

NEW GLOBAL ALLIANCES

Mum is the reaction from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the US President Donald Trump’s tariff attack on India and the threats to suspend the ongoing talks on a trade deal between two countries. It’s probably because Trump’s attack on India –imposing about 50% tariff - is irrational, borne out of a strange sense of settling score – and is unpopular even among his countrymen and the global leaders. Modi and India are not alone in cold shouldering Trump for his idiosyncrasy; countries like Canada, Brazil, China and others have given him the same treatment. This is definitely a blow to India exports to the US since our products would lose competitive edge others. Trump want India and other countries to bend to his knees and purchase stuff from the USA, including oil and military hardware. He is too cut up with India buying Raffale from France and most other stud from Moscow. India would once again be led by its interests and what its government thinks is right for the country. One sector that the USA is keen to enter into in India is the daily and farm sector. He has no idea how strongly Indians are attached to their soil and agriculture. It’s not merely a source of income for them but their pride and legacy that they would not like to jettison. A businessman by nature, Trump, probably, doesn’t understand the sentiment behind this in India. However, India is getting support and cooperation from the like-minded nations like Brazil, where President Lula refused to engage with the Trump saying he “doesn’t want to be humiliated.” Lula, to Trump’s chagrin, rather dialed Modi and the two spoke about enhancing their trade and mutual cooperation. This eventually means new trade and business alliances will come up and the US will be isolated. It should worry Trump!

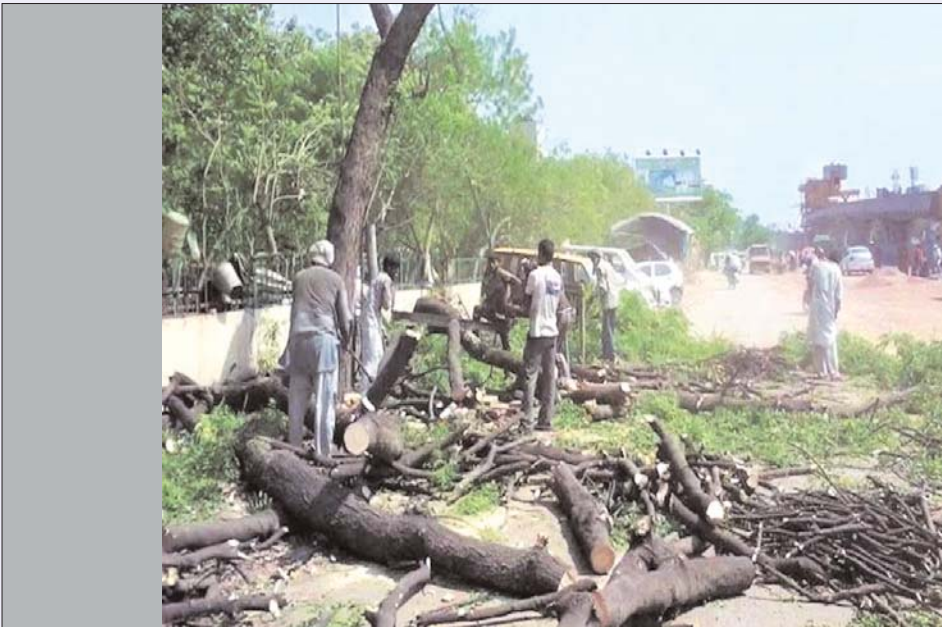
The Hypocrisy of Green Living: Cutting Trees, Buying Plants

Vishwarupa Bhat-tacharya

The traditional school holidays in Delhi, once confined to the summer, and winter vacations, have evolved in recent years. Today, schools in the city are also closing for holidays every year due to dangerously high Air Quality Index (AQI) levels. During such closures, residents express growing concerns about the escalating pollution, and the long-term negative effects it will have on the health and well-being of our children. While their concerns are entirely justified, and understandable, I find it rather hypocritical that they too are doing their bit to contribute to exacerbate the problem.

In gated communities, residential neighborhoods, and private properties, tree pruning is carried out recklessly. And the reasons are so absurd that it feels incredibly frustrating. Whether it is an aversion to falling leaves/branches, concerns about blocked sunlight or obstructed view or a mere preference for a tidier look, many residents order heavy trimming without understanding the science of proper pruning. In doing so, they overlook the fact that nature’s untamed beauty has its own charm and ecological significance.

What makes this situation concerning is that the government department responsible for regulating tree felling, and pruning appears to be struggling



with effective enforcement. Rather than strictly implementing the guidelines, and closely monitoring tree maintenance, there are instances where they carry out excessive cutting under the pretext of upkeep. Additionally, the workers assigned for pruning often seem to lack specialised training. Without adequate knowledge of proper tree care, they tend to follow instructions from residents, who may also be unfamiliar with responsible pruning practices. As a result, instead of assessing tree health, and applying scientific pruning methods, large branches are sometimes removed indiscriminately, sometimes leaving nothing but a bare stump.

The irony in all this is striking: after mindlessly felling or severely pruning the very trees

that have been growing for decades, the same individuals then turn around, and spend thousands of rupees on potted plants, hoping to achieve the same benefits — like air purification, and aesthetic value — that mature trees naturally provide on a much larger scale. This contradiction highlights a deep misunderstanding of the ecological importance of full-grown trees considering that a single large tree can contribute more to carbon sequestration, temperature regulation and habitat support than an entire room full of indoor plants. According to the US Department of Agriculture, in one year a mature tree will absorb more than 48 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and release oxygen in exchange. In contrast potted plant might absorb only around 1 to 3

pounds (0.45 to 1.36 kg) of carbon dioxide.

The irony doesn’t end here. Even after being aware that big trees can reduce surrounding temperatures (According to a Lancet planting more trees would reduce the mean temperature by 0.4C), they end up recklessly pruning trees and then turning to artificial means-air conditioners (ACs) — to cope with the heat, which directly contributes to higher energy consumption and exacerbates pollution.

Potted plants have become a modern symbol of eco-consciousness and sophistication. They are easy to maintain, visually appealing, and fit neatly into the minimalist designs of contemporary homes. According to various reports, the global indoor plant market is a significant

cantly growing market. Social media has further fueled this trend. Platforms like Instagram and Pinterest are filled with images of lush, green interiors that inspire people to create their own indoor jungles. While potted plants offer undeniable benefits — better air quality, stress relief, and aesthetics — they can never replace the vast environmental advantages of green cover outdoors. It’s a troubling paradox that many of us, when choosing where to live, prioritise green spaces and lush surroundings. We are willing to pay a premium for homes in neighborhoods that are green and tree-filled, valuing the tranquility, air quality and natural beauty that these spaces offer — help lowering stress, improving air quality, reducing noise, and providing aesthetic appeal. However, once we settle into these neighborhoods, the very greenery we sought out is often the first thing we end up destroying.

This behavior speaks of our disconnect between our environmental consciousness and our daily actions. We champion sustainability, advocate for cleaner air, and lament rising temperatures, yet our choices — whether it’s cutting down trees for convenience, over-relying on air conditioning, or prioritising aesthetics over ecological balance — contradict these very concerns.

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MINORITIES: BREAKING DOWN STEREOTYPES

Prafull Goradia

Shaukat Ali Quadri, in his article in this esteemed publication on July 31, has made wise and moderate suggestions, so that Muslims can retain their identity and yet be an integral part of the Indian populace. In this regard, it would be useful to first enumerate the compulsions that loyal Hindu citizens apprehend about their country.

The country is vast, with a correspondingly large population. The population speaks a variety of languages, not to mention the numerous dialects. There is a variety of castes; besides these, India also has religious diversities to take care of, not to speak of the racial differences that go with the largeness of the country, with its long and often contentious history.

India obtained its independence from Imperial Britain in August 1947, but before relinquishing the reins of power, several observers, mostly British, had predicted that if Indians were not careful, their country could be threatened with secessions and breakups. In short, having given Muslims the Pakistan the latter wanted, it was now for the Hindus to be cautious, if not also careful.

To that extent, India is not a typical nation of the kind the Western world is used to. Such a typical country should ideally have all or most of its citizens’

souls breathing together.

These are points that have never been driven into the minds of Muslim citizens who remained in India after August 15, 1947; Pakistan having been born the previous day. Each political party has propagated its own ideology, which generally has been music to the Muslim ear but not necessarily to the integrity of the country.

Islam has, from its beginnings, been a transnational religion, rather like Judaism and Communism. In these beliefs, the coming together of several peoples or groups is no big thing, nor is the break-up of a country a calamity to be mourned. Take the example of Egypt and Syria during the time of the presidency of Col. Nasser.

These two countries briefly formed a union called the United Arab Republic (UAR) in 1958, which dissolved in 1961. Again, a significant number of people in the western wing of Pakistan did not mind their eastern wing seceding. The Soviet Union comprised sixteen republics.

Moscow spontaneously let secede fifteen of these republics and go their way one day in 1991. In fact, the Soviet constitution provided for secession if any republic felt like seceding. This provision in the Soviet constitution reflects the transnational outlook of the communist ideology. Chaim Weizman, the first prophet of modern Israel, had said

that there were no Polish Jews, Hungarian Jews, Russian Jews, British Jews, etc, but Jews in France, Jews in Britain, Jews in Russia and so on. Chaim Weizman was also the president of the Zionist Organisation and later first president of Israel. “Workers of the world, unite” was the exhortation in the Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in 1848.

Indian Muslims, therefore, in today’s times, have to find a way to rise above these transnational impulses. There can be no denying that separatism, and the feeling of being ‘distinct’ or different from other communities, has been a particular feature of this community’s consciousness as well as conduct.

In India, this feeling of separateness and being distinct has existed vis-à-vis the Hindus of the country ever since the Muslims first came as invaders to settle in parts of the country — their rule over it and subsequent Hindu resurgence leading to the collapse of Islamic rule and the partition of the country after the departure of British colonial rule in 1947.

It is reasonable to expect that the members of all religions who expect personal laws to be retained would be of a similar bent of mind. In the Constitution of India, Article 14 insists on equality of all citizens. But by the time we reach Article 25, different communities are allowed different personal

laws. There is a Directive Principle of State Policy which expresses a desire of the Constitution to have a Uniform Civil Code, but after 75 years of the Constitution being in force, one community continues to enjoy its personal laws, which have been imported from abroad.

are allowed to have family trusts, while Muslims have the privilege that are called waqf, which is entirely different, and increasingly a matter of contention.

With so many variations, it is difficult to be assured that India is a united and well-integrated nation. The question of all the souls of the country breathing together could be a tall order. Everyone needs to be reminded that there are two nations in the neighbourhood that were once parts of the British Empire.

This makes the Hindu heart harbour fears that one minority or the other might be harbouring extra-territorial or transnational loyalties in its heart. It would be much preferable if the scope for such fears did not exist. We must also not forget that for decades together, the communist parties have been operating with weapons in the hands of many of their armed cadres. Transnational ideologies and the demands of loyalties they impose negate the very notion of national integration and oneness.

Biofuels for Sustainable and Clean Energy Transition

Binod Anand

Due to the increasing trend of green house gases (GHGs) after burning of fossil fuels, the global climate change impacts are affecting the environment, ecology, flora and fauna. The fossil fuels in the transportation, thermal power generation and other man-made activities create carbon footprints, and the built — environment becomes carbonised. There has been huge challenges in the environment, such as air and water pollution, waste disposal, electricity generation with carbon emissions. To address these challenges, Government of India have taken some key initiatives like bio-fuel policy, green hydrogen mission, net zero emission by 2030, 500 GW power generation from renewable energy by 2030. The Hon’ble Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas during India Energy Week held in February 2025 at New Delhi stated that there has been a link between economic activity and energy use and there will be requirement of more energy as time passes from \$4 trillion to \$10 trillion economy and beyond. India is moving ahead on sustainable avia-

tion fuel (SAF). It is preparing the ground for biofuels to be integrated into its supply chain. India has set a target of 5 per cent blending in SAF mandatory by 2030 and there is an opportunity for the export of the fuel of the future. India is also striving to increase the share of gas in the economy to 15 per cent from six per cent. Apart from this, India has also set a target of production of five million metric tons of green hydrogen annually.

\\Sustainable Biofuel Opportunity For India’s Energy Transition

As India has entered into the transitions towards a cleaner and more sustainable energy solutions, the role of biofuels has emerged as a critical component in reducing carbon emissions and mitigating threat of energy security. Its adoption of biofuels in the energy mix across the globe has been muted as it still faces scrutiny regarding food security, higher costs, and deforestation.

The Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) roundtable at India Energy Week 2025 brought together policymakers, industry leaders and international organisations to address the pressing need for harmonised sustainabil-

ity criteria for biofuels.

The leaders called for collaborative action to develop transparent, inclusive, and adaptable sustainability frameworks, which would enable sustainable biofuels’ broader adoption and long-term success.

The industry’s huge potential, including its ability to decarbonise and deliver one-third of today’s natural gas consumption and reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by 11 per cent has also been considered as one of the positive steps towards net zero emissions drive by 2030. Charlotte Morton Chief Executive of the World Biogas Association, however, has said that there are many challenges due to the lack of acceptability and acknowledgement of biofuels and various discouraging statements about bioenergy.

The biofuels industry is seeking the rightful place in the global energy dialogue. They are critical to decarbonising hard-to-abate sectors like transportation, aviation, shipping, and heavy industries.

Roberto Bocca, Head, Centre for Energy and Materials, and Member of the Executive Committee at World Economic Forum said that the future

of bioenergy systems is more complex because they bring more opportunities. More opportunities mean more complexities, meaning infrastructure investment will depend on clarity.

“So, it is critical that we understand the direction, size, volume, and not just the taxonomy but also the potential of these different solutions. This will mean the investments can flow more confidently,” said Bocca.

Over a year after the inception of GBA, led by the US, Brazil, and India, the alliance has expanded to include 28 countries and 12 organisations, including the World Bank, the World Economic Forum, and the International Energy Agency. It is playing a pivotal role in increasing the adoption of sustainable biofuels on the global stage. The joint collaborative efforts by the industry and academia on sustainable biofuels emphasised a shared commitment to accelerating biofuel development, adoption, and integration into the global energy mix, emphasising international cooperation, policy support, and technological advancements.

The Policymakers also explored the potential of non-food feedstocks

in advancing India’s biofuels sector, key opportunities, challenges, and policy considerations for scaling sustainable biofuels and strengthening energy security.

Biofuel for Sustainability

Using agriculture residue for ethanol and SAF production also addresses the problem of stubble burning and allows farmers to generate additional income from waste. It is just one of the agricultural residues (including maize, sugar, used cooking oil, besides municipal waste) that can be supplied as sustainable fuels to the industry. Alternate feedstock, such as sweet sorghum, seaweed, and reusable plastic waste, can give further impetus to SAF’s potential in the country.

As the world shifts to optimal use of all resources, municipal solid waste could be a key input for SAF. Its potential could further increase with higher solid waste generation, better segregation capabilities, and higher diversion of SAF production. Using agriculture residue for SAF production also addresses the problem of stubble burning and enables farmers to generate additional income from waste.

According to initial industry estimates, by 2040, India will have the opportunity to produce 8-10 million tonnes of SAF against the potential demand of around 4.5 million. By then, the SAF blending rate is seen at 15 percent. An estimated 230 million tonnes of surplus agricultural residue are unused and could also be used for the 2G ethanol plants being set up by the oil marketing companies.

SAF production in 2024 was around 1 million tonnes. According to IATA, SAF demand is expected to hit 50 million tonnes by 2050. With the right regulation, technologies, demand from consumers, and feedstock for production, could help create a new industry.

Vision 2040 for India’s aviation sector has estimated passenger traffic at 1.1 billion and freight traffic at 1.7 million tonnes. India currently accounts for a little over two percent of the global ATF demand.

Given India’s abundant feedstock for SAF and high exposure to exports for ATF (50 percent of ATF produced being exported), India is well-positioned to capitalise on the rising global demand for SAF.