



A thought for today

Japan will get something that's already been invented and study it until they thoroughly understand it. In some cases, they understand it better than the original inventor

STEVE JOBS

Abe In Ahmedabad

India-Japan partnership can transform development paradigm in India and the region

The symbolism of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe holding parleys with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Ahmedabad from today cannot be missed. The last Asian leader who was similarly hosted in Ahmedabad was Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2014. Back then Modi had gone out of his way to fete Xi, but considerable water has flown down the Yangtze Kiang since then. India-China ties haven't proceeded along the expected trajectory, as exemplified by the recent Doklam standoff.

Japanese exports to India rose from Rs 22,900 crore in 2005 to Rs 57,800 crore in 2015, and as of today about 1,305 Japanese companies have branches in India. Japanese investments—both made and proposed—in projects such as the Delhi Metro and the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor have been or can be transformational. Abe along with Modi will lay the



foundation stone for the marquee Rs 1.1 lakh crore Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project which Japan is financing. Understandably, an Indian bullet train has raised eyebrows given the shabby state and unsatisfactory safety record of Indian railways in general. However, it needs to be noted that the bullet train project will have a separate financing stream. Plus the project can be used as a model to upgrade technology, standards and protocols across the railways.

Additionally, India and Japan will sign 10 MoUs—including those for Japanese industrial parks—during Abe's trip. But what is really grabbing eyeballs is the expected launch of the Asia Africa Growth Corridor. The corridor is meant to build capacity and boost human resource development in Africa, create quality infrastructure, and facilitate people-to-people partnerships. Juxtaposed to China's top-down investments comprising its 'One Belt One Road' initiative, India-Japan's outreach to the continent seeks to connect different growth poles through local ownership of projects, skill development and transfer of technology.

The strategic dimension of the corridor is clear. With China using its huge foreign exchange reserve to acquire economic depth overseas while trying to muscle aside other Asian powers, India and Japan can work together to buttress a multipolar Asia, as well as to provide an alternative model of development for Asia and Africa that respects sovereignty and democratic principles. In that sense, the India-Japan partnership can be a force that transforms the development paradigm in this part of the world. And Modi and Abe have the personal connect to actualise this.

Post-Amma Churning

Sasikala ousted but AIADMK's instability keeps Tamil Nadu on the boil

The continuing saga of who controls Tamil Nadu's ruling party—AIADMK—intensified with chief minister E Palaniswami (EPS) and his deputy O Panneerselvam (OPS) ousting VK Sasikala and her nephew TTV Dhinakaran from the party. The party's general council also put its official imprimatur on the merger between the EPS and OPS factions while elevating former chief minister J Jayalalitha to 'eternal general secretary'. AIADMK will now be run by OPS as chief coordinator while EPS will be second-in-command.

But even if these decisions pass the legal scrutiny test of the Madras high court next month, the state government's fate still hangs by a thread. Sasikala's nephew claims to enjoy the support of nearly 21 MLAs which could potentially bring down the government in the event of a floor test. The EPS-OPS faction claimed the support of 111 MLAs in their show of strength last week. This is still short of the magic figure of 117 in the 234-member house (with 2 seats being vacant). Invoking Jayalalitha is hardly going to help AIADMK in this context.

In the midst of all this political uncertainty, governance has become the biggest casualty as survival has taken precedence. The state is going through a phase of economic stagnation and drought but these issues are getting nowhere near the sustained attention they deserve. The principal opposition party DMK met the governor last week, claiming the government is in a minority and demanding an early floor test. Such a test is the only way to reliably discern whether the government enjoys the confidence of the house, a principle that the Supreme Court's landmark 1994 SR Bommai judgment reiterates. It must be held at the earliest to end this period of flux and for governance to come back on the state government's agenda.

Fatal attraction

Occupational hazards and the risky business of choosing a career

Jug Suraiya



Mom and dad talking about their young daughter.

Mom: There's good news and bad news about our daughter's career choice. The good news is that she no longer wants to be a lion tamer—or a trapeze artiste, or tight rope walker, or The Human Cannonball—or whatever it was she wanted to be after you took her to the circus last year.

Dad: Whew! That's good news. I was wondering how we'd talk her out of doing any of those dangerous things.

Mom: But the bad news is that she wants to do something even more dangerous than any of those things.

Dad: Don't tell me she wants to be a professional Jallikattu contestant.

Mom: Worse, she wants to be an investigative journalist.

Dad: Investigative journalist? What on earth does she want to investigate?

Mom: All sorts of things. Like cow vigilantism, and targeting of minorities, and garh wapsi, and fake godmen, and honour killings, and exploitation of tribals, and...

Dad (interrupting): Enough already! Don't you know just how risky it's become to even talk about any or all of these things, let alone investigate them?

Mom: I know just how risky it is to even talk about any of these things. But the point is does she know? And if she does, does she want to go ahead anyway?

Dad: Maybe we can get her to change her mind and opt for any other career choice but that of an investigative journo which is one of the most dangerous jobs in the country today. How about becoming a rationalist?

Mom: Rationalist? Are you nuts? That's just as bad as being an investigative journalist. Like being a journo, being a rationalist is what they call a killing job—it's likely to get you killed.

Daughter (who has just entered the room): OK, guys, you can stop worrying. I've decided not to be an investigative journalist. Instead, I'm going to start a women's literacy mission.

Mom and Dad (together): Oh, goody! That's nice and safe. Where's this women's literacy mission to be?

Daughter: Where? In Taliban-occupied Afghanistan, of course...

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The Right To Murder?

Violence against anyone dubbed 'anti-national' is being legitimised and endorsed

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The gunning down of journalist Gauri Lankesh is yet another bullet in the heart of those who value free thought in India. Gauri's murderers remain unknown, some pointing to a Naxal link, others like her own lawyer alleging that 'Hindu terror units' took her life.

When it comes to allegations about 'saffron terror', not since Nathuram Godse has a Hindutva-inspired assassin openly taken authorship of his act of murder. While Islamist or Maoist extremists generally claim responsibility for their killings, 'saffron terror' has been suspected in several cases like recently in the murders of rationalists Dabholkar, Kalburgi and Pansare, arrests have been made but there haven't been any convictions.

We don't know who killed Gauri, but we do know who is celebrating. Those on social media jubilant at Gauri's slaying describe themselves as proud Hindu nationalists, people who Gauri described as her greatest enemy. In fact, Hindu nationalism seeks a new enemy every day.

If Gauri had been alive and expressed her views for example on how India should not deport Rohingya Muslims, she would surely have been screamed at by furious 'nationalist' television anchors and branded as a traitor, anti-national jihadist and Naxalite. The fever pitch of TRP-driven accusations often builds to such a crescendo that the individual against whom prime time fingers are pointed ends up becoming public enemy No.1, the equivalent of a criminal who is publicly paraded on TV every night with a metaphorically blackened humiliated face even as a gladiatorial mob on social media hails for her blood.

Violent minds, violent language and violent speech beget violent acts. In an atmosphere where violence is legitimised, endorsed and even seen as a ticket to creating an electoral constituency, the actual act of murder of an 'anti-national' only becomes part



of a 'war'. The so-called 'just war' against those who insist on the right not to be Hindu nationalists, to be atheist and rationalist, or to eat beef, to wear mini-skirts, to be homosexual, to attack government policy on Jammu & Kashmir, or to speak in support of JNU students.

The toxic divide between 'nationalists' and 'traitors' is deeply worrying. Gauri had strong ideas, she spoke out against Hindutva politics, attacked caste discrimination, pushed for Naxals to abandon the gun and argued passionately for sexual liberation of women. In a conservative regional milieu, her voice may have been offensive to some but instead of mounting counterarguments, someone decided her voice had to be forever silenced.

Her killers may have used a gun but don't we see a symbolic gun pointed at the heads of student activists like Kanhaiya Kumar and Umar Khalid in the manner they are publicly vilified? Doesn't the gun loom large when hit lists are circulated, naming women journa-

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lists and activists as next targets after Gauri? The cult of violence is breeding faster than the aedes aegypti mosquito and infecting many with the fever of blood lust against those they disagree with.

Particularly violent language is directed at the media. Ministers can label media as 'prestittutes', a BJP MP can call for a noted author to be tied to a jeep, noxious foul-mouthed abusers get strength and even legitimacy from the fact that they are 'followed' by our top political leadership. Journalists have been threatened, intimidated and murdered before, especially in far flung areas where telling the truth means risking all. But today, are attacks against journalists being endorsed by the ruling party when it issues only perfunctory condemnations of Gauri's murder, instead of a ringing declaration that

attacks on media persons will not be tolerated?

When the government itself takes pride in an anti-media stance, when certain journalists are boycotted by ruling party ministers, when critical journalists are censored and labelled 'news traders' by the political leadership, when lawyers who beat up female reporters are not censured, then is the government itself creating an environment encouraging violence against the press?

Too much religious ideology in politics inevitably creates violence in society. Those rulers who practice 'soft Islamism' or 'soft Hindutva' open the gate for more radical extremists to gain legitimacy. The divide between Hindus and Muslims is being catastrophically sharpened today, with every new issue like azaan, or beef ban or Vande Mataram or even the so-called competing claims of shamshans and kabristans becoming a tacit political signal for violent goons to take over the argument and physically attack the targets of their rage.

'Shout don't shoot' is supposed to be the mantra of democracy, but when democracy becomes entwined with irrational religious ideology then shout becomes tacit permission to shoot, all norms of parliamentary democracy brushed aside by those empowered by blind faith.

In a recent interaction former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan said that open-mindedness is a crucial pre-requisite for high growth economies that rely on the service sector. The manner in which Gauri's death is being legitimised as just punishment for traitors shows that far from open-mindedness, those who dare to think differently are seen as natural targets for assassination.

If we as a society don't speak up now, there will be more deaths, and each 'anti-national' murder will be celebrated more noisily than ever. As TV anchors unleash deadly calls to metaphorically eliminate the enemy, the legitimacy of violence will become widespread. That's why, strict exemplary action must be taken against those who celebrate violence because they are just as culpable as Gauri's killers.

'Price of electricity from renewables will be same as from coal by 2025 ... unfortunate that coal cess went to GST'

Chief economic adviser (CEA) Arvind Subramanian recently argued that since renewable sources of energy come with hidden costs, coal—which is cheaper—should remain India's primary source of energy and we should not allow the narrative of 'carbon imperialism' to come in the way of realistic energy policy planning. **Ajay Mathur, Director General of TERI (The Energy & Resources Institute) and member of the PM's Council on Climate Change spoke to Nalin Mehta and Sanjiv Shankaran on the debate over the high costs of renewable energy and how India should balance energy policy.**

storage cost will be same as the cost of electricity from coal, by somewhere around 2025. We expect this will become about Rs 5 per unit. The issue is what happens between now and 2025.

■ But today this costs roughly about Rs 11 per kWh, as per the Economic Survey?

Exactly. If you break that up, it translates into about Rs 3 per kWh for renewable electricity and Rs 8 per kWh for storage capacity.

Over the next 10 years, if battery prices reduce to about one-third, then battery power will cost less than Rs 3. The price of renewables-based energy itself will fall to much less than Rs 2 or a total price

of less than Rs 5 per unit by the mid-2020s. **■ But aren't there other hidden costs in renewables—like land—as the Economic Survey has pointed out?**

The great advantage of solar power stations is that they can be in places where you don't need a railway siding to bring in coal. The issue is if there a marginal or social cost which is larger than financial cost. We don't know.

■ But even in 2025 you won't be sure of the social costs of renewables?

A good example is wind, where all power generation is from the private sector. Most of these people bought the land and there were no acquisition problems. Financial and social cost are somewhat in equilibrium. Even within this, in Tamil Nadu, farmers got very smart with land. And the cost is linked to kWh generated per-square-meter of land. We will see more innovative measures of land allocation which ensure that financial costs are much closer to social costs.

■ How do you respond to the view that realistic policy making requires India to not buy into carbon imperialism?

We have to invest in futures that make sense to us. So, we

move to large-scale renewables as they become the least-cost option. The price of electricity from coal is also increasing because of the social costs of air pollution, and the necessity for more stringent air quality standards. This will add 75 paise to Re 1 to every electricity unit produced from power plants today. An average cost of Rs 3.5 per unit of electricity ends up becoming Rs 4.25 to 4.50 once the additional air pollution control costs are built in.

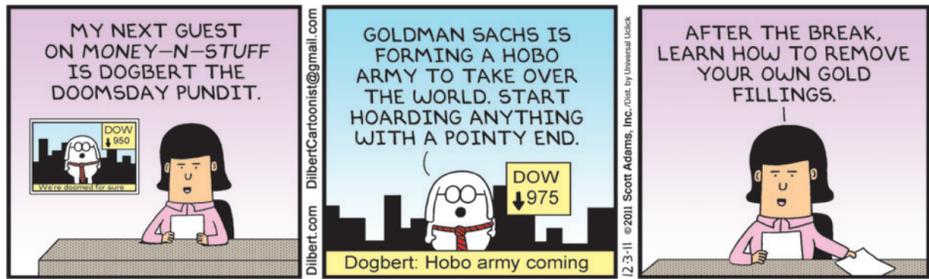
It is important to go back to the Electricity Act, 2003. That represents a broad agreement in the nation that we need to push renewables for something that is more than only an economic argument. In 2003, renewable electricity was 2%. We are now at about 8%. The question is: Are renewables coming at a cost greater than their benefits? The answer: No.

■ India has been taxing coal since 2010 for the Clean Energy Fund but that money, instead of being used for research and development (R&D), has been diverted to GST. Isn't that an anomaly?

The coal cess was to be used to promote renewables implementation and R&D. It is indeed unfortunate that this cess has gone to GST. I would like to see it resurrected to be used for renewables, even for the short-term succour that is needed for the coal sector. We are essentially talking about buying time.

It will be good if the National Clean Energy Fund is used for that.

dilbert



Action And Renunciation Go Together

Jaya Row

Renunciation has been misunderstood as giving up the good things of life to adopt a life of deprivation and misery. Hence, people shun spirituality and do not benefit from the power of renunciation. Renunciation is not giving up things you enjoy. It is moving up to far more fulfilling avenues. Renunciation is not dispossession. It is all possession. Renunciation is not giving up action. It is performing dynamic action in a spirit of renunciation. Action and renunciation go together. They are not mutually exclusive.

Renunciation is shedding weakness for strength. It is asserting oneness and rising above differences. Exuding warmth and shunning bitterness. Creating goodwill and giving up ill will. Renunciation is giving up the residue of grudges, prejudices and hatred to live a life of freedom and

happiness. Renunciation is growth. When a caterpillar transforms into a butterfly, its erstwhile life of darkness and limitation vanishes. Similarly you experience freedom, joy and cheer and live a life of effortless excellence with renunciation.

Sri Ramakrishna spoke of four types of fish that a fisherman never gets caught. It sees the net coming and swims away. The second gets trapped but manages to break free. The third is ensnared but struggles to get out of the net. The fourth, oblivious to the life-threatening situation, bites the net and feels all is well! The fifth chapter of the Gita speaks of four types of people—the bhogi, yogi, sanyasi and jnani. The jnani is ever free, never bound by the world. The sanyasi understands

the danger of worldly entanglement and manages to steer clear. The yogi is bound but endeavours to escape. The bhogi is blissfully ignorant of the risks of worldly involvement and is content with instant pleasures that his life affords.

The bhogi looks outward for happiness and gets only sorrow and disappointment. He is full of desire for objects of the world. The yogi has understood that happiness is a commodity not available in the world and begins the journey inward. He tries to reduce and refine his desires. A sanyasi is an evolved soul knocking at the doors of enlightenment. The jnani has reached the destination of infinite bliss. As you move up you become more successful, experience greater happiness and gain more power. A jnani has the option of operating with the body, mind and intellect when

needed. And retreat into the world of infinity when not required. The other three are stuck in the world.

As soon as you embark on the spiritual journey you become free from agitation and sorrow. Then you get released from the baggage of the past. You develop equality of vision towards all beings. You remain unaffected by fluctuations in the world.

As long as you look outward for happiness you remain unhappy. The moment you turn inward you experience peace. When you get to Atman you gain infinite bliss. Pleasures that arise from sense contact are wombs of sorrow. They yield continuing misery. They are transient. The wise do not revel in them. Endure the force born of desire with the intellect. Reduce the number of desires, improve the quality of desires and change their direction. Then you are ready for meditation.

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