

LOCAL MOTIF: ON MODI'S CALL FOR SELF-RELIANCE

PM Modi's Call For National Self-Reliance Might Be Undermined If It Turns Overly Ambitious

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's emphasis on Tuesday, on a renewed drive for a self-reliant India is not merely a reaction to the new global realities spawned by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a throwback to the nationalist economic policies that India and other newly independent nations followed in the last century before the high tide of globalisation swept over. His statement also foretells a potential renewal of the swadeshi economic policies that continue to inspire Hindutva politics long after centrist nationalists have abandoned them. India opened itself to the global market in 1991 through its liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation policies, but remained cautious as it skirted around the whirlwind of international capital in the following decades. This hesitant approach of India often led to a clamour from various vocal quarters for faster and deeper opening of its economy but its relative insularity from disruptive global headwinds turned out to be helpful several times in the last three decades. When Mr. Modi took over as Prime Minister, there was a renewed cry from global corporations and foreign governments for bolder reforms. If anything, he travelled the opposite course — raising fresh trade barriers and seeking to strengthen India's manufacturing base through the 'Make In India' initiative. In doing so, he has been true to his ideological calling and also to his mandates of 2014 and 2019 — which were not sought or won for expanding globalisation. Mr. Modi's politics, in fact, rides on the mobilisation of people dispossessed and alienated by the rumbling march of globalisation by providing them new targets to vent their anger on.

The pandemic brought to the fore at once the limits and inevitability of globalisation. Countries such as the U.S. that relied on others for the supply of essential medicines and medical equipment were suddenly vulnerable. China's unmatched leverage in global supply chains and concerns that it may weaponize trade have prompted a renewed global discussion on the components of national security and how to protect them. At the same time, this pandemic continues to illustrate how inseparably shared is the future of humanity, across national boundaries. Mr. Modi understands this dynamic of global politics and has sought to advance India's interest within an emerging framework. He did not repudiate globalisation, but proposed a new syntax for it — a human-centric one, as opposed to the current profit motivated model, according to him. He placed India at its centre. This is largely rhetorical and might be unmindful of India's limitations. To the extent that such politics brings succour to the disadvantaged, it is to be welcomed. If this is only a facade for majoritarianism or authoritarianism, it will bring more harm to the same people that this approach professes to protect. His supporters and opponents alike would be eager to see how this philosophy translates into policy.

Meanings of Difficult Words:

- motif** (noun) – theme, concept, idea, motive, topic/subject.
- call** (noun) – appeal, request, plea, demand.
- self-reliance** (noun) – self-sufficiency, self-support, self-sustenance.
- undermine** (verb) – reduce, diminish, impede, hinder.
- overly** (adverb) – excessively, exceedingly, unduly, inordinately, immoderately.
- ambitious** (adjective) – zealous, enthusiastic, motivated/ determined, hoping/ striving.
- emphasis** (noun) – stress/attention, priority, underlining, underscoring.
- drive** (noun) – campaign, movement, effort, push.
- self-reliant** (adjective) – self-sufficient, self-supporting, self-sustaining, self-standing.
- merely** (adverb) – only, simply, just.
- spawn** (verb) – produce, generate, cause, give rise to, result in (much of new things quickly).
- pandemic** (noun) – the worldwide spread of a new disease; The illness spreads around

- the world and typically affects a large number of people across a wide area.
13. **throwback** (noun) – having a characteristic/ quality of an earlier time; a return to a previous method of doing something.
 14. **nationalist** (adjective) – patriotic, pro one's country.
 15. **high tide** (noun) – highest level, culminating point.
 16. **globalisation** (noun) – the process of making the trade of goods and services equivalent in all nations (Courtesy: VOA Learning English).
 17. **sweep (over)** (verb) – move quickly, flow across quickly & engulf, overwhelm, flood.
 18. **foretell** (verb) – predict, forecast, foresee, envisage.
 19. **potential** (adjective) – possible, likely, probable.
 20. **centrist** (adjective) – a person whose political opinions are not extreme, falling between those of liberals and conservatives.
 21. **nationalist** (noun) – a supporter/advocate of nationalism.
 22. **liberalisation** (noun) – removal or loosening of restrictions on something, typically an economic or political system.
 23. **privatisation** (noun) – transfer of a business, industry, or service from public to private ownership and control.
 24. **skirt around** (verb) – go along something, go around something.
 25. **whirlwind** (noun) – a busy, tumultuous (uncontrolled) activity or process.
 26. **capital market** (noun) – it is basically a system in which people, companies, and governments with an excess of funds transfer those funds to people, companies, and governments that have a shortage of funds.
 27. **international capital market** (noun) – International capital market is the group of different country's capital market. International capital markets are the same mechanism but in the global sphere, in which governments, companies, and people borrow and invest across national boundaries.
 28. **hesitant** (adjective) – dubious, tentative, half-hearted, sceptical, reluctant.
 29. **clamour** (noun) – protest, complaint, outcry/commotion.
 30. **vocal** (adjective) – vociferous, outspoken, forthright; relating to someone who expresses his/her views freely.
 31. **quarter** (noun) – an unspecified group of people.
 32. **relative** (adjective) – moderate, reasonable, a fair degree of, considerable.
 33. **insularity** (noun) – the quality of being interested in own country and not willing to accept anything (ideas, culture, etc.,) from outside of it.
 34. **disruptive** (adjective) – turbulent, unsettling, unmanageable, uncontrollable, uncooperative.
 35. **headwinds** (noun) – (in business) situations or conditions that make growth harder/difficult. Whereas tailwinds describe a situation or condition that will move growth, revenues, or profits higher.
 36. **turn out** (phrasal verb) – transpire, emerge; happen/occur.
 37. **take over** (phrasal verb) – assume control of, take charge of, take command of.
 38. **cry** (noun) – urgent request, demand, entreaty.
 39. **bolder** comparative adjective of **bold** (adjective) – courageous, confident, decisive.
 40. **if anything** (phrase) – on the contrary.
 41. **course** (noun) – route, way, direction, path.
 42. **seek** (verb) – try, attempt, strive, work towards.
 43. **ideological** (adjective) – relating to a system of ideas.
 44. **calling** (noun) – mission, purpose, vocation.
 45. **ride on** (phrasal verb) – depend on.

46. **mobilisation** (noun) – the act of bringing people/resources together for a particular cause.
47. **dispossessed** (adjective) – deprived (of property), impoverished, homeless.
48. **alienated** (adjective) – isolated, estranged, detached.
49. **rumbling** (adjective) – (of dissatisfaction) continuing in a modest way.
50. **march** (noun) – progress, advance, development, continuance.
51. **vent** (verb) – release, let out, express.
52. **bring to the fore** (phrase) – to move something forward to a most important position (to make it more visible).
53. **at once** (phrase) – now, right now, this moment.
54. **inevitability** (noun) – necessity, certainty, requirement, compulsion.
55. **rely on** (phrasal verb) – depend on; resort to, bank on.
56. **vulnerable** (adjective) – unprotected, unguarded, helpless.
57. **unmatched** (adjective) – unequalled, incomparable, unparalleled, second to none.
58. **leverage** (noun) – advantage, influence, power/ authority.
59. **global supply chain** (noun) – a dynamic worldwide network when a company purchases or uses goods or services from overseas. It involves people, information, processes and resources involved in the production, handling and distribution of materials and finished products or providing a service to the customer.
60. **weaponise** (verb) – use as a weapon.
61. **illustrate** (verb) – explain, elucidate, clarify.
62. **inseparably** (adverb) – indivisibly, firmly.
63. **humanity** (noun) – humankind, the human race, people.
64. **dynamics** (noun) – basic/fundamental cause or force which triggers change within a system.
65. **framework** (noun) – structure, scheme, system.
66. **repudiate** (verb) – reject, deny, disavow, contradict, rebut.
67. **syntax** (noun) – Greek meaning “arranging together” (of different elements in a certain way to make a structure/system). Syntax generally means “a set of rules in a language to arrange words in sentences, phrases, etc.,
68. **rhetorical** (adjective) – relating to the art of speaking or writing effectively & persuasively or impressively (but, often lacking substance); oratorical, overblown, extravagant, bombastic.
69. **unmindful** (adjective) – unthinking, neglectful of, unconscious of.
70. **succour** (noun) – aid/help/support, assistance, relief.
71. **the disadvantaged** (noun) – the deprived, the poverty-stricken, the underprivileged.
72. **facade** (noun) – outward appearance, false display, posture, pretence.
73. **majoritarianism** (noun) – a philosophy that states that a majority (sometimes categorized by religion, language, social class, or some other identifying factor) of the population is entitled to a certain degree of primacy (priority) in society, and has the right to make decisions that affect the society.
74. **authoritarianism** (noun) – autocracy, fascism, totalitarianism/draconianism.
75. **profess** (verb) – claim, state, pretend, purport, allege.
76. **alike** (adverb) – equally.

FARM GATE IN FOCUS: ON AMENDING ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES ACT

Move To Amend The Essential Commodities Act Is Fraught With Risks

The Centre's objective of using the COVID-19 crisis to usher in an Atmanirbhar Bharat saw Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman focus Friday's tranche of announcements on farm sector reforms. The centrepiece was a ₹1-lakh crore fund to finance agriculture infrastructure projects at the farm gate and produce aggregation points. Given that the lack of adequate cold-storage facilities continues to extract a high price on farmers and the agrarian economy by way of post-harvest losses, especially in perishables, the targeted outlay is a welcome step. The decision to channel the funds to agricultural cooperatives, farmer producer organisations, rural entrepreneurs and start-ups is also encouraging as it lays the onus of creating the appropriate infrastructure or logistics solution largely on the principal beneficiaries, the farmers themselves. The Minister also unveiled a ₹10,000 crore scheme to promote the formalisation of micro food enterprises. Suggesting a cluster approach focused in different regions on signature produce, Ms. Sitharaman said the goal was to assist unorganised enterprises in scaling up food safety standards to earn the products certification and build brand value. The package, though, may be more beneficial in the longer term than providing any immediate relief from the lockdown-exacerbated distress in the rural hinterland.

Crucially, the Minister also announced three reform proposals that are ostensibly aimed at enabling better price realisation for farmers by removing restrictions and facilitating enhanced marketing freedom. These include amendments to the 1955-vintage Essential Commodities Act that would effectively hollow out the legislation by deregulating cereals, pulses, oilseeds, edible oils, onions and potato. While the Economic Survey, in January, had recommended jettisoning the "anachronistic" Act, the law has nonetheless remained a vital tool in the government's armoury for protecting consumers from irrational volatility in the prices of essentials by tamping down on black marketeers and hoarders. While the Act's provisions do have scope for an overzealous bureaucracy to harass even an honest exporter, who may have paid a fair price to the farmer and stocked produce for shipment overseas, total deregulation for food grains is fraught with the risk of future inflationary food price spikes. The other two proposals are also of concern. While one seeks to bypass the APMC regime through a central law that would allow farmers the freedom to sell across State borders, the other proposes a framework for farmers to enter into pre-sowing contracts that would purportedly help assure them of offtake volumes and prices. Both the changes, once enacted, could privilege market forces without necessarily safeguarding food security. Surely, it would be in no one's interest to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Meanings Of Difficult Words:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. farm gate (noun) – a place (i.e. farm) from where a cultivated product in agriculture can be purchased directly. 2. move (noun) – step, measure, action. 3. fraught (adjective) – full of, filled with, loaded with. 4. objective (noun) – aim, intention, purpose. 5. usher in (verb) – start, begin, initiate, introduce. 6. Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (or) Self-reliant India Mission (noun) – the special economic package totaling Rs 20 lakh crore | <p>by the Indian government to tide over the Covid-19 crisis and it would focus on land, labour, liquidity and laws. It would benefit labourers, farmers, honest tax payers, MSMEs and cottage industry. This economic package would be around the 10 per cent of India's GDP.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. tranche (noun) – part, section, portion (of something, particularly money). 8. centrepiece (noun) – central component, focal point, best part. |
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9. **finance** (verb) – fund, pay for, back/support.
10. **aggregation point** (noun) – the aggregation point is a place where farmers come together to receive services or sell their produce (products/goods).
11. **aggregation** (noun) – “coming together” to form a group/cluster; the joining of multiple things together.
12. **given** (preposition) – considering, taking into account, bearing in mind.
13. **lack of** (noun) – absence, insufficiency, shortage, deficiency.
14. **cold-storage** (noun) – refrigeration; it keeps the quality of fruits and vegetables for a long period of time.
15. **extract** (verb) – force, elicit, wrest, obtain (by threat).
16. **agrarian** (adjective) – relating to cultivating/farming.
17. **by way of** (phrase) – passing through, by means of, as a form of.
18. **harvest** (noun) – the process of gathering a ripe crop from the fields.
19. **perishables** (noun) – things, especially foods, likely to decay quickly.
20. **outlay** (noun) – expenditure, expenses, spending.
21. **channel** (verb) – direct, pass on, transfer.
22. **entrepreneur** (noun) – businessman, businesswoman, business person.
23. **lay** (verb) – assign, attribute, ascribe, allocate.
24. **onus** (noun) – responsibility, duty, burden.
25. **logistics** (noun) – overall-flow of a commercial activity, which includes production, stock and transport processing (of goods).
26. **unveil** (verb) – present, announce, disclose, make public, communicate.
27. **formalisation** (noun) – the extent/ degree/ level to which rules and procedures are followed in an organization.
28. **cluster approach** (noun) – an approach by which a cluster is formed by 50 or more farmers for seeding, harvesting of crops and transporting produce to the market with the help of government’s development plan.
29. **signature** (adjective) – distinctive, unique, individual, trademark.
30. **produce** (noun) – (natural) products, foods.
31. **unorganised sector/ workforce/ enterprise** (noun) – unorganized sector means an enterprise owned by individuals or self-employed workers and engaged in the production or sale of goods or providing service of any kind whatsoever, and where the enterprise employs workers, the number of such workers is less than ten.
32. **scale up** (phrasal verb) – increase (in size or number).
33. **brand value** (noun) – that value is determined by consumer perception of and experiences with the brand. If people think highly of a brand, it has positive brand equity.
34. **exacerbated** (adjective) – aggravated, made worsen, worsened, compounded.
35. **distress** (noun) – difficulty, hardship, misfortune, trouble, suffering.
36. **hinterland** (noun) – remote areas of a country away from the coastal areas/the banks of major rivers.
37. **ostensibly** (adverb) – apparently, seemingly, allegedly, supposedly.
38. **realisation** (noun) – achievement, fulfilment, accomplishment, attainment.
39. **facilitate** (verb) – make easier, make possible; assist, help, aid.
40. **enhanced** (adjective) – strengthened, reformed, improved, augmented.
41. **vintage** (adjective) – old, classic.
42. **Essential Commodities Act** (noun) – An Act enacted in 1955 by Parliament of India to provide, in the interest of the general public, for the control of the production, supply and distribution of, and trade and commerce, in certain commodities.

43. **hollow out** (verb) – remove, undermine, make pointless/useless, weaken/erode.
44. **legislation** (noun) – statute, act, bill, law.
45. **deregulate** (verb) – remove/reduce/lessen regulations.
46. **cereal** (noun) – food grains (rice, wheat, millet, maize & etc).
47. **pulses** (noun) – pulses are the term used for edible dry peas, beans, lentils and chickpeas & etc.
48. **edible oil** (noun) – cooking oil; fat of plant, animal or microbial origin, which is liquid at room temperature and is suitable for food use.
49. **jettison** (verb) – discard, throw out, abandon.
50. **anachronistic** (adjective) – old-fashioned, bygone, outmoded.
51. **nonetheless** (adverb) – notwithstanding, nevertheless, in spite of that/however.
52. **tamp down** (phrasal verb) – reduce, flatten, compress, condense.
53. **black marketeer** (noun) – a person who sells goods on the black market; extortionist, racketeer, profiteer.
54. **hoarder** (noun) – collector, gatherer, accumulator (of things (like food products, money, etc.,) and hides them away for future use).
55. **provision** (noun) – term, clause, requirement/ condition.
56. **overzealous** (adjective) – too zealous; excessively sincere, feeling, fervent, impassioned, passionate, enthusiastic.
57. **bureaucracy** (noun) – officials (in the administration, government, the establishment) as a group.
58. **harass** (verb) – oppress, disturb, trouble.
59. **deregulation** (noun) – the removal of regulations.
60. **inflationary** (adjective) – tending to cause monetary inflation.
61. **inflation** (noun) – simply meaning “cost of living”; increase of price level of goods & services and vice versa decrease of currency value.
62. **spike** (noun) – a sharp rise/increase of something.
63. **seek** (verb) – try, attempt.
64. **bypass** (verb) – circumvent, avoid, dodge.
65. **regime** (noun) – system, arrangement, scheme.
66. **framework** (noun) – structure, scheme, system.
67. **sowing** (noun) – an act of seeding a plant or crop.
68. **purportedly** (adverb) – allegedly, reportedly, supposedly.
69. **offtake** (noun) – purchase of goods (by an agreement entered between a producer and a buyer to buy/sell a certain amount of the future production of goods/products).
70. **privilege** (verb) – give a special advantage.
71. **necessarily** (adverb) – inevitably, certainly, surely, undoubtedly.
72. **safeguard** (verb) – protect, shield, secure.
73. **interest** (noun) – concern, matter, care.
74. **throw the baby out with the bathwater** (phrase) – throw something valuable along with other things that are unwanted.