

## STEPPING-UP INDO-BANGLA RELATIONS

The two countries India and Bangladesh celebrate golden jubilee of their relationship which is unique and organic, cemented in battlefield during the glorious War of Liberation in 1971. This relationship has come a long way in the last half century and the people of the two nations have traversed a great distance together. As we move towards the first half century of Indo-Bangladesh relations, it is time to look take stock of the achievements, acknowledge the problems and challenges and think outside the box about what can be done to take the relationship for the Generation next.

As a new generation takes over, who may value the historical and civilisational bonds shared between the two countries but may not have the same emotional investment in the relationship or the collective memories shared by the previous generation, so the question arises as to how do we make the relationship relatable for them? In an age of geopolitical change, how do Dhaka and New Delhi's younger generation navigate the changing landscapes in unison? Can we move beyond the rigmarole of routine bilateral issues and forge greater convergence on global issues?

Despite myriad challenges, our relations currently are on a very firm footing. A large portion of the credit goes to political leadership in both Dhaka and New Delhi who have invested a significant amount of political capital in bringing the relationship to its current level. This year, the highlight of Republic day parade will be the contingent from Bangladesh consisting of 96 soldiers.

There are three major issues challenging the youth of both the nations and hence a collaborative mechanism for the same could be worked out. Collaboration on counter terrorism and de-radicalisation. Strategies need to be worked out as this is fast becoming a significant challenge. Development of joint strategies on Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) and developing combined net assessments on evolving threat of violent extremism and terrorism in the coming decades. Countering the financing of terrorism is another potential for bilateral cooperation for countering activities of the terror and militant groups and must be explored.

Post-COVID, the unprecedented economic downturn is expected to offer a fertile ground for youth-radicalisation by terror/militant groups operating in the region context, a potential nexus between organised crime and terrorism needs to be explored in near future. Apart from terror, extremism is a major regional security threat. Means countering and containing these extremist organisations/forces must also be initiated with a similar urgency by both the countries.

In the post-COVID world, monitoring of the Cyber Domain is a necessity as most transactions and engagements have and shall continue to occur on virtual platforms. Use of the cyber domain by terror/ groups for radicalisation, which has already been an existing threat, shall also increase. Owing to the common threats faced by the two countries, potential for bilateral cooperation for countering such activities in the cyber space exists and must be explored.

The issue of illegal Bangladeshi migrants needs to be given appropriate consideration, but extremism must be stopped on both sides. Secular politics must be mutually encouraged. Instances of border killings of Bangladeshis (many as cow smugglers), etc., for example, often receive significant publicity, adversely influence Bangladeshi sentiments, and hurt bilateral relations. Over 1,000 such instances have occurred in the past decade. The issue needs to be tackled more maturely. With respect to the Rohingya issue, Bangladesh has been disappointed with India, China, as well as Russia. Pressure should have been put on Myanmar to take its people back.

Connectivity, tourism, and bilateral trade between the two countries is crucial and has great potential for improvement. While both India and Bangladesh engage more with farther countries, low mutual engagement between the neighbours is a concerning aspect. Bilateral trade of USD 9.8 billion was carried last year. Two Special Economic Zones have been offered by Bangladesh to India in this light. More Indian companies should be involved in infrastructural development especially in building roads and hydroelectricity sector. At least, 30 points can be opened in borders for better cooperation of trade and greater people-to-people contact. This connectivity will help tackle the vulnerability of the Siliguri Corridor. Plus, easing of Visa regulations is an aspect that needs urgent attention, given the perpetual difficulties and delays in the process. On the education front, quota for Bangladeshi Students should further increase in Indian Universities.

With the younger generation interest in the internet and cyber domain, there remains is an immense scope and opportunity for greater technological collaboration especially in the areas of Artificial Intelligence, communications technology such as 5G and satellite technology. More integration of the scientific communities and creation of IT Hubs and networks not only by the Government but also the private players will open a window of opportunities for the youth of both the nations.

There is a need to make the relationship more centered on the emerging generation. Greater contact between the youth of the two countries is a need of the hour. In an era of disinformation, fake news and deep fakes it is quite easy especially for the youth segment of the population to fall prey to misperceptions about each other. Enhanced contact will not only dispel myths about each other but also open an opportunity for constructive debate and conversation and opportunity to develop greater understanding. We spend a lot of time on talking about connectivity of roads, bridges and waterways but it is the connectivity of the minds that is the ultimate investment.

The youth of both India and Bangladesh need to continue their journey together as partners for the coming decades in areas of education, information sharing, cyber domain, infrastructural developments and deradicalization efforts. This will help in moving our friendship towards becoming a more progressive, sustainable and rock solid.

Jyoti M. Pathania and Shafqat Munir

# Sarvanand Koul Premi - Martyr to a belief

■ B L SARAF

In mid sixties of the 20th Century, I was pursuing graduation studies in S P College Srinagar. Coming from a far off place called Shopian and having been brought up in a rural atmosphere it seemed natural that whenever my father-Pandit Saroop Nath, be in the city he would, invariably, send for me or, time permitting, himself visit the college. Father did so to enquire about my welfare: or, may be, assure himself that his rustic son, who was new to the place, had not fallen to the charm of 'other side' of the city. True to the pattern, one day in early summer of 1964, father, who had come down, sent a word that I should see him after my class-work was over. The suggested meeting place was the office of 'Roznama Khadmat' then an official newspaper of the ruling National Conference party. The place was convenient because it lay opposite to my college - in a lane taking off from the Residency road, near India Coffee House, abutting the 'Bund'. The iconic Ahdoo's Hotel was in close neighbourhood.

Those days Khadmat was being edited by Pandit Nand Lal Watal, a veteran journalist and an authentic freedom fighter whom I had met with earlier, in company of my father. Before Independence, my father himself had spent precious period of his life fighting the autocratic rule which made him suffer incarceration of many years.

He was one among the few Kashmiri Pandits who had joined National Conference, soon after it metamorphosed from its earlier incarnation of Muslim Conference, in 1939. Sheikh Abdulla was instrumental in the changeover as Jawaharlal Nehru had advised him to carry along all sections of J&K, so that a meaningful campaign could be launched to usher in a democratic rule in the state.

Entering the office I bowed to Watal, who was in the chair and those seated around the table - father included. I was signaled to take a seat in a corner which I did. They were in a serious discussion which at times had an animated tone - at times it assumed a somber note. Sometimes they felt silent. Nonetheless, their silence was too eloquent to miss the underlying worry and concern for the future.

The seriousness of the discussion was palpable and quite understandable. Pt Jawaharlal Nehru had just passed away. The State, in general, and Kashmir in particular had, in the winter months, undergone a political and religious upheaval of a larger proportion. People in the Valley had come out on the roads in what looked to be a near revolt against India. Reason for the uprising was a despicable act.

A sacred relic was found missing from the revered place in Hazratbal Shrine. The diabolical act caused widespread anger among the followers which in no time assumed an anti-India colour. Knowledgeable persons hold that it had not been the political sagacity of Maulana Massoudi, who lead the people in Kashmir in those tumultuous times, and the political cum administrative deftness employed by Lal Bahadur Shastri-deputed by Nehru to bring situation back from the brink-game would have been over for India then, in January 1964.

The political fallout locally, however, couldn't be avoided which effectively spelt the end of Bakshi Gulam Mohammad's political carrier and ensured rise of G M Sadiq to the throne. Nehru, too, suffered a shock which, apparently, brought his end nearer.

When the meeting ended and people moved out of the office, father signaled me to follow him close by. After enquiring about my welfare and progress in studies, father relieved me. The significance of what followed thereafter recalls the whole scene to my mind, rather vividly. No sooner had I moved towards my destination than father summoned me back and told me to pay respects to a

gentleman standing alongside him. Together, both had moved out of the Khadmat office.

I did as ordered. Whereupon father gave a detailed introduction of the person, his achievements in the field of art and literature and the role he had played in spread of education in the far flung area of Kokernag.

Father respectfully called him Master Premi (suffixed was his pen name) and recounted his association with Masterji when both were incarcerated in quit Kashmir movement. And the illustrious person, for whom I was summoned back to pay respects, happened to be Pt Sarvanand Koul Premi of Soaf-Shali, Kokernag. Then I came to know that, driven by his journalistic propensity, Premi ji was a regular visitor to the Khadmat office.

Frankly speaking, even such a imposing C V of a man wouldn't impress, much, a young man like me (as I was then) who had just come out of adolescence. At that stage of life, for young and college going students, generally, Cine stars and film songs-not the seriously written poetry and serious looking poets-are objects of attraction and interest.

Nonetheless, there was something in persona of the man that I felt compelled to have a second look of him. Masterji looked a typical Kashmiri Pandit, had sharp facial features and a slim physique where on his well-tailored Bandgalla jacket and trousers fitted appropriate. His well-tended luxurious crop of hair was properly combed and, in the mould of so many male matinee idols of the time, had a straight parting line. If I recall correctly, Master ji had a Tilak dotting his forehead.

All in all, his physical turn out exhibited a youngish and an immaculate demeanor, normally not a hallmark of the carefree and unassuming rural life and the raw surroundings, Premi had come from. That was my first acquaintance with the person and thus got the sketch of Premiji ingrained in my mind!

Later on, at number of times I did have fleeting glimpse of Premiji on the dais either in Tagore hall or in Auditorium of Women's College Amira Kadal, Srinagar; where he would demonstrate his literary acumen in company of greats like Dina nath Nadim, Prof Hajni, Rehman Rahi, Amin Kamil and dozens of other literary giants. In Women's College Auditorium I found Premi ji seated among host of political bigwigs of the period; namely Syed Mir Qasim, Pir Gyasudin, Noor Mohammed, M L Misri, O N Trisal, Abdul Sattar Ranjoor, A G Namtahi and many others.

My serious and fairly profitable interaction with the great man took place in Village Hangulgund, in the house of late Pt Radhakrishnan Hangloo-an illustrious father of an equally illustrious son - Prof Rattan Lal Hangloo. It was a pleasant autumn day, in October 1984, when my younger brother Virji tied marital knot with dear Tejaji, daughter of Pt Radhakrishan. Pt Sarvanand Koul ji was there to receive the Barat. It so happened that Mirza Gulam Qadir Beg (elder brother of Mirza Afzal Beg) was also present there.

The three political activists (father included), known to one another very well, had a very absorbing discussion among themselves, of which politics constituted a major part.

The discussion provided me with a good measure to assess the brilliance, clarity of thought, firmness of belief in Kashmir's pluralism and emancipated articulation cum interpretation of religious scriptures-across religions-Premi ji was endowed with.

Shaheed Sarvanand Koul Premi was, undoubtedly, a multifaceted personality. As alluded to hereinbefore, he combined in himself a poet, author, thinker, scholar, an authentic translator and a socio-political activist of high repute. Journalism was another feather added to his cap. Range of his scholarships and

command on vocabulary, of so many languages, were so wide and intense as to bring home, both, letter and spirit of Tagore's Gitanjali to the readers of Kashmiri language. Premi ji's biography of Saint Mirza Kak is a cherished possession of the devotees.

Limitations impede me to assess the literary greatness of Premi ji. The domain experts have done it elaborately. The exercise, nevertheless, is ongoing one. With the passage of time new and hitherto unexplored facets of martyr's literary and political works keep on coming to the fore. It is said that indigenous communities across globe have always attached profound cultural, political and spiritual significances to the great works of poets, painters and art practitioners. Poetry has been representing voice of the people, their trials, tribulations and aspirations in the language entwined with ideas, emotions touching the very core of readers hearts and minds. It is not an overstatement to say that in our times, so far as Kashmir is concerned, one of the intense, passionate and exciting voices belonged to Pt Sarvanand Koul Premi. It is a tragedy-beyond words-that such a voice got silenced by a demented assassin.

Going through Premi ji's life story, his activism (both educational and political) aimed at ameliorating the lot of downtrodden, yearning for a democratic form of governance and literary out puts - of varied nature-one could safely say that, as a true intellectual, he was endowed with a quality to hold multiple ideas in the mind at the same time and still retain ability and courage to concentrate on one of them-that of the syncretism which in our context is euphemistically known as Kashmiriat.

It is the firmness of that belief which explains Koul Sahib's insistence to stay put when terrorists had ordered his whole community to move out of the Valley. On the other side, some may say that it was too much of a generous attribute he, fatally, granted to his neighbours of other faith.

And, that may afford a reason for them to raise a question that Sarvanand Koul Premi's intelligence proved inadequate when confronted with the hard realities of the time. Could, therefore, they say that more than assassins' bullet Premi ji fell prey to his own error of judgment? My answer to it is emphatic No.

Well, history is replete with the instances where great men of learning fell prey to the demented, despite having fore knowledge of what they ultimately came to.

Hundreds of men and women who had made a mark in their lives, across globe and faiths, have been crucified at the Cross. Generally, the hangmen happened to belong to the tribe which had befitting most of the hard-toil put in by those whom they put to the cross. In the martyrdom of Premi ji and his younger son the culprits have committed a three-fold murder. Trust has been the third causality: Trust, created by Premi ji, of which his neighbours, of different faith, were the major beneficiaries. A Trustee seldom causes a breach in the trust. In the martyrdom of Pt Sarvanand Koul and his younger son Verinder onus is heavy on the beneficiaries to account for the betrayal. They are as much culpable, albeit passively, as those who committed the dastardly act, actually.

Terrorists may have snatched his mortal remains but Master Premi ji's humanism, in the genre of Abdul Ahad Azad and Gulam Mohammad Mehjoor, will remain immortal to sustain hope in human values. No wonder, it was Mehjoor who gave us Premi out of Pt Sarvanand Koul. For Pt Sarvanand Koul Premi the poet has very apt words, 'Hazaroon Saal Nargis Apni Be noory Pae Rotee Hai Badie Mushkil say Hoteh Hain Chaman Mein Deedawar Paida'.

Respected Premi, Rest In Peace

(The author is a former Principal District & Session Judge)

## Education on moral values must for school children

■ VIJAY GARG

Having moral values and learning is just building having a strong root; for the body, having a healthy root will help in having healthy leaves and branches. A famous quote says if wealth is lost nothing is lost, if health is lost something is lost; when character is lost everything is lost. This is the reason schools have introduced a subject called moral science so that moral teachings can be disseminated among today's children. Inculcating a sound moral base is becoming a tougher challenge day by day.

Students today are so much into studies and games but somewhere moral teachings becomes compulsory as it gives them a proper shape and direction as how to act or react during various difficult situations. Moral values need to be inculcated in all age groups especially in young children as it is said that young minds are empty just as a plain white sheet so whatever mark we leave the impression remains for years. When it comes for a teacher to inculcate a moral base in their students it takes a lot more as teachers are the ones who shape our thoughts and mind to a large extent.

Moral education means an ethical education that helps choose the right path in life. It comprises some basic principles such as truthfulness, honesty, charity, hospitality, tolerance, love, kindness and sympathy.

Moral education makes one perfect. Education is not aimed at obtaining only a degree, it includes necessary value-based teachings which result in character building and social improvement too.

It is the need of the hour that schools today should include the concept of hidden-curriculum which refers to the transmission of norms, values, and beliefs conveyed in the classroom and social environment. It helps to reinforce the lessons of the formal curriculum but many schools neglect it. They focus more on language, subjects and marks. For example, on one hand a school may publicly claim and ensure that its education policy and practices are formed in such a way that all students succeed academically.

At the same time, it can be observed that the students of the particular school are contributing to undesirable behaviours whether it is bullying or cheating on exams.

This type of education will barely help a child to face life situations like opinion making, decision making and right course of action.

To curb this problem, schools should adapt and offer special classes, seminars, and workshops with an expert counsellor under the guidance of educators who can help in incorporating 'values' lessons into the curriculum in order to foster well-rounded personality development in children.

Our society today is much advanced, much better than it used to be but what if the people of a society are not well mannered? With rapid urbanisation and modernisation, the moral values of people are degrading day by day. An individual is not able to trust anyone be it his relatives or friends. Trust, integrity, love, and brotherhood all their feelings are fading away with time. It is the moral values that teach us to share and make new friends at school but today, children are taught not to trust anyone and make less friends.

There is cut throat competition everywhere be it schools, colleges, offices or any talent competition. In today's materialistic world, people are jealous of each other's progress but rather than being suspicious and envious one must support and co-operate each other and work unitedly for the common welfare. In this industrialised era, most of the parents are working because of which they spend less time with their children due to which they lack moral values and are not able to differentiate between what is wrong and right.

## YOUR COLUMN

### Submission of Life Certificate

Dear Editor,

Through the esteemed columns of your newspaper, I would like to invite attention of the Vice Chancellor of the University of Jammu, Jammu towards the issue of life certificate which is mandatory to submit once in a year for the retirees of the central government, J&K Union Territory and all the sister universities of J&K Union Territory other than University of Jammu, Jammu.

Whereas in case of retirees of Jammu University, they are asked to submit the same certificate two times in a year; one in the month of June and second in the month of December. It is not understandable when both the certificates serve one and the same purpose, which is verification of survival of the retired person, why there is different practice in case of retirees of the Jammu University?

Keeping in view the age and health factor of the senior and super-senior citizens, it is requested to the university authorities that the matter may kindly be reconsidered for fixing the period of submitting aforesaid certificate once in a year instead of two times a year.

There is also an initiative by the Government for submitting the certificate online. It would further ease the process for the retirees living in the far flung areas.

Therefore the online process for procurement of the Life Certificate should also be considered as an alternative to the existing practice.

Padam Dev Singh,  
(Jammu University Retiree)

Ex Joint Secretary Non-Teaching Employees Union.

### Use sanitizers with care

Dear Editor,

Hand sanitizer is a liquid or gel, used to sanitize the hands. It contains 70 per cent of Isopropyl alcohol. Moreover, spurious sanitizers contain high amount of cheap adulterants like methanol. Methanol is a toxic alcohol and is used as solvent and fuel. Excess of methanol causes skin irritation, breathlessness and blindness.

It may pose threat to life of people falling in high risk groups. Being highly inflammable, Alcohol gel catches fire easily. To minimise the risk people should rub their hands until dry which means whole of alcohol has evaporated.

Since, sparking takes place in metallurgical works, automobiles, electrical appliances etc one must keep away from flames after using hand sanitizers.

It is much better and safe to use a soap and wash hands to stay away from coronavirus and to protect hands.

R.L Raina,  
Paloura,  
Jammu.

## Fill your Emptiness

Dear Editor,

Have you ever noticed what people are doing that all the time - just imitating others and they are always in trouble, because they cannot do every this and that. They feel inferior.

The whole world suffers from an inferiority complex in one way or other, for the simple reason that we go on comparing and imitating.

We forget that, everyone is unique in its own way and we need to value that. Life consists of millions of things, and if you are constantly comparing, that's why you are not happy and always in a state of inferiority, suffering.

Look within and you will experience great uniqueness. Once you know your uniqueness you are joyous, and then there is no need to follow anyone.

Learn from everyone rather than imitating and comparing.

You can learn from everyone, not only from man but from animals, from trees, clouds, rivers. You can't become a river, but you can learn some river-like qualities like the flow, the let-go etc.

Just understand the value of life and your yourself. Welcome the things with a smile and learn new things every day.

Som Nath Sharma,  
Old city,  
Jammu.

## OFF 'D' CUFF

### Indian diets both scientific, sustainable

Consumers have the right to know - and we shouldn't be discouraged by strategies like really small-point food labelling with no information that is of use to us.

Such a change in food consciousness won't come a moment too soon. I'm very concerned about the rise in India of junk food and foods high in salt, sugar and fat now. India has developed a huge problem with obesity and food is a major cause of this. Where our food was once medicine, it's turning into poison now. We should stop such consumption before this turns all-consuming. Indigenous Indian foods

are based on a mix of dietary science, locally grown crops and philosophy - ancient texts believed that food formed the basic part of a cosmic moral cycle. The four Vedas describe diverse grains - the Rig Veda discusses barley while others outline lentils and millets. The everyday Khichdi, made of rice and lentils, is mentioned in these canons. Food science developed voluminously in India - according to ayurveda, food drives our physical, temperamental and mental states - therefore, a stable and healthy diet is essential. (By Times Evoke)