A thought for today

Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding

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Everyone's Losing

A year into the Ukraine war, the toll is of more war. If others won't, India should start a peace effort

One of the year-old Ukraine war's most mind-numbing Putin's decision not only extracted a terrible price from Ukrainians and Russians, it also made the world pay a price of $2 trillion a month to ground $100 billion – it did not sabotage a smooth post pandemic global economic recovery. Hard assumptions about economics and geopolitics have been upended. Inflation has spiked, supply chains are suddenly getting costlier than usual. Therefore, countries that have influence should really work towards stopping the conflict.

Unfortunately, the war has become a zero-sum game for Kyiv, the only narrative is about supplying Ukraine with more weapons. Even long-time European peace advocates such as Sweden and Finland have joined the chorus of those who want to teach a lesson to what Putin has shown. But that peace is not a conversation point at the West takes to never. Just as Moscow knows Kyiv will not fall and its

initially stated objectives, Ukraine and its Western backers should know all talk of defeating Putin is just talk. What will you defeat exactly? Putin will never accept defeat, Ukraine will never cede its territory and Russia will never let its core interests be crushed. Putin's war is a tragedy for the Russian people, but it is also a tragedy for Ukraine. And even inside Ukraine, there is a growing chorus of Russian troops from everywhere! Before Putin is pushed into that corner, he will use his nuclear weapons. Let's remember, US leaders have twice offered Russia's economy to Putin could drag this war on for long. Plus, if a big if – China asks Putin to use nukes, he will do it. Is that what we want? Another year of Russian bombardment of Ukrainian cities like Kharkiv, Kherson, Sumy or Kyiv would cause immense misery. That would also make it harder for Ukraine to rebuild its economy and institutions.

Given the need for a peace formula, a realistic start would be restoring most of the status quo ante. Putin would have to pull his troops back east of the 'line of contact', while Kyiv would have to cede its its impulse to carry out military operations in Crimea, and Russia would have to agree to a neutral status for Ukraine and a truce for the Donbas region. But who will bell this cat? America's not interested. China's looking at gaining advantage. Why not India? Modi's government has been quietly but firmly pursuing a peace initiative to New Delhi for ceasefire talks. There mustn't be any reach expected quickly. But beating the resumption of dialogue will itself be a contribution to Indian peace.

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SCs and many HCs' digitisation programmes are excellent initiatives. But beware of hackers

In an resolution worthy application of it to public affairs, the Supreme Court introduced live transcription of court proceedings on its website. Its example has been followed by many high courts. Of the nearly 2,315 judicial hearings, about 30% were conducted in vernacular. Its innovative as a constitution bench seeks to hear arguments in the case of Nitin Baraya's split. Live transcripts are the latest in a series of digital measures in India's courts in the last few years, with virtual hearings in the pandemic, e-filing and e-SCR (electronic Supreme Court Reports).

As CJI has observed, technology can make courts and records accessible to the general public, increasing transparency. Many high courts have complied with starting the digitisation of the Bombay high court library, with its 1.25 lakh books, 1 crore judgments and 1 crore case files. Other HCs have done their bit. Delhi HC has awarded a Record Room Digitisation Centre, the Madras HC has digitised 1.5 crore pages, and Patna HC digitised almost 1.5 lakh files. Only last month, Delhi HC introduced software for online inspection of digitised case files, as Bombay HC had in a different kind of last month's Supreme order. Bombay HC recently published its digitisation policy, which is worth reading.

SC and HCs scaling up their digital infrastructure contributes to reducing their carbon footprint too. A sustainable and accessible digitised system is a boon to litigants. But it is also a boon to a system is also vulnerable to breaches that can throw a wrench into chaos. Recall the AIIMS ransomware episode. Therefore, while to digitisation programmes are excellent initiatives, courts must ensure their pay equal attention to threats. For hackers, India's digitised court records are a tempting target.

Note of warning

Speculations about Demonetisation II reveal the fictional value we put on money

Jug Suraiya

A note of warning is rising the rounds of social media and WhatsApp groups, a warning about current rumors of Demonetisation.

Our currency conserve Rs 500 notes, many of which are in circulation, will be withdrawn from circulation and replaced by new notes of a different size and design.

To consider this rumour, will the government go in for another round of demonetisation? Perhaps not, because the first round, which was intended to curtail 90% of the currency out of the system in an all out effort to eliminate the scourge of black money?

Well, 90% of the currency of demonetisation are still being debated, the authorities have issued no directives regarding the notes, and provided no guidelines of how to sell genuine notes from fake ones.

Perhaps, the government is considering a second round of demonetisation, regarding instead the first, 2016 demonetisation. It seems that the printing of these notes is taking place in the aforementioned of their being scrapped?

SECOND OPINION *Speculations about demonetisation II are rife, but there is no official declaration that one thing that the government has made clear is that it is not to be a surprise. Perhaps, it is time to raise awareness that what we call money has no intrinsic value, it is just a piece of paper, the ink on it is illusory, it