**ON REVOLUTIONS**

Political reform needs to extend beyond overthrowing despotic regimes, says Deepak Lal

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**The Harshad Mehta fallout**

**WEEKEND RESUMENOW 7**

**T NUNAN**

The prime minister’s answers to questions put to him by TV editors on Wednesday evening might have been less than convincing on key points, though his late hour held this reader – like never before. The result today was a better one for the functioning markets than before. For after all, we should thank Harshad Mehta.

Could the multitude of scams that have erupted over the past six months lead to similarly positive outcomes? Yes, if the government followed through with its promises. Most of the controversies relate to real-estate sectors, land and real estate, scarce natural resources (iron ore, coal, upholstery, etc), and finally government contracts. And if it happened, solutions in all these areas are not only feasible, some of them are already in the final stages of implementation.

For instance, a new draft law on mining is being prepared to address some of the issues, as well as to streamline the licensing process. The Centre’s aim is to make mining more transparent and ensure that contracts are awarded on a competitive basis.

In the real-estate sector, the government is considering a new registration law that would make it easier for consumers to get their rights. The government is also working on a national housing policy to ensure affordable housing for all.

With regard to coal, the government has approved the coal linkages of all proposed power plants, and is working on a national coal strategy to ensure a stable supply of coal to industries. The government is also considering the introduction of a coal cess to discourage the use of coal in power generation.

In the context of government contracts, the government is looking at ways to make the procurement process more transparent and efficient. It is also considering introducing a new framework for the award of government contracts to ensure better value for money.

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**A living strike in Punjab**

**THE EGYPTIAN RIDLE**

India has a place in a Pakistani village

SUNIL SETHI

Ireland has a place in a Pakistani village. It is a shrine of a Sufi saint, built many years back by a Pakistani despondent of an English soldier. The shrine of this saint has a cairn from the Irish countryside, and a small Irish stone is in the prayer hall. The Irishman who brought this stone was a Sikh from Amritsar who had lived in Ireland for many years and had gone to the Holy Land for pilgrimage. He had brought this stone from the sea to the shrine, and had built a small Irish cottage beside it, to house his house and his family.

In this village, I have seen the Irish language spoken by the elderly, and the dialect of the language is still heard. I have seen the Irish flag flying from the roof of the house, and the Irish national anthem played during the dusk. I have seen the Irish football team playing in the village, and the Irish cricket team playing against the Pakistani team. I have seen the Irish wine cellars, and the Irish beer gardens. I have seen the Irish pubs, and the Irish bars. I have seen the Irish cuisine, and the Irish music. I have seen the Irish culture, and the Irish traditions. I have seen the Irish people, and the Irish spirit. I have seen the Irish land, and the Irish sea. I have seen the Irish sky, and the Irish dreams. I have seen the Irish land, and the Irish sea. I have seen the Irish sky, and the Irish dreams.

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