

PREVENTION BETTER THAN CURE

The situation has turned precarious once again with some experts issuing warnings about probable third wave of the pandemic becoming a reality soon especially on account of inception of the new variant of the contagion corona namely Omicron. It is advisable for LG's administration in Jammu and Kashmir to take all the prerequisite steps meant to stop transmission of this deadly disease which has gone berserk during its second wave in the country. It is good that already the night curfew has been imposed and the government is making all out efforts to stop the virus from spreading uncontrollably. In this regard, Ramban administration has taken a good step setting examples for others by making it mandatory for all to go for RAT test to screen visitors for COVID-19 infection. This becomes imperative especially on account of snowfall in the region as it is likely that tourists will throng the place to have a glance of snow clad mountains. It has been ordered that all passengers and tourists traveling by bus, cabs, taxis, tempo travelers and personal vehicles shall have to undergo Rapid Antigen Test for COVID-19 compulsorily at Patnitop, irrespective of their vaccination status. District Magistrate Ramban has also issued an order that it will be mandatory to adhere to COVID Appropriate Behaviour at all times. Such restrictions are quite important looking into the surge of cases in the country. As J&K has reported 418 new coronavirus cases, the surge is apparent thus making it more important to be on toes as far as combating COVID-19 is concerned. The LG's administration has been going steadily dealing with the situation but looking into the cases in other parts of the country it becomes imperative to take all the steps to ensure that the disease corona could not cause any more damage as any lethargy in the matter can prove out to be detrimental. It is advisable that the government should revisit the restrictions especially in case of places where there are large gatherings. This is necessary to stop the virus from wreaking havoc. The need of time is that people sitting at the helm take cue from Ramban administration and go for strict rules to stop spread of disease.



OFF 'D' CUFF

Yog- a perspective

Yog means union. Union with a supreme power which is the source of creation, perfection and destruction. Union with the supreme intellect and the guiding force behind the perfect mechanism of the universe. Yog is merging oneself with this force that guides the human being to a state of total bliss. Human is a small universe in itself. When the consciousness of this small universe unites with the energy prevailing in the vast canopy of the universe the union is complete and the light of wisdom starts flowing in the human body. The light brings everything human needs to evolve. Human is a part of nature and constantly striving for perfection. This is the natural course of evolution because god is the personification of ultimate perfection. Evolving by flowing along with the universal force or balancing with nature reveals the truth automatically. Balance is the key to the powers of nature. Balance between two extremes because the Universe is balancing all extremely contradictory forces, day-night, sun-moon, man-woman, God-Satan. No hectic or tortuous way can lead to the truth. Balancing the body and mind and attuning it to the tunes of nature is certainly a step towards realization. Nobody can put down any syllabus or a short cut for self-realization. Yog, Jap, Tap, Penance and many more so called ways can help to control and develop self discipline but certainly not guarantee the ultimate union. The basic requirement for attaining realization is Truth i.e. to be truthful on the three planes of Mansa ,Vacha, Karma (thought, word and deed). A person who is truthful on these three planes naturally gets guidance from the supreme. It just flows spontaneously to the person who is balanced in emotions, tolerant, patient, humble, fearless, confident, satisfied, spreads happiness always, has speech full of love and compassion. Such a person becomes a perfect channel for cosmic energy that symbolizes the cosmic MOTIFIER. That is why nature is called Mother Nature. She is the best guru. She just gives and gives and shares her bounties without any commercial calculation. The nucleus is to be good to be God. Details fritter us away from reality. The human body has built in remote

Meena Om

Unmasking communal intent to repudiate justice delayed for decades

■ GIRDHARI LAL RAINA

Traditional political parties of Jammu & Kashmir are apparently enraged and are demonstrating frenzy over draft Delimitation report shared by the Commission with associate members- the elected Members of Parliament from the Union Territory. We have three members from Kashmir all belonging to the National Conference and two from Jammu region from BJP in Parliament at present. Even though the draft was neither interim nor a final report shared with public yet sensational speculation based reporting was resorted to provoke public sentiments on a regional and religious basis. Members of Lok Sabha belonging to National Conference headed by Dr Farooq Abdullah along with Kashmir-centric political parties are in forefront for mobilising opinion against 'draft recommendations' shared with associate members by Delimitation Commission in a meeting held in New Delhi. Their misplaced anger is over the supposed distribution of additional seven seats in a manner that gives six seats to the districts falling within the Jammu region and one seat to District Kupwara in Kashmir valley. To make it look unfair these politicians and political outfits are trying to sound 6:1 as gross injustice to Kashmir. Though over the past fortnight utterances have been modified to replace raw comments with stylish jargon, still the essence of argument remains unchanged. They consciously ignore and work hard to delink the recommendations from past history of incessant discrimination. This is done to conceal unfairness of distribution of seats in past and any endeavour to deliver justice to sections of population and regions discriminated against by these very leaders. Argument of pro-status quo people is that; i) It is against delimitation process itself because of freezing of such activity until year 2026 ii) The supposed distribution of additional seven seats in a manner that gives six seats to the districts falling within the Jammu region and one seat to District Kupwara in Kashmir valley is unfairly ignoring population as sole criterion for delimitation process. Both these arguments are superficial and in total disregard to factual position. The matter of the fact is that the Constitution (84th Amendment) Act, 2001 which, extended ban on the readjustment of seats in Lok Sabha and the state legislature assemblies for another 25 years (i.e., upto 2026) was aimed to encourage population limiting measures. Hence the freeze was to deny political reward to those who refuse family welfare and population control measures so important for sustainable development of

the nation. In Jammu & Kashmir, however, the freeze was to deny justice to disadvantaged people. Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir (Twenty-Ninth Amendment) Act, 2002 [Provided that until the relevant figures for tile first census taken after the year 2026 have been published, it shall not be necessary to readjust the total number of seats in the Legislative Assembly of the State and - the- division of the State into territorial constituencies under this sub-section.] Hence population limiting objective of freezing at national level needs to be applied to Jammu & Kashmir thereby excluding unnatural growth in numbers to form a benchmark for the delimitation process. Second set of reasons for smelling unfairness needs to be seen from a historical perspective. It is important, therefore, to take into account 43:30; 42:31 and 46: 37 along with 47:43 to understand the significance of 6:1 in a better sense. 6:1 in isolation conceals much more than what it reveals. For an overview of what happened in the past we will have to travel back to the 1951 era. It was on May 1, 1951 the then Regent Prince and head of the state Dr Karan Singh issued a proclamation to create a Constituent Assembly in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. He directed his government that: i) A Constituent Assembly consisting of representatives of the people, elected on the basis of adult franchise, shall be constituted forthwith for the purpose of framing a constitution for the State of Jammu and Kashmir; ii) For the purposes of the said elections the State shall be divided into a number of territorial constituencies, each containing a population of 40,000 or as near thereto as possible, and each electing one member. A delimitation committee shall be set up by the Government to make recommendations as to the number of constituencies and the limits of each constituency". This proclamation of Dr Karan Singh to begin with negated the earlier assurance of Maharaja Hari Singh who incidentally had delegated power to the Regent Prince, made in his proclamation dated March 5, 1948 ordaining, 'My Council of Ministers shall take appropriate steps, as soon as restoration of normal conditions has been completed, to convene a National Assembly based upon adult suffrage, having due regard to the principle that the number of representatives from each voting area should, as far as practicable, be proportionate to the population of that area. The Constitution to be framed by the National Assembly shall provide adequate safeguards for the minorities and contain appropriate provisions guaranteeing for

the freedom of conscience, freedom of speech and freedom of assembly'. It is essential to remember that Dr Karan Singh was Regent Prince appointed by Maharaja Hari Singh through a proclamation issued on 9th June 1949 and had 'all powers and functions, whether Legislative, Executive or Judicial, which are exercisable by me (Maharaja Hari Singh) in relation to the State and its Government, including in particular my power and prerogative of making laws, of issuing proclamations, orders ordinances, of remitting, committing or reducing sentence, and of pardoning offenders'. While promised provisions of adequate safeguards for minorities and appropriate measures guaranteeing freedoms of various kinds were discounted, it still mentioned a population of approximately 40,000 per territorial constituency as a reference point. But, what happened on ground seats were demarcated in a manner that on average Constituencies in Kashmir valley had less than 40,000 population and in Jammu region it was around more than 48,000 per constituency. Remember Kashmir valley was allotted 43 seats and Jammu region 30 only. Ladakh, which was given two seats, is out of our discussion for now. Therefore 6:1 has to be looked into along with this 43:30. Remember 1951 was for an important election for Constituent Assembly that had to frame the Constitution for future generations. In Kashmir valley, distribution of seats was 14 each for Kamraz region now called North Kashmir and Srinagar or central Kashmir and 15 for Maraz region or today's south Kashmir. After protests and resistance one seat was taken away from Kashmir valley and given to Jammu region. The election of 1967 was held under this system of 42:31. But wait there is the devil in details. The seat in Kashmir was taken away from the voiceless Kamraz region making it 13; 14; 15 for North, central & south Kashmir. The seat added to the Jammu region was created as Banihal. It is self-explanatory as to why and where the constituency was created. This 42:31 continued till 1975, so did the protests for under-representation of Jammu region. In 1975 an additional seat was provided to the Jammu region. It was done after amending the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir (Twelfth Amendment) reducing seats reserved for Pakistan occupied areas of Jammu & Kashmir (PoJK) from 25 to 24. The Assembly segment was created in Poonch District and it became 42:32. So, difference between Jammu region and Kashmir province as far as Assembly constituencies is concerned narrowed down

from 13 to 11 seats in 25 years. After the 1996 Delimitation process the division of seats in the 87 member Legislative Assembly became 46:37 as the additional 11 seats were added in a manner that gave Jammu region five more seats, Kashmir province four extra seats and Ladakh two more making it 46:37:4. The Neo-ruling elite of Jammu & Kashmir managing to completely dominate over state politics have been extensively discussed. In case of delimitation of territorial constituencies it began with delinking of census operations in 1951 in Jammu & Kashmir from the rest of the country to stop reflection of ground reality of the impact of bloody partition in census figures. All this was done to give 43 seats to Kashmir-which had a land area of 15, 953 Sq Km (15.73 per cent) and less than half of the State's population, 30 to Jammu with an area of 26, 293 Sq Km (25.93 per cent) and the population more than Kashmir and a paltry 2 to Trans-Himalayan Ladakh with a land area of 59,146 Sq Km (58.3 per cent) in a House of 100. The anomalies were not corrected even in 1961 when Jammu's population was 16 lakh and that of Kashmir 18 lakh. But rulers arbitrarily retained 12 seats more than those of Jammu effectively meaning 2 lakh populations in Kashmir were given right to elect 12 legislators. This gross violation of norms even on the sole criterion of population continues till date and is suggested to be continued at even the 1981 Census, which had put Jammu's population at 27, 18, 113 and that of Kashmir at 31, 34, 904, didn't bring any relief to the former. It continued even after a substantial chunk of the population around 3.5 lakhs was forced out of Kashmir in 1989-90. Remember Jammu and Kashmir Representation of Peoples Act of 1957 mandated, 'Delimitation Commission shall in the manner herein provided, distribute the 2 [eighty-seven seats] in the Legislative Assembly to single member territorial constituencies and delimit them having due regard, as far as practicable to the following:- (a) (i) population as ascertained at the last preceding census of which the relevant figures have been published; and (ii) geographical compactness; and (iii) nature of terrain; and (iv) facilities of communication.' It put equal thrust on all the four factors, not only population as is being propagated. It is time to unmask these undemocratic, self-centered power hungry politicians and political parties and allow democracy to flourish in real sense at every level. (The author is Spokesperson BJP J&K and former Member of Legislative Council)

Cancer: Preventable with major changes in lifestyle

■DR SHYAM KISHORE SHRIVASTAVA

Cancer is emerging as a major issue among the non-communicable diseases in our country. In India head and Neck, cervical and breast cancers are very common. As per recent data from National Cancer Registry Programme (NCRP 2016), 1.7 million cases and 0.88 million deaths from cancers were expected in 2020. Among cancers, only 5-10 per cent cancers have roots in genetic defects; however, 90-95 per cent of cases can be attributed to lifestyle and environment. Lifestyle factors including tobacco, alcohol, diet, environmental pollutants, infection, stress, and physical activity etc have a profound influence on development of cancer. Although, hereditary factors cannot be modified, however, the lifestyle and environment are potentially modifiable. Cancers like Head & neck, cervical, lung, colorectal, liver, skin, prostate, breast is considered preventable cancers. The use of tobacco as smoking was identified as a primary cause of lung cancer in 1964. Further tobacco use has been attributed to nearly 15 types of cancers. According to studies, tobacco use in developing countries is increasing and using over 70 per cent of world tobacco consumption. Alcohol is associated with an increased risk of esophageal cancers, was known since 1910. Further studies revealed that chronic alcohol consumption is a risk factor for cancers of the upper aero digestive tract including oral cavity,

pharynx, larynx, and esophagus as well as liver, pancreas, and breast. There is evidence of synergistic effect between alcohol consumption and hepatitis C virus (HCV) and Hepatitis B virus (HBV). This possibly increases the risk of cirrhosis of the liver. Diet also plays a significant role in cancer, red meat is considered as a risk factor for several cancers such as gastrointestinal tract, colorectal, gastric, pancreatic, and prostate, bladder, and oral cancers. Obesity is known for increased mortality and is attributed to cancer of the colon, breast, endometrial, renal cell carcinoma, etc. Increased modernization and western lifestyle and diet have been associated with increased prevalence of disruption of neuro-chemicals leading to inflammatory signaling pathways linked with obesity and cancer. Nearly 15 per cent of cancers are associated with infection such as Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), Epstein Barr Virus (EBV), HIV, HBV, HCV with risk of cervical, anogenital, skin cancer, nasopharyngeal cancer, Burkitt's lymphoma, Kaposi sarcoma, and liver cancer. Even environmental pollution is linked to cancer including outdoor air pollution by carbon particles, hydrocarbons, smoke, and volatile compounds such as benzene. Food pollution by food additives, pesticides, carcinogenic metals and metalloids, pharmaceutical compounds, and cosmetics also contribute to cancer. Cervical cancer is associated with hygiene and socioeco-

nomie status of the population, if the hygiene is improved the can be prevented to some extent. A small percentage of cancers may also be induced by ionizing or non-ionizing radiations typically from radioactive substances, ultraviolet and pulsed electromagnetic radiation; these may include leukaemia, lymphoma, thyroid, skin cancers, sarcomas, lung, and breast cancers. Prevention of cancer: The fact that 5-10 per cent of cancers are due to a genetic defect and the remaining 90-95 per cent are due to lifestyle and environmental factors provide an opportunity for cancer prevention. Majority of cancers are related to tobacco and alcohol consumption, the avoidance of tobacco and minimizing alcohol consumption would likely have a major effect on reduction in cancer incidence. Vaccination for certain viral causes such as cervical cancer, Hepatocellular carcinoma, would help prevent these cancers. Diet derived from natural products will potentially be helpful for a healthy lifestyle. Obesity and metabolic syndromes are linked to cancer mortality, thus modifying the diet, and having fruits and vegetables will prevent such instances. Several phytochemicals (such as carotenoids, vitamins, resveratrol, quercetin, sulforaphane, etc) have been identified and may have potential against various cancers. These will have the advantage of being safe and targets for multiple cell signaling pathways to prevent can-

cers. Whole grain food does contain chemo-preventive antioxidants such as vitamin-E, tocotrienols, phenolic acids, lignans, and phytic acids. A sedentary lifestyle has been associated with most chronic illnesses. Physical activities and regular exercise may reduce the incidence of various cancers. For cancer prevention, a multi-prong approach is needed to tackle the growing burden of cancer in India. Therefore, cancer prevention requires smoking cessation, increased ingestion of fruits and vegetables, moderate use of alcohol, caloric restriction, exercise, minimal meat consumption, use of whole grains, use of vaccinations, and regular check-ups. World Health Organisation (WHO) has initiated a program for cancer cervix elimination, which is a great initiative at the global level. In India, the lack of nationwide screening guidelines and vaccination strategies is a hurdle for proper preventable cancers. Apart from the governmental initiative, the efforts by non-governmental organizations and advocacy by civil societies are needed to promote it. Cost-effective strategies for screening the high-risk population for sustainable long-term control of cancer. In addition, we provide evidence that cancer is a preventable disease that requires major lifestyle changes. (The author is Director, Radiation Oncology, HCG, Cancer Centre, Mumbai)

YOUR COLUMN

Attending SAARC's 19th Summit

Dear Editor, I would like to express my deep concern regarding SAARC Summit through the medium of your esteemed daily newspaper. SAARC, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation is an organisation of eight countries including India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives and Afghanistan who joined organisation in 2007 having permanent Headquarters at Kathmandu (Nepal) and was established on December 8, 1985. After the formation of SAARC, the member nations agreed to cooperate in areas of Agriculture, Social development, Education and Culture, Biotechnology, Economic, trade and finance, Ecology, Science and technology, Information, Communication and Media, Poverty alleviation, Security aspects, People to people contact, Funding mechanism & Social development.

The 19th summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is to be held next week in Islamabad. The summit was not initially scheduled for January 2022 and was supposed to be held in November 2016, but was postponed due to attack on India's Army camp on September 18, 2016 in Uri, Kashmir, wherein Pakistan's involvement was surfaced and latter Afghanistan, Bhutan and Bangladesh also pulled out themselves from Summit meeting, which was to be held in Islamabad on November 15-19, 2016. It is now a second attempt of the member countries to hold SAARC and this time, with Pakistan reiterating its invitation and I think, New Delhi should join the Summit virtually, if not wants to attend in person, as SAARC consists of 8 countries. I think the Summit would essentially be fruitless if any of its major members were not present. Moreover, this invitation has been extended to all countries and presence of all members is of particular significance this year due to important agenda items of relevance. This year, a number of geopolitical developments have occurred in the region that impact all surrounding countries. It would be in the

interest of all countries in the region to engage in these issues and even if they disagree, they should negotiate and indulge in dialogue. There are existential threats facing region for example ISIS has reared its ugly head new threat of Omicron virus and others so many international issues. The brunt of climate change is estimated to be quite harsh on the South Asian region due to its coastal vulnerability. Perhaps, most notable of all, Afghanistan once again after twenty years sees the rule of the Taliban, and this enormous political development has serious consequences on the monetary, financial, and political and security conditions of all member countries. India has played an integral part before in SAARC.I view it as an important organisation for enhancing regional cooperation that should not be set aside for selfish deviant motives by countries. Last but not the least, I hope that India will also pay heed to greater good and security of the region and attend the conference.

Mool Raj,
Doda