

End overdependence on coal

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Climate change and global warming are destabilizing the planet. In 2018, energy-related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions rose by 1.7 per cent. This amounts to 33.1 gigatons of CO₂. India pledged last week at COP 26 in Glasgow to reduce GHG emissions from its energy sector and achieve net zero emissions by 2070. India produced 106.3 billion units of power in December 2020, of which 75 per cent came from coal-fired thermal power plants. Just before the COP 26 summit, in mid-September, 2021, India faced a record shortage of coal supplies that threatened to undermine its fossil fuel-dependent energy infrastructure. The crisis should have propelled the nation's leaders to devise alternative policies to limit its dependence on coal and look towards renewable alternatives.

Coal-dependent thermal power units account for about 70 per cent of India's power production. On 1 October 2021, it was announced that 135 thermal power units across India had less than four days' worth of coal in their reserve. The reason for this coal supply shortage can be traced to new geopolitical developments in the region: the AUKUS naval deal coupled with incessant monsoon rains have reduced coal supplies from mines.

Punjab State Power Corporation Ltd. declared on 9 October, 2021, that most of its thermal power units were operating at reduced capacity. The Delhi power minister's dialogue with power distribution firms revealed that some of the power plants had less than one day's worth of coal in their reserve. The Delhi government sought the Union government's assistance to manage this impending power crisis. Several power distributors such as Tata Power urged consumers to use energy judiciously. The coal shortage could result in extensive blackouts in the northern Indian states and the National Capital



region.

India's over-dependence on coal is a major reason behind this crisis. While the whole world is looking for greener energy solutions, India is still dependent on coal for most of its energy supply. As per 2018 records, Germany, Japan, Mexico, France and the United Kingdom have been able to reduce their GHG emissions. China, India and the United States accounted for 80 per cent of the GHG emission rise in 2018.

India should look to sustainable energy alternatives in the wake of this coal crisis. This is not only economically taxing for the government but also an inconvenient pill to swallow ahead of major state elections. This energy shortage could cripple the industries that are re-opening after

pandemic lockdowns.

There has been a sharp increase in power demand since August 2021. This sudden increase was not anticipated by the power generation and distribution companies. To make matters worse, the cost of imported coal from Indonesia has increased from \$86 per ton in April to \$162 per ton today. The reason is the sudden increase of coal demand in the Chinese markets. After the recent finalisation of the AUKUS naval deal, the relationship between Australia and China is at a historic low. China is now looking for alternative suppliers for its domestic coal demands. Caught in this political struggle, India has to bear the brunt of its over-dependence on coal-fired thermal power.

Nuclear power can be an effective

alternative to replace India's dependence on coal. Nuclear power is greener than coal and more efficient in producing energy. The World Nuclear Association's Cooperation in Reactor Design Evaluation and Licensing (CORDEL) and the Nuclear Energy Agency look out for safer and technologically advanced nuclear reactor designs. There has been a drastic reduction in radiation leakage from generation I to recent generation III+ reactors. This makes transitions to nuclear energy both environmentally friendly and economically viable.

Other sustainable solutions are renewables. India planned to invest around Rs 24 trillion in its National Energy Pipeline scheme. Clean energy is the chief focus of this scheme.

This would free the nation from the crippling economic impacts of its dependence on hydrocarbon imports. India spent over \$111.9 billion alone on oil imports between 2018 and 2019. In 2020, India's coal imports were around \$15.9 billion.

India must diversify its energy programmes towards 'cleaner' and 'greener' alternatives. This will also make the country independent of fluctuations in the global hydrocarbon market. Coal shortages are a call to India's policy makers to prioritize the green energy transition in the country.

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100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

With regard to the statement which appeared in our Mail Telegram respecting the control of oilfields in Mesopotamia, it is only fair to point out that Sir R. Waley Cohen, of the Shell Company, has written a long letter in which he traverses the suggestion that behind the Shell group there are interests detrimental to those of Great Britain. Sir Henri Deterding, before the declaration of war, placed the whole resources of the Shell group at the disposal of the British Empire, and has always been one of those who had a clear insight into the dangers of Germany's commercial methods. As for the supposed hostility between the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and the Shell group, Sir R. Waley Cohen remarks that without the help of his company it would have been difficult for the Anglo-Persian Oil Company to achieve the steady progress in production which they have made. There is also some misapprehension as to the Turkish Petroleum Company. This company was formed by Sir Henry Babington Smith, and the Shell Company entered into an arrangement with the Turkish Petroleum Company only at the instance of the British Government. It is evident, therefore, that the insinuations which have been made against the Shell Company are totally unfounded and have doubtless been put forth by interested persons who desire to prevent a friendly cooperation of British oil companies in Mesopotamia.

NEWS ITEMS

BRITISH TRADE WITH INDIA

The Department of Overseas Trade issues today, Mr. Ainscough's general review of the conditions and prospects of British trade with India during the last two fiscal years, revised up to October. Mr. Ainscough says that the period was so abnormal and has been so markedly transitional that it is extraordinarily difficult to draw safe conclusions from the many tendencies which emerge. Although the United Kingdom has largely regained its pre-war position in the Indian market, there are distinct signs that America and Japan will retain the foothold they gained during the war, while German and Belgian competition is steadily growing. Mr. Ainscough points out that India is now mistress in her own house in fiscal matters, and the watchword among Indian politicians, industrialists and business men today is protection for Indian industries.

EMPIRE COTTON GROWING

The Administrative Council of the Empire Cotton Growing Corporation has held its first meeting. Reference was made to the minority of spinners who did not pay a levy of sixpence per bale towards expenses, which were conditional on the Government's grant of a million sterling from the profits of Egyptian cotton control, but it was pointed out that it was illegal to make the levy obligatory. Cotton manufacturers, therefore, will be asked to express their willingness to support legislative action in order to make the levy compulsory. Speaking at a luncheon of the Empire Cotton Growing Committee Mr. Stanley Baldwin emphasised the fact that the Committee was tackling cotton problems in the right way by close cooperation between masters and men towards a common end.

GERMANY'S INDEMNITY PAYMENT

Addressing the Reichstag Taxation Committee today, Herr Wirth intimated that the Reparations Commission had declined to discuss the possibility of a moratorium if Germany did not make her indemnity payments in January and February. Herr Wirth confidently looked forward to long term credit operations in which connection the Government had been sounding the markets of the world. He declared that the visit of Herr Stinnes to London was private, although he had previously informed the Government of the journey. The Chancellor would like to see an increasing effort on the part of German business concerns, including banks and trade unions, to get into touch with influential quarters abroad.

RAILWAY FARES AND PROFITS

Mr. Bell of the Railway Board, in a joint reply to the Southern India Chamber of Commerce's memorandum and the representations of the Railway Passengers' Association referring to the State management of the railways says that it is a mistake to suppose that the railway companies are making large profits for themselves and that in fact nine-tenths of the earnings go to the Government and only one-tenth to the companies. Railway fares had had to be enhanced to meet increased working expenses. The Government had demarcated the maximum and the minimum rates and the companies had the option to fix the actual rates between those limits.

Little red children and Grandpa Xi

SHIH-WEN SUE CHEN AND
SIN WEN LAU

When students in China returned to classrooms in September 2021, they were provided with a new series of textbooks outlining China's president Xi Jinping, or "Grandpa Xi's", political philosophy.

Each textbook on "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for the New Era", as Xi's political philosophy is officially called, is tailored to students at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels.

"Xi Jinping Thought" was enshrined into the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) Constitution in 2017. Although the main stated aims are to remain committed to reform and build a "moderately prosperous society", the realities of this political philosophy has been a tightening of party discipline and curtailing of social freedom.

While prior textbooks were focused on the CCP, the new versions centre on China's paramount leader. In this way they reflect the growing personality cult of Xi Jinping, eerily reminiscent of the days of China's founding father Mao Zedong.

According to China's National Textbook Committee, the "textbooks reflect the will of the Communist Party of China and the nation and directly impact the direction and quality of talent cultivation."

In particular, the Committee stated: "Primary schools should foster love and right understanding for the Party, country and socialism in students."

The core socialist values highlighted in the textbooks include prosperity, patriotism and friendship. Targeted at children, the moniker



of "Grandpa Xi" is part of the ongoing strategy towards creating a personality cult in China. Authoritarian regimes like the Soviet Union also used the grandfather figure ("Grandpa Lenin") as part of propaganda aimed at children. This enhanced Lenin's personality cult across the Soviet nations.

Political scientist Pao-min Chang defines the personality cult as "The artificial elevation of the status and authority of one man [...] through the deliberate creation, projection and propagation of a godlike image."

Like Lenin, a personality cult around Mao Zedong emerged during China's Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Although later leaders Deng Xiaoping, the architect of China's economic reform, and Wen

Jiabao, who was Premier between 2003 and 2013, are popularly known as "Grandpa Deng" and "Grandpa Wen," they did not overtly push for this image.

Xi returns to Mao in his efforts to build a personality cult around himself. Since coming to power, he has cultivated the image of being "a man of the people" in a bid to make his authoritarianism more palpable to the masses.

The new primary school textbooks emphasise Xi's wisdom, friendliness and care for the children. Early signs of this strategy can be seen in government propaganda video, Grandpa Xi is Our Big Friend, that circulated online in 2015.

The video was recorded at Yan'an Yucai Primary School in Shaanxi. The

location is significant because the school was founded by Mao Zedong in 1937.

In the video, Xi Jinping is not presented as a distant authority figure. Instead, Grandpa Xi is a caring "big friend." The children sing that his "warm smile" is "brighter than the sun." Images of children waving sunflowers and lyrics that describe Xi's visit as "better than the warmth of a spring day" serve to accentuate his friendly disposition.

Most importantly, the children sing about the need to "study diligently" to "achieve the Chinese Dream". This dream is Xi Jinping's vision for China to become a prosperous society.

The children wear red scarves and red stars in the video. These symbols represent the national flag. The colour red alludes to the blood of revolutionary martyrs. They remind children of their connection to the nation and the Party.

Xi wears a red scarf in the video. In one scene, he places a red scarf over the shoulders of a child. This accessory and gesture are depicted in the 2021 primary school textbooks as well. The act of placing a scarf on a child signifies children taking on the mantle of happily fulfilling Grandpa Xi's vision.

The textbook for lower primary students contains photos of Xi planting trees with children and meeting them at school.

The books include statements such as: "Grandpa Xi Jinping is very busy with work, but no matter how busy he is, he still joins our activities and cares about our growth."

Xi shares his memories of being emotional when joining the Young Pioneers of China (the CCP's youth organisation) in 1960. He then invites

readers to describe their own feelings about becoming a part of the Young Pioneers, thus encouraging young people to join.

The textbooks use illustrations with speech bubbles to make the ideological content more interesting. Some illustrations are of students sitting around a table teaching each other Grandpa Xi's expectations to become a person of "good moral character" and who is "diligent and thrifty".

The books also emphasise acquiring knowledge about "science and technology," as well as being "creative and innovative".

The children must cultivate these markers of good citizenship to become what the books refer to as "qualified builders and successors of socialism". This rhetoric of children as the hope of the nation has been in use since the late nineteenth century.

The emphasis on being "qualified" suggests children must live up to the expectations set out by Xi. The textbooks imply this is only possible because of Grandpa Xi's continued care for them.

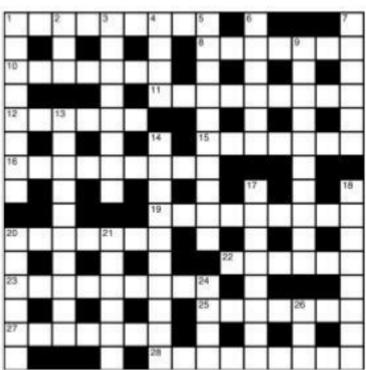
This image of Grandpa Xi as a "big friend" is a gentler form of propaganda than that seen during Mao's Cultural Revolution. Propaganda aimed at children during the Cultural Revolution positioned the Party as the surrogate parent. It also highlighted children's violence as they fought for the socialist cause. Young Red Guards sang patriotic songs and read the Little Red Book. These rituals fostered Mao's cult of personality.

It remains to be seen whether the new school curriculum is a harbinger of future deification of Xi Jinping.

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CROSSWORD

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YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



ACROSS

- Hunt, wearing nursing uniform, is a prickly individual (3,6)
- Trump cut short meeting with prostitute, we hear, which is novel (7)
- Outside broadcast follows Frank (4,3)
- Patrol old mills for a lot of money (3,6)
- Ordnance is harmless in main transport channel (6)
- Developed thick skin about love, or just cold-hearted? (7)
- Usurer left Noah's, upset by his mode of transportation (4,5)
- Instruction to make payment to prevent heartless child collection (4,5)
- White privilege ultimately seen in small child having everything (3,4)

- Pulls off tense clergyman (6)
- Cooked steak with ham and eggs, at first, in hurry (4,5)
- South American bishop going to spa for day of relaxation (7)
- Friend of Dorothy drinking Burgundy perhaps in provincial capital (7)
- Route maps confused pest controller (9)

DOWN

- Dodgy OAPs look after gold in financial centre (3,5)
- Soprano thrown out of bar in hail (5)
- Again, bust chair? (8)
- Upset, start to reside in temporary building (4)
- Unusual tip to stop theft showing over-attention to detail (3-7)

- Georgia: country providing fossil fuel (3,3)
- Nude Bristolian covers junk (6)
- Welcome females in the morning at European's great collection (4,2,4)
- Pulls Emily Ratajkowski, for starters, in emotional movie (4-6)
- Flowers might flower around spring and summer, primarily (3,7)
- A young explorer is getting expelled shortly, but is appealing (8)
- Small, small person excited to cheat (6,2)
- Wake up in bed containing Eccles and Oscar (4,2)
- Sunbathe naked to entertain Olympian (6)
- Overthrown monarchy welcomes son; he had lost his birthright (4)
- Perhaps Charles is cycling in Scottish town (3)

NOTE: Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required. (By arrangement with The Independent, London)

