



A Million Mutinies

From Cauvery to neutrino, Tamils are taking up the cudgels on multiple issues. What accounts for this angst?

Present Tense

Cauvery

The sharing of Cauvery waters between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu has seen recurrent protests. Now, Tamil Nadu is protesting the Centre's failure to set up the Cauvery Management Board

Sterilite

Ever since Sterilite Copper established its copper smelter in Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu, there have been sporadic protests against its environmental impact. The current protests, going on for over 50 days now, were triggered by the company's attempt to build another smelter to double its output

Neutrino

Led by Vaiko, people in Theni have been agitating against a proposal to locate a ₹1,500 crore neutrino observatory on Bodhi Hills. Though the project has got environmental clearances, it is in limbo due to protests

Indulekha Aravind

Ever since the Supreme Court-mandated deadline for setting up the Cauvery Management Board expired at the end of March, Tamil Nadu has been simmering. On Thursday, the anger boiled over during PM Narendra Modi's visit to Chennai for the Defexpo. An army of vociferous protesters in black took over those areas of the city where the prime minister was supposed to touch down. They released bunches of black balloons into the sky and #ModiGoBack trended on Twitter. The rallying call for boycott may have been given by DMK working president MK Stalin but those who responded came from all walks of life, from IIT-Madras students to farmers to civil society activists.

Yet, this protest is hardly the only one Tamil Nadu is currently in the grip of. In the port town of Thoothukudi, residents have been protesting for over 50 days against Vedanta-owned Sterilite's copper smelter which, they say, is responsible for various ailments among people living in the area. The agitation reached its apogee on March 26, when over 2,00,000 people raised their voice against Sterilite. Near the Bodhi hills in Theni district, too, people are protesting against the proposal to set up a ₹1,500 crore Neutrino Observatory, an underground laboratory to detect and study neutrinos, in the area. Around 200 km away in Neduvasal in Pudukkottai district, villagers are raring to resume their agitation against ONGC's proposed hydrocarbon project on their lands. A million mutinies, it appears, are raging in the state.

The common thread running through this multitude of protests is anger over the perception that Tamil Nadu is being discriminated against. "Whether it is the Ster-

lite protests or Cauvery, it has consistently been brought home that this is something that is unfair to Tamil Nadu as a state," says S Anandhi, professor at Madras Institute of Development Studies. "There is an idea that the state's demands are fair and yet it is being denied its rights. That's why there is unanimous support for these movements, across social strata." The Centre and the projects led by it are thus perceived as impinging on the rights of the citizens.

Then & Now

This keen sense of Tamil identity and prioritising its interests can be traced back to the Dravidian movement led by stalwarts like Periyar, which began in the 1920s. The movement against Brahminical hegemony and caste system also played a crucial role in launching the anti-Hindi agitation of 1937, when the Congress, led by CRajagopalachari, introduced Hindi as a compulsory subject in schools in the Madras Presidency. Faced with protests for three years, the order was finally withdrawn. The anti-Hindi agitation reared its head again in the 1960s when it was time for Hindi to be adopted as the sole official language in the country. The Congress government was voted out, never to return to power in the state, and the DMK in 1967 inaugurated the rule of the Dravidian parties in the state.

If the Congress was at the receiving end of Tamil ire then, it is now the turn of the BJP. "The credibility deficit of the BJP is so strong in Tamil Nadu that whatever goes wrong,



Past Tense

Jallikkattu

In January 2017, thousands of people, led by students, converged on Marina Beach in Chennai to protest against an SC order banning jallikkattu

Anti-Sri Lanka Protests

In March 2013, visuals of the murder of LTTE chief Prabhakaran's 12-year-old son sparked outrage in Tamil Nadu. Protesters sought an independent probe into what they termed was genocide by Sri Lanka

Koodankulam Protest

Protests against a nuclear power plant in Koodankulam peaked in 2011-12 after the nuclear disaster in Fukushima in Japan

Anti-Hindi Agitation

It began in 1937 when Hindi became compulsory in schools. It flared up again in 1965 and the Centre had to bring in an amendment ensuring English would indefinitely continue as the associate official language

people tend to blame the party. The Centre had very little to do with (banning) jallikkattu but if you went to Marina Beach during the protests, you would have seen people raising slogans against Modi. BJP is seen as a north Indian, Hindi, Hindu party which is against Tamil aspirations," says historian and writer AR Venkatachalapathy.

From the beginning, the Dravidian parties had also established a welfare state, perpetuating the notion that the state was

the one that would protect its citizens and provide for them, putting their interests first. "People in Tamil Nadu have strong faith in the welfare measures of Karunanidhi and Jayalalithaa. They compare this with the Central government which, in their minds, is not a welfare state. Few people are aware the rice in PDS has to be given by the Central government. For them, Jayalalithaa or Karunanidhi have launched free rice schemes, which keeps them alive," says Anandhi. This is an idea that the regional parties, whether it is the DMK or AIADMK, have assiduously cultivated.

Vekatachalapathy, however, draws a distinction between the current protests and those that happened earlier. "I see these protests as relatively new. Most of it is spontaneous, not really organised by political parties. The parties are capitalising on it and riding the wave of resentment." The pro-jallikkattu protests, for instance, that drew thousands to Marina Beach in January 2017, had no single leader. With the death of former CM Jayalalithaa and old age and ill health restricting former CM Karunanidhi, there is a crisis in the polity. "People are waiting for a new leadership or movement to emerge."

There is also a distinct dichotomy when it comes to issues within the state. For instance, while the Jayalalithaa-led government might give people a free hand to protest against Sri Lankans coming to play cricket in Chennai, it came down hard on any dissidence against itself. The death of Jayalalithaa has now opened up the space for dissent, says Anandhi. "The space that has opened up is now being seized by civil society."

The widespread adoption of social media and mobile phones are making it all the easier for people to organise and spread the message of revolt. With every move of the Centre coming under scrutiny in Tamil Nadu, it is now up to the government to assure the people, both in word and in deed, that it is not being discriminated against. Here, perceptions might even be more important than reality. ■



ONGC pays glowing tributes to Ambedkar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Rajamahendravaram

EXECUTIVE Director and Asset Manager of ONGC DMR Sekhar has said Bharat Ratna Dr. BR Ambedkar played an instrumental role in industrialising and introducing labour-friendly policies in India, besides hugely contributing to drafting of the constitution. He took part in the 127th birth anniversary celebrations of Ambedkar held at ONGC Base Complex on Saturday.

He said Ambedkar's ideas on the betterment of under privileged had influenced numerous welfare policies of the governments and ONGC's

CSR and component plan are also influenced by his ideas of creating a better society. Ambedkar's poor family background could not deter him from championing the cause of the socially marginalised sections of society, informed Sekhar.

From this great soul's resolute determination and struggles, the youth of the day has a lot to take inspiration to build their successful careers and serve society, he said. Earlier, Sekhar garlanded the statue of Ambedkar.

Commemorating the event, the ONGC, under the aegis of the All India SC/ST Employees Welfare Association, organised a blood donation camp.

केदारनाथ पुनर्निर्माण को 10 करोड़ देगा ओएनजीसी

जागरण संवाददाता, देहरादून: केदारनाथ पुनर्निर्माण कार्य के लिए ओएनजीसी सीएसआर (कॉर्पोरेट सोशल रिस्पॉन्सिबिलिटी) फंड से दस करोड़ देगा। इसमें पहली किश्त के रूप में पौने पांच करोड़ का बजट स्वीकृत हो गया है। यह फंड मंदिर तक जाने वाले रास्ते के निर्माण व सौन्दर्यीकरण पर खर्च होगा।

पुनर्निर्माण योजना के तहत केदारनाथ धाम में सरकार कॉर्पोरेट जगत की नामी कंपनियों के सीएसआर फंड से काम करा रही है। जिंदल स्टील वर्क्स के बाद ओएनजीसी भी दिसंबर 2017 में योगदान को आगे आई थी। ओएनजीसी ने मंदिर तक जाने वाले 300 मीटर लंबे और 50 फीट चौड़े मार्ग सुधार, सौन्दर्यीकरण को बजट देने की सहमति दी थी। ओएनजीसी ने करीब चार करोड़ 78 लाख रुपये इसके लिए स्वीकृत भी कर

मंदिर तक जाने के लिए 300 मीटर रास्ते पर खर्च हो रही रकम चौड़ीकरण के बाद लोनिवि इन दिनों पत्थर बिछाने का कर रहा काम

दिए हैं। अब पर्यटन विभाग ओएनजीसी से शेष बजट की मांग कर रहा है। स्वीकृत बजट पर्यटन विभाग के मार्फत लोक निर्माण विभाग को ट्रांसफर किया गया है। इस रकम में से तीन करोड़ रुपये ओएनजीसी को प्राप्त हो गया है।

सचिव पर्यटन दिलीप जावलकर ने बताया कि ओएनजीसी ने करीब 10 करोड़ रुपये सीएसआर फंड से दिए हैं। इसमें से तीन करोड़ रुपये लोनिवि को जारी कर दिए हैं। शेष काम पूरा होने पर दिए जाएंगे। उधर, लोनिवि एंसाई मनोज परमार का कहना है कि मंदिर तक जाने वाले रास्ते का चौड़ीकरण शुरू हो गया है।

Varanasi to go green with CNG, PNG services

Sanjay.Dutta
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Prime Minister's Narendra Modi's constituency Varanasi is ready to go green with CNG (compressed natural gas) and PNG (piped natural gas) services, harvesting the first fruits of PM's Rs 13,000-crore energy lifeline for reviving industrial activity in the region.

About 5,700 homes have received PNG connection and two CNG stations have been constructed by state-run gas utility GAIL, while the crematorium at Harishchandra ghat too has been converted to run on clean-burning natural gas, people working on the project in the city told TOI.

The PNG connections have been given to residents of DLW, Bhel and BHU colonies. The CNG stations are located in the city's periphery and can service roughly 200 autos, they said. State-run gas utility GAIL, which is implementing the project, is making trial runs by filling the pipeline network with CNG to remove impurities such as moisture and sulphur etc. Commercial service will start this month. GAIL has laid a 27-km-long spur line to connect the network to the main trunk pipeline being laid under the energy lifeline project, known as 'Urja Ganga'. The project envisages laying a 2,655-km trunk pipeline through UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, Bengal and Odisha. The Centre has approved grant of Rs 5,176 crore.

IOC to give LPG connections to 6.55 lakh poor families in NE

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

PSU major Indian Oil Corporation will distribute 6.55 lakh new LPG connections to poor women beneficiaries across 6,741 villages in the northeast as part of the Centre's initiative to make households smokeless.

"We have launched our programme to make these villages smokeless. Under this initiative, which was announced by the Prime Minister, we will give LPG connections in the name of women in the houses," Indian Oil Corporation Chief General Manager (IndianOil-AOD) Uttiya Bhattacharyya told PTI here.

Under the programme Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, the com-

pany will handover LPG connections to 6.55 lakh families across 6,741 villages in the northeast, including 2.4 lakh new connections in 3,042 villages in Assam, he added.

"The programme is beginning today and will end on May 5. In the scheme, the selection of woman beneficiary will be from the BPL families identified from the SECC list or from any of these categories — SC/ST households, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin), Antyodaya Anna Yojana, forest dwellers, Most Backward Classes, tea and ex-tea garden tribes and people residing in island and river islands," Bhattacharyya said.

Under this initiative, the government will give the

deposit money on behalf of the beneficiaries, while the cylinders will be given to the owners on loan from the company, which will start recovering the same from delivery of the seventh cylinder from the subsidiary amount.

"This will require about Rs 110 crore investment from our side for implementing the project in 80 districts of the region. This amount will start coming to us against from delivery of the seventh cylinder to the beneficiary," he said.

The senior official informed that the company has been preparing itself to meet this additional demand for the last few months and is ready to handle the extra load of cylinders due to this programme.

India under US currency watch

Washington: The US Treasury has added India to its watch list of countries with potentially questionable foreign exchange policies, joining China and four others, according to a report issued on Saturday.

The Treasury said the "monitoring list" includes those "major trading partners that merit close attention to their currency practices."

In addition to India, the semi-annual report to Congress names five nations that continue on the list from October: China, Germany, Japan, Korea and Switzerland.

Countries remain on the list for two reporting cycles "to help ensure that any improvement in performance versus the criteria is durable and is not due to temporary factors."

While no major trading partner was found to be manipulating its currency, five of those on the list meet two of the three criteria, while China is included because "it constitutes a disproportionate share of the overall US trade deficit."

The US has a deficit of \$337 billion with China of a total global trade deficit of \$566 billion, according to government data.

"We will continue to monitor and combat unfair currency practices, while encouraging policies and reforms to address large trade imbalances," US treasury secretary Steven Mnuchin said in a statement.

The Treasury report is required by Congress to identify countries that are trying to ar-

LINE OF FIRE

- **On the list:** India, China, Germany, Japan, Korea and Switzerland
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tificially manage the value of their currency to gain a trade advantage, for example by keeping the exchange rate low to promote cheaper exports.

Energy visit

Washington: US energy secretary Rick Perry is travelling to India as part of the Trump administration's move to enhance bilateral energy ties.

"The US secretary of energy Rick Perry will travel to India on the heels of a large delivery of US sourced natural gas," the department of energy said.

GAIL India has recently signed a 20-year deal to buy LNG from Cheniere Energy of the US.

During his visit to New Delhi, Perry will meet both government officials and private firms to discuss the growing energy relationship between the US and India. P11

The report said India, which has a \$23 billion trade surplus with the United States, "increased its purchases of foreign exchange over the first three quarters of 2017," although the rupee still rose in value.

"Given that Indian foreign exchange reserves are ample, and that India maintains some controls on both inbound and outbound flows of private capital, further reserve accumulation does not appear necessary," the Treasury said.

And while China — which is at the centre of a brewing trade dispute with Washington — remained on the watch list, the Treasury said "the Chinese currency generally moved against the dollar in a direction that should" help reduce China's trade surplus with the United States.

"The increasingly non-market direction of China's economic development poses growing risks to its major trading partners and the long-term global growth outlook," the Treasury said.

Germany also remained on the watch list, even though it is part of the European currency union, which means it cannot independently control the exchange rate for the euro.

Even so, the report notes that Germany "has the world's largest current account surplus" and has made "little progress in cutting this surplus in the past three years."

The Treasury called for all the countries on the list to implement economic reforms to address their surpluses. Agencies

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The PNG connections have been given to residents of DLW, Bhel and BHU colonies. The CNG stations are located in the city's periphery and can service roughly 200 autos, they said.

State-run gas utility GAIL, which is implementing the project, is making trial runs by filling the pipeline network with CNG to remove impurities such as moisture and sulphur etc.

Commercial service will start this month. GAIL has laid a 27-km-long spur line to connect the network to the main trunk pipeline being laid un-

Varanasi set to go green with arrival of CNG, PNG services

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ECO-FRIENDLY HOLY CITY

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GAIL has laid a 27-km-long spur line to connect the network to the main trunk pipeline being laid under the energy lifeline project, known as 'Urja Ganga'.

The project envisages laying a 2,655-km trunk pipeline through UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha. The Centre has approved capital grant of Rs 5,176 crore to cover 40% of the project cost.

GAIL is running ahead of schedule with the project and expects to complete the first phase from Phulpur in UP to Dobhi, Patna and Barauni in Bihar by July, six months ahead of the December 2018 deadline. This will help launch CNG and PNG services in Patna, Ranchi and Jamshedpur around August.

The project is aimed at speeding up industrial activity in eastern region by supplying gas to help revive fertiliser and power plants, refineries, steel plants and other industries. It also aims at extending the convenience of PNG and CNG services to key eastern cities.

Raj Thackeray joins the anti-refinery refrain

After Uddhav's threat to CM, MNS chief promises support to farmers opposing the Rs 3-trillion project in Ratnagiri



Farmers sit down with MNS chief Raj Thackeray to persuade him to join their opposition to the project. Below: Uddhav Thackeray is also expected to visit Nanar soon

Chaitanya_Marpakwar
@timesgroup.com
TWEETS @chaitanya_pm

Could the warring Thackeray cousins find common ground in the Nanar refinery project? Farmers from villages where the Rs 3-trillion refinery is planned to be set up in Ratnagiri district met MNS chief Raj Thackeray on Saturday, asking for support to their agitation against the mega refinery.

Raj is said to have assured them of full support and a visit to Nanar soon.

"We are meeting all political leaders who had told us that they were against the project and had expressed their support to farmers. So, we met MNS chief Raj Thackeray, too. He assured us of his full support. He said he would visit Nanar soon to back us," said Ashok Walam, president of the Konkan Anti-Refinery Action Committee, who is leading the protests. The farmers also met Congress leaders, including state president Ashok Chavan.

"Rajsaheb has promised support to the Nanar farmers. He will begin his statewide tour on May 1, during which he will visit the Konkan region and meet the farmers there. The MNS will not let farmers suffer," said MNS leader Sandeep Deshpande.

The backing from the political heavyweight came a day after his cousin and Shiv Sena chief, Uddhav Thackeray, lashed out at Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis for not doing enough to stop the Centre from giving the go-ahead to the project despite widespread opposition and threatened to pull out of the government.

A senior Sena functionary said Uddhav has spoken to key party ministers, asking them to "be prepared to step down". "This is the right time, if we want to pull out of the government. This is our moment because everyone is against the project. If the government doesn't budge, we will withdraw support."

Uddhav, too, is expected to visit Nanar soon. "He will camp there and meet affected villagers," said the functionary.

Threat to environment

Besides displacing a large number of farmers, the project has been opposed by conservationists, NGOs and anti-nuclear activists for likely environmental degradation in the eco-sensitive zones of the Konkan region. It is suspected that the pollution from the refinery complex will not only affect mango and cashew orchards, but also alter marine life.

Walam warned that the project will also lead to an increase in particulate suspended matter



and oil spills in the Waghotane creek, endangering the lives and livelihoods of villagers.

Verbal lashing

In his vitriolic attack in party mouthpiece Saamna, Uddhav had called Fadnis "spineless" and a "traitor" for going back on his supposed promise of ensuring that the project would not be "thrust upon the people". He said his party would not allow the project to take off "under any circumstance". "It looks like the Centre has not paid heed to the chief minister, who should have remained adamant and got the projects scrapped."

The pillory came two days after a consortium of Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd signed an MoU with state-owned Saudi Arabian Oil Company (Saudi Aramco) for setting up "India's largest refinery and petroleum complex" in Ratnagiri.

Political support for the agitation against the project has been growing. Former chief minister and Maharashtra Swabhiman Paksha founder Narayan Rane, who recently entered the Rajya Sabha through a BJP nomination, is also opposed to the project. NCP chief Sharad Pawar has asked the government to look for an alternative site for the refinery.

A defensive Fadnis has said that the MoU has been misunderstood, and that it was not about the Nanar project but the oil refinery on the western coast. He has asserted that the government would go ahead with the project regardless of opposition. He also said he would persuade Uddhav and Rane and the protesting farmers to give up their resistance.

Once built, the refinery will be the largest single location refinery complex in the world with a capacity of 60 million tonne.

हालात नहीं सुधरे तो बढ़ सकती हैं तेल की कीमतें

नई दिल्ली | एजेसी

सीरिया में हवाई हमलों के बाद बिगड़ते हालात के बीच दुनिया पर इसके असर की समीक्षा भी की जा रही है।

विशेषज्ञों का कहना है कि अगर हालात नहीं सुधरते हैं तो भारत भी इसके असर से अछूता नहीं रहेगा। मध्य-पूर्व एशिया तेल भंडार का बड़ा स्रोत है, लिहाजा वहां हालात बिगड़ने का असर कच्चे तेल की कीमतों पर पड़ सकता है।

हल निकाला जाए: भारत के विदेश मंत्रालय ने सीरिया हमले पर प्रतिक्रिया व्यक्त करते हुए कहा कि हम सभी दलों से संयम बरतने का आग्रह करते हैं। अगर सीरिया में रासायनिक हमलों की बात सही है तो यह दुखद है और हमें ओपीसीडब्ल्यू की जांच का इंतजार करना चाहिए।

संयुक्त राष्ट्र ने की शांति और संयम की अपील

संयुक्त राष्ट्र। सीरिया में हवाई हमलों के बाद रूस और अमेरिका में बढ़ते तनाव के बीच संयुक्त राष्ट्र ने सभी पक्षों से संयम बरतने का आग्रह किया है। संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासचिव एंटोनियो गुटेरेस ने सभी सदस्यों से इस माहौल में धैर्य दिखाने और अंतरराष्ट्रीय कानूनों का सम्मान करने की अपील की। कहा, मैं सभी सदस्य देशों से इस हालात में जिम्मेदारी से कदम उठाने का आग्रह करता हूँ। सीरिया की आलोचना करते हुए कहा कि यह अंतरराष्ट्रीय शांति और सुरक्षा के लिए गंभीर खतरा पेश करता है। फ्रांस ने कहा कि वह सीरिया में संघर्ष को खत्म करने के उद्देश्य से राजनीतिक प्रक्रिया बहाल करने पर काम शुरू करना चाहता है।

बाजार का असर !

सऊदी अरब और ईरान के बीच दुश्मनी जगजाहिर है और जब इन देशों के पेट्रोलियम मंत्रियों की बात हो तो यह दुश्मनी और मुखर हो जाती है। इसकी वजह यह है कि कूड यानी कच्चे तेल की कीमतें घटने के बाद दोनों देश ज्यादा से ज्यादा कूड बेचने के चक्कर में एक दूसरे के हितों पर प्रहार करने से बाज नहीं आते, लेकिन भारत में स्वार्थपूर्ति के लिए ही सही यह दुश्मनी घुलती नजर आई। पिछले दिनों भारत में संपन्न इंटरनेशनल एनर्जी फोरम की बैठक में सऊदी अरब के तेल मंत्री खालिद अल फलह भी उपस्थित थे और ईरान के पेट्रोलियम मंत्री बीई जंगनेह भी शामिल थे। दो दिनों तक चले इस सम्मेलन में इन दोनों देशों के मंत्रियों को कई बार पेट्रोलियम मंत्री धर्मेंद्र प्रधान के साथ मंच साझा करना पड़ा था। यह इन दोनों देशों की जरूरत कहिए या पेट्रोलियम मंत्री प्रधान की मौजूदगी का असर रहा हो, लेकिन जब भी सार्वजनिक तौर पर इन्होंने मंच साझा किया तो एक दूसरे के प्रति गर्मजोशी दिखाने में कोई कमी नहीं की। अब देखना होगा कि वतन वापसी पर दोनों के बीच यह गर्मजोशी कितनी कायम रहेगी।