

Further, Shrii Sarkar remarks that most political leaders are physical or intellectual criminals. Common human beings have to be protected from the clutches of these criminals. We are not against politics or political science, but we have to fight against professional politicians. Only Sadvipras (active moralists) have the right aptitude to engage in politics; other people should be swept out from the field of politics. Moralist sadvipras will apply suprahuman, intuition-directed (ksatroc'it and vipro'cit) Seva force to accelerate the social movement for human welfare. It, therefore, goes without saying that a Sadvipra is more potent than a partisan political leader.

Sadvipras follow the principles of Yama and Niyama—the principles of spiritual morality—and are devoted to Supreme Consciousness or Parama Purusha. Only Sadvipras can serve all human beings selflessly and lead others along the path of all-around advancement. These Sadvipras – those who follow a correct philosophy of life and practice a proper system of sádhaná or spiritual practices – will be the leaders of the society in the future.

The Practicality of World Government

Shrii Sarkar raises an interesting question, 'Is it possible to establish a world government without struggle?' In reply, he says, "Yes." The greatest social welfare for the human race will be accomplished - if those who aspire to establish the world government and blissful global family engage in constructive activities and selfless service instead of wasting their vital energy in the vortex of politics or political conflicts. They will have to render social service with steadfast commitment, without any ulterior motive in their minds.

Political leaders cannot create sadvipras by haranguing people from public platforms—this demands righteousness and the practice of self-purification in personal life. Furthermore, what type of people come to deliver lectures from these platforms? Are they not the ones resorting to mud-slinging for the sake of party politics? Most of them are blinded by their obsession for power, so what can they teach others? They are just like the blind leading the blind.

Charter of Rights

The formation of a World Government will require a world

constitution. A charter of principles or bill of rights should be included in such a constitution and encompass at least the following four areas.

- Complete security should be guaranteed to all the plants and animals on the planet.
- Each country must guarantee purchasing power to all its citizens.
- The constitution should guarantee four fundamental rights – spiritual practice or Dharma; cultural legacy; education; and indigenous linguistic expression.
- Finally, if the practice of any of these rights conflicts with cardinal human values, then that practice should be immediately curtailed. That is, cardinal human values must take precedence over all other rights.

All the constitutions of the world suffer from numerous defects. The framers of different constitutions may adopt the above points to overcome these defects.

The Cosmic Patrimony and Cosmic Brotherhood—the Indispensable Base of World Governance

For Shrii Sarkar, spirituality is not a utopian ideal but a practical philosophy that can be practised and realized in day-to-day life, however mundane it be. Spirituality stands for evolution and elevation, not superstition, inaction or pessimism. True spirituality does not recognize any distinctions and discrimination between one human being and another and stands for universal fraternity.

That ultimate and absolute ideal is the Cosmic ideal – an ideal beyond the scope of time, place and person. It is the Absolute, without and beyond relativity. The Cosmic ideal alone can be the unifying force that shall strengthen humanity to smash the bondages and abolish all narrow domestic walls of fissiparous tendencies.

Sentiments, traditions, and habits that are native and not ultra vires to the cardinal human values; do not hamper spiritual development - in summary, each region's cultural and linguistic sovereignty is nurtured and treated as an inalienable right of individuals and communities. For example, the demand for uniformity in dress for all people will be ridiculous and irrational. Different choices of food and clothing result from climatic factors and corporal necessities.

There will also be many regional differences in traditions and customs. Naturally, these should be appreciated and encouraged for the indigenous development of society.

But under no circumstances should there be a compromise in principle or yielding to tendencies detrimental to the inculcation of Cosmic sentiment.

Movement for Samajification

The following lines are drawn from the writings of Shrii P R Sarkar, briefly explaining His views on planetary economic groupification for 'Local Prosperity with the Aim of Establishing Globalization'. (Published in An Outline of Prout: A Presentation for Students). Prout activists rightly proclaim the slogan "Localise the Economy; Globalise Humanity."

"Freedom is a right of every human being. To encourage comprehensive, unbarred human expression in the different spheres of social life, we must create a congenial socio-economic environment because such an environment does not exist today. (Socio-Economic Groupifications).

Various economic units have different economically problematic areas within the same political zone.That is why economic zones are indispensable for expediting economic progress. While forming socio-economic units, one should consider several factors. These include (1) same economic problems, (2) uniform economic potentialities, (3) similar geographical features, (4) ethnic similarities, (5) the sentimental legacy of the people."

Thus, the world government would comprise self-reliant, autonomous economic units administering the Samaj community's mundane and supramundane affairs. Shri Sarkar recommends 256 such socio-economic autonomous units or 'Samaj' worldwide (44 units or Samaj in India). We may readjust the boundaries of these units to suit any change in the environment – for instance, development in communication techniques.●

In the next part of this article, the discussion will focus on the formation of world government.

SHOULD WE ENCOURAGE CRYPTO CURRENCY?

Ganesh Bhat Sirsi

(Continued from the February issue)

The previous part in brief .....

Cryptocurrency does not exist in physical form (like paper money); there are no coins to mint or bills to print, only exists online, and is typically not issued by a central authority. Cryptocurrencies use decentralized control as opposed to a Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC). Each cryptocurrency works through distributed ledger technology, typically a blockchain that serves as a public financial transaction database that allows individuals to engage in peer-to-peer financial transactions or enter into contracts. There is no need for some trusted third-party intermediary such as a bank, monetary authority, the court, or judge. Since the release of bitcoin, many other cryptocurrencies have been created. As a result, there are currently over a thousand different cryptocurrencies globally. The legal status of cryptocurrencies varies substantially from country to country and is still undefined or changing in many of them. At the same time, some countries have explicitly allowed their use and trade. Others have banned or restricted it. Few countries are planning to create their own cryptocurrency. cryptocurrency advertisements have been temporarily forbidden on many social platforms}

The Government of India has announced in Budget 2022-23 its decision to introduce its own cryptocurrency by the Central bank RBI during this year.

The Risks

The real identity of the person or groups behind the development of Bitcoin is not known. However, the stated goal of the technology was to create ["a new electronic cash system"} that was "completely decentralized with no Server or Central authority".

Anonymity

The owners who have cryptocurrency in the system are anonymous—there are no account numbers, names, social security numbers or any other identifying features that connect to its owners.

It has been appealing to criminals due to its anonymity and lack of regulation. Transactions that occur through the use and exchange of altcoins are independent of formal banking systems, enabling tax evasion and laundering money.

Money laundering issues [are also present in regular bank transfers. However, for instance, with bank-to-bank wire transfers, the account holder must at least provide a proven identity.

Since crypto protects the identity of holders, governments are deeply concerned about their use in illicit activities such as money laundering, terrorist financing, [online black markets], and tax evasion. In addition, some fear the end of anonymity by replacing government-controlled, centralized money with crypto.

Difficult to Resolve

Loss, theft, and fraud with cryptocurrency are becoming a

routine affair even though tall claims are being put forth regarding their security. Without a governing body, it can be challenging to resolve issues if crypto gets stolen or lost. Cryptocurrencies are used primarily outside existing banking and governmental institutions and are exchanged over the Internet.

Whenever there is an intermediary like the banks, it is possible to trace the revenue generation, and the government will have control over the investment people put in.

Volatile and Speculative

Bitcoins and their many look-alikes, often known as 'crypto-assets', are best viewed as a volatile, speculative asset class, which some users are prepared to accept as a form of payment. However, since its public launch in 2009, Bitcoin's value has risen dramatically. Although it once sold for ₹10,000/- per coin, its current price is about ₹39 lakhs.

Cryptocurrencies have been compared to Ponzi, pyramid schemes and economic bubbles, such as housing market bubbles. On the other hand, some say that digital currencies are nothing but an unfounded fad, based on a willingness to ascribe value to something that has little or none beyond what people will pay for it.

Regulators in several countries have warned against cryptocurrency. Some have taken measures to dissuade users; such warnings are ignored in the mad rush in anticipation of earning quick bucks.

Digital Currencies to Affect Geopolitics

With the expansion of big tech firms into global finance and banks themselves widening their digital footprints, financial technology will reshape the commercial and the geopolitical sphere.

Introducing a 'digital yuan' would allow China to bypass the world's traditional banking systems and then challenge and help curb the dollar's dominant role in international trade and finance. In addition, it could help limit China's exposure to US sanctions policies which rely heavily on the dollar's pre-eminent position in global finance.

The widespread introduction of digital currencies can transform the world financial system. In January, the group of advanced economy central banks – from Canada, the UK, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, and the European Central Bank – announced they were [working together on central bank digital currencies] under the auspices of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS).

The Concern of an Unregulated Global Economy

As the popularity of and demand for online currencies has increased, so have concerns that such an unregulated person to person global economy that cryptocurrencies offer may become a threat to society.

The governments of the G7 have recognized the need for international cooperation on how governments should regulate private digital currencies because the alternative – a global free-for-all – could be chaotic and dangerous.

Why Do Central Banks Want Their own Digital Currencies

Once a crypto exchange is established, it can mind its own cryptocurrency. It can have initial coin offerings, leading to a new asset class in that country and helping people invest. Supporters of this theory suggest that RBI should introduce its cryptocurrency in India. The Government of India has announced in Budget 2022-23 its decision to introduce cryptocurrency by RBI during this year.

The Reality:

Cryptocurrency investment is a speculative activity, and in no way does it encourage production /manufacturing activity or create actual employment.

Those in favour of legalizing cryptocurrencies argue that with the help of technology, people will find newer ways to escape from the noose of law. So, it is going to be extremely difficult to regulate crypto. But, they overlook that technology continues to evolve and can find solutions.

Another argument is that people continue to invest wherever the returns are high, even if it is risky. It is valid under the existing socioeconomic system where no one is assured of a secured future and where acquisitive nature dominates the society.

But, these experts and leaders fail to conceive of a decentralized economic system where everyone is guaranteed the basic necessities of life through 100 per cent employment opportunities with an adequate purchasing capacity to pursue higher values of life instead of becoming money-earning machines. PROUT advocates such a socioeconomic system for the entire globe where speculative activities are banned, and opportunities are created for gainful investment in the local area.

View of Prout

PROUT says," The banking system must be vigilant about two important points. First, the intrinsic demonic greed of the banks must not be allowed to jeopardize the life of the common people. Secondly, the banks must not allow unwise administrators or governments to print monetary notes indiscriminately without reserving the proportionate amount of bullion in their treasuries.

"The printing and issuing of monetary notes having no bullion value must stop immediately. No monetary notes should be issued by the government from then on without a clear assurance that it is prepared to pay the requisite amount of money in bullion coins. A socioeconomic unit can conserve its reserve bullion and improve the purchasing capacity of the local people by manufacturing locally finished products".

To combat inflation, Prout suggests that the production in a country should be abundant, and the gold bullion reserves are in proportion to the country's economic position.

Countries with a large volume of very few commodities to sell but many commodities to buy will find barter trade profitable. Otherwise, their reserves of gold bullion may get exhausted very quickly. In addition, barter trade will protect from disastrous impacts due to economic depressions.

Prout opines, "capitalists, in either their singular or collective forms, are the most pernicious economic exploiters today. They are continually exploiting local economies and draining their wealth all over the world. In nearly all cases, the profits they accrue are spent outside the local area and remitted to outside stockholders and parent companies. An essential measure to control this economic exploitation is that the speculative markets in all countries of the world should be closed down immediately".

Excluding invariably, the Samaj Peoples Economy of guaranteed basic necessities, the institution of free trade worldwide in luxury, commercial and services economy, as far as possible, is required to eliminate dishonesty in business.

In Prout's decentralized socioeconomic system, each Samaj (self-sufficient socioeconomic unit) can have its own currency. Forms and modes of exchange of money/currency are sure to undergo radical changes in the future. PROUT supports scientific innovations and their adoption, which encourage the real progress of society. However, even if introduced and controlled by the country's Central bank, Prout cannot support cryptocurrency, which is not backed by gold bullion. A proper, efficient regulation method of new era currency is the immediate need. The new crypto to be introduced by the RBI can become an official tool of speculative trade. ●

Capitalists want to produce commodities at the lowest costs and sell them at the highest prices. To produce commodities cheaply, there must be efficient transportation, cheap raw materials, cheap labour, cheap energy, adequate water supply, etc. No matter what form capitalism takes – individual capitalism, group capitalism or state capitalism – capitalists will always prefer centralized production. All these forms of capitalism are essentially the same. Communism is state capitalism which is why it is not free from the defects of capitalism. State capitalists, like individual and group capitalists, control industries. State capitalism means state controlled industries. In other words, in state capitalism industries are centralized. Communist countries support state capitalism, which means centralized production. While communism appears to differ from capitalism on the question of popular liberation, capitalism and communism are the same internally. Fruits of the same variety may have different colour skins, but their seeds are the same. Capitalism and communism are fruits of the same variety.

Nothing would be better, if it were possible, than the eradication of capitalism by friendly persuasion and humanistic appeals. In that case the peace of the greater human family would not be much disturbed.

– Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

> Milk sachets, fuel: basics slip out of reach for Sri Lankans as economic crisis bites

SRI LANKA Economic Crisis

Hannah Ellis Peterson

People queue to buy Liquefied Petroleum Gas cylinders in Colombo as shortages of essentials gripped the island

The country is in the midst of one of the worst financial crises in decades, exacerbated by a tourism collapse in the wake of Covid. As a result, Shamla Laxman, 54, has been rising at dawn or staying out late at night in recent weeks. In recent weeks, she has been on the prowl for an item that has become rarer than gold dust in Sri Lanka's commercial capital of Colombo: sachets of milk powder.

"These days it's become impossible to find, and when you do find it in a shop, the prices are so expensive, double or triple what it was before, that I can't afford it for my family," said Laxman, who feeds a family of seven in her small house. "All our basic items have become almost unaffordable now," said Laxman. "Every day I am fearful of not being able to feed my family tomorrow."

Sri Lanka, an island off the southern tip of India, is in the midst of one of the worst financial crises to hit the country since it became independent in 1948. In recent months, food prices have skyrocketed, there has been a continued shortage of essential goods, fruit and vegetables, and long queues have formed outside petrol stations due to a shortage of fuel. This week, daily power cuts of over five hours began to be imposed across the island and warnings were issued that water supplies might also soon be disrupted.

Last week two ships carrying diesel and a tanker of fuel oil sat in

the port, but the government could not bring in their essential cargo as the government didn't have the dollars to pay for it. Over the weekend, Gemunu Wijeratne, President of the Lanka Private Bus Owners' Association, warned that buses were not being given enough petrol to continue functioning, and journeys were already being shortened. “If this continues, public transport will collapse and the economy will come to a standstill,” said Wijeratne.

It is a crisis many say has been over a decade in the making but was exacerbated by the pandemic and economic policies of the current government, led by president Gotabaya Rajapaksa who came to power in late 2019.

Consecutive governments have borrowed high-interest sovereign bonds, which, coupled with billions in loans from countries including China and Japan, have left Sri Lanka with cripplingly high foreign debt repayments. As a result, it has been operating with a $6bn trade deficit, importing far more than it exports and investing billions in expensive, large-scale infrastructure projects. “We have been spending beyond our means for years,” said Ahilan Kadirgamar, a political economist and senior lecturer at the University of Jaffna.

As the pandemic hit, Sri Lanka lost crucial foreign income from tourism, and tax cuts by the Rajapaksa government meant that the government severely reduced the flow of federal revenue. Over the past two years, inflation has surged, foreign reserves fell by 70 per cent, and an ill-advised outright ban on fertilisers crippled the farming industry, leading to an ongoing shortage of fruit and vegetables.

Sri Lanka now owes $15bn in foreign bond repayments, with $7bn owed this year and a $1bn repayment required as soon as June, all to be paid in dollars. But with Sri Lanka's foreign reserves at their lowest levels in years and its economic rating in the gutter, there are barely any dollars left, and many fear the country is headed for a default. “The situation here is very bleak,” said Kadirgamar.

From the lowest income to the country's wealthiest, the impact on people's daily lives is palpable. Nishan Shanaka, 40, is a civil engineer in Colombo. Still, he now drives an auto-rickshaw in the evenings and on the weekends because his salary won't cover the cost of food and his children's education. He described his family's struggle to afford flour and bread and said they now existed on cheap vegetables.

"The cost of everything is far too high now, even if I go to buy a toffee it's unaffordable," said Shanaka. "The high fuel prices are impacting everything, my daughters can't even get the school bus because they can't afford to run them any more."

Thangarasa Vathani, 48, owner of a fabric and tailoring shop, said she had already had to close one of her tailoring factories and let go several members of her staff. The few left now worked from her home, but she was concerned she wouldn't be able to keep them on for much longer. "People here are so disturbed, we don't know what will happen tomorrow. Those who can afford it are sending their children abroad but not all of us have the money to do that," said Vathani.

A fruit vendor waits for customers in Colombo

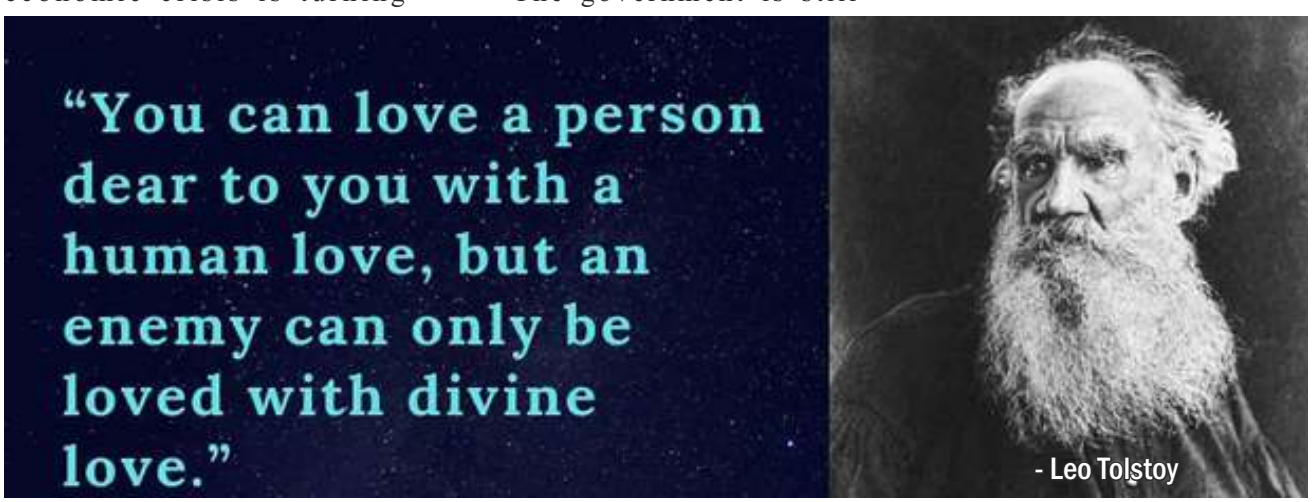
child studies besides a lit candle at her residence during a power cut in Colombo

The crisis is already affecting the industry. Lawrence Wilson runs a lucrative noodle-making factory but has cut production to alternative weeks because the necessary supplies have stopped coming in. "The situation here is dire, and it's only getting worse," said Wilson, who said he spent his nights trying to find petrol for the car. "Groceries that used to cost 2000 Sri Lankan rupees are now costing 5,000 rupees. I don't know how people on lower incomes are surviving."

There are many signs that the economic crisis is turning Rajapaksa's core voting base, the Buddhist Singhalese majority, against him. An editorial in the daily newspaper Daily Mirror ran with "Empty treasury, power cuts, fuel shortages and nonsense". In addition, the government's failure to restructure foreign loans and refusal to turn to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for an emergency loan as Sri Lanka has done in the past has angered many. Likely that it feared, they would impose stringent cost-cutting conditions which would be politically unpopular.

The government is still focusing on the return of foreign tourism and a rise in exports, but experts say it's unlikely to solve the crisis.

"I blame this government," said Shanaka, who voted for Rajapaksa. "I work hard at a garment factory supplying foreign brands like Nike and Victoria's Secret and Lulu Lemon. We bring good foreign income into Sri Lanka, but the government has wasted it all away with bad policies. It is a terrible time for this country."●



Poor Country With Affluent Elite
INDIA IS GOING NOWHERE

India is now one of the most unequal countries for both income and wealth inequality and has shown the most rapid increases in inequality.

Jayati Ghosh

The Paris-based World Inequality Lab has become a major source of data on global inequality, based on a careful aggregation of national data from a multitude of sources of both income and wealth inequality at national, regional and international levels. Their latest World Inequality Report 2022 is an eye-opener, even for those who know that economic inequality has increased massively in recent years. It shows that inequality is now as great globally as at the pinnacle of Western imperialism in the early 20th century. The process began nearly four decades ago but worsened during the pandemic, exposing and amplifying existing inequalities.

India is now one of the most unequal countries for both income and wealth inequality — and has shown the most rapid increases in inequality. It emerges clearly even though, as the report laments, "Over the past three years, the quality of inequality data released by the government has seriously deteriorated, making it particularly difficult to assess recent inequality changes." We know that the central government has tended to suppress inconvenient information and manipulate data, refusing to release the 2017-18 national consumer expenditure survey results and playing fast and loose with definitions to increase the number of 'formal' workers artificially.

Despite these desperate efforts to hide the actual patterns, certain trends are unmistakable. By 2020, the income share of the bottom half of the Indian population was estimated to have fallen to only 13%, while the top 10% captured 57% of national income and the top 1% alone got 22%.

In terms of wealth distribution, the reality is even starker. We know

that the past few decades have been a period of increasing wealth concentration globally: the top 1% captured nearly two-fifths of all global wealth growth. The wealth of the top 52 billionaires (which include our home-grown Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani) increased by nearly 10% each year between 1995 and 2001. In India, the rate of increase of private wealth and its concentration at the top has been even sharper. The poorest half of the population have less than Six per cent of the wealth - the top One per cent grab more than one-third, and the top Ten per cent nearly two-thirds.

The pandemic was a particularly happy period for the extremely wealthy. Another recent report on inequality from Oxfam points out that the wealth of the ten richest men in the world doubled. In contrast, 99% of the world's people are worse off. One of the biggest increases in wealth was Gautam Adani, whose wealth multiplied eight-fold during the pandemic. Oxfam also notes that Adani used state connections to become the country's largest operator of ports and its largest thermal coal power producer, wielding market control over power transmission, gas distribution, and now privatized airports — all once considered public goods (Oxfam 2022, page 20). The increase in private wealth has been associated with a decline in public wealth, which is bad news for governments wishing to increase spending on citizens based on returns from public assets.

For India, the World Inequality Report estimates that the ratio of private wealth to national income increased from 290 per cent in 1980 to 555 per cent in 2020, one of the fastest such increases in the world throughout history.

India fares badly on other indicators of inequality as well. For example, women's share of labour income, at 18 per cent, is around half the global average, according to this novel estimate. It will come as no surprise to those who know how badly India treats its unpaid and underpaid women workers, even as the economy remains critically reliant on their work.

Another shock is the extreme inequality in carbon footprint within the country. On the face of it, India has very low carbon emissions per capita, at 2.2 metric tonnes per person per year. But this masks the fact that the bottom half of the population emits only one metric tonne per year, while the top 1% richest Indians emit 32.4 tonnes on average. That's more than three times the annual average carbon emissions of the bottom half of the US population and more than six times the emissions of the bottom half in Europe. Controlling the carbon emissions of the Indian rich would contribute greatly to reducing overall emissions, something that is rarely if ever, mentioned in discussions by Indian policymakers. Globally and within India, inequality is not just killing people but destroying the planet.

We know that inequality is multidimensional: the income-poor are more likely to live in poorer areas, to be women or girls, to belong to socially discriminated castes and communities, to be informal workers. More likely, therefore, to be unable to influence policy. The World Inequality Report finds that India stands out as a poor and very unequal country, with an affluent elite. Unfortunately, history tells us that such countries rarely progress very much. Radical redirection of policies is therefore essential for any real progress to occur. ●

The author is a development economist.

Shepherds in Indian Himalayas Turn Backs on TRADITIONAL LIVELIHOOD

Varsha Singh

Decreasing availability of pasture and low prices for their woollen products are forcing members of the indigenous Bhotia group into new work and migration

Woollen products in a shop near Bagori, Uttarakhand.

Nomadic shepherds in the central Himalayas are facing a double threat. Not only is more and more pasture land being fenced in for plantations, but they are also unable to sell their woollen products at a worthwhile price. The shepherds from the indigenous Bhotia community must also pay the state forest department ever-increasing fees for grazing permits, even as the area traditionally available to them shrinks.

Bagori, in the northern Indian state of Uttarakhand, is a typical Bhotia village and lies just 25 km through footpaths from the source of the Ganga, India's longest and holiest river. Almost 2,700 Metres (around 9,000 feet) above sea level, it is here that the shepherds retreat in autumn from pastures at even higher elevations, as far up as the border with Tibet. In winter, they then move to the foothills, searching for fodder for their animals and selling the coats, sweaters, shawls, caps and blankets they have made at home. Then it's back uphill in the spring.

Making and selling woollen coats, sweaters, shawls, caps, and blankets is a traditional livelihood for Bhotias. But this centuries-old nomadic lifestyle is now in danger, as Bhotias find space for their activities increasingly limited, whether they move up or down from Bagori. Rajendra Singh Negi, a 60-year-old shepherd who has remained

A Bhotia woman sells woollen goods in Bagori

in the village for winter, said his community has long taken their flocks to graze on meadows in Chorpani, a village further downhill, with "receipts" from as far back as 1964 to prove this. "But when we went there this November, we found that the forest department had used the area for tree plantation, so we could not use it for grazing," the shepherd explained. "There was a time when over 50 families like ours used to graze their flocks there. This time there were only seven, but we still could not graze."

The receipts Rajendra mentions are for old permits, paid to graze in areas owned by the forest department. A new permit is issued every year, but only if a shepherd can show the previous year's. The amount to be paid is based on the size of the flock.

Women in the community traditionally carry out the making and selling of wool products, but as prices dwindle and shrinking pasture threatens the future, their crafts are becoming a less viable source of income.

Jaimohan Singh Rana, a shepherd from Fitari, a village to the west of Bagori, told of similar experiences dealing with Mussoorie authorities. "We used to get around 8,000 hectares from the Mussoorie Forest Division for winter grazing, until the 2011-12 plan of the state government reduced it to four hectares because they wanted to plant trees on the pasture," he said. "Our flocks have been banned from the area since that." Rana showed a letter he had written to the then Chief minister of Uttarakhand protesting the move.

Grazing Benefits Overlooked

Narayan Singh Negi is another shepherd who tells of increasing marginalisation, despite the benefits that his long-practised livelihood

A man herds sheep along a road near Bagori village, returning from higher pastures

A flock of sheep and goats in Bagori, in the mountains of Uttarakhand

can bring to the landscape. "The forest department is keeping us away from the forests," the 73-year-old said. "These forests become green after the [June-September] monsoon rains. Then the grasses dry out by November or December. Our flocks graze on these dry grasses and thus reduce the fire hazard in these forests. In addition, they fertilise the soil, and their hooves do a lot of weeding.

Shepherds in the Bhotia community have well-established seasonal patterns for nomadic grazing between high pastures near the border with Tibet and the Himalayan foothills.

A Bhotia woman makes woollen thread in Bagori. Women in the village use traditional methods and machinery, but residents say the current prices no longer justify the significant labour required to make their wool products.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN agrees. It has proposed that 2026 be observed as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, with its proposal document acknowledging the numerous ecological services provided by grazing. As well as lowering the risk of wildfires by reducing ground-level biomass, grazing can aid the regeneration of fresh grasses, arrest soil erosion, and benefit carbon sequestration and conservation of medicinal plants, the FAO explains. Thus, the organisation adds, grazing can help combat climate change and its impacts, promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss.

Despite these many benefits, Negi described how the grazing fee is being raised all the time. In 2011, INR 1 (USD 0.01) per sheep and INR 2 (USD 0.03) per goat. By 2021, it had become INR 8 (USD 0.11) per sheep and INR 16 (USD 0.22) per goat. Each shepherd, he said, has a flock of hundreds, so such

increases are creating a strain for many. "The forest department wants us to leave the forests," he concluded.

In response, Sushant Kumar Patnaik, chief conservator for the Garhwal division in the Uttarakhand Forest Department, said: "The number of sheep and goats has exceeded the carrying capacity of our forests. Overgrazing damages forests."

Patnaik explained that the Forest Division (a part of the forest department) has a 10-year "working plan" for all protected forest areas identified as pastures. Based on this plan, grazing permits are given for a part of the pasture land, using a rotational grazing policy.

Asked about the overall decrease in the pasture area, Patnaik said he did not have the data in one place. The closest indicator is Uttarakhand's 2021 report of the Fodder Resources Development Plan. It shows an increase in the state's sheep numbers from 311,000 in 1997 to 361,000 in 2019, and goat numbers from 1.09 million in 1997 to 1.37 million in 2019. But that rise is much lower when compared to other states in India. The report ascribes this to a shortage of good fodder. It says 11 of the 13 districts in Uttarakhand face a fodder shortage.

Less Wool, Even Less Money

Lack of good fodder means less wool. On top of this, Bhotias are facing lower demand for their wool products. After shearing, preparing the wool and the clothes is traditionally the job of women in the Bhotia community, who often take charge of selling the clothes. But now they are finding the traditional clothes they continue to knit and weave have few buyers and are fetching less on the market. They are unable to compete with mass-produced machine-made woollen garments.

"Out of around 500 families living in our village, only 50 to 60 are still working as shepherds. Women are also slowly leaving their traditional work," Bagori resident Narmada Rawat said. "The money we make does not justify the labour involved in washing wool, carding it, making thread, knitting and weaving."

Sitting at her loom on the porch of her home, fellow resident Leela Devi said: "We buy raw wool to weave shawls. It takes about 10 days to weave a shawl. Given the price at which we are able to sell, we would have made more by working as unskilled labour." ●

Until PROUT is established, however, special efforts should be made to protect the interests of backward classes. For example, tribal people are among the most deprived of the backward classes. In Tripura and many parts of India, and in other countries of the world as well, tribal people are poor and illiterate. Special steps should be taken immediately to enhance their socio-economic development. Such steps should include the removal of all educational inequalities; the widespread establishment of cottage industries; proper agricultural facilities, especially irrigation water; self-reliance in energy production, such as electricity; increased communication facilities, such as telephones; and better transportation infrastructure, such as railways.

- Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

WATER IS LIFE

Narendra Rajpurohit

Drought has ravaged thousands of villages in Maharashtra, leading to thirst, hunger, debt, forced migration and withered crops

Without water, humans, trees, plants, and other creatures cannot survive. In the last few years, the problem of water has been increasing. Many rivers are already polluted. People cannot drink its water. Even India encounters a severe water problem in many districts of many states. In the last few years, drought has severely affected thousands of villages. The only solution is to rely on rainwater. We must collect rainwater. It is a crisis largely caused by humans – by poor management of water and rapid destruction of nature. According to Shri P.R.Sarkar, one of the greatest causes of environmental destruction is deforestation. Afforestation is the only solution to desertification. The Thar desert, located in the western part of Rajasthan, suffered from an acute water problem. After the induction of the canal from the Sutlej River, the prolonged water problem is reduced.

Not only India but many countries of the world are still facing a water crisis, e.g., Jordan, Qatar, Israel, Iran, Lebanon, and Brazil. It is all due to weak monsoon in these areas, particularly India's 1/4th population is affected due to weak or irregular monsoon and out of that 12 per cent are most affected. According to India's Composite

Water Management Index (CWMI) report, water demand will be double by 2030. India and a few other countries will face a water crisis in the next few years.

Earth's 70 per cent area is covered with water. About 97 percent of water is unusable (salted). Only 2 to 3 per cent is usable water and out of which 60-70 percent water is in the form of mountain snow. On One per cent water, the entire living beings, including flora and fauna, are built and sustained. So, concerned citizens must understand the importance of water and try and save it. For many years, Maharashtra (Marathwada, Vidarbha), Karnataka, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh have been facing problems related to water.

Constructing a deep tube well is not the solution to the water crisis. According to Shri Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar (the Propounder of Progressive Utilization Theory), we should build small check dams on the rivers. Increase the depth of those ponds, tanks, lakes, rivers, and reservoirs already used for water storage. We should plant trees around them to hold the water and groundwater for irrigation. Due to rapid deforestation, the environment is destroyed.

To save water and use it properly, the following measures are necessary: (1) Trees to be planted on a war footing, (2) Making small check dams, (3) Drip irrigation, (4) Make small holes in the ground, (5) Increase the depth of those ponds, tanks, lakes, rivers and reservoirs an (6) Planting panic-stricken crops in place of the crop which requires more water.

There is a lot of rain in the Konkan part of Maharashtra, but most of the water is wasted as it flows into the Arabian Sea. Therefore, according to Shri P.R. Sarkar's views, ample rain in the rain-front area must be shifted to the rain-shadow area, i.e. Marathwada, Vidarbha of Maharashtra parts of Telangana (India), for irrigation and drinking by using lift and shift system or through the tunnels.

For irrigation, only groundwater is to be used. Therefore, we should utilize surface water in preference to subterranean water. The drawback of tube well/ well irrigation is that it causes the water table level to drop. In such a situation, the trees and plants can dry up in that area, and in future, the part of land or area can turn into a desert. As in the current scenario, many wars are taking place in the world for fuel, but in future, there will be wars between many countries for this most valuable commodity, i.e. water.

The condition of Sahyadri Samaj of Maharashtra (India) is serious. They surveyed in 2015 and found that drought has ravaged thousands of villages in Maharashtra for decades, leading to thirst, hunger, debt, forced migration and withered crops. After travelling through more than 6-7 districts and hundreds of villages and speaking with farmers in the field, we discovered a man-made crisis. It results from mismanagement of water and natural resources, exacerbated by the uncertainties caused by climate change. Sahyadri Samaj should solve the critical issues of the fast degeneration of villages in the wake of droughts, increasing farmer suicides, and constant water crises. Sahyadri Samaj is mobilizing and motivating

villagers to fight the water crisis. We can find scientific solutions to eradicating this crisis in water conservation methods, water management by increasing the depth of ponds, tanks, lakes, rivers and reservoirs and environmental restoration.

We are moving with the motto that Shrii P. R. Sarkar has said "if there is a problem, there must be a solution. No problem is greater than your capacity to solve it". It is only by collective efforts we can solve the problem. So we convince villagers to come together to face the crisis. Our mission is to create awareness and make Maharashtra drought-free and prosperous by encouraging social unity. Additionally, by educating farmers, restoring balance in the use of stored and groundwater, reviving existing rivers and canals.

Sahyadri Samaj is doing water conservation work in various places, including Jalna, Osmanabad, Beed, Aurangabad Districts (Maharashtra, India). We inspire village communities to work together positively and joyfully to solve the problem of drought-stricken areas. It helps all the factions and groups in the village to work together to achieve the noble goal. Before initiating water conservation work, we always arrange a meeting with villagers about the water crisis and take their assurance to ban liquor construct toilets in all houses. Then, we start with our work of planting trees, and only after that does the water conservation work begin. It is pertinent to note we would not initiate work unless we get some contribution from each villager to make them feel associated with the project undertaken in their area. Once they contribute something, they think that this is their project.

With the help of Sahyadri Samaj in the last six to seven years, the problem of drinking water was solved in many villages, as they made small check dams on the river & streams. During the rainy season, these check dams are filled with water, due to which the water table of the area increases, thereby solving the problem of drinking water. After the project is completed in one village, there is sufficient water for consumption and agriculture. Due to adequate water for irrigation, farmers get to work on farms, and their economic conditions are getting better due to good harvest. Owing to this water conservation project, the purchasing power of farmers have increased impeccably, resulting in repayment of bank loans easily, if any. Alternatively, this also helps in transforming rural ecology and the rural economy. It was a response to the apathy towards the devastating drought conditions and agonizing voices of farmers in Maharashtra. Many projects have successfully been completed to help villagers and farmers lead their lives in fulfilment and dignity.

So we should adopt this model in many parts of the country with a water problem. We are into a movement empowering the human spirit by eradicating farmer agony. We aim to facilitate development in deprived villages and usher happiness in the lives of farmers and their families.

Saving water will save us from various future problems. If there is no water left, it will be difficult for living beings to survive on the earth. Life would be meaningless without water. By following the path shown by Shri P R Sarkar, we can save humanity and the entire world from the problems of water and other difficulties that may come. ●

Honour Killings Will Continue as Long as Iran's Laws Protect Killers
Widespread Practice of Child Marriage Means More Young Girls Will Be Murdered

Mona "Ghazal" Heydari was 17 years old when her husband, Sajjad Heydari, decapitated her and paraded her head on the street in the Iranian city of Ahvaz, Khuzestan Province—at times smiling at a camera. "Now do you have anything more to say?" he said while carrying the girl's severed head in his hand by her hair in a video clip that the state-owned Rokna News Agency aired before the government banned it from republication.Sajjad Heydari was arrested, but so far, no charges have been announced against him for killing his child bride, and if they are, Iranian law would still work in his favour, allowing him to go unpunished or at worst serve a mere ten years in prison.

At the core of this crime are two unaddressed issues in Iran—the lack of protections for violence against women in Iran and the widespread practice of child marriage. Moreover, these individual acts of murder are closely tied to government policies. Iran's Laws Offer Girls and Women Little Protection from Widespread Domestic Violence. Iranian laws allow men to carry out various forms of violence against women with little if any consequence. For example, Article 302 of Iran's Islamic Penal Code states that a man can legally kill a person for committing a crime punishable by death under Sharia (Islamic) law, such as adultery. However, a woman in Iran could never walk free after killing her unfaithful husband and be executed.

Indeed, there's no guarantee that Sajjad Heydari will be charged, and Iranian media reports are indicating that Mona Heydari's father may never seek justice for his daughter. Moreover, meagre attempts to provide stronger legal protections to girls and women have long remained blocked from becoming law by Parliament.

In addition to the lenient punishments for fathers and husbands for violence against girls and women - other aspects of Iranian law compound the problem. For example, a woman can't leave the marital home without proof that she's endangered, and if a woman does flee, she forfeits financial maintenance. In addition, orders of protection do not exist, and shelters for abused women are woefully absent in much of the country. In general, the police consider violence by family members to be a "family matter."

Widespread Child Marriage Leaves Many Girls Desperate to Flee, Vulnerable to Honor Killings

Meanwhile, the legal marriage age for girls in Iran is Thirteen. Further, younger girls can be married if their father or male guardian receives a judge's approval. Mona's father confirmed that Court approval was granted to get married at age 12.

The latest figures from the Statistical Center of Iran show that 9,753 girls between the ages of 10 and 14 were married in 2021, a 32 per cent increase compared to the previous spring. The growth has been fueled by low-cost state marriage loans that parents have increasingly sought to benefit from by marrying off their young daughters.

Meanwhile, the UN reports that at least 17 per cent of Iranian girls under the age of 18 are married off by their families each year. A common theme in honor killings in Iran has been the victim's—who are often child brides forced to marry—desperation to flee abusive marriages.

Mona Heydari: From Battered Child Bride to Murdered Wife

Mona Heydari was married off at 12 and became a mother at 14 after having a child by Sajjad Heydari. A source close to her family told the London-based IranWire Persian news site that she had tried to escape him by fleeing to Turkey because she was "suffering from domestic violence."

"Every time she talked about divorce or complained about her husband's assaults, they convinced her to continue her marriage for the sake of her child but eventually she dropped everything and ran away," added the source.

Mona Heydari had returned to Iran with "assurances that she would not be in any danger if she came back," the source told IranWire. "But a few days after she returned home, Sajjad and his brother tied her hands and feet and cut her head off. Sajjad's brother rolled her decapitated body in a blanket and threw it away in another neighborhood while Sajjad walked around in the street holding her head in his hand."

After the murder, Sajjad Heydari's mother told the state-owned Fars News Agency that Sajjad Heydari was "provoked" because rumours had damaged his reputation that his wife had committed adultery.

Society Decries Violence and Child Marriages to No Avail

Her killing has renewed debates among Iranians about the Iranian government's refusal to pass laws that could have better protected Mona Heydari and girls and women like her, as well as the inhumane practice of child marriage in Iran. These issues have long prompted a societal outcry. Thus, they are once again loudly debated on social media by Iranians - following news of Mona Heydari's murder, which was first reported on February 5, 2022.

Despite broad societal condemnation of the practice, clerics, conservative lawmakers, and other officials continue to block attempts to raise the minimum marriageable age in Iran. As a result, tens of thousands of girls under the age of 15 are married off by their families each year in Iran. In reality, the numbers are likely much higher as many families in Iran do not register underage marriages.

Meanwhile, so-called "honor killings" continue to occur in Iran, with at least seven children and women known to be murdered in this manner this year in Iran. They include: Romina Ashrafi (13), Shakiba Bakhtiar (16), Mobina Souri (16), Faezeh Maleki (21), Reyhaneh Ameri (22), and Fatemeh Farhi (19). ●

PROUT's QUALIFIED MARKET ECONOMY

The central purpose of an economy must be to meet the needs of people — not to maximize profits.

Ravi Logan

Several different approaches have been used to organize economic activity. In the Soviet Communist command economy system, economic activity was controlled by centralized planning boards. This was a very inefficient way to organize economic activity.

In capitalist economies — which now prevail almost everywhere — the production and distribution of goods and services are organized by markets. If a product or service can find buyers, if a demand exists (or can be created), then economic businesses will supply those buyers with those goods and services. If there is more demand than is being supplied, then market forces will increase supply; if there is more production than there is demand, then market forces will decrease supply.

Ross Jackson, in *Occupy World Street*, noted that the term "market economy" is a very general term and that there are a variety of forms that market economies can take. So, for example, the market economies of East Asia are assisted by considerable state planning and state support, and in this they differ greatly from the market economies that operate in nations with little or no state planning. Then there are the market economies of the democratic socialist countries of northern

Europe in which more and more social services are provided by the state (rather than by markets). These democratic socialist market economies are very different from market economies, such as existsin the United States, in which there is more and more privatization of services that were previously public in nature.

The Progressive Utilization Theory, also called PROUT, is a socioeconomic system that has its own distinct form of a market economy. The PROUT economycan be called a qualified market economy.It is a market economy that is qualified in ways that create far more balance and efficacy than do other forms of market economies.

Given below, in brief, are the characteristics that qualify a PROUT market economy.

1] A Consumption Motivated Market Economy

The central purpose of an economy must be to meet the needs of people — not to maximize profits. Making profits cannot be ignored if enterprises are to be sustainable, but profits cannot be the primary rationale for economic activity. The primary rationale should be to ensure the availability of consumer goods and services, to make them available at affordable prices, and to ensure that all people that the purchasing capacity to acquire their basic requirements and amenities.

2] A Regulated Market Economy

People, communities, and the environment must be protected from any harm caused by economic enterprises. If protection from harm can be achieved by instilling values and awareness in which enterprises self-regulate their activities to prevent harm, this is a preferable approach. But if self-regulation does not suffice, then state mandated regulatory frameworks must be put in place. Wherever there is the potential for harm, there must be adequate legal checks on economic markets.

3] A Planned Market Economy

Economic planning is needed to complement to a market economy that can meet human needs. There are aspects of economic planning which should be undertaken at global, national, or regional levels, but, in the main, planning should occur at the local level. It is at the local level that the expertise of local people can best solve economic problems and create prosperity according to local needs. Planning undertaken primarily on the local level will have the following benefits: Planners can better understand the major and minor problems of the area. Local leaders can solve problems according to local priorities. Planning will be more practical and more readily implemented. Local organizations can play an active role in mobilizing human and material resources. Unemployment can be more easily prevented. And a balanced economy can be more readily established.

4] A Decentralized Market Economy

In corporate capitalism, control is centralized in the hands of a few big capitalists. Economic planning cannot be effectively undertaken by people who live far from where economic activity occurs. Economic planning must start from the level where the experience and expertise of local people can be applied to solve economic problems and create prosperity. Decentralization of economic control is therefore essential for promoting people's all-round welfare. This means that resources should be controlled by local people, production should give priority to meeting local needs, production and distribution should by organized primarily by local cooperatives, only local people should control local economic enterprises, and essential commodities should be produced by local enterprises. These five important principles of economic decentralization will create a holistic approach to decentralized development.

5] A Worker Empowered Market Economy

Where practical, distribution of *essential commodities* should be done through consumer cooperatives, rather than through private traders or state enterprise. This reduces the possibility of manipulation of prices, hoarding, and bureaucratic inefficiency in the marketing of products that are necessary for consumers and producers. Decentralization of production and marketing will reduce the opportunity for expensive advertising campaigns designed to manipulate consumer demand.

6] A Globally Equitable Market Economy

All nations and regions should have equitable opportunity to develop their economic potentialities. While diversity will always exist in the economic potentials, there must not be any structural arrangements that give undue advantage to more developed regional economies. If due to historical circumstance, lack of capital, or a limited resource base some regions are lagging in developing their potential, there should be global assistance given to accelerate their development. There should be no net drainage of capital from any regional economy.

7] A Sustainable Market Economy

Economic activities must not deplete the resource base of the local area. Local people must be assured of sustainable access to resources so that future generations do not face diminished economic opportunities due to resource depletion. Without proper planning of resource use, there cannot be sustainable development. For this, a proper planning methodology is required that considers the present and projected future needs of the society for a commodity and the present and projected future supplies of the commodity. On the basis of this information, planners can determine how much harvest or extraction of a resource to allow.

8] A Democratic Market Economy

Where economic power is centralized, democracy is subverted. Centralization of economic power corrupts democratic institutions and results in government that is controlled by the power of money. To end this tyranny of wealth, there must be *economic democracy* rather than *political democracy*. In political democracy there is universal voting rights and centralization of economic power. In economic democracy, the focus is upon ensuring that the common people enjoy *maximum economic empowerment*. If economic power is with the people, the integrity of political democracy will follow. A highly empowered citizenry is more likely to elect political leaders that support human interests.

9] A Balanced Market Economy

An essential aim of economic planning should be to create *a balanced economy* in whichthere is a balanced distribution of workers in the different sectors of the economy — that is, in agriculture, agricultural industries, nonagricultural industries, commerce, professional services, social services, education, government administration, etc. Virtually all countries today have imbalanced economies, and they suffer from the problems which this imbalance creates. Where there is excess employment in the agricultural sector, industry is not properly developed. Without sufficient industry there is a dependence on imported manufactured goods, and there is less wealth generated by an economy devoid of industry, resulting in a cycle of underdevelopment. Countries that are overly focused on industrial and commercial activity become dependent on other countries for agricultural products, which tends to further lock in underdevelopment in the agriculturally predominant economies.

10] An Incentivized Market Economy

Incentives are essential to motivate workers to develop and use their full productive capacities. A society

without economic incentives, where all work is paid equally, cannot prosper. At the same time, pay incentives should not be so large as to create unnecessary disparity. Society should set minimum and maximum income levels. The minimum level should be adequate to insure purchase of basic necessities and amenities according to the prevailing standard. The maximum income level should balance society's need to maintain high worker motivation with its need to distribute wealth equitably. Over time, the minimum and maximum income levels would rise with rising purchasing power, and the range between the minimum and maximum incomes should be gradually lessened — unless this has the effect of diminishing worker motivation. Incentives should be incorporated into all productive activity.

11] A Full Employment Market Economy

All people should enjoy guaranteed purchasing capacity to meet their needs; this is a fundamental human right. The guarantee of purchasing capacity requires an economy that full employment for all who are able to work. This in turn necessitates policies and approaches that ensure a vital, stable, and sustainable economy. It also means that as efficiencies of productivity increase due to mechanization and improved utilization of human potentials, the length of the work day should be correspondingly reduced.

12] A Socially Owned Market Economy

Economic enterprises should not be owned and run by those having capital investment in the enterprises, nor should there be state run enterprises. There should instead be social ownership of enterprises by workers. In practice, social ownership can take the form of worker owned cooperatives, small scale private businesses too small to be viable as cooperatives, and key industries run by cooperatives but — because of their strategic importance — commissioned and regulated by governmental boards.

13] A Progressive Market Economy

Through human labor and use of technology, wealth is created. Increased wealth should result in a progressive rise in the standard of living of the society. The increase in the standard of living is the principal measure of the vitality of a society. Increase in the standard of living cannot be measured properly by growth in per capita income. Money may lose value, increased taxes may reduce disposable income, cost of goods and services may rise faster than income increase, etc. The proper measure should be growth in purchasing power. When there is growth of purchasing power, there will be increase in the standard of living.

14] A Neohumanist Market Economy

Humanism takes human welfare — not the welfare of state, church, or enterprise — to be the measure of social good. But our world is not only home to humans; it is home to all of Earth's life forms. So human activity must be guided by a new humanism that values and protects the welfare of all living beings. Economic development must not be allowed to violate the inherent right of other species to existence. It is not sufficient to want "an economics as if people matter", as E. F. Schumacher called for; economic activity must be guided by neohumanistic values, ensuring "an economics as if living beings matter."

15] A Spiritually-Supportive Market Economy

For a society to determine a proper direction for economic development, it must first ask: *What is the purpose of economic progress?* If the purpose is only to increase material amenities, such development may maintain our materialist lifestyle but won't help us attain inner fulfillment. To acquire deeper fulfillment, we must reorient our idea of progress away from life being simply about material increase to being movement toward inner realization. It is true that people cannot pursue spiritual realization if their material needs go unmet. So a proper conception of progress must acknowledge the need for material development. But, fundamentally, our understanding of the purpose of development must include support for the human search for meaning — not just filling ourselves with things that empty our lives of meaning. ●

Existential Flow and Its Culminating Point

- Shrii Shrii Ánandamúrti

There is mind, there is microcosm, in each and every existence of this universe. In inanimate objects the mind is in its stagnant point, in cimmerian slumber; but amongst animated beings the mind plays a very important role; and amongst those animated beings or animated creatures, in humans the mind plays the most dominant role. It is the most dominant factor amongst humans. We may say that human beings are more psychic beings than physical ones. One characteristic of the mind is that it moves – it cannot remain stationary, it must move. Even when [quiet], it goes on moving; movement is a must. In order to maintain its existence, the mind must maintain its dynamicity.

Now, for the Macrocosm, the movement is in a particular line, in a particular flow, in a particular direction, following a particular route. And in each and every object of this universe, the movement is in a particular way, unless and until diverted or redirected to some other way by a stronger mental faculty. But in the case of microcosms, and especially of human beings, it is something different – it has a certain speciality of its own. A river moves from the mountain towards the sea, and never from the sea towards the mountain; but in the case of human minds, or human microcosms, the movement may be from the mountain towards the sea or from the sea towards the mountain. This is the speciality of the human mind.

The mind is the cause of bondage, and this mind, this very mind, is the cause of liberation, is the cause of emancipation." If the movement towards subtle is encouraged, and there is movement with proper acceleration, then what will happen? There will take place one of two different things: either one's existence will be converted into the Cosmic Mind – that metamorphosis of unit mind into Cosmic Mind is known as the qualified stance – saguńásthiti – or, if the very "I" feeling is surrendered at the altar of Supreme Existence, then the alternative will be that the entire existential factor will become one with the Supreme Cognitive Faculty, with the Cognitive Principle – one will become omniscient, an all-knowing entity.

And the culminating point, the desideratum, is Parama Puruśa – love, eternal love, universal love, personified. What is Parama Puruśa? Universal love, when personified, is Parama Puruśa. Your march, your movement, is towards Him. That is, your mind moves from crude to subtle, from matter to Parama Puruśa; in this march, in this universal march, everybody has the right to do it; everybody has the birthright to move along this path of righteousness. Just show people the path – just tell them: "O human beings, the path is ready for you, you just come!" Whoever is endowed with a human mind and a human body is entitled to follow this path, and at the end of the journey, one day, one is destined to attain Parama Puruśa. When Parama Puruśa, the Cosmic Cognition, is your goal, success is a must, success will be with you. ●

Dialogue on Biopsychology and Microvitology of Fasting

On February 26, 2022, the Society for Microvita Research and Integrated Medicine (SMRIM), Udaipur, organized "Dialogue on Biopsychology and Microvitology of Fasting". The keynote speaker Dr S. K. Verma, presently Professor Emeritus at Pacific Medical College and Hospitals, Udaipur, was introduced by Dr Urvansh Mehta.

Dr Verma explained the topic in detail with a PowerPoint presentation, highlighting the difference between Fasting and Upvaas. Fasting is 'Anashan', that is not taking anything, whereas Upvaas means to sit near the Supreme entity. Fasting without food and water purifies the body, but Upvaas purifies the mind as well. Upvaas is done during specific days of the lunar cycle. Full moon, new moon and 11th days of both, are highly beneficial for the body, mind and soul. Because, these days, the gravity and electromagnetic forces and radiation from different celestial bodies affect the human body's various glands and water content the most. Biopsychology is a new science given in 1987 by Shrii P. R. Sarkar, who explained the correct method of starting and breaking the fast. If a fast is appropriately done, the body will imbibe the positive microvita. Otherwise, the negative microvita preferentially affects the body and mind resulting in harmful effects. Therefore, a Fast followed properly will raise the human mind from physicality to psycho-spirituality and ultimately help reach the desideratum of human existence. Dr Verma concluded that a nicely done fasting makes physico-psychic activities faster than usual. Therefore, the body has to fast without food and water, and the mind should feast with his Beloved Supreme.

The guest of honour, Dr Vijay Laxmi Chouhan, said that a happy, calm and content state of mind is very important while eating and during Fasting. According to the Organizing Secretary and moderator of the Seminar, Dr Vartika Jain, more than 60 participants joined the program held on the Zoom platform with live streaming on YouTube from all over the country and the world. She said that Fasting is followed in many religions. Still, the scientific basis of keeping fast on Ekadashi, Purnima and Amavasya supports ancient knowledge of rishis and munis and breaking fast properly is also essential to get the maximum benefit of Fasting.

Dr Verma also resolved the queries of all the participants in the question and answer session. The program was smoothly conducted with the active support of Rajesh Sharma, Bhavika Kunwar and Yash Verma. In the end, the Vice President of SMRIM, Dinesh Sharma, proposed a vote of thanks to Dr Verma, all the participants, and the entire organizing team.

PBI Candidate in UP Assembly Election

Kanpur : Santosh Kumar Giri, the lone candidate in the recently concluded UP assembly election, could not do well at hustings despite his best efforts. He could secure 262 votes. This should serve as an eye opener for the name-sake Proutists of Kanpur. PBI had been active there for past several years.

PBI is giving clarion call to unite and organise genuine moralists. It is always emphasizing on establishment of economic democracy in order to eradicate poverty and unemployment. It has therefore started a vigorous campaign against the predominant role of capitalism and immorality in our socio-economic life. Today few are ready to stand against capitalistic exploitation and immoral practices. Therefore although steady, but forward movement of PBI is slow.In this background, Santosh Kumar Giri 's decision to move with PBI's banner has been a courageous decision. It is indeed praiseworthy. He has kept the flame burning. Congratulations to him!Kanpur's energetic and courageous Proutists are still full of visionary enthusiasm to go ahead with firm determination. All good wishes to their irrepressible resolve!

National Seminar Held on Kiirtan in Context with Microvitology

On February 27, the Society for Microvita Research and Integrated Medicine (SMRIM), Udaipur, organized a "National Seminar on Kiirtan in context with Microvitology".

Dr S. K. Verma, spoke about the history and science of Kiirtan. He explained that Kiirtan should be of eight-syllable Siddha mantra, which we should recite with Lalit Marmik dance loudly. Kiirtan helps in controlling the mind, glands and hormones. Microvita is the smallest living entity created by the Cosmic Mind and moves through inferences and also acts on different plexii, and controls hormonal secretions. Positive Microvita prefers subtle sound inferences, whereas negative Microvita prefers crude smell inferences. Therefore, kiirtan's sound inferences invite positive Microvita, which positively affects the human body and mind. Positive Microvita creates a congenial environment for psycho-spiritual meditation. One can increase its density by engaging in good sangeet and kiirtan, sentient food, good literature, good thinking, good company, and scriptures. Therefore, invitation of positive Microvita is required to enhance the overall progress of humanity from physical to psycho-spiritual and ultimately pure spiritual. Dr Verma said that there is an urgent need for research on the scientific aspect of kiirtan.

Plenary speaker, Madan Prasad Singh from Jamshedpur, spoke about available scientific evidence regarding the effect of Kiirtan on neuronal cells and their circuits and the genetic structure. The studies have shown that Kiirtan improves the cognitive, vestibular and locomotor functions. He said that Kiirtan is a kind of easy meditation where the goal is fixed, and body parts are engaged in singing and dancing in the thought of the Supreme Entity. He also emphasized that we should start further research on 'Baba Naam Kevalam' Ashtakshar Siddha maha-mantra and its therapeutic benefits.

Seminar's Moderator, Dr Vartika Jain, said that more than 50 participants had joined the Zoom platform with live streaming on YouTube from India and abroad. Tattvik Paras Nath ji appreciated the efforts of SMRIM for regularly organizing excellent sessions on such interesting topics. Queries of all the participants were also resolved in the question and answer session. In the end, the Vice President of SMRIM, Dinesh Sharma, proposed a vote of thanks to Dr Verma, M.P. Singh, all the participants, and the entire organizing team.

Girls' Proutist's Hold Rally in Sakchi Golchakar to Protest Alleged Violence against Women

On the occasion of International Women's Day, a meeting was organized by "Girls Proutist" at Sakchi Golchakkar, Tata Nagar, to protest against the alleged oppression of women. A memorandum was also presented to the Deputy Commissioner on the occasion of International Women's Day at 1 pm.

" Everyone knows how neglected women are in this male-dominated society," said Rekha Mahato, district secretary of "Girls Proutist" East Singhbhum. Despite women being half of the society, they are always victims of atrocities. The ruling party is promoting obscene half-naked clothes, dirty pictures, pornographic movies and obscene songs to degrade the character of the youth. Another weapon in this culture is the use of naked female bodies in advertisements. As a result, women are facing atrocities everywhere today.

The "Girls Proutist" denounced this contempt for the female race. The 'Girls Proutist' is preparing for a big movement in the coming days to liberate women from social, economic and religious exploitation and regain their lost dignity. This awareness meeting is an exhibition of that movement. In order to build an ideal human society, the three point demands of the great philosopher Shri Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar need to be implemented quickly.

1. To ensure proper education of women
2. Social, economic recognition of women
3. Provide equal religious rights

According to Shri Sarkar, women have not lost their freedom. An ideal man has to stand up against these injustices towards women

The program of "Girls Proutist"

1. Spiritual practice related to science
2. Yoga and Kaushiki dance
3. Observance of sixteen rules in daily life
4. Progressive Utilisation Theory and Neohumanism.

The claim of "Girls Proutist"

1. Every woman has to solve social and economic problems.
2. Establishment of Progressive Utilisation Theory for building a society free from exploitation.
3. To make women's education free, compulsory and spiritual everywhere.
4. Ensuring pedagogy in primary education for women only.
5. Stop pornographic nude exposure of women in movies, television and advertisements.

More than 200 women from East Singhbhum, Saraikela-Kharsawa and West Singhbhum attended the meeting. Rekha Mahato, Devyani Biswas, Jyotirmoyee Kumari, Prantika Roy, Bela Mahato, Shikha Mahato, Aparna Mahato, Durba Mahato, Shila Sarkar, Anupama Mahato and others were present at the meeting.

PBI Candidates in Odisha Municipal Elections

Smt Bharati Purohit has won the Gram Panchayat election as Sarapanch at LAXMIPRASAD Panchayat of Boudh Block (BOUDH district, Odisha) . She is a PROUTIST Bloc India's activist in her region and a very popular leader.

Namita Majhi has won the Gram Panchayat election in KA'UNSHIBA'HA'L Panchayat of Barkote Block in Deogarh district of Odisha . She is a sincere PROUTIST Bloc India activist and is known for her genuine love for unprivileged and suffering people.

Prasanta Kumar Maharana, another PBI activist. He has won the ward member election from GP---Bantala. He led by 77 votes over the rival candidates. He is a very committed and sincere activist.

Subhasri Samantaray established a lead of 181 votes over her rivals. She succeeded as Panchayat Samiti member in Chandanpur Panchayat of Bari block in the district Zajpur of Odisha.

Prabhat Ranjan Das won in Kuhudi Gram Panchayat as Sarpanch, Marsaghai block, Kendrapada district. Hopefully he will prove equal to the task ahead.

Kadambini Nath, the victorious candidate, won as ward member in ward no--4, of Sana Adhanga gp by a lead of 3 votes.

Mitrabhanu Pradhan has won as Sarpanch in Gram Panchayat Bayakumutia of Banshapala Block in Kendujhar district of Odisha. He is a young and energetic PBI activist.

Smt. Rajalakxmi Swain won as sarpanch of GP Kamira in Boudh district.

Mira Panigiri won as Panchayat Sameeti Member in gram panchayat Baghiapada of Block & Dist. Boudh.

Suresh Pradhan winner as ward member Palahagora Panchayat of Block Kantamal, Dist. Boudh. He secured 284 Votes out of 339 total votes.

Kalpataru Katai, GP Bayakumutia ; won uncontested as ward member of ward no.10, Keonjhar district.

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

Please come and awaken them

UTTUNGA SHIKHAR PARE
BASE ÁCHO TUMI KÁR TARE
DHÚLI AVALUNṬHITA MÁNAVATÁ
NEVE ESO TVARÁ KARE

MÁNUṢA BHULE GECHE SE JE MÁNUṢA
KALPANÁR ÁKÁSHE SEJECHO PHÁNUSA
SVÁRTHA BHÁVANÁTE HÁRÁYECHE HÚNSHA
TUMI ESE JÁGÁO TÁRE

TOMÁR SUMUKHE KONO DVIVIDHÁ TO NEI
TOMÁR SUMUKHE KONO DVIVIDHÁ TO NEI
TAVA SRIṢṬS DHARÁTE BÁNCÁTE HOVEI
NEVE ÁSIVÁR KÁLA ESE GECHE
TARIIRA HÁL DHARO NIJA KARE

Atop a precipitous peak
You sit for whom
Humanity wallows in dust
Please come down soon.

Men have forgotten they are men,
In skies of fancy, they play with paper balloons
With selfish thoughts, men have lost their senses
Please come and awaken them.

Before thee O there is no discrimination
Thy creation, the universe, must be saved
Time has come for You to descend
Hold the rudder of the boat Yourself.

Rajashrii Biswal - PBI Candidate for Bhubaneshwar Mayor

A veteran Proutist Rajashrii Biswal is contesting as Proutist Bloc India candidate in the ongoing election for the Mayor of Bhubaneshwar city, Capital of Odisha. Boat is her symbol in this election.

It deserves mention that Rajashrii has postgraduated from Vani Vihar, Bhubaneshwar. She has regularly been associated with various social, cultural and political activities from her University days. Her spiritual master and seer-philosopher Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji alias Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar --- propounder of the alternative socio-economic and political ideology PROUT (Progressive Utilisation Theory)--- is her perennial source of inspiration.

Her slogan in this election is : Das Tanka Diya, Vote Diya (Give Ten Rupees and One Vote). Her vision is to free electoral politics from the ominous shadows of money and liquor. She exudes tremendous confidence in winning the election due to hearty support of the common people. She tells media persons that those who spend crores of rupees in the elections, their main thrust after the election is to earn back that money by whatever manipulative tactics. And in this race for money earning, they totally forget the sufferings and burning problems of the masses. Hence her effort is to introduce a new political culture. Therefore the slogan of -- "Ten Rupees & One Vote".

In this novel experiment and herculean task she has the unstinted support and blessings of centenarian famous freedom fighter Shrii Padma Charan Nayakji.

Shrii Nayakji, who is also President of Milit Odisha Nisha Nibaran Abhijan alongwith many renowned public figures has made a moving appeal to the voters of Bhubaneshwar to extend their all out support including financial, to Rajashrii Biswal in this battle between virtue and vice. Others who have joined Shrii Nayak in this appeal include Smt. Krishna Mohanty, eminent woman leader and daughter of a celebrity former CM late Nabakrishna Choudhary, Dr. Bhagwan Prakash,ex-chief advisor, Election Commission of India & Odisha Nagrik Samaj, Prahalad Singh, veteran Ghandhian activist,Prof. Gokulananda Das, Ex-vice Chancellor, Utkal University, Prof. Kumar Bar Dash, ex-vice chancellor North Odisha University.

Thoroughly service - oriented Rajashrii has actively worked to support the victims of Corona Pandemic. Besides she regularly works to render relief to flood, and other natural or man made calamities of any nature with exuberant selfless spirit.

If you think Rajashri is fighting for a just cause, please share it with as many of your contacts as possible. I know her personally and trust me, Bhubaneswar will be fortunate to have a Mayor like her.

- Comment by Shri Siddharth Das,
eminent social thinker in social media group, Bhubaneswar.

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