Be Happy, Share & Help Each Other!!!
Life, on her own two feet

Selvanayagi lost her arms in Sri Lanka’s war 27 years ago.

MEERA SRINIVASAN
Jaffna

Few students in Vadamarachchi, part of Sri Lanka’s northern peninsula, had heard of Visual Basic until Sebastian Selvanayagi started offering a course in it at her modest computer centre.

"Even basic programming languages haven't come to our village in a big way," she said, entering a small room in her home, where five desktop computers are kept.

Selvanayagi teaches computing. MEERA SRINIVASAN

in a humid climate like ours. Moreover, they were expensive.

Ms. Selvanayagi now manages her tasks with full-time help from a caretaker and her guardians — her father's friends — who have been caring for her since his passing.

Work from home

Every evening a group of students comes for the classes, as part of the National Vocational...
Q-Enhancement of paid maternity leave for women in the organised sector to 26 weeks from 12 is a progressive step. Has it succeeded in empowering women and bridging gender gap? Critically evaluate?
Intro:- The enhancement of paid maternity leave for women in the organised sector to 26 weeks from 12 is a progressive step expected to cover only 1.8 million women. [Q-Two countries-?]

One that should lead to closer scrutiny of the difficulties faced by unorganised workers who fall beyond the scope of any worthwhile labour welfare measures.

Introduced with an amendment to the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, in line with several expert recommendations including that of the World Health Organisation, which recommends exclusive breastfeeding of children for the first 24 weeks.

Giving some benefits to adoptive mothers and women who get children using embryo transfers as well signals India is in step with social changes.

Many poor millions in the unorganised sector, the only support available is a small conditional cash benefit of ₹6,000 during pregnancy and lactation offered under the Maternity Benefit Programme restrict even this meagre (अल्प) benefit to the first child for budgetary reasons.

Centre labour Minister Bandaru Dattatreya has said, the Centre is giving organised sector women workers a humble gift.
Providing benefits for women and children is a societal responsibility which can be funded in a large country through a combination of general taxation and contributory payments from those who have the means.

Health care should be treated as a right and deliveries handled without cost to women.

The income guarantees during the 26-week period can be ensured through a universal social insurance system.

There would also be no discrimination against women in recruitment by employers who currently have to factor in benefit payments.

Women would not suffer loss of income simply because they cannot remain in employment after childbirth.

Beneficiaries covered by the latest amendment must be protected from discrimination through clear provisions.
Women’s empowerment can be achieved through universal initiatives, not by imposing conditionalities to avail benefits.

Access to welfare support has become even more critical as workers migrate frequently due to economic changes.

The twin imperatives are, therefore,

1) To create more jobs for women in a diversified economy, and

2) To provide social opportunity through maternal and child welfare measures.
Organized Vs Unorganized Retail Sector

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<tr>
<th>Organized Retail Sector</th>
<th>Unorganized Retail Sector</th>
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<tr>
<td>(i) The sector is registered by the government.</td>
<td>(i) The sector is not registered by the government.</td>
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<td>(ii) The terms of employment are regular.</td>
<td>(ii) The terms of employment are not regular.</td>
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<td>(iii) The sector is governed by various laws such as the Factories Act, Minimum Wages Act, etc.</td>
<td>(iii) The sector is not governed by any act.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(iv) This sector includes banks, hospitals, schools, etc.</td>
<td>(iv) This sector includes a large number of people who are employed on their own doing small jobs, etc.</td>
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After Mosul

**Intro:-** The loss of Mosul is perhaps the biggest military set back for the Islamic State. Iraq’s second largest city, Mosul was the jewel of the IS’s military gains, a place where its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared his ‘Caliphate’ in June 2014. A few weeks ago, the IS lost the ancient city of Palmyra to the Syrian army. In less than three years, the IS’s territory has shrunk- influence is now limited to some pockets, through sustained military operations in which several actors such as Kurdish and Shia militias. The defeat in Mosul does not mean that the threat from the IS is over. The group still has presence in some pockets in Iraq and in at least two major cities in Syria, Raqqa and suburbs of Deir ez-Zor. Even if the group loses its territories, it could transform itself into a stateless jihadist group like al-Qaeda and continue to target civilians in the region and beyond. But still, the larger argument is that without territories, the IS couldn’t claim to be a ‘Caliphate’. In the longer run, the respective governments should adopt a more comprehensive approach to deal with the asymmetric threats the group will pose.
In Iraq, the IS’s eventual defeat depends on how the government addresses Shia-Sunni tensions. Prime Minister al-Abadi appears to be clear on his preferences.

Unlike his predecessor whose Shia sectarian policies drove the Sunni population to revolt against Baghdad, Mr. al-Abadi tried to reach out to the Sunnis and promised to heal the sectarian wounds.

After the military victory in Mosul, he has to make sure that the Sunnis are treated as equal citizens and share power equitably.

This may not happen overnight given the deep sectarian divisions.

But Mr. al-Abadi should at least begin a process that would erase the suspicions among Sunnis about the government.

Else, IS-like outfits will continue to channelise support and regroup.
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Is noise the only way to get noticed?

Intro:-(BJP) have been in the news ever since the party came to power- Activists who pretend to be associated with the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal and the Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh too have had their day in the news.

There are two widely held explanations for such activism

1) First, the “fringe” is encouraged by the party as a strategy to appeal to more extreme elements within the party and to polarise politics.

2) Second, and more specific to the right wing, some believe that these individuals’ provocative actions and remarks are indicative of the government’s tacit support for Hindutva principles.

There are two other reasons.

The first, we believe, is that this behaviour is symptomatic of the tendency of lower-level politicians and often even bureaucrats to indulge in actions that would help them win favour among their political superiors.

Take the case of some ABVP leaders who have been involved in pushing a virulent nationalist agenda.
That career advancement of individuals in political parties and the bureaucracy is determined largely by random criteria, often on the whims of their political masters.

Lack of democracy

In India, unless one hails from
1) A well-established political dynasty or
2) Has a great amount of financial resources, he or she would find it extremely difficult to move up the political ladder.

Research by Rajkamal Singh and Rahul Verma shows that almost two-thirds of Assembly constituencies in Uttar Pradesh in the 2017 election were contested by families that have long been a part of electoral politics.

There is a complete absence of inner-party democracy at the local level.

The fact that parties do not have well-established party organisations at the local level elevates the randomness of advancement within their ranks.
Since most parties in India are highly centralised, access to the party high command is extremely restricted.

In order for them to get noticed by those in higher ranks, they need to create some sort of noise or disturbance.

The hierarchical nature of Indian parties means this lower rung simply does not feel the same level of responsibility towards the larger goal set by the party.

This leaves individuals at the local level with virtually no sense of responsibility towards many of the policy decisions.
In order to deal with this effectively, one option for political parties would be to come down on these individuals with a heavy hand.

A better and more sustainable option is to reduce the randomness in political advancement at the local level.

This can be done by introducing reforms that strengthen inner-party democracy during selection of candidates for different roles.

Such reforms are bound to face resistance from a system.

It is imperative that political parties take steps to alter the incentive structure of the system and give local politicians a larger stake in larger issues of the day.
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‘Lost’ Chandrayaan-1 found orbiting Moon by NASA

Ground-based radar technique helps to spot the spacecraft

**Page-2**

Four States come together for elephant census

Odisha, Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand have maximum number of human-elephant conflict

**SATYASUNDAR BARIK**

BHUBANESWAR

In what will probably be the first such attempt, the States of Odisha, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand have decided to conduct a synchronised elephant census between May 9 and 12. The four States together have the maximum number of human-elephant conflict-prone regions in India.

A decision to this effect was taken by senior Forest Department officials of the four States during a regional workshop on Friday.

The States will conduct the census based on an identical set of rules — using the direct and indirect counting methods. The dates have been chosen specifically as the sighting of elephants is expected to be easier on the night of May 10 – a full moon night.

The direct counting method is based on sighting of elephants while the indirect method uses the ‘dung decay’ formula, in which the analysis of elephant dung is used to estimate the population. The second method has already been used by Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

As per the 2015 census, Odisha has 1,954 elephants while Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal had approximately 700, 275 and 130 elephants, respectively.

“Earlier, field officials were deputed inside a forest area for direct counting. It was expected that the entire area would be covered. But, that is not possible because of many reasons. As a result, the population was underestimated in some places while duplication was reported elsewhere,” said S. S. Srivastava, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests of Odisha.

A simultaneous census will eliminate these factors.
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Shashi Kant Sharma

He is the [?]th CAG of India.

Q- Enjoys the same status as-

CAG has been elected the Chairman of the United Nations' panel of external auditors.

The CAG is mentioned in the Constitution of India under Article 148 – 151.
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI
The Rajya Sabha passed the Enemy Property (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2016 on Friday, in the sixth attempt after ordinances were passed to keep the Bill alive, following fierce objections by the Opposition parties.

As the government introduced the Bill for consideration in the Rajya Sabha, the entire Opposition walked out. The government’s determination to pass the Bill was evident as 10 Union Ministers were present in the House to ensure that it was passed.

Home Minister Rajnath Singh, who was supposed to reply to the debate on the Bill, did not say much observing that the Leader of the House Arun Jaitley had already explained it in detail.

The 49-year-old law was amended to guard against claims of succession or transfer of properties left by people who migrated to Pakistan and China.

Defer it, says Opposition
The Bill, which amends the Enemy Property Act, 1968, was passed by the Rajya Sabha despite the Opposition demanding deferring of the debate on the draft legislation for a threadbare deliberation next week.

The measure was passed by the Lok Sabha in March last year. After this, the Rajya Sabha had sent it to a select committee, following whose recommendations, the government had moved a number of amendments to it. After the amended Bill was passed by the Rajya Sabha, it was returned to the Lok Sabha for final passage just before it was adjourned for the day.

Earlier when the Bill was taken up in the Upper House, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said “many senior members including the Leader of the Opposition are not present in the House for a variety of reasons. Therefore the Bill should be taken up for discussion on the next working day.” His views were echoed by other members including Javed Ali Khanna (SP) and Sushil Kumar Shinde (AICC). However, the government took up the Bill for discussion and later got it passed by a voice vote after the entire Opposition, anguished over the government’s insistence, walked out of the House.

Determining effort: Finance Minister Arun Jaitley speaks in the Rajya Sabha in New Delhi on Friday. PPT/TV GRAB

Explaining the urgency to get the Bill passed, Mr. Jaitley said the ordinance effects the amendments in the Act would lapse on March 14 and this was a security issue also. Elaborating on the measure, he said it was a principle that the government should not allow commercial interests or properties of an enemy country or its citizens. Mr. Jaitley said the right of the enemy property should vest in the government of India and not in the heirs of the citizens of the enemy countries.

Union Ministers present in the House were Manohar Parrikar, J.P. Nadda, M. Venkaiah Naidu, Suresh Prabhu, Piyush Goyal, Prakash Javadekar, Ananth Kumar and Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi.

The amendments are aimed at plugging the loopholes in the Act to ensure that the enemy properties that have been vested in the Custodian remain so and do not revert to the enemy subject or firm.

The Bill also prohibits civil courts and other authorities from entertaining disputes related to enemy property.
At least 13 deaths have been reported due to swine flue (H1N1) virus since the beginning of the year in western Maharashtra.

Ms. Park becomes South Korea’s first democratically elected leader to be forced out of office, capping months of paralysis and turmoil over a corruption scandal that also landed the head of the Samsung conglomerate in jail.

Pakistan Parliament passes landmark Hindu Marriage Bill-The final text approved by both Houses includes the ‘Shadi Parath’ — a document similar to ‘Nikahnama’ in Islam. The ‘Shadi Parath’ will be required to be signed by a pandit and will be registered with the relevant government department.
Twenty-first (Amendment) Bill, and The Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill, to set up military courts to hear the cases of hardcore criminals- amendment in the army law to enable military to regulate these courts.

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The Japanese and U.S. navies are conducting joint exercises in the East China Sea as tension intensifies in the region following North Korea’s missile tests, local media

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The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) on Friday dismissed Air India’s claims of recording operational profits for the first time in a decade in 2015-16.
Continued...

- Net direct tax collections up to February grew 10.7% as compared with the same period of the previous financial year, while net indirect tax collections increased 22.2% during the same period.

- PAN may be made mandatory for TAN [Q-Full form-?]
- PAN stands for Permanent Account Number and TAN stands for Tax Deduction Account Number.
- TAN is to be obtained by the person responsible to deduct tax, i.e., the deductor.
- In all the documents relating to TDS and all the correspondence with the Income-tax Department relating to TDS one has to quote his TAN.
Mass coral bleaching again- Australia’s Great Barrier Reef

When water is too warm, corals will expel the algae (zooxanthellae) living in their tissues causing the coral to turn completely white—This is called coral bleaching.

When a coral bleaches, it is not dead—Corals can survive a bleaching event, but they are under more stress and are subject to mortality.
Chemistry Nobel winner George Olah dies at 89
detail was provided. Olah’s research brought him the 1994 Nobel Prize in chemistry for his groundbreaking study of the unstable carbon molecules known as carbocations.
Paved the way for more Effective oil refining and ways of producing less polluting forms of gasoline. (North American term for petrol)
The office of the Custodian are located in Bombay with a branch in Calcutta.

The ISRO is planning to launch Chandrayaan-2 in the first quarter of 2018.

Coral reefs are diverse underwater ecosystems held together by calcium carbonate structures secreted by corals. Coral reefs are built by colonies of tiny animals found in marine waters that contain few nutrients. Coral reefs are built from stony corals, which in turn consist of polyps that cluster in groups.

The CAG is ranked 9th and enjoys the same status as a judge of Supreme Court of India in Indian order of precedence.

The current CAG of India is Shashi Kant Sharma, who was appointed on 23 May 2013.

He is the 12th CAG of India.