

CHARACTER, COUNTRY AND CORONA

By Maj Gen K Eswaran, VSM

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Can you imagine one thing that would have made a big difference to the current pandemic? It could have saved us all the trouble, saved so many lives and given us freedom from corona!

The first time when it started, people coming from outside did not have the Integrity to check themselves for the infection and they simply walked into the country.

Later as the infection started spreading and we had a method of checking the temperature of people at the airport, what did they do? The people who were well-to-do and well educated, showed absolute lack of character and took paracetamol Tablets to hide their fever!! One small pill for a man but a big pillage for the mankind!

Whom have they fooled? - Their countrymen or their own selves?

The individual character of a person could have been the first step to arrest the coronavirus!

Honestly, how many of us have the moral courage to tell our neighbours or our friends or anyone on the road, to wear a mask? Nobody wants to risk the rebuff. 'Mainu Ki?' 'How-does- it- make- a - difference- to-me' attitude. Now, what is this, if not lack of character? What was Sam Manekshaw's definition of moral courage? 'The ability to distinguish right from wrong, and having done so, be prepared to say so, irrespective of the consequences'.

Do we have it in us?

And by the way, why should there be a need in the first place to tell a person. What about his own integrity? As a first step the individual himself must be self-disciplined to wear the mask and if not, then should be humble enough to accept his fault when pointed out. The issue could be resolved in the two steps of integrity and moral courage. The third and rare step should be that Police force should come into play. If first two steps work well, then there should be no reason for any penal deduction for not wearing a mask.

Moreover, it is war like situation. During a war, all soldiers wear camouflage colours to protect themselves from the enemy fire. Nobody says that he is not in mood to wear green or would like red or blue colour. One silly mistake by a soldier can cost him not only his own life but that of the whole platoon. Exactly similar way, Mask is the 'National Uniform' today to fight the Corona War. Not wearing it is not only risky to one's own self, but others too. You can be shot by the 'Enemy Corona'! Unless and until the Nation becomes a priority Number one for each one of us, things may be difficult to improve.

Today, we see that even after one year, people have not learnt their lessons. They are trying to make money by playing with the lives of people!!

For some people, money is more important than the lives of somebody's father, mother, brother, sister, son or daughter. That too during a national pandemic.

Making duplicate medicines, selling empty oxygen cylinders, hoarding and black marketing, charging exorbitantly for ambulance, hospital admission and even cremation!

And these are not poor ill-educated people whom we generally shun away as dirty and characterless people.

These well fed, well read, suited booted elite of this country who are trying to suck the blood of their own brothers and sisters during a national war. Yes, it is war which is on.

We have heard so many war stories where a soldier has sacrificed his life trying to save his comrades. We have had several martyrs whom we honour every year. But surely, they are going to turn in their graves today and wonder why have they made their supreme sacrifice for such people!

Forget about sacrificing lives, this dishonest community is not even ready to shed a few bundles of paper notes!! Where are we leading to? What has happened to the mankind? The long journey of Homo sapiens need not end this way.

Coming to loyalty, how many people were loyal to their maid servants and others during the pandemic. The Salaried class, the top 30% of this nation, crème de la crème of this country, was unable to look after the bottom 30%! Why could they not pay them the monthly salaries? They were finding it difficult to pay even Rs 600- 800 to their maid servants. That's just about eight thousand for ten months. This would not have made any dent to their financial position but certainly would have saved the maid's family from starvation. This shows the material one is made of.

Similarly, how many business men paid their employees? They did not bother to exhibit any loyalty to their workers, during a national crisis. It would have saved the mass exodus and in turn reduced the spread of pandemic. In fact, we would have settled down by now and they could have done roaring business, instead of slipping into second year of crisis. Their character could have saved a lot of trouble, both to their workers and their business.

Recently the Vice Chairman of Niti Aayog wrote about continuing the infrastructure projects which could get the economy back on rails. Here he spoke about physical infrastructure. Yes, that is one way forward and has to go hand in hand. But what we are discussing here is **Moral infrastructure**. This is something that cannot be seen, it is intangible and yet can make a definite impact on our lives. While physical Infrastructures can be felt and exists on ground, the moral Infrastructure exists in hearts and minds of people, in our culture, traditions, habits and best practices.

We need to have a **Moral Infrastructure Development Program**. A **holistic approach** to building of a National Character. It has to start from the womb. we all know that babies come with a clean slate and it is 'we the people' who write their future. We are certain that the govt and several other organisations and institutions are doing their best for the country in terms of **ethical practices**, but evidently it is not enough. Lot more needs to be done. In fact, our forefathers did put us on a right path but somewhere down the line we have wavered. Probably we need to reset our direction and get back on the right track. We need to tweak our old habits and get out of the 'Chalta Hai' attitude. If we had a strong character, it is quite certain that we could have been saved and the effect of corona could have been reduced a lot. This again is an issue which could be of concern to Niti Aayog.

There is no doubt that if we all **practiced what we preach** and **stood up to our convictions**, the pandemic could be controlled and we would be walking without a mask.

Is anybody listening?

Random Thoughts-The shape of democracy in Internet Age

By Udaya Kumar Verma

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That we are past the Industrial Age and already in the new Age of Internet, is a phenomenon and a fact that we have come to recognize and reluctantly accept. The challenge now is how to understand and deal with the requirements of this age and how to harness and utilize its potential to further the betterment of mankind; and to ensure sustainable human existence on this planet. A more formidable and difficult challenge will be to mould and adapt our thinking and attitudes, our ambitions and impulses, our notions of growth and development and progress and equally significantly how to temper and tame our hubris and arrogance and intemperance in disowning and discarding what we have toiled to build over last many centuries with our talent, intellect, sweat and blood. For, detachment from something that we so passionately and painstakingly created, amplified and sustained is rarely uneventful or painless.

One immediate implication of the Internet Age will be on our governance structures and political institutions like democracy. Will democracy get strengthened, will it be fairer, more equitable and mature, and could it indeed become truly representative? Or will it become another instrument to be manipulated for creating narratives and discourses that serve the interests of those who control the use of the internet? It's a very important question and demands urgent attention from all thinking people across nations.

My own understanding of what has come to pass in the past over a year and a half, makes me believe that there is no way we are going to turn back to the old ways of our living. The society-its mechanics and dynamics, the institutions that so far defined our thoughts, concepts, planning, organizing, working and interacting, the daily chores that structured our personal, family and professional lives- all of these have transformed and this transformation is here not only to stay, but only get intensified.

The new world order will not brook wasteful processes and prolonged debates and deliberations. The representative nature of our collective expression or articulation because one did not have access to everyone else's attention and information, shall become irrelevant and redundant.

Out of over 6.6 billion people in the world, the internet has access to almost half of them. There are countries where this access is reaching a level that can be called universal while there are pockets where it is still in the realm of a distant dream and utopia. We have been calling this the digital divide for some time now. Is this divide narrowing? Is this gap getting bridged? Is the reach of the most advanced and the most backward and the information hiatus between the most primitive and the most advanced amongst the human race likely to continue and sustain for long?

The paradigm-shift in the way we have been living and surviving in the last year and a half, offers enough evidence to suggest that the challenge may be formidable but not insurmountable and it may be just a matter of time when this so-called divide gets bridged substantially. The basis for such a belief emerges from the fact that notwithstanding the untold miseries and hardships, we have remarkably survived in the times of corona, that the world has not seen populations dying of hunger, of want, of lack of food or water or even medicine. And this has happened because we learnt to use the internet to maintain our supply chains, our processes of production and procurements and distribution. We learnt to work from home and to learn and teach and educate online without the shelter of a classroom or university building. We missed the ways we used to work but quickly adapted ourselves.

So is this then going to be the 'new normal'? In all likelihood, yes! No doubt we will feel nostalgic about our former lifestyles, their pleasures and their advantages, those conveniences and comforts; we are never going to go back to these old ways. All concepts of an era, borne out of our advancement emanating from the Industrial Age and its gifts and legacies today stand on their head and shall only be reinvented, reshaped, remodelled and replaced and substituted. It may take a while, but not too long.

Not too far in the future, shall we need a Parliament? Why do you need to elect 600 odd people's representatives paying an astronomical price in terms of money, time, energy and resources, just to debate on policy matters and take a majority view when each one of us can directly express our opinions and views on any issue under the sun? At a click of a key, we can directly and decisively opine whether we want or need a law, or how a scheme of welfare for children and women should be conceived and created? We can participate directly in telling the government whether we need a law, a regulation, for whom and what should constitute its contents and components? The new Age of Internet will enable us to do so. So do expect in near future abolition of or at least a radical transformation in the way we think and conceive of making laws in this country or for that matter in any other countries and we don't need MPs and MLAs to decide what law should be framed and enacted for us. These bodies, no doubt, will have some other useful purpose but we will not need them the way they exist today.

But there always exists another possibility- perversity and pessimism, destruction and disorder- being as natural an impulse, choice and fascination as are creation and conception. What if some or many of us consciously decide and choose the technical manipulation of information and data to further consolidate control and authority- a weakness and vulnerability that nature seems to have endowed upon us as generously as it does the spirit of benevolence, altruism and sacrifice. And such a possibility is not merely a fear or apprehension; it is real, palpable and experiential.

Notwithstanding the uncertainties and attendant excitement of understanding the unravelling of imminent possibilities, one is inclined to be convinced on the course of the future democracies of the world set and destined to reinvent and re-engineer themselves. And this will only be a beginning. Institutions after institutions so assiduously and craftily built during the Industrial Era will crumble under their weights as increasingly they will find little utility, little value and no justification for their continuing existence. Be ready instead to embrace and accept and own a new order of Institutions- in every sphere and dimension of human life, activity and existence.

China's Increasing Footprints in POK and its Implication for India

By Niharika Sinha

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Historically speaking, Pakistan has always played into the hands of China, turning into a proxy to keep India boxed in and troubling it for its own benefits. This master-client relationship got further cemented with the fallout between Pakistan and the United States after the elimination of Osama Bin Laden and the subsequent degradation of relationship between the two. China, on seeing an opportunity, wasted no time in cementing its already strong ties with Pakistan, supplying it with arms and funding it generously. However, as one understands the Pakistani obsession with India, what fuels China's 'generosity' towards Pakistan which is not a viable economic partner? Is it just limited to boxing in India or does it go beyond that? This article seeks to explain these facets.

Pakistan and China's bilateral ties have grown exponentially since the inauguration of the **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)**, the forerunner of Xi Jinping's brainchild, the **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**. CPEC is undoubtedly China's most exorbitant venture under BRI,

purposed to connect Gwadar Port in Pakistan with Kashgarh in China through a network of roadways, railways and pipelines. Although it has been projected as an economic coalition between the two Asian neighbours to boost Pakistan's slumping economy, CPEC has far-reaching implications, especially for India. The 3000 kilometres long corridor links Pakistan to China traversing the heart of the Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, legally a part of the Republic of India.

Revisiting the Kashmir invasion of 1947

In the wake of the independence of India and Pakistan in 1947, the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir was proffered the choice to join either of the two newly independent states or remain sovereign. Due to the lack of consensus amongst people in favour of any of the two states, Maharaja Hari Singh, then ruler of Kashmir, opted to stay independent. However, in October of 1947, Pashtun tribesmen with the backing of the Pakistani troops invaded Kashmir to insure the state's accession to Pakistan. Inept at snubbing the advancement of the tribesmen to the capital, Maharaja Hari Singh executed the Instrument of Accession, thereby agreeing to accede to India. The Indian army airlifted to Srinagar following the accession launched counterassaults on the invaders, staving them off and retaking most of the seized land. The skirmish imminently materialized into the **First Indo-Pakistan war**, resulting in an UN-mandated ceasefire calling for a referendum on Kashmir, necessitating complete withdrawal of the Pakistani troops from the region.

Blatantly ignoring the UN resolution, Pakistan refused to concede and continues to usurp one-third of Kashmir till date. Au contraire, India condemns Pakistan's occupancy and upholds that the erstwhile Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir, in its entirety, appertains to India by the virtue of the Instrument of Accession. It is noteworthy to mention that the Constitution of Pakistan does not recognize Pakistan Occupied Kashmir as part of Pakistan but the Constitution of India does. This fact alone provides that POK is an integral part of India, being illegally occupied by Pakistan. Over the years, Pakistan has left no stone unturned to internationalize the Kashmir issue, raising it at every international platform, particularly in the United Nations. Painting India as an aggressor that has striped the people of Kashmir of their freedom and rights, Pakistan alleges that India has expropriated Kashmir through fraudulent methods. Ridiculously, it never bothers to explain away the burgeoning terrorist activities, worsening human rights violations, or the mass protests and demonstrations against the government of Pakistan in POK.

China's Kashmir Policy

Even though Pakistan is always in the vanguard in haranguing India over Kashmir, China has had its fair share too. In 2019, when the government of India abrogated **Article 370**, revoking Kashmir's status of a special state and bifurcated it into union territories of Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir, China denounced the move calling it 'illegal' but plumped for constitution of Gilgit-Baltistan as the fifth province of Pakistan, acutely aware that the region is legally an Indian territory. Then again, China itself has annexed autonomous territories of Tibet, Taiwan, Hongkong, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and Inner Mongolia, ruling them with an iron fist in the name of '**One China Policy**'. China had also called for a closed door meeting of the United Nations Security Council, on the insistence of Pakistan, over the reforms undertaken by India in Kashmir despite the lack of interest amongst the remaining P5 members. China's continuous interference in the Kashmir issue stirs up suspicion concerning its ulterior motives. What is China's fascination with Kashmir? What would it gain from advocating for Pakistan on the issue? And what does it imply for India?

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India above and beyond: A roadmap for the future

By Ashish Chauhan

Author is CEO and MD of Bombay Stock Exchange.

Before Covid-19 impacted Indian economy, the Indian government rolled out initiatives to inspire growth in core sectors like finance, agriculture, health and education in the form of missions and schemes. The advent of Covid-19 and its subsequent second wave has been a series of unfortunate events not just for India but globally as well. But these unprecedented times has forced humankind to take unprecedented actions.

New world, new perspective

The world dynamics are constantly changing and with fourth industrial revolution at its dawn it is almost a mandate that our nation breaks through and transform itself into a sustainable and developed economy. This can be achieved by transforming entire systems of production, distribution and consumption. Given, the natural and human resources that our country is gifted with it is paramount that we accelerate towards this common goal and achieve what our forefathers envisioned for us. As more countries are pushing towards self-sufficient and sustainable strategies of growth, India has positioned itself in the right way as we look to move ahead with the goal of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.

What needs to be done?

- *Global alliances and Free Trade Agreements -*
While improving domestically, India should also promote and propel global alliances and partnerships. Maintaining strong relations with global organisations like WTO and also with individual countries at a quid pro quo capacity that is healthy, sustainable and in line with progress for both economies. A right step in this direction is the creation of IFSC at GIFT City. Opening of this avenue has created a whole host of new opportunities and with this change, good things are bound to happen.
- *Boost exports and Make in India -*
The Chinese economy was built on the country's ability to export almost everything it produced. With the quality of resources India has both natural and human, we are set up in an optimum way to unlock India's capacity to export. 'Make in India' a concept turned initiative by the current government aims to achieve this but it can be a reality only when we as Indian's realise the importance of it. Self-sustenance will create the future we want.
- *Ease of Doing Business -*
The country wide lockdown which was a result of Covid-19 pushed most organisations, from across the industries and sectors, to transform themselves into digitised, functional units. What is now a crisis management tactic should become a norm for the future. Companies, institutions and government alike should look to reduce compliances simplify processes.
- *Separate Cell / Vertical and incentives to Promote Next - Gen Technologies -*
Next-gen technologies such as artificial intelligence, internet-of-things, and robotics should be promoted to keep in line with the fourth industrial revolution. The recent unprecedented success of BSE can be attributed to this very fact, and the Sensex being a key indicator of the nation growth, it is clear that technology based industries (fin-tech, agro-tech, healthcare tech etc.) are the future.

India's bold vision to become a \$5 trillion economy is now more achievable than ever. In spite of the pandemic, a rise in the number of investors was observed which is testament to the overall positive sentiment of Indians. BSE-listed companies also recorded market-cap milestone of \$3 trillion showcasing India's strive towards excellence. With a series of efficient and calculated measures and forming the right kind of partnerships focused at building the country's future, India can soon become a dominant world power. A movement like 'Make in India' is not just a current fad but in fact a key principle on which this country got its freedom. Although the past year and half has been tragic for lakhs of families across country, but it is our sheer determination and a never-back-down attitude as a community that has helped us not only survive but thrive.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the opinions or views of the FINS or its members.

Nation is Indebted to:

Manu Bhaker

Born 18 Feb 2002

Youngest International Athlete



Manu Bhaker was born in Gorla village of the **Jhajjar district** of Haryana, a state known for its boxers and wrestlers, Manu took to sports at an early age and excelled in tennis, skating and boxing in school. She also participated in a form of martial arts called 'thang ta', winning medals at the national level.

After the 2016 Rio Olympics, when she was just 14 years, impulsively decided to try her hand at shooting. Within a week, Manu Bhaker asked her father to get her a sport shooting pistol to hone her craft. Her ever-supportive father, Ram Kishan Bhaker, fulfilled her wish and Manu's burgeoning talent soon manifested itself on the national stage within a year.

Bhaker decided to take up competitive shooting. She first tasted success at the international level when she won the silver medal at the 2017 Asian Junior Championships. In the 2017 National games held at Kerala, Bhaker won nine gold medals, after defeating many stalwarts.

In the 2018 International Shooting Sport Federation World Cup held at Guadalajara, Mexico. Bhaker won the gold medal in the Women's 10-meter air pistol, defeating Mexico's Alejandra Zavala, a two-time champion. By winning the gold medal at age 16, Bhaker became the youngest Indian to win a gold medal at the World Cup.

Bhaker won her second gold medal at the World Cup in the 10-meter Air Pistol mixed team event.

In 2018 Commonwealth Games, she competed in women's 10m air pistol and qualified for the finals. In the final round of the women's 10m air pistol event during the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, she secured the gold medal with setting a new Commonwealth Games record. In 2018 Asian Games, she scored a game's record score in the qualification round of 25m Air pistol event. But she failed to win a medal in final round.

At the Youth Olympics 2018, Manu Bhaker stood at the top of the points table in the women's 10m air pistol event. The Indian flag bearer at the opening ceremony of the Youth Olympics is also the World Cup and Commonwealth Games gold medallist. The 16-year-old Manu became the first shooter from India and the first female athlete from India to grab a Gold medal at the Youth Olympics games.

In February 2019 she won the gold medal in the 10m air pistol mixed team event at 2019 International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup in Delhi.

She has qualified for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics in the 10m pistol event via a fourth place finish at the Munich ISSF World Cup. This came days after her pistol jammed in the finals of the 25m pistol event when she was leading, eventually forcing her to forfeit due to her gun not being able to fire.

In all the four Pistol & Rifle ISSF World Cups in 2019, she won the Gold medal in the 10m air pistol mixed event with Saurabh Chaudhry as her partner, making the pair a strong contender for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Manu Bhaker is a shining example of a young dedicated, focused youngster who has achieved international acclaim at a very young age.

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