

## PADDLE FOR HEALTH

After looking into the sequence of events in the last couple of years due to the pandemic, people should have understood by now that remaining healthy and agile should be foremost priority as the same ensures good immunity as well. Diet, happiness besides physical activity counts for the robust immune system in humans and therefore to be fit a regular physical activity is a must. A healthy lifestyle including an active routine can protect people from serious illnesses like obesity, heart disease, cancer, mental illness, diabetes, arthritis and now COVID and many of its variants as physical activity improves immunity. Riding a bicycle regularly is one of the best ways to reduce risk of health issues associated with a sedentary lifestyle. One can say to remain healthy and fortified against the diseases including coronavirus paddling a bicycle is a good option. This is something which people of almost all ages could enjoy. Above all it is the cheapest exercise with lots of benefits. It has been seen in the last phase of coronavirus that many people started this activity and roads were buzzing with motor-less bikers paddling from here to there. It was unfortunate that when the lockdown was lifted the number of cyclists on the roads was reduced drastically and people again started using their bikes, cars and public transport. However, looking into decrease in the physical activity in Jammu it is good if the people adopt cycles as their companion to offices, shops and even residences of their relatives, friends and known ones. There is no harm or shame in riding a bicycle because this makes the body healthy and the mind fresh. Cycling increases stamina, strength and aerobic fitness which mean that the heart, blood vessels and lungs all get a workout. This helps people breathe deeper, perspire and experience increased body temperature, which enhances overall fitness level. In the coronavirus times what else people need, cycling is a complete package for health and fitness besides combating the viruses through immunity boosting. The point is why the people in Jammu are not tilted towards this physical activity as compared to other states? Surely it is the time that people should change their mindset as there is no better alternative than cycling for remaining upbeat and physically fit.



## OFF 'D' CUFF It Requires a Prepared Mind

CV Raman (1888-1970), the renowned Indian scientist, once had it pointed out to him that scientific discoveries were accidental. Raman's response was: "Yes, but such accidents occur only when the mind is prepared." The fact is that all the opportunities for scientific discovery are already present in nature. People pass by them, but fail to recognize them. A scientist, having a prepared mind, instantly recognizes and develops any such matter as could be of scientific interest the moment he comes across it. This is how scientific discovery is arrived at.

The same is true of spirituality. Tokens of spirituality are scattered all over the world. In fact, every part of nature, great or small, is invested with spiritual content. People see the signs, but pass them by without detecting them. One who has a prepared mind, however, is able to recognize them and then turn them into objects of contemplation. It is 'discovery plus contemplation' that adds up to spirituality.

Two friends, Moti Ram and Ram Ratan Kapila, the former a jeweller and the latter an AC engineer, were in the habit of taking morning walks together in a quiet part of New Delhi. Once, along the way, they found a glittering object. Ram Ratan Kapila picked it up and pronounced it to be a piece of glass. Moti Ram, on the other hand, immediately recognized it as a diamond. His friend, although a degree holder in the science of Air Conditioning, totally failed to recognize the object for what it was. Moti Ram, being a jeweller, only took a second to recognize it. This was because, on the subject of gemstones, he had a prepared mind.

This story illustrates the importance of mental preparedness. Anyone who wants to live as a spiritual person must train himself to this end. One who has neglected to prepare himself will never be able to draw spiritual nourishment from life's experiences. In the midst of spiritual abundance, he will continue to remain spiritual-

ly starved. What is preparation? Preparation cannot be achieved by means of taking some external course. It is an exercise in self-training. Only those who are ready to engage in self-training can enjoy spirituality. Those who do not do so, can never develop themselves as spiritual persons.

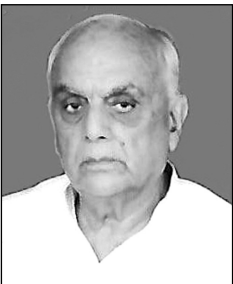
There are many aspects of self-preparation, for instance, the capacity to discern which are the relevant and which are the irrelevant aspects of any given event, so that an appropriate course of action may be taken. An acute sense of what is significant and what is not is essential, for without it, man can never experience spirituality.

To train oneself spiritually, the most important thing a person must do is to condition himself to refrain from taking offence. The moment he allows himself to be offended, he closes the door to self-training.

The process of learning always takes place within society. In social relations, a person speaks from his mind, not from another's mind. Hence it is necessary that, as regards social relations, one should be 100 per cent objective. Where there is a lack of objectivity, there is the likelihood of offence being taken. And one who takes offence shows himself to be incapable of objective thinking.

There are always two options before you – subjective thinking or spirituality. If you are desirous of spirituality, you shall have to give up thinking subjectively. If you are not ready to forego subjective thinking, spirituality will forever remain beyond your grasp. Spirituality cannot be acquired through physical exercise. Physical exercise is quite unrelated to spirituality, the latter being a state of mind. Only with the right state of mind can spirituality be cultivated, for spirituality is a way of thinking – a function of the mind. One who has the urge to live with spirituality must train his mind for this purpose, otherwise spirituality for him will remain a distant dream.

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan



■ ER P L KHUSHU

There is a famous maxim which says 'Silence amounts to Speech'. If Jammu and its people remained silent and peaceful so far, while accommodating all the insinuations in respect of its governance and development, both from the central government and the dynastic rulers of Kashmir, it does not mean that they never understand as to what was or is happening around. This silence needs to be gauged by the political dynastic leaders of Kashmir who ruled Jammu and Kashmir by turns for decades, which has ceremoniously been addressed to a great extent if not fully by Delimitation Commission, working presently in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir, through its draft report about the enhancement of seats in the legislative assembly for Jammu and enhancing the number of seats the scheduled casts, scheduled tribes and the like.

In a major bid to end decades long political disempowerment of Jammu region, the Delimitation Commission has proposed allocation of six out of seven Assembly seats to Jammu and one to the Kashmir valley out of a total of seven seats increased for the Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory and also announced reservation of nine seats for Scheduled Tribes and seven for Scheduled Castes. As per the Delimitation Commission's proposal, Kashmir will now have 47 Assembly seats and Jammu 43. Even if the proposal mooted by the Delimitation Commission headed by Justice (Retired) Ranjana Prakash Desai which was shared with five Associate Members in a meeting in New Delhi is through, Kashmir division will still have four more seats from Jammu region. The five Associate members including Union Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) Dr Jitendra Singh, Jugal Kishore Sharma, both from BJP and Lok Sabha MPs from Jammu region, Dr Farooq Abdullah, Mohammad Akbar Lone and Justice (Retd) Hasmain Masoodi, all from NC and the members of Parliament from Kashmir. The Commission told the Associate Members that out of seven seats increased in the Legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir (from 83 to 90), six have been proposed for Jammu region and one for Kashmir division. The Commission also briefed the Associate Members that it proposed to reserve nine seats in the Legislative Assembly for Scheduled Tribes and seven for Scheduled Castes. In the new Assembly, all seats will be well within the boundaries of 20 districts and no seats will overlap from one district to the other as is the case presently, the Commission told the Associate Members. It said since the last delimitation held in 1995, the number of districts has increased from 12 to 20 and number of Tehsils from 52 to 207 in Jammu and Kashmir and in absence of delimitation, the Assembly seats crossed boundaries of the districts. The Commission told the Associate Members that it categorized all 20 districts in three broad categories of A, B and C giving margin of +/- 10 percent of average population per Assembly constituency while proposing allocation of seats to the districts. "The Commission has also, for some districts, proposed carving out of an additional seat to balance the representation of geographical areas having inadequate communication and lack of public conveniences due to their excessive remoteness or inhospitable conditions on the International Border (IB)," the Panel said. The Commission informed that population density in the districts of J&K varies from 29 persons per square kilometer in Kishtwar to 3,436 persons per square kilometer in Srinagar. The UT also share international boundary with Pakistan and in those locations, the inhabitants are forced to take shelter, intermittently in bunkers due to continued inhospitable and uncertain living conditions. The delimitation draft proposes one seat each to be added in the districts of Kishtwar, Samba, Kathua, Doda, Rajouri and Udhampur/Reasi in Jammu division and Kupwara in Kashmir division. Incidentally, districts in J&K have increased from 12 to 20 since the last delimitation in the erstwhile state in 1995. It vividly appears that true justice has been done by the Commission to fix new parameters of seats of the legislative assembly both for Jammu region and Kashmir region, though Jammu still lags in seats in the legislative assembly as per this proposal. The political leadership clan has as usual shown



■ ANURAG SINGH THAKUR

On December 13, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Kashi Vishwanath Dham. This unique project befits a civilizational city that Kashi is, and the historic Kashi Vishwanath temple. Highlighting the significance and antiquity of Kashi, Mart Twain wrote, "Banaras is older than history, older than tradition, older even than legend and looks twice as old as all of them put together." With the project's inauguration, Prime Minister Narendra Modi rededicated one of the most ancient living cities on our planet and the epicentre of Hinduism and our age-old civilization, Kashi or Varanasi to the global world. An amalgam of antiquity and continuity, Kashi belongs to entire humanity. It is regarded as one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. While other ancient cities around the world could not survive the imperial and colonial onslaughts, Kashi carries on with its characteristic fervour. This makes the city truly significant and unique. Through its continuity, this city signals its firm resilience to retain its cultural, artistic, and educational identity even in the face of barbaric invasions and onslaughts. Kashi Vishwanath Dham reflects a solemn vow to rise above the tyrannical past of this city. In other words, it is a humble effort to rejuvenate the age-old spiritual, educational and creative heritage of this land. History has taken a new turn on the pretext of this Dham. It is perhaps the first time in history that a thousand years of injustice has been undone without any extirpation, depredation or with any sense of revenge. It has been achieved solely through

## YOUR COLUMN

### Make street-lights functional in Nanak Nagar

Dear Editor,

Through the columns of your esteemed daily, I would like to invite the attention of concerned authorities sitting at the helm of affairs towards the miserable condition of street-lighting in Jammu city in general and Nanak Nagar area in particular, due to which the residents of the area are facing a number of hardships. In majority of Jammu, maximum areas witnessed a complete blackout due to strike of Power development Department employees from midnight of December 17, as many areas witnessed power outages and remained in complete darkness for days but the situation normalized soon after the strike was called off by employees. But, hardships of resi-

their non-acceptance of these recommendations of the Delimitation Commission, classifying it not based on the actual population rationale of Jammu & Kashmir. They have often been saying that the present delimitation in Jammu and Kashmir should have been based on the census of 2011. They are consciously knowing the rabid and the resistance behind the population configuration of the year 2011. The National Conference members led by party president and former Chief Minister have expressed their reservations over the draft report of the Delimitation Commission especially the biased process of seat sharing, a party spokesperson tweeted. The party, within hours of the meeting, made it clear that it 'will not be a signatory to this report.' The recommendations of the Delimitation Commission on Jammu and Kashmir are 'divisive and unacceptable', the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) said on Tuesday and announced a peaceful protest in Srinagar on January 1, after holding a meeting in this regard. On Delimitation Commission's recommendations, their representative is reportedly said, "We are firmly of the opinion that it (proposal) is divisive and will further deepen the divide in Jammu and Kashmir. It will also deepen the alienation of the people and will create a much more bigger void which is also detrimental to the interests of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh as well and will also damage the interests of the country as a whole." This is an unfortunate statement of this conglomerate group of political leaders from Kashmir mostly with dynastic bases, who ruled Jammu and Kashmir for decades considering Jammu as a colony of theirs and ignored the interests of Jammu in all respects. Jammu and its people shall have to resist it now fully as enough is enough already. They shall have to face it together in all fronts. Notwithstanding all these issues in the context of J&K, the redrawing of the constituencies was an extraordinarily complex and highly needed and a desired exercise. It had to potentially balance the electoral demographic imbalance between the two regions, the root cause of sufferance for Jammu and its people for an appropriate development of Jammu region with an appropriate share in the state administration along with proper legislative powers and share thereof. The critics whom it does not suit say that this severely compromises the Commission's mandate vis-a-vis J&K. This is not a fact. This is a fair opportunity for Delimitation Commission-2020 to undo faulty Delimitations done earlier, at the belligerent cost of Jammu division and its people. Jammu has suffered a lot due to the apathies shown to it and to its people for its inherent development since 1947, with a gruesome reference to its population share, as per various data's compiled in the past, of course susceptible to doubts of sorts. A brazen picture of suspected willful attempt to deprive Jammu of its due share, comes into picture in this regard with the fact that according to sources, the current Delimitation Commission had sought the report of its predecessor panel, presented by chairperson Justice K K Gupta in 1995, from the J&K government. The purpose was to study the basis on which it had allocated the seats to the three regions of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, so as to assess and correct any anomalies in the current exercise. However, the UT administration reverted saying that the report of Justice K K Gupta commission, set up under the J&K Constitution and J&K Representation of the People Act was not traceable in the state assembly, state government records or archives. As a result, the current Delimitation Commission had to make up with whatever records and figures of the last delimitation exercise are available in the public domain, including the notification relating to the 1995 delimitation award, to put together its first delimitation draft. What an apathy? Should such an important report get lost or one should smell a rat in such a move. It is condemnable. The humans under the influence of selective amnesia try to forget most of the happenings in one's life. But the scars left by bigger damages in one's life cling to one's ethos of memory like showing a red rag to a bull. This is what happened to Jammu and its people for proper development in all the perspective and prospective developmental fields so far, on the logistics of its subdued and depressed population figures, managed and cooked by the erstwhile political rulers with significant dynastic bases. Speculating that enough is enough, an uprising in the minds of Jammu and its people started with the taking over of these issues by an intellectual forum of Jammu, Jammu Newspapers Editors Guild

# Kashi Vishwanath Dham-Tribute to our living heritage

construction and creation.

Kashi has been known through the ages as the city of liberation or Mukti. People from all over are drawn to Kashi, seeking liberation. This project though is an attempt to celebrate the liberation of Kashi itself. This vision, and efforts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has brought back the millennia old glory to Kashi Vishwanath Temple. Kashi Vishwanath Dham is a project for the whole of humanity. For it is a celebration of the continuance of civilization itself. Thus, it is project for the entire world. The Hindu pantheon recognizes the Holy Trinity of Bhagwan Brahma - the Creator of the Universe, Bhagwan Vishnu - the Protector of the Universe, and Bhagwan Shiv - the Liberator of the Universe. Kashi evokes utmost reverence because it is one of the abodes of Bhagwan Shiva. This is the religious and spiritual importance of Kashi. On Constitution Day this year, Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi said, "It was a compulsion for India and for many countries of the world to live in the shackles of colonialism for many generations. Since India's independence, a post-colonial period started all over the world and many countries became independent. Today there is no country in the world that apparently exists as a colony of another country. But this does not mean that the colonial mindset has ceased to exist."

So, it is imperative for humanity, which survived colonialism for many generations, to de-colonize itself, to become independent, to usher again. Historically, besides many other things, plunder and demolition have been the main tools and objectives, means and ends of colonization. Naturally, civilizations with treasures of wealth, knowledge and archaeology were the prime attractions for such barbaric hoards.

dents of Nanak Nagar and other adjoining areas started much before the strike and are pursuing till date as nothing has been done to mitigate the sufferings of residents despite making repeated requests and reminders to various concerned. I, personally, have been calling concerned authorities from December 14, 2021 and requesting for restoring the street-lights of the area and every time got an assurance that same will be rectified within 24 hours. I am surprised that which type of clock the concerned are using which is moving at a snail's pace and 24 hours are yet to complete, when as per other clocks, more than 7 days are over. This is nothing but height of apathy of the concerned towards grievance of people, who are forced to suffer without any fault. It is not necessary to tell that taking advantage of darkness, anti-social elements get active and carryout various nefarious designs thereby putting the life and property of citizens in danger. Moreover, the headline numbers which are published in newspapers are also of no use, as majority times either these number are busy or not connected. It is further surprising that even the efforts of

(JNEG), sometime last year, led by the Chief Editor of STATE TIMES Jammu and other brilliant journalists and intellectuals of Jammu. Similarly the other political and the intellectual forums of Jammu in their best capacities started to voice their concerns about the plight of Jammu for its brazen neglect at the hands of the power corridors, be it the central governments of the past or the dynasty based political masters from Kashmir who mostly ruled the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir to their advantages only. 'Ikkjut' party from Jammu did a yeoman's service to Jammu and its people by exposing the acts of malfeasance and misfeasance of the erstwhile governments in their attempts to change the demography of Jammu. A silver lining was observed on the horizon, when two most credible political stalwarts of National Conference belonging to Jammu, resigned from the National Conference, not for any personal gains but on the anomaly of having felt concerned about the neglect of Jammu by various dynasty based power centers from Kashmir; to which the National Conference is the principle partner which ruled the state ever since 1947, with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah taking the reins of governance of Jammu and Kashmir; in 1948, from the great ruler of Jammu and Kashmir the Maharaja Hari Singh as a free gift at the asking of Pt Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India. Congress party too ruled Jammu & Kashmir for most of the time, but that was again an apology as for as the interests of Jammu and its people were concerned. In fact Jammu and its people suffered more during the congress rule in this part of country. Recognition had started gaining ground much earlier amongst the important political leaders of Jammu and Kashmir; that Jammu division has been ignored so far. The National Conference having ruled Jammu & Kashmir for a long time, admits through its tall mentor Dr. Farooq Abdullah, that Jammu has its own problems and issues, while submitting memorandums to the Delimitation Commission very recently, through the leaders of this party belonging to Jammu, who have resigned now from that party. With the formation of Gupkar Alliance, by a handful political leaders of Kashmir; showed dissent of sorts on most of the issues like abrogation of articles 370, 35A and the like for its consumption for the people of the valley, through a declaration known as 'Gupkar Declaration'. This alliance had no space or energy for the problems and the step motherly treatments meted out to Jammu so far since 1947. These leaders from Kashmir are on record to have tried many options to change the demographic character of Jammu. In retaliation to the creation of Gupkar Declaration a similar declaration was badly needed for Jammu and its people to be called as 'Jammu Declaration', when the base and the foundation stone for the same has been laid by Devender Singh Rana, a veteran and an experienced political leader from Jammu, supported and augmented by the versatile support from another shrewd and matured leader from Jammu Surjit Singh Slathia, along with their resigning from the national conference party. Devender Singh Rana declared that the Jammu Declaration, which is my political philosophy, will be pursued religiously; Surjit Singh Slathia and Devender Singh Rana both joined BJP recently at the BJP headquarters at New Delhi. BJP should not take it as a shot in their arm politically. BJP should feel proud that these two prominent energetic leaders of Jammu who had kept national conference's face alive and active in Jammu and are enjoying a mass base amongst their followers have joined BJP for the development and recognition of Jammu as an entity of 'Dogra' face and culture. Let the writing on the wall be read by the political leaders from the valley that Jammu has risen now and no amount of impersonation for Jammu by them will work anymore in future times to come. If they feel and say that much more void will get created between Jammu and Kashmir with this new proposal of delimitation, it is for them to ensure that such a situation does not arise. Ladakh is already alienated with their regional policies. Let Jammu be retained, before the so called paradise of Kashmir gets reduced to a paradise without a sky over it, when Jammu too will seek a separate statehood for itself. This is the high time. Let Jammu brace and face it together.

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

Coming back to Kashi. That this legendary ancient city has been a constant victim of plundering and looting, demolitions and destructions drops an ample hint of the kind of fabulous city it must have been. This is also attested by the specimens of glorious antiquities from Kashi scattered in museums and private collections across the world. The city of Kashi in general and Kashi Vishwanath temple in particular, were demolished and constructed several times in the past. Initially Kashi Vishwanath temple was destroyed by Ghurid Turk Sultan Qutb-ud-din Aibak and was rebuilt by a Gujarati merchant. The story of destruction and reconstruction continued till 1780, when, according to a legend, Bhagwan Shiva came in the dream of great Maratha Queen Ahilyabai Holkar and she became a devotee of Bhagwan Shiv and rebuild this temple. According to another legend, it was attack on this city which prompted the great Shivaji Maharaj to take up the sword. It is said that the demolition of Kashi Vishwanath Temple by Aurangzeb made Shivaji Maharaj's mother Jijabai so furious that she dared him to capture Sinhadgad- a fort under Mughal control. Rest is history. The rejuvenation of the temple complex is not just another step to move out of colonial hangover, but it also symbolises the primacy of civilization over barbarity, the reassertion of a seat of knowledge and reverence over savagery. The project is an effort to achieve these laudable goals through a constructive approach, while ensuring complete harmony. This presents an example for the entire humanity to see and, may be, to follow. May our Kashi continue to flourish and prosper. May Bhagwan Shiv bless us all with his divinity and glory.

(The author is Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports and Information Broadcasting).

the local corporators are not yielding any positive result and situation remains the same at ground level. At one hand, where the administration is making tall claims regarding various achievements to make Jammu a Smart city, on the other hand the resident of Nanak Nagar are moving towards old-age as their streets are reeling under darkness, giving an open invitation to anti-social elements for carrying out their evil designs and there is none to address the genuine grievances of citizens. Once again, I, on behalf of all residents of Nanak Nagar, would like to request the concerned authorities to break their slumber and mitigate the sufferings of Nanak Nagar residents by making all defunct street-lights function at the earliest before any untoward incident happens. I would also urge the LG Manoj Sinha to please issue necessary instructions to the concerned department for resolving the crisis at the earliest.

Surjit Singh, General Secretary, All J&K PoJK 1947 Sharnarathi Intellectual Forum.