

QUACKS OR WHAT?

During earlier times there used to be 'Jhola chhap' doctors who brazenly fleeced innocent people especially in remote areas where there was no check of authorities. But in today's modern world if someone is cheating people that too in a town by impersonating as a qualified dentist when he is a simple assistant in the field raises a big question mark on the efficiency of the concerned authorities. Surprisingly, a Dental Assistant posted at PHC Gudufalal in District Kathua was placed under suspension by the Director Health Services Jammu because he has opened an illegal dental clinic opposite Tehsil Office Billawar where he was fleecing gullible patients by charging huge amount as consultation fee and practising during duty hours. For sure, this is not the first case of this sort and also not the only one as there are many medicos who are practicing privately during duty hours in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and their reputation among people is also good because despite knowing this fact they prefer to visit those medicos. Reportedly, in August 2020 also, the case of attached Medical Officer at Government Medical College's Nephrology Department came to limelight as without any fear of penal action he was caught red handed performing dialysis of patients in a private health facility in Talab Tillo area during duty hours. There cannot be another example of 'dare-devilry' as the cases of such employees who prefer to work in private establishments during duty hours and the government facilities have to bear the wrath of people as their functioning hampers due to such kind of delinquency. There should be a check on such malpractices by the government health employees as the same is maligning the image of the entire department as well as the government. Although, the Additional Chief Secretary, H&ME has said that such conduct of Government officials in the Health Sector shall not be tolerated and strict action shall be taken against those employees who are found to be indulging in private practise during working hours illegally but the previous record in such matters speaks otherwise as people get back all their enoluments with interest once their suspension is revoked. If the dereliction of duty is proved in such cases, the government should terminate the erring officials with immediate effect as these employees don't deserve any clemency.

OFF 'D' CUFF

Forest Bathing

In the heat of idleness, I often envision myself in the middle of nowhere, lost in the deep, dark woods, full of magic and mysticism. Taking deep breaths to smell the fresh forest air and damp soil, placing my hands on the trunk of a tree, listening to the ambient sounds of birds, dipping my fingers in a stream to feel the chilled water and soaking up the sublime serenity, I am at the peak of bliss, calm and contentment. Such is the tonic called Nature.

Lured by wilderness, I reserve a seat for the Mendenhall Glacier Hike for my day trip in Juneau. Alaska's remote capital city with no roads going anywhere, Juneau is the gateway to remarkable hiking trails and massive, awe-inspiring glaciers.

After a barely 25-minute drive from downtown Juneau, my hiking buddies and I are ready to set foot in the Tongass National Forest, the USA's largest national forest, and part of the Pacific coast temperate rainforest — the largest forest of its kind in the world today — which stretches 2,500 miles from northern California up to Kodiak Island in south-central Alaska.

Our trail begins with cautionary advice: “This is a bear trail. Do not approach or run from them. Keep your food in the pack”. In spite of this warning about how unpredictable and uncertain wildlife spotting is, we casually walk past the signboard, giving it only a quick glance.

After walking just a few steps in the wet, moss-covered rainforest, our passionate guide and naturalist Jim Pfitzer is quick to sense some sort of movement in the foliage behind us. “It's the bears,” Jim announces. We walk back in silence and decide to wait, hoping bears make a grand entry on the muddy path. Voila! We see a family of three black bears plodding sluggishly, searching for salmon — their favourite delicacy. Yes, bears catch spawning salmon and pull them out on the stream banks to devour the nutrient-rich parts of the fish. While Tongass is reputed for having one of the highest density of black bears in the world, we certainly didn't expect to spot bears within a few minutes of starting the trail. “There are certain days when we don't see bears at all. I guess we just got really lucky,” says Jim.

Being treated to these adorable creatures in their natural habitat is indeed a rewarding experience.

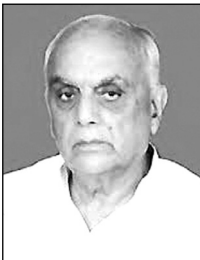
This is just the beginning. We are yet to unfold the flavour of the forest. After walking only a few hundred meters farther, we have a close encounter with another bear. “That's 19-year-old Nikki enjoying her catch of the day,” says Jim who succeeds in making us feel strangely comfortable around bears. We sight seven bears in and around the bushes and it's a wonderful feeling to observe and photograph their behavior without causing any disturbance. I am both inspired and fascinated by Jim's tendency to affectionately converse with bears, expecting them to understand or respond to his questions and instructions. This brings to mind Albert Schweitzer's meaningful lines: “Compassion, in which all ethics must take root, can only attain its full breadth and depth if it embraces all living creatures and does not limit itself to mankind”.

Filled with a certain sense of fulfillment, we continue our journey in the Alaskan backcountry. Sunlight filters through towering Sitka spruce, western hemlock and red and yellow cedar trees, moss and ferns cover the ground, and lichens drape many trees. Apart from dwarf dogwood that produces berries, we come across blueberry and salmonberry plants and several kinds of mushrooms including angel wing mushrooms. Lush and inviting, the forest is nothing short of an enchanted world coming alive from folklore, fantasies and childhood classics.

After the first mile, the trail becomes less defined and gains a bit of elevation characterised by uneven terrain, some steep pitches, slippery scree and a series of stairs. But all the hard work pays off when the trail opens up to expose a glorious view of Mendenhall Glacier overlooking the Mendenhall Lake and the forest. With autumnal colours in full bloom, it is a sight to behold. Green Sitka alder trees are painted with hues of yellow and orange. The partly cloudy weather treats us to impressive deep blue icebergs glaucoured by pinkish-blue skies and snowcapped mountains in the background.

Shikha Shah

Political excursion to Jantar Mantar



■ ER P L KHUSHU

A few days back PDP President and former Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, posed to protest against alleged repression of people of the Union Territory and demanded that killing of innocents be stopped immediately. Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister staged a Dharna at Jantar Mantar in this regard, to protest about the alleged repression of people of the union territory and demanded that killing of innocents be stopped immediately. The Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president said she decided to stage a Dharna in the national capital as she was never allowed to register her protest in Kashmir. She says that she was either detained at her house or whisked away by police every time she planned a protest. She claimed that scores of PDP workers joined her in the protest at Jantar Mantar. But what was ironically witnessed that such a protest by her was looking like a dramatic joke, as hardly ten youths were with her in this protest which was observed by the people on television and everybody mocked the leader to call it a protest at the national capital. It can be called as the political excursion of this leader of PDP to Jantar Mantar, New Delhi, along with some 10 number youths as her supporters to supplement her slogans of sorts. None from her erstwhile veteran members of PDP could be spotted in this protest as most her lieutenants have already deserted her, which is on record. This political leader of PDP is trying to project herself as one of tall leaders of Kashmir, by saying that she was not allowed to register her protest in Kashmir; as she was always detained or put on house arrest on all such occasions. Does she know the genesis of a tall leader representing masses? When a mass base political leader struggling for the interests of people of a region or state or country is arrested, it is the masses or the people who come out on roads and express their protests for such arrests or detentions of such political leaders. Such protests continue unabated and continuously in the support of such popular leaders if they have any popularity or credentials among the masses. Citing examples in this regard of Kashmir itself, we have observed that when the great leaders of Kashmir like Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah, Mirza Mohamed Afzal Beg and the like, were put in long detentions during plebiscite agitation, after 1953, the agitations in Kashmir in this regard were a constant affair and a movement, when the people would come on the roads risking their lives and would hardly get

deterred by the acts of the security forces. Great political leaders have vast and mass based followings of the masses. Such agitations are not being quoted here with an intention to approve of such protests and agitations. It is to bring home to the leader of the PDP that do not remain in any false dilemma that the people of Kashmir are with this leader for such agitations or protests and do not portray as a mass leader of the people of Kashmir. Nobody from the political party of this leader, as also not a single soul even from the constituency of this leader did bother to come on the roads to protest for the detention or the house arrest of this political leader. Who does not know that most of her close stalwart confidants and colleagues of her party, who shaped this political party have since deserted her and left PDP. This political leader should introspect about the cause of such desertions of her trusted colleagues. It has become a fashion with all such dynasty based political leaders of Kashmir to project themselves on mock shows, when their real intentions behind all such dramas are now fully known to the general people of Kashmir.

Why President of PDP has no following in Kashmir has a base in the fact that she betrayed the trust of the people by aligning with BJP to form the government in Jammu and Kashmir in 2015. People in Kashmir have no short memories. They know it that it was in coalition with BJP in running the government of Jammu and Kashmir; prior to the abrogation of article 370 and 35 A. She showered enough of praises on PM Modi then in unequivocal grammar to ensure that she remains in power as the chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir. Why did this leader opt to go for alliance with BJP with divergent political manifestoes of these two political parties, can be anybody's guess? The answer is simple. This political leader wanted power, which this leader got at the cost of the political manifesto of PDP. Even this leader meant to make her brother and one other close relative of her as the minister of Jammu and Kashmir during her chief minister ship. This political leader is on record to have said then that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is 'the man of guts' and the state needs him. It was reported in press then that 'Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister was full of praises for the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi while campaigning for her brother, who was the party's candidate for the Anantnag Lok Sabha by poll. She has reportedly said, "If there is any leader who can talk to Pakistan it is him (Modi). She is not a mute witness to the abrogation of Articles 370 & 35A, but a positive contributor to this process of abrogation of Articles 370 & 35A, being a part of the government with BJP, when she headed the coalition

Government between PDP and BJP. People of Kashmir have not forgotten it. That is why she has a narrowed following amongst the masses of Kashmir. This political leader obviously has no right now to speak against the abrogation of the articles 370 & 35A, by arousing the regional and the communal bias, in the minds of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. By siding with the Taliban or showing sympathy to Pakistan by asking the government of India to talk to Pakistan on issues of terrorism or unrest in Kashmir due to terrorism are hypocrisy and an absurd political ad-hoc gimmick which reflects about the political immaturity of the persons concerned. The former Chief Minister denied the charge that she raised questions on every police action. "Whenever there is an encounter and a terrorist gets killed, nobody questions but when a civilian gets killed, only then people come out and start asking questions," she said. Carrying a placard at the protest site at Jantar Mantar, it read 'Kashmir is in pain'. Can she be asked as to how many such protests and 'Dharnas', she held for pain of the Kashmiri Pandits of valley, due to their mass killings and the forced exodus of from the valley, which is still occurring with the leftover residual population of this miniscule community in the valley under the very nose of such hypocritical leaders. Has she any reply or she kept mum on such occasions being radically tilted towards a suspected radical thought, the meaning of which can be understood by any wise and a person of intelligent acumen. In an interview to a TV channel recently this political leader has empirically said that Jammu and Kashmir has acceded to the India of Gandhi, not Godse. It is not this political leader of PDP only who says so, the other tall leader of national conference is also portraying this 'Mantra' among masses for their cheaper publicity. Do these leaders want to compare the present government with that of Godse? It is an insult and assault to the honor and the dignity of crores of Indian masses who have chosen the present government twice with absolute majority. The present rulers of this country are not dynasty based rulers who bring in their brothers, sisters and maternal uncles (Mamas) as ministers. It is a clean Government with a pious slogan of 'Sab-Ka-Sath, Sab-Ka-Vikas, Sab-Ka-Vishwas' and now 'Sab-Ka-Prayas', when it is actually happening on ground. In particular they should know that Jammu and Kashmir does not mean Kashmir only. Jammu is a standing entity which constitutes Jammu and Kashmir. Jammu province has sent two MPs from BJP, so do not insult people of Jammu and call it Godse regime. Kashmiri Pandit is another important entity of Kashmir. Such a statement means an insult

to them as well, as they are true Indians believing in full accession of Jammu and Kashmir with India. Let these leaders forget at this point of time, when much water has flown down river Jehlum, Tawi and Chenab, that they are not the contractors (Thekedars) of idea of the State's accession to India. There are other cogent segments as well. Should the tall political leader of PDP be reminded of her Hurriyat like approach, as to what this leader said on the floor of the Jammu and Kashmir assembly about Kashmiri Pandits return to valley? Yes this leader should be reminded. To quote it in July 2016, this political leader said that they (Kashmiri Pandits) cannot return to their original homes in the current atmosphere. This political leader likened their home coming to 'throwing pigeons among cats'. Of course this leader drew a lot of flak from various quarters including the Kashmiri Pandits, for this murderous 'pigeon-cat' analogy. This speaks enough about the communal passion and kinetic gritty of Ismic mind of such a leader about the members of other community, particularly the Kashmiri Pandits. Should theology of this leader be equated with that of Godse. She has to decide before giving sermons on her Godse comments. It deserves to be condemned by all the principles of logistic debates. The tilt in the thinking's and sympathies of all such leaders towards separatists and Pakistan can be any body's guess due to their repeated utterances in this behalf. Let people of Jammu and Kashmir decide it. Let them stop calling the present government at the centre a Godse Government. It pinches heart and soul of crores of Indians. PDP was founded in 1999 by the former Union Home Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed. It captured power in Jammu and Kashmir in October 2002 Assembly elections. Who does not know that its main aim was to combat the influence of national conference in Jammu and Kashmir and had suspected hidden blessings of Jamati-Islami? The PDP leader says that PDP will contest the elections as and when these are held in Jammu and Kashmir minus its leader. The leader says that she will not contest the elections as long as the Articles 370 and 35A is not resumed back in Jammu and Kashmir. What a paradox? Why should then PDP contest the elections if the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A is the obstacle. The answer is simple. The leader of PDP knows that the possible defeat in elections of this leader can be obvious, as this leader lost the recent parliamentary elections miserably to a stalwart candidate of National Conference, Justice Masoodi.

(The author is a Chartered Consultant Civil Engineer, who loves his motherland the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir).

General Rawat made China & Pakistan to tremble

■ R K SINHA

The entire nation is bound to mourn the sudden death of the Chief of Defense Staff (CDS), General Bipin Rawat, in a very sorrowful helicopter accident. Apart from General Rawat, 12 others including his wife Madhulika Rawat, have lost their lives. On December 6, the day marking the 50th anniversary of our victory against Pakistan in 1971 war; the country was to celebrate and remember the martyrs. The absence of General Rawat will have a profound impact on all those programmes. General Rawat was appointed as the country's first CDS and was also the Chief of Indian Army before that. He also had a deep understanding of the workings of the Army and the Navy and managed to do a brilliant job of synergizing the three armies.

General Rawat was a keen expert on Chinese affairs and constantly advised the government on the ongoing border conflict with China and Pakistan. He believed that the country would not be suppressed under any circumstances. For their every attack, our country would have a better counterattack. On the ongoing border dispute with China, General Rawat had said, "There is also a military option to deal with the encroachment of Chinese army in Ladakh." Rawat's statement reassured the citizens that India is prepared for any situation. There was nothing wrong with what he said. It was a well-balanced true statement. General Rawat never kept the nation in the dark. He had described China as the biggest security threat to India. Some time ago, General Rawat had said, "China has become a big security threat to India and thousands of soldiers and weapons the country had sent last year to secure the Himalayan

border; will not be able to return to the base for a long time." This statement of General Rawat seemed to strike a nerve with China.

China, stunned by Rawat's statement, said, "Indian Officials not without reason speculate on the so-called 'Chinese military threat', which is a serious violation of the strategic guidance of the leaders of the two countries that China and India do not pose a threat to each other." China may keep saying anything in its favor; but it is abundantly clear that the real challenge before India is China. Ever since General Rawat took over charge of CDS, he was preparing the three wings of the Army so that even if India had to face China-Pakistan together on the battlefield, India would not lag. Due to his strategic thinking, the Indian Army was continuously preparing itself. China-Pakistan watched all these military preparations and became aware of the aggressive mindset of General Rawat. The opinion that General Rawat was expressing about China had been expressed by former Defense Minister Late George Fernandes many years ago. He described China as our biggest enemy. After the Pokhran-2 nuclear test, the then NDA Government's Defense Minister George Fernandes had claimed that India's number one enemy is China.

Political experts believed that George Fernandes must have given this statement based on information received during his tenure as the Defense Minister. Apart from George, former Defense Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav also believed that China is a bigger enemy of India than Pakistan. After the Doklam controversy in 2017, Mulayam Singh Yadav said in the Lok Sabha that the biggest issue for India is not Pakistan but

China. Cautioning the central government, he had warned that China is the biggest threat to our security and the government should take it seriously. However, some experts of Defense also believe that if India ever went to war with China, Pakistan would also openly fight alongside China. Similarly, if Pakistan ever waged a war against India, China would fight alongside Pakistan. Captain Amarinder Singh, a defense expert and the Former Chief Minister of Punjab, has publicly said that Pakistan will not sit still if an India-China war breaks out. They will fight in favor of China. Of course, given the attitude of China and Pakistan, Indian security forces have to remain vigilant throughout the year on all fronts, land and sea borders. The Indian Forces were performing this responsibility well under the patronage of General Rawat. It is safe to assume that even after the sudden demise of General Rawat, the tension on our borders with China and Pakistan will not end. China isn't going to give up on its mischievous and underhanded tricks and attacks. Meaning India will continue to face its two enemy countries together on the border every day until they are crushed once and for all. Friendly relations cannot be expected from them. So India has to remain alert always to counter the nefarious antics of these neighboring countries. It will be the responsibility of the new CDS of the country to replace General Rawat, to continue the work of strengthening the army like during the time of his predecessor; General Rawat. That will be the nation's tribute to that great warrior. He was the pride of Devbhoomi Uttarakhand and a warrior of the nation. India shall always remember him with profound gratefulness and respect.

(The writer is a senior Editor, Columnist and former MP.)

YOUR COLUMN

Mobile phones for students of 21st century

Dear Editor,
Research shows that more than 80 percent of high school students in America use mobile phones consistently. And with the availability of tools like Photo-Stick mobile, there is no need to worry about the space as well, as this tool helps create a backup of important data and photos. If you are looking to design mobile phone apps for students, you can contact this web design company. This rampant use of mobile phones has brought about a raging debate about whether students should be allowed to bring their phones that often or even bring them to class. However, those with cell phones in class argue that there are more benefits than disadvantages of students using phones. To put this matter to rest, here are the main advantages of using mobile phones for students:

Gone are the days when students would only get knowledge from teachers, parents, and books. Today, the sources for knowledge have diversified, and one of the ready sources is the internet. Having a mobile phone on their person all the time can help students check out things in a more fun way than going to books all the time. Not only are we seeing students using smartphones to record lectures, photograph instructor notes, and collaborate through cloud-based applications, but some instructors are starting to allow the Mobile Student to research items of interest during a lecture or use Twitter to open a backchannel of conversation and enhance student participation and engagement

A cell phone connected to the internet can motivate the student to do his/her studies, as all the time; he knows he can access the world's biggest library right where he is. If there is any doubt in mind about something that the teacher was teaching, the students can clear the doubts immediately. While gadgets cannot manage your time for you, you will be able to do the right thing at the right time when you set deadlines, and you set an accompanying alarm for the same. To wake up early in the morning, students need to set the alarm on their cell phones. You can also set a text alert to accompany the alarm to remind you to do a certain thing. That way, if a student is supposed to check out something on a certain day; he/she needs to set the alarm and an accompanying note for the same. Should students find themselves in emergencies in school, at home, or in the streets, they know they can reach their parents, a senior person, and even the emergency services right from their mobile phones. Today, there are so many things going around schools, from shootings and other accidents. With a cell phone, a parent can keep in touch with their children all the time, even when they are in school. This is one way a mobile phone is useful for students at school. There are so many learning applications in the app stores for students at all levels in school. This means that a student can get help from an app for the subject in which he/she lacks in some areas. Most of these apps are free of charge, or you may pay a small one-off fee for downloading. There is an app for every subject out there. There are versatile apps, as well. Say, for example; this top online learning app is one of the most used and most popular apps in the world. Students can have the best Android homework app on their android phones.

Similarly, iPhone users, too, can have an advantage by installing the best Apple learning app on their phones. This then is a merit of mobile phones for secondary stu-

dents, playing an essential role in making life easy for students. Mainly, this is GPS technology. Once the location indicator is turned on, as a parent, you can always know where your child is. When you are late at work, and you cannot pick him or her at school on time, you can call in advance and let him know. If he says he is going to visit a friend, you will know where he is all the time. It is always a good idea to let your child know that you have the GPS turned on for their safety. Students no longer have to wait until the computer class time so that they can check things out. With mobile internet-enabled devices, they can check up stuff from anywhere. This means that learning goes on all the time, in and out of the school setting. Students no longer have to wait to access the school or community library because with a smartphone, the world's biggest library- the internet is at their disposal. Apart from the apps that help students with their homework, they can also visit websites to find the information necessary for their research. Many forums have case studies in almost any niche that students can learn from. The latter can even write reports on mobile phones, as popular editing tools like Grammarly and The Hemingway App have mobile versions that help to make a student a better essay writer. And social media communities can connect them with other scholars to interact with and learn from their experiences.

When the teacher encourages students to use technology to advance their studies, they will happily do so because they love technology. During teenage, students tend to be stressed up by many things. Thankfully, their mobile phones pack a lot of entertainment in the form of games, cartoons, and many more entertaining things. No matter the age of the student, there is always something entertaining on their mobile phone.

Vijay Garg.