

MISSION GAGANYAAN

That's an exciting development for India's space exploration efforts! The Gaganyaan mission marks a significant milestone for ISRO and for India as a whole, as it will be the country's first manned space mission. The selection and training process for the astronauts, as well as the preparations for the mission, demonstrate India's dedication to advancing its capabilities in space exploration. The involvement of the Indian Air Force and the Institute of Aerospace Medicine in the selection and training process highlights the collaborative effort across different sectors to make the mission a success. The completion of initial training in Russia despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic underscores the resilience and determination of the individuals involved. As ISRO continues to prepare for the Gaganyaan mission, the progress being made in equipping the Human Space Flight Center with simulators and ensuring the astronauts' fitness through regular flying with the IAF are crucial steps in ensuring the mission's success.

Yellow Revolution-Need of the hour

■ ATUL CHATURVEDI

With Edible Oil imports reaching a whopping 165 lakh mts last year it would come as a surprise to everyone that India was reasonably Self Sufficient in edible oils in Nineties of the last century.Our import of edible oil was a minuscule 3.0 lakh tons. However, our obsession with Wheat and Rice after the launch of Green Revolution has resulted in India becoming surplus in these commodities at the cost of Oilseeds.

Skewed Thinking -Lost Decades
About two decades back I had an interesting conversation with a very Senior Govt.functionary on the step motherly treatment meted out to the Oilseed sector. His reply summed up the fundamental reasons of thinking in the policy making circles of the time. He said the private sector has done such a wonderful job of maintaining the supply chain of edible oils that they feel the need for Oilseed development thrust does not exist. Years of low commodity prices had lulled decision makers into complacency, and this got reflected in deciding priorities.

This skewed thinking resulted in Indian dependence on imports growing to almost 60-65% of our consumption seriously compromising our Edible Oil security. The import bill has now ballooned to almost Rs.1.4 lakh crore and rising year after year. Food Security in our view does not mean only wheat and rice security as you require both pulses and edible oils to complete a meal.

The fallacy of neglecting Oilseed Sector over the years hit us below the belt when Covid struck. With Indonesia banning Palm oil exports to protect their domestic market, edible oil prices in India went through the roof. The situation really became alarming and edible oil prices almost touched Rs 200/ per kgs. Oilseed prices rose alarmingly, and Soya beans were traded at Rs 10000/per kgs sending alarm bells in decision making quarters.

Government Steps.
The current regime headed by Modiji understood the writing on the wall and swung into action to limit the fallout and ensure common man is not affected much. The pace of decision making and doing immediate course correction was exemplary.I have been in Edible oil and oilseed business for more than four decades but have never seen such proactive approach by the government functionaries.It may not be out of place to recount some of the actions which provided succour in those harrowing times during Covid and post Covid.Sometimes one wonders if the normal pace of government decision making had happened, we would have been witness to untold human misery.

The then Food Secretary and his team burnt a lot of mid night oil to ensure supply remained unaffected.Zoom meetings with key industry players were held practically every second day and problems sorted out at breakneck speed.Honestly speaking it was a novel experience to speak to Secretary,JT.Secretary level officers on a regular basis as opposed to running from pillar to post to get an appointment. Welcome winds of change.

-Even though dependence on imports is very high Edible oil discharge and clearance at ports used to take 10/15 days resulting in disrupting supply chain.Prompt action from Govt ensured clearances within two days.

-Edible oil import duties were slashed across the board.
-Edible Oil Manufacturers were requested to lower their prices and our Association -SEA pushed the industry to rise in this need of the hour by lowering prices. Industry responded proactively and promptly.

-Indonesia was dealt with diplomatically and they had to withdraw the ban within a short time and their concerned Minister came running to India to mend fences.Message to the world was clear -DO NOT MESS WITH INDIA.

-Geo Political tensions in the Black Sea area also disrupted Sunflower oil supplies.Proactive action in opening imports from Russia ensured minimal dislocation.

-Hon Prime Minister even called a Zoom meeting of prominent players to get suggestions to tackle the situation on a long term basis.This writer was also one of the speakers and gave suggestions which can go a long way in addressing issue of Atmanirbharta in Edible oil /Oilseeds.

All these measures had the desired effect and the spiralling prices were brought down to manageable levels.

Moving towards Atmanirbharta

Ever since our Honourable Prime Minister gave the clarion call the buzzword in Policy making circles is Atmanirbharta.No wonder we see action towards improving Oilseed production in the country.

-Massive investment for promoting Palm in India was announced with initial outlay of 11000 crores.

-National mission on Oilseed has been put on fast track.Our Honourable Finance Minister announced the start of Oilseed Mission during her Interim Budget speech which reflects the seriousness with which this problem is now getting addressed.

-Apex Industry Association, SEA, launched Mustard Mission aggressively and with Govt support we are seeing massive jump in Mustard production in our country.Few years back the production used to hover around 7.0 million tons and now it is touching 12.0 million tons. To say Mustard has been our saviour would not be out of place.

-One of the biggest problem facing Oilseed Sector has been woefully low productivity.Ironically over the years NGOs and activists had stymied efforts to introduce GM Oilseeds which may have the potential of increasing yields. It is to the credit of this Government that they have given an affidavit in Supreme Court that opposing GM in oilseeds is tantamount to being anti national. This decisiveness will go a long way helping Atmanirbharta efforts in Oilseeds.

Under our dynamic and action-oriented leadership we are bound to see strong and effective action at the ground level in coming years.Time for never ending debates is long over and concrete action under National Mission on Oilseeds is the need of the hour to have Game Changing impact on Oilseed production in our country.If we continue to dither (unlikely under present regime)we will permanently remain at the mercy of Exporting Countries and our bargaining capacity would be seriously compromised.
(The writer is Chairman-Asian Palm Oil Alliance).

The Amul Way: A Journey of India's Dairy Revolution

The sapling that was collectively planted by the villages of Gujarat 50 years ago has now grown into a magnificent banyan tree. Today, the branches of this colossal banyan tree have extended across the nation and abroad". This is what Prime Minister Narendra Modi said while participating at the Golden Jubilee of Gujarat Coop Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) recently. GCMMF is the cooperative giant that owns the iconic dairy brand - Amul.

A year before India attained independence, in the heartlands of Gujarat, a revolution was born, which started as a small-scale protest against unfair trade practices of Polson dairy and turned into a monumental movement that reshaped India's dairy landscape. The farmers of Kaira (now Kheda) district formed a cooperative - the Kaira District Co-operative Milk Producers Union Ltd. under the guidance of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

In 1965, the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) was set up with the basic objective of replicating the Amul model, which was followed by establishment of GCMMF in 1973, under the leadership of Dr. Verghese Kurien, a.k.a the Milk Man of India. GCMMF emerged as the apex organization of Gujarat's dairy cooperatives, with a mission to provide remunerative returns to farmers and quality products to consumers.

Amul is the inspiration of Atmanirbhar Bharat. Amul prod-



ucts are exported to more than 50 countries around the world. Supported by a vast network of over 18,000 milk cooperative committees and 36,000 farmers, Amul processes more than 3.5 crore litres of milk per day.

At the core of this model lies a three-tier cooperative structure. Village-level dairy societies collect milk from local farmers. These societies, in turn, supply the milk to district-level milk unions. Finally, the state-level milk federations consolidate the supply and distribute it to various markets. Farmers are offered fair prices for their milk, and consumers receive fresh, unadulterated products. By decentralizing operations and involving

local communities, Amul not only ensures a steady supply chain but also strengthens rural economies.

Today, Amul is the largest FMCG brand in India posting annual sales turnover of Rs 72,000 crores during FY 2022-23. The UK based Brand Finance in its 'Brand Finance Food & Drinks Report 2023' has ranked Amul as not only the world's strongest dairy brand globally, but also the second strongest food brand worldwide, only behind American chocolate brand Hershey's.

At the heart of Amul marketing strategy is the umbrella approach, where the Amul Girl serves as a unifying thread. By using a consistent nomenclature across its product

range, Amul has simplified marketing efforts and streamlined cost management.

Also of great significance is Amul's communication strategy. Introduced in 1966 by Sylvester daCunha, the Amul moppet's witty, relatable advertisements have transcended generations, earning a place in the Guinness Book of World Records for the longest-running campaign. The butter girl was so appreciated that a British company launched a butter and named it Utterly Butterly in 2019. The witty billboards and print ads featuring the Amul Girl, commenting on everything from politics to pop culture, have been successful in keeping the brand alive in public discourse.

As GCMMF celebrates its golden jubilee, it's not just a milestone for the organization but a triumph for millions of dairy farmers whose lives have been transformed for better. The journey of Amul is truly a great example of balance between cooperatives and government, showcasing what can be achieved when communities come together with a shared purpose. The government is making record investments in modernizing infrastructure related to animal husbandry, with a special fund of Rs 30 thousand crore established for this purpose.

Today, Amul brand is not only a product, but also a movement. It is in one way, the representation of the economic freedom of farmers. It has given farmers the courage to dream. To hope. To live.

Indigenous Technologies for Viksit Bharat

■ DR. PARVEEN KUMAR

This year the National Science day coincides with the release of 16th installment of PM KISAN, a credit support providing an yearly amount of rupees 6000 in three installments of rupees 2000 each to the farming community of the country. As we know Science, Technology and Innovations (STI) are the essence of a progressive society and for the well being of its citizens. What we do today is Science but tomorrow it will become technology. As an endeavour towards a systematic and logical study of how the universe works, Science is a dynamic subject based on observation, experiment, and measurement, and the formulation of laws to describe these facts in general terms. Science is one of the greatest blessings to the mankind. It has played a major role in improving the quality of living of the man. Science is omnipresent and omnipotent in every walk of our life. In every inch of our body, science is the protagonist. The different type of science includes Physical Sciences like Physics, Chemistry, Astronomy and Earth science. The Life Sciences deals with the living organisms consisting of Botany and Zoology and Social sciences that deals with studying social processes. Life is unimaginable without all this, as it has become a necessity. Science is valued by society because the application of scientific knowledge helps to satisfy many basic human needs and improve living standards. Technology uses scientific laws into various devices and Innovations are perceived as practices, ideas or things that are perceived as new by members of social system. The innovations in health sector have improved the overall quality of life in the country; the innovations in education sector have improved the literacy level in the country and the innovations in agriculture sector in terms of hybrid and high yielding seeds, farm machinery and other necessary inputs made the country self sufficient in food grains production. Today, the country is a leading producer of many commodities. All these innovations have been a result of the scientific quest in the country. Considering the importance of Science in every aspect of our day to day life, Feb. 28 is celebrated every year as National Science Day.

History of National Science Day (NSD): This National Day is celebrated in India on 28 February each year to mark the discovery of the 'Raman effect' by Indian physicist Sir C. V. Raman on 28 February 1928. For his discovery, Sir Chandrasekhar Venkat Raman also known as C.V. Raman was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930. On this day, he discovered a phenomenon of scattering of photons which was later known as 'Raman Effect' after his name. After two years in 1930 he got Nobel Prize for this remarkable discovery and this was the first Nobel Prize for India in the field of. In 1986, The National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC) asked the government to designate Feb. 28 as National Science Day. The most eminent and outstanding Indian scientist

NATIONAL SCIENCE DAY: FEB 28

(famously known as CV Raman) established his experimental thesis known as ' Raman Effect' which he declared officially on 28th February in 1928.By this discovery Sir Raman became known for his contribution globally. For this all important discovery Sir Raman when being bestowed with the world-famous 'Nobel Prize' in 1930 in physics became the first Asian to receive this award in physics. Sir Raman was also later on respectfully awarded with the 1st 'Bharat Ratna' award in 1954 and was also greatly honoured with the greatest award of Russia' Lenin Peace' in the year 1956.The National Council for Science & Technology Communication (NCSTC) made a proposal to our central government to observe National Science Day every year on 28th February to commemorate C. V Raman's great historic discovery Raman Effect.Thereafter our government agreed to their declaration in 1986 and announced to celebrate National Science Day according to NCSTC's proposal date.Then in 1987 on February 28 the first National Science Day was observed country-wide.

Objectives of this day:The main objective of this National Science Day is to aware people of our country about science. Add to this, it inspires children or stu-

dents to choose science as their career.This national science day is also celebrated to commemorate the contribution of science to the development of our country and to pay great tribute to all scientists who have honoured the name & fame of our country India globally in the field of science. This day also serves to inspire new generations giving the example of famous personnel like CV Raman, APJ Abdul Kalam to upgrade the level of science and technology. We can't ignore them as they are our future to lead our nation in a progressive way. The celebration purpose is also to support and inspire new innovations of innovative scientists or students and also to make known publicly about the importance of science and scientific achievement of the whole world.This day is celebrated by organizing lectures, debate competitions and by conducting many sciencelated programmes to attract and inspire the thirsty students. Students and young researchers can be facilitated to develop new innovative models which can be replicated on a larger scale later on

Themes of the National Science Day 2021: Every year the day is celebrated with a particular theme. The celebration of this day usually relate to the theme of the day for the year. This year the National Science Day is celebrated with the theme 'indigenous technologies for Viksit bharat'. The theme is the most appropriate for the present times when the world all over is facing threats from the climate change, loss of biodegradable versity, environmental degradation and pollution of natural resources.OVID pandemic. National Science Day reminds us that Science has to be utilized to develop technologies that are innovative and can serve mankind in one or other way.The government of India is also providing many grants, incentives, facilities and all other necessary support for promotion of scientific ecosystem in the country and to conduct basic and applied research in various frontier areas of science with the ultimate aim of serving the mankind all across the globe. Events on this dayreminds the importance of science inspiring people of all ages to work in the field of science.

(The author writes on Agriculture & social issues).

Need and Necessity of UCC in India

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

The uniform civil code or uniform common code has remained one of the controversial subjects from last several decades and it is also a matter of intense debate in the political circles of the country .The UCC has come to occupy a centre stage in our politics and country because of the fact that the state of Goa and recently the state of Uttarakhand passed the UCC bill and also got the assent of the governor and thus it has become a law in that state because of the efforts of its chief minister Pushkar Singh Dammi .Now the state of Assam under the government of Himanta Biswa Sarma is seriously making efforts to make UCC a reality in Assam .The uniform civil code is very necessary and its need is felt in the country and so our state governments and the central government should take necessary steps in the direction of making UCC a reality and for that noble purpose the bills in this regard have to be introduced and passed by the states and if the bill regarding UCC is introduced and passed in the union parliament and made an act to be applicable and enforceable in the whole country and in that case the states are dispensed not to frame law on UCC .The fact and hard reality is that the founding fathers of the Indian constitution were well aware about the need of UCC and therefore this subject was kept in article 44 of the constitution as a directive principle of state policy and it means that the state shall take steps to make uniform civil laws a reality .Therefore the BJP government should take steps to make

legislation on this controversial subject .However UCC has remained an item of agenda in the election manifestoes of the right wing saffron party of BJP ever since the existence of the BJP from the days of the Jana Sangh and therefore the central government of the BJP should make serious efforts to frame a law about uniform civil code so that it is enforced for all citizens in the country .It is important to note here that due to India's diversity of religion ,culture and languages it could not be legislate upon and we have been rendered unable to frame a law in this regard .The fact is that there is great need and necessity in the country for UCC and therefore the union government of BJP should take necessary steps to enact a law on uniform civil code .Recently UCC took a centre stage when Prime Minister Narendra Modi mentioned the importance of UCC in one of his rallies in Madhya Pradesh .As already said ,the implementation of UCC poses severe hurdles because of the cultural and religious diversity of India .At the outset ,it is in the fitness of things to know the meaning of UCC .Uniform civil code (UCC) is a legal framework though it is not enforceable by the law .it is a set of uniform laws regarding inheritance marriage ,adoption ,succession ,and divorce applicable to all citizens irrespective of their religion community ,race ,sex and caste .The uniform civil code was proposed to be implemented with the aim of replace the personal laws applicable to each religious community based on customs and scriptures. There are many advantages of implementing UCC and

some points of its importance are as under:1-It promotes equality in the society and country .In modern India ,there is need to form uniform personal laws for all citizens irrespective of the religious affiliation .For a secular democracy of India ,there is considerable need for having a uniform civil and personal laws for all citizens cutting across the religious and cultural barriers .There should be no different laws for every religion ,class, caste ,gender ,sex and race.2-UCC makes national integration possible as it promotes national unity in the country .So far as criminal laws and civil laws are concerned all the citizens should be treated equally by the court .So UCC can end discrimination among the citizens belonging to various religions .The UCC fosters national integration and national unity.3-UCC will lead to gender parity and equality .It has been seen that the personal laws of different communities are biased towards men .Women are generally discriminated in matters of succession and inheritance ,but with the implementation of common civil code the discrimination will end.4- UCC will end the exploitation of the women in the society .Women are generally discriminated and exploited and with the enforcement of same civil and criminal laws, the exploitation with the women will cease to a vast extent and therefore there is strong case for having a common civil code in the country.5-The UCC will also moderate loopholes in personal laws .The personal laws of different religions have some inherent problems because of their favoritism towards the patriarchal

concept of society and the uniform civil laws will eliminate such limitations in the personal laws and will make uniform laws for all communities a possibility and will end the loopholes in personal laws of different communities. The UCC will celebrate diversity and strengthen unity in the country .It will promote national integration and secularism by removing the distinctions and contradictions based on religious personal laws and will create a common personal laws and will also create a common identity for all citizens .The UCC will foster a sense of unity and harmony among diverse communities.UCC will empower women through uniformity .It would ensure gender justice and equality by abolishing the discriminatory and oppressive practices against women in various personal laws such as polygamy ,unequal inheritance .The current legal system is burdened with complex and overlapping personal laws ,leading to confusion and legal disputes .The UCC will simplify the legal framework by consolidating and harmonizing various laws into a single code .A UCC is a sign of a modern progressive nation implying that it has moved away from caste and religious politics .Many countries in the world have common civil laws and so we in India should also have uniform civil laws for different communities as it would lead to modernity .To conclude it can be argued that in India we should without further delay frame common civil laws so that various kinds of discriminations will cease and common civil laws will become a reality.

(The author is a columnist, social and KP activist).