

Back of the book

Palpitations by Anuvab Pal

Swadeshi jargon manch

Some weeks ago, a small article in a leading business daily read, "SIDBI, AMFI, CII, NASSCOM, all happy." Now if you, like many of us, are unaware of the vast ocean of acronyms, jargon and abbreviations that dominate every aspect of Indian business-speak, you'd be forgiven for thinking that SIDBI, AMFI etc. were not respected Indian business organisations but names of Russian rockets or Star Wars characters ("C3PO, R2D2, OB1, YODA, all happy"). Those of us not blessed with the good fortune of walking the hallowed halls of the IIMs (which is around 999.5 million people) or, as MBA students do, sharpening our jargon in many GDs ("group discussions" in business English or "chatting" in normal English), there is very little available for those with a modest curiosity in business and finance.

There's no place more prevalent for jargon mania larger or deeper than Mumbai. Recently, a leading rupee expert at a serious economic conference in a fancy

South Mumbai hotel ballroom proclaimed in front of his graph-infested power-point, "If the rupee softens or hardens, we will push it from the rear and it will begin moving." Important economists with important moustaches nodded in profuse agreement, whereas I was trying to figure out when the rupee stopped being a currency and turned into a fruit on wheels. I asked a gentleman in the

"If the rupee hardens or softens, we'll push it from the rear and it will begin moving."

audience afterwards what the speech meant and he replied, "I have no idea, but it sounded deep and he had a British accent. Also his graphs had lots of colours. I usually come to these conferences for the snacks".

Consider this sentence from a stock analyst at a Mumbai brokerage house on a television channel, "This stock cannot keep

moving up like this without appropriate realisation." It made me think of the stock turning into a philosopher, thinking to itself, "I can't keep moving up like this, what have I become? A shallow Page 3 stock? Am I leaving my little stock friends behind? I should never forget where I came from." I think the most frightening prospect for the world of Indian business and finance, more than losing money, is being understood.

Sometimes perhaps, the most complex business questions require the simplest answers and everything else turns out, in the end, to be a random waste of big words. Recently, at the end of an hour-long lecture on "Causes of Indian Poverty" a senior economist sprinkled confusing math equations with words like "circumnavigation" and "deregulatory statutes", ended his thesis with the following: "And so ladies and gentlemen, to summarise; the main cause of poverty seems to be, as my analysis shows us, the lack of wealth."

Fast & loose

If I can limit the number of heterosexuals entering the Peel, then that helps me keep the safe balance.

According to Tom McFeely, manager of Melbourne's Peel Hotel, banning heterosexuals from entering his pub is the only way to stop them from poking fun at homosexuals.

I sincerely believe that my chest-line is looking good. Women have cleavage and I have a great chest-line.

Shekhar Suman preens.

They go underneath, inside the nose. Anywhere you can put diamonds, we've put diamonds.

Damien Hirst is excited about his 50 million-pound diamond encrusted skull.

For a moment I thought he was the guy who ran out naked screaming "Eureka" after discovering the world was round!

Amitabh Bachchan confuses John Galliano with Archimedes.

When there is a full moon out, we look at the sky and say, "Oh no, all the idiots will be out tonight."

Terry Wing, a bouncer at a Brighton club, believes there is a connection between the full moon and violent behaviour.

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