

PAY BILLS FROM HOME

Jammu Power Development Corporation Ltd (JPDC) has come up with a revolutionary step to sensitize the consumers for making electricity bill payments while sitting at their homes. The campaign under the theme, 'Bijli Bill Bharna Hua Aasan, Ghar Baithe Karo Bhugtan' is really a productive measure as this will counter many difficulties while giving an option to people to remain aloof during the ongoing surge in the coronavirus cases. There is likelihood that the campaign will also increase the revenue collection as paying bills from homes is a convenient thing and the consumers are not required to visit rush-prone banks and other places meant for bill payment. There is another benefit of paying the bills online is that record is available in black and white online and there is no chance of any conflict or confusion. In other words, the JPDC has come up with a win-win situation for the consumers and now it is prerogative for the people to either visit banks and suffer inconvenience or go by this new alternative to pay the bills with extreme ease. Of course, the JPDC's initiative will also save the time of the consumers so that they don't have to stand in queues at Banks to pay their electricity bills. It is really a prolific approach of the JPDC that it is making efforts to educate consumers and facilitate payment of electricity bills sitting at home. To accomplish this the meter readers of the concerned sub-divisions shall soon visit every JPDC registered consumer to sensitize and install Bill Sahuliyat App in the mobile phone of at least one member of every household and map their consumer ID so that most of the consumer switch to online bill payment mode and do not visit banks every month to pay their electricity bills. A GPRS enabled POS machines shall be handed over to the Sub-Divisions which shall subsequently operationalise existing revenue centers and hand-over POS machines to meter readers so that consumers can instantly make payments using debit and credit cards. The POS machine shall be made available at Revenue Centre till late hours during the month of February and March since revenue collection increases drastically during these two months. This shall ensure that consumers shall have alternative arrangements to make their electricity Bill Payment. This campaign will help working and daily wage people who can't take out time to visit banks and pay their electricity bills. All said and done, kudos to the brain behind this initiative as this will set an example for other departments and ensure clean payment with no scope for any kind of hanky-panky.



Purchase Happiness! Available for Sale at Best Discount

If there is a single thing life wants to teach everyone—happiness is all around, it is available for sale at best discount. Keep looking for it and purchase it at a discounted price anytime.

So, in the festive season and the New Year, when you go shopping, keep your eyes open for happiness which is often freely available.

It is available in all the little things. Looking at the blue sky on a winter afternoon, singing God's glory, trying a new and healthy recipe, drinking a coffee with someone in the family, a refreshing stroll in the park, smelling a fragrant rose in our own small garden, meditating in the morning.

Each of these would make anyone happy and this attribute of happiness does have a significant role in everyone's life.

And so—

Find Happiness Everywhere

Even amid troubles and setbacks in life, at least think of all the goodness in your life at present. Everything will start looking brighter. Cherish your happiest memories, recall some of them and bring a smile to your face.

In retrospect, of course, you can only think of them as a beautiful past, yet they were a part of your life. Do not lose them since it's also like enjoying the present moment. Refrain from always looking toward tomorrow for happiness, odds are you will experience something unexpected that may or may not be a joyous experience.

Understand that the ability to appreciate what's before you at present has nothing to do with what you actually have rather, it's about how you take the beautiful things (or memories) in your life at any given time.

So, look around—what's in front of you that can make you happy. Purchase that thing of happiness instantly.

Make a Bright Future by Being Happy Now

Never let go of your smile and positive emotions ever. They are the foundation of your bright future. Stay that way always. It keeps you mentally focused and you also enjoy an amazing sense of well-being.

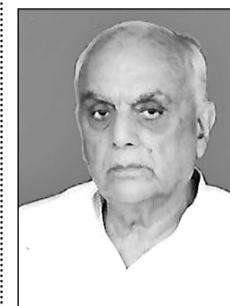
Dr Archika Didi

We may stumble and fall but shall rise again; it should be enough if we did not run away from the battle.

-Mahatma Gandhi

EDITORIAL

New variants in present political gamut—a dangerous trend



■ ER P L KHUSHU

It appears that new variants have crept in the present day politics in India, when it can be concluded that was the convoy blockading a dry run as a sinister attempt on Prime Minister Modi's Life, or a security lapse. Was it a willful or a default occurrence. It is a million dollar question. Such a situation has never been witnessed before. Is it a black spot on our federal structure or an attempt to silence the most popular political face in India in Modi, when some dejected politicians do not like or admire him for inherent reasons of having lost the confidence of the people of India, by getting reduced to bare minimum numbers in the electoral outcomes, in the parliament of India, thus losing their governing cycle of decade old duration. Twenty minutes is a long time for targeting a VVIP, especially the Prime Minister, when his motorcade is held up with his car stuck up in a static position in the middle of an elevated flyover, which is a place nearer to the international border, often prone to the drone attacks across the border from the enemy country Pakistan. Thank God, our Prime Minister is safe. Equally we are proud about our judicial system which is very much valued and independent when the highest court of our country has ordered an enquiry in it under the chairmanship of a retired judge of supreme Court, with other prominent members of repute and integrity, forming a part of such an enquiry body. Facts in this regard will certainly come to surface soon. It is being propagated through different sources in the media that it has other allied antinational elements too aligned to it. How far is it correct, the time will prove?

Though the five-state poll-schedule has re-focused attention elsewhere, there is still the need for fixing responsibility for the huge gaffe in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's security as his motorcade stood stranded atop a flyover in Punjab, not far away from border with Pakistan, infested with anti-India terrorists and administration.

Who took the decision for the prime minister, the nation's single most popular leader, to take the road route when they should have already known about the farmers' protests and also the grave risks involved? The nation has to know about it. What was the state police set up of Punjab doing, knowing very much in advance about the programme of the Prime Minister? How can the chief minister and the home minister of Punjab mitigate their role and responsibilities in this regard? Right or wrong there is a feeling which can be otherwise too, that since the governments in the centre and Punjab are manned by two

different political parties which are quite diverse in their semblance of approach in its political ideologies can be a factor. It may speak of vengeance of one against the other at least to humiliate the dignity of the honor of the Prime Minister's post. This can have further relevance to the fact that the party ruling Punjab is in deep turmoil not in Punjab only, but across the whole country when this political party is nearer closure and almost at its extinction. They are thus in a state of deep frustration. With such a situation of a sinking political party, it can go to any extent for vengeance. Its present apex leadership is almost limited to only a 'Family-Raj', when the veterans in this party have already deserted it through default or by design. Thus the bug does not stop here. The present leadership of this party ruling Punjab is a selection of this dynastic epoch and may have to act at the asking of their mentors from the so called high command, which is reduced to a family command a "mother-progeny trio". How come a directive is sent to the present chief minister of Punjab from the so called high command, that this issue of Prime Minister's blockade in the middle of the fly over should be investigated, after a lot of hue and cry across the country was witnessed, about the sensitivity of this situation? Was the chief minister not competent, or permitted on its own to take proper measures about the adverse threat like situation on the "Life" of the Prime Minister being at stake in the middle of a flyover for more than 15 minutes. It was followed by rhythmic drum beating by the followers of this dynasty based political party across the country that the Prime Minister created a drama out of it. How sad and ridiculous a taunt. This taunt was spearheaded by the president of this political party ruling Punjab, when he has probably to acquaint himself more and more about the decency of political statesmanship while representing a ruling political party of an important state of India.

Well nothing better could be expected from such a person who has deserted the BJP, for his personal interests, then hobnobbed with other political party which is in governance in Delhi state, for accommodating him in that political party to get a bigger position in Punjab. Subsequently he landed in the lap of the 'mother-progeny-trio' political party which used to be the principle and the pride political party of this country, from Nehru's time to Indra Gandhi's time and is now in a state of diminution as per the law of diminishing returns.

His inclusion in this dynasty based political party created enough of ripples within such party in Punjab, while making a veteran leader of this political party to resign as the chief minister of Punjab, thus ushering a complete political instability in Punjab. His closeness to the Prime Minister of Pakistan is equally notably prominent. So many

doubts can visit the minds of the people under the circumstances behind the motive of making the prime minister's motorcade to get blocked in the middle of a flyover, while his travel to address a public gathering at Ferozepore, by a bunch of protesters even as the Punjab Police personnel were later seen sipping tea in the company of the same protesters, when some of the protesters and blockers even made attempts to go towards the convoy of the Prime Minister with sticks in their hands, with a near rude attitude. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was forced to cancel his public address and return to Delhi after a "security breach" prevented him from going to Ferozepore because of the road blockade. It was Modi's first visit to the state in two years. Modi, who landed at Bathinda's Bhisiana Airport in the morning, when he was stranded on a flyover near Piaresana village on Ferozepur-Moga road after a road blockade prevented him from going farther. The prime minister had originally planned to take a chopper to Ferozepur but had to take the road route because of bad weather. On reaching Bathinda Airport back, the Prime Minister Modi's cryptic and a sarcastic message in the shape of thanks for the congress government's chief minister in Punjab, that I have reached safe and sound, should be an eye opener for the congress chief minister about the sentiments of the prime minister about this whole planned episode, as it is always the wearer who knows where the shoe is pinching. Probably it can be said that Prime Minister's travel abroad is safer than his travel to Punjab. What a curse within the definition of curse.

It can be presumed and assessed that the mixing of the political animosity with the security protocols of the Prime Minister is quite alarming; if at all the attempt has been such in this case. It notionally appears that this Punjab incident is a glaring example of how political animosity and bickering may not get merged with the security protocols, of the VVIP's, thus lowering down the standards of the federal structure as defined in the constitution of India.

Under such circumstances it seems to be a clear cut objective to down grade the central governance and exhibit sheer hate for it by such types of state level dispensations.

The states have to be disciplined offshoots of the central government as per the Indian Constitution as far as the security and the safety of the country is concerned.

There can be no maxim applicable as 'Holier than Thou', between the various states and the centre, as far as the national security and the national integrity is concerned. States are the limbs when the centre is the head as also the heart.

No limb can function without the direction of the head and heart, whatever the circumstances of the political ideologies, in the matters of the security of

the country. It is a common biological synonym, as far as human physiology is concerned. It willy-nilly applies to the centre-state relationships too. No state can function as a country within the country. A glimpse of it was earlier witnessed in the west Bengal as well to a smaller extent during the elections there, which was quite unfortunate for the nation to observe. This trend needs to be arrested with an iron hand. The security of the elected prime Minister of India can never be allowed to be at the political whims of the state where the Prime Minister is touring. Playing with the security of the Prime Minister is almost playing with the sovereignty of the country. Our country has a history of the assassination of two Prime Ministers due to political vendetta in the past. As such more concern and professionalism should have been shown by the government of Punjab in this episode of making the prime Minister of India to get blocked in the middle of a road and then return back without performing his national duty and commitments towards the people concerned. The centre is not only a joint grouping of the states, but is a composite unit of states having a centrifugal force which acts as the bond, which binds the federal states together as one republic, called as Republic of India. Any move or ill-advised attempt to make the head of the Central government a target by any state administration by playing with his security is almost akin to an attempt of treason which deserves to be shown its door, before such a misadventure becomes an order of the day to be adopted by other similar states having different political party in governance as that of the centre.

It can mean anarchy in the political system of India, when such eventualities are sometimes visible now a day in our country.

The onus in this regard now rests with the centre to show its wit with appropriate action, rather than utilizing it for the election drum beating.

This new variant in the present political gamut of India is a dangerous variant and needs to be vaccinated with appropriate vaccine of constitutional components of India before it takes as a shape of delta formation, which often becomes uncontrolled.

The people of this great nation of 130 crore have to chose between the proxy politician trying to rule the country for their selfish motives by dividing the people on caste and color basis and the good governance of the soft politicians believing in 'Sab-Ka-Sath, Sab-Ka-Vikas', 'Sab-Ka-Vishwas' and 'Sab-Ka-Prayas'.

The 'Prayas' is with the people of this country to show the door to the evil designs of such opportunists as politicians of hate and dissent.

(The author is a Chartered Consultant Civil Engineer who has fascination for his Motherland, the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir).

Significance of Makar Sankranti

■ ER PRABHAT KISHORE

Makar Sankranti is an auspicious day in Indian culture and is dedicated to the almighty Surya. This day has historical, spiritual as well as scientific significance. It is set by the solar cycle and corresponds to the exact timing of the astronomical events of transition (Sankranti) of Surya into Makar Rashi (Capricorn). This day marks the termination of cold & harsh winter season and the beginning of longer & warmer days with the onset of spring season. It usually falls on 14th January of the Gregorian calendar and on 15th January in the case of leap years.

Most of the Sanatan Dharma festivals are based on lunar events. Makar Sankranti is one of the rare Indian festivals, which is based on a Solar event. The Gregorian year 2010 observed the special occasion when solar event coincided with the lunar event of Amavasya and had witnessed a great Surya Grahan (Solar eclipse). Makar Sankranti is the festival to thank nature for its abundant resources and has a special time for farmers as it marks the beginning of the harvest season. Farmers across the

country pay their gratitude to Surya Dev and wish for a good crop. As cows and bullocks are the centre of farming families, they are also worshiped in different parts of the country. This festival has no gender-centric rituals and signifies equal importance to every individual in nature.

Before this day the Sun shines on the Southern Hemisphere, i.e. Dakshinayan; due to which the nights are longer and days are shorter. The period from Karka Sankranti to Makar Sankranti is known as Dakshinayan. From Makar Sankranti the Sun begins its journey towards the Northern Hemisphere i.e. Uttarayan journey, resulting in longer days and shorter nights. According to religious

scriptures, Dakshinayan is the night of Devi-Devtas and signifies negativity, whereas Uttarayan is said to be the day of the Devi-Devtas and a sign of positivity. Makar Sankranti is the beginning of the month of Magh, hence the Mela held on this day is termed as Magh Mela. Many Melas are held on this auspicious day in different parts of the country, the most significant being the Kumbh Mela and the Ganga Sagar Mela. Kumbh Mela is held every 12 years at four sacred

locations Haridwar, Prayag, Nashik and Ujjain. People take ritual bath in rivers or other nearby water courses, worship Surya Dev and chant the Gayatri Mantra. The day holds special importance for Indians, particularly the Sikh sect, as two elder sons and forty Shishya/Sikhs (Chalis Mukte) sacrificed their lives to protect Guru Govind Singh Maharaj from huge Mughal Army. Maghi Mela is organised in Muktasir in memory of these patriots. In the Mahabharat Dharma Yudha, severely injured Bhishma Pitamah waited for his death till the day of Uttarayan of Surya Dev for Moksha-prapti.

There are one nation numerous celebrations on Makar Sankranti as it is observed all over the Indian sub-continent with various other provincial names such as Maghi Bihu (Assam), Maghi (Punjab), Sarakar (Hariyana), Til Sankarat (Bihar), Uttarayan (Jammu, Gujarat), Shishir Sankranti (Kashmir), Pongal (Tamilnadu), Maghra Volaku (Kerala) etc. In foreign countries it is known as Maghe Sankranti (Nepal), Poush Sangkranti (Bangladesh), Songkranti (Siam/Thailand), Thingyan (Burma), Mohan Songkranti

(Cambodia).

This day is observed with Mela (MaghMela), Patangbaji (Kite Flying), bonfires, dances etc. Dahi-Chura, Gud, Bhura, Tilkut, Tilwa, TilLaddoo or Anarsa, Kangsubi, Khichdi, Pitha of boiled rice etc. are the traditional dishes of the day. The Til consumed is said to purify the soul. As per BharatiyaPanchang (calender), this day marks the end of Kharmaas and resumption of all auspicious events or ceremonies such as engagement, marriage, Namankaran, Sankar, Mundan, Griha-Pravesh (House warming), purchasing new vehicle/property, laying foundation stone etc. A festival is said to be a binding force between communities. It infuses new energy in people's life and facilitates them to move forward with great enthusiasm. Makar Sankranti, with different names but having same rituals and objectives, is celebrated across the length and breadth of country and it signifies the unity among the diversity of our culturally rich civilization.

(The author is a Technocrat & Academician and holds Master in Engineering from M N Regional Engineering College, Allahabad).

YOUR COLUMN

Rising Omicron cases

Dear Editor,

With yet another new variant of deadly pandemic ready to burst open the floodgates and the health department still hedging its bets on whether the storm would take a turn away. The international community could not ring the alarm bells any louder. Downing Street has already marked the mammoth surge in recorded infections as the tidal wave. India has, however, drawn the ire of the rest of Europe for not acting fast enough as muddled messages and an over-burdened ready slowly poisoned health care system might pipe in to the final dance of death any day now. If countries like France can bolt their doors on people from the United Kingdom, should

our mealy lands be ready to be shovled under butcher's knife again? Clearly, 2022 is being rightly decried as 2020-too. Now as far as the ground realities are concerned, we are still swimming in cautious waters. Only a handful of cases have yet been reported and India has already sat upright and placed travel restrictions from known hotspots. But going by our tainted record, the authorities have a notorious knack of not going by the code. The dismal manner in which the pilgrims from Iran were mishandled last year when they conveniently flouted quarantine and mingled with people far and wide upped the 'viral' game.

This influx from outside is what needs aggressive policing. Screening and only screening can help prevent us from teetering on the edge of disaster for the umpteenth time. Scientists have been bluntly telling anyone who would listen to priorities their loved ones if not themselves. That the strain produces mild symptoms has not

yet been rubberstamped. It can be hoped—even, prayed—to hold true but not handed out as delusive contentment to a public still struggling to follow the government's guidelines. Every one in six Indian believes in some divine protection reserved for them alone against COVID-19. Worse off are those broadcasting conspiracy theories said to be churned out to sideline Islam. While we may not have the New Year's festivities to look out for, December's wedding bonanza is just as much of a super spreader. The rest of the world is urging for a doubling down of preventive measures. Warnings are pouring in fast and furious from all over. Bring back the mask, they plead. Booster regimens remain the only iron armor against the threat of serious symptoms. The ball is, ergo, in our court. Will we kick the new strain out of the stadium or be clean-bowled for an embarrassing duck?

Mool Raj