

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Unlike NC leader Omar Abdullah, Congress' senior leader and former Chief Minister of erstwhile J&K State has come up with a more rational idea on resolving the issue of J&K by bringing a bill in Parliament to restore Jammu & Kashmir's statehood.

This is the most viable solution at the moment as statehood demand is growing by each passing day with ruling BJP giving assurances over the demand but on ground paving way for polls after the much hyped delimitation exercise and lingering on process to restore dignity back to J&K.

There is no doubt that statehood should be given back to J&K as already people here have been hurt by loss of status of the State to the mere position of UT.

Azad, being a seasoned leader, has assessed the mood of the people in the right perspective as loss of jobs and land to non-locals is a big issue for those who consider J&K their place of origin and have affection for the soil. It is not a small thing for them to share their resources with people coming from other parts of the country as many other states also toe a line wherein jobs and land chunks have been reserved for aborigines.

Senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad, looking into all this, has asked the Government to bring a bill in Parliament and restore Jammu and Kashmir's statehood.

Though the Government's view on the issue is different, being a democracy no one can stop G N Azad from demanding what he feels is right. This is the greatness of India that fundamental right to free speech allows people to speak freely on the issues which they think are significant for saving the democracy.

As the Government is of the opinion that after delimitation the polls will be conducted and the issue of statehood will be looked after normalcy is restored but the people including the senior Congress leaders have something different in their minds.

They are of the opinion that first of all statehood should be restored and rest should follow.

Government should consider this demand as it will not change anything on ground and will give shape to upcoming Government in a much better way. However, the decision lies with the Government and people will have to wait and watch to see what happens next?

OFF 'D' CUFF

Empathy, love, care, support, and other virtues like these make the world beautiful. Yet, it is also true that no one would become able to express these virtues freely if there is a lack of tolerance all around.

In the present world, everyone is in haste. Unfortunately, this hastiness and lack of sympathy towards fellow people are breeding intolerance in society. However, for a healthy and peaceful society, no one should ignore the significance of tolerance; it doesn't matter how busy the world gets.

Tolerance shows how 'valuable' humans actually are. It plays a crucial role in every stage of a person's life be it during childhood, adolescence, or adulthood. Being tolerant makes life fruitful. And when you understand the deeper meaning of tolerance, you'll realize its real importance.

The Deeper Meaning of Tolerance
Man is nothing but an amalgamation of complex feelings. Tolerance means the ability to understand and respect others' feelings in spite of disagreements. A tolerant person therefore is a kind person. He listens to others' opinions patiently and tries to comprehend their point of view. Such people also express their ideas without any stress or conflict while showing empathy towards the fellow person.

Tolerance or open-mindedness thus means humbly accepting others' views. There is no question of any conflict thereby maintaining the tranquility of the place. This profound peace, moreover, solves many problems and infuses relationship values in people. Needless to say, such open-minded people build a healthy and effective relationship with everyone. This makes tolerance an indispensable life value helping people to live together peacefully. And nothing in life is more important than peace!

Tolerance as a Moral Duty
Dear Editor,

Tolerance; the root of humanity

Further, ours is a land of diverse cultures. A rich variety of people and myriad forms of expression coexist here. Tolerance is all about respecting them all. It is a moral duty of everybody that paves the way to uphold human rights and fundamental freedoms of fellow human beings.

In India, and anywhere in the world, people are naturally diverse. Only open-mindedness can ensure the survival all peacefully. Therefore, ways should be devised for proper education for inculcating the value of acceptance. It must aim at countering negative influences that lead to fear and exclusion of 'others'.

Young people should come forward in large numbers to develop capacities for fair judgment, critical thinking and ethical reasoning. The diversity of our land must not be a reason for conflict. It must be preserved as a treasure that enriches the beauty of the earth.

Becoming Tolerant Through Meditation
Also understand that as you continue to practise meditation regularly, your tolerance to stress, and challenging situations grow. Apart from this, meditation also enables you to clear your mind of the negative thoughts. It makes you more resilient and patient with diverse cultures and people as well.

The meditating people choose to be happy and balanced who prefers to live with compassion and tolerance. They notice any disagreement with others and work to tackle it instantly. Even in any conflicting situation, they sail along with appreciation, inner-peace, and patience.

Thus, try to always be grateful to everyone around you, appreciate diverse cultures in your country and give respect to wide-ranging lifestyles with a meditative heart. You'll feel a profound inner calm and live peacefully and happily with others making the world even more beautiful.

Dr Archika Didi

You don't change the course of history by turning the faces of portraits to the wall.

-Jawaharlal Nehru

Holding elections in Jammu & Kashmir

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

Jammu and Kashmir is under Governor's rule since BJP withdrew its support to the coalition of the PDP-BJP government in the erstwhile state. The state of Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated into two union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh and special provision of the state as guaranteed under the controversial article 370 was scrapped and this was a historical development and had great ramifications for the politics of the union territory. The Jammu and Kashmir continues to reel under the Governor's rule for a pretty long time and this is not the interest of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The people of the disturbed union territory yearn for a change and want a people's government to be installed. The Governor's rule or what is called a Centre rule is no alternative to a democratic government. The centre rule is a temporary and a stop gap arrangement and the need of the peoples rule cannot be dispensed with. Jammu and Kashmir continues to reel under the centre rule and people stand orphaned in absence of their own democratic rule. The restoration of democracy is the need of the hour and as such there is no short cut to the elections. Democracy is a meaningless proposition without the elections as elections are the breath and soul of a democracy. The different political parties whether of the regional standing or of the national stature want the holding of the elections in the UT to empower the real sovereigns. Therefore assembly elections should be held to bridge the political vacuum in the union territory and give a healing touch to the alienated people. The various political parties have made it crystal clear that they are in favour of the elections to the assembly. Not only political parties are in favour of the early elections of the assembly but the common people are also demanding the elections of the assembly so that a democratic government is in place. In the disturbed Jammu and Kashmir Panchayat and municipal elections have taken place successfully without any violence and now it is the turn of the holding of the assembly elections. The gross root democracy in UT has been strengthened as the people have overwhelmingly

taken part in these elections. Thus, after elections of the gross root democracy the much due elections of the assembly should be held to install a democratic Government in UT to balm the wounds of the alienated people and to relieve them of their troubles and ills. Now, that the political parties and people of the UT have made it crystal clear that they want early elections of the assembly and thus the ball is in the court of the Centre Government and they should take a final call on the theme and subject of holding of the assembly elections. But as a first step towards holding assembly elections, the delimitation of the assembly constituencies should be conducted and carried to its logical conclusion so that the representative elections will be conducted to give the alienated people a government of their choice. As the delimitation of the assembly constituencies should be held in the union territory before the holding of the much due elections of the assembly. The political parties national and regional should take active part in the delimitation of the assembly constituencies and they should not boycott the exercise of the delimitation as it is the first prerequisite for the assembly elections. So, the delimitation of the assembly constituencies should be carried to its logical conclusion so that the ground is made fertile for the holding of the assembly elections. The democratic government is definitely a better alternative and so the democratic elections cannot be dispensed with under any circumstance. Therefore there is an urgent need for holding the much due assembly elections in the union territory so that the alienated people are given a chance to elect a government of their choice. Thus the centre government should ask the election commission to give a go ahead to the election process in Jammu and Kashmir so that a people's Government is installed to relieve the people of the disturbed from the sufferings and troubles. People are sovereigns in a democracy and so the people should be empowered to form their own government and for the empowering of the people the assembly elections should be held at the earliest so that the people will form their own government. Thus to end the political vacuum in the

UT the much due elections should be held so that the people will chose their own government which will relieve them from their troubles and sufferings. There is a big gap between rulers and the ruled in Jammu and Kashmir and to bridge this gap the elections are the only answer and therefore the assembly elections should be held to empower the people of the UT and give them their own government. Thus to bridge this gap the elections of the assembly should be held to give the alienated people a chance to elect a government of their own which will deliver the goods and relieve the people of the sufferings and troubles. Therefore for the triumph of the democracy the assembly elections should be held so that a people's government is formed at the earliest. There is a fertile ground for elections in the UT and the centre government should take the opportunity and initiate the democratic process in Jammu and Kashmir and start the election process in the union territory. Therefore the centre government and the UT administration should take necessary steps towards the holding of the elections in the Jammu and Kashmir to usher in the true democracy in the union territory. As already said the centre or governor rule is no alternative to the democratic rule of the people and therefore democratic rule is definitely a better form of governance. Thus for ushering of the democracy in the union territory the much due assembly elections should be held at the earliest so that the people of the UT are given a chance to form a government of their choice after the elections are held. Therefore for the installation of the people's government it is necessary to hold the assembly elections in the UT so that a democratically elected government is formed to address the genuine sufferings and problems of the people in the UT. Thus the assembly elections of the UT should be held in order to give the people their own government which can relieve them from their troubles and sufferings. Therefore, there is need for the conducting of the Assembly Elections to the UT so that the people are given a chance to elect a government of their dreams and choice. In brief, the Assembly Elections should be held at the earliest to balm the sufferings of the people of the Union Territory.

United approach required to contain pollution

■ SHYAM SUDAN

To impart awareness among people regarding various to contain the increasing pollution and importance to curb it, National Pollution Control Day is celebrated across the country on December 2. On this day, various awareness programmes are launched to inform people about this catastrophe. No doubt at present we are facing the problem of pollution in every walk of our life. Due to this crisis entire humanity is suffering at large, it effects our health in all aspects. Now days we have seen a rapid surge of various health ailments in human and other biotic components. Due to rapid growth of industrialization the problem of pollution is increasing day by day. All nations of the world, in order to meet their energy requirements, are rapidly exploiting the natural resources without caring for the welfare of others. All natural resources i.e., air, water and soil are getting polluted due to this devastation. Air quality index in many metropolitan cities is very miserable condition. In our capital city this index is changing the life of people every year. Now it seems that we are living in a gas chamber of polluted air. Our natural resources of water are also deteriorating at an alarming rate. The pious and sacred river of our landscape looks like a sources of polluted liquid. Moreover, our soil is now contaminated with various kinds of toxic wastes. The increasing content of urea and other pesticides are gradually changing texture and quality of soil. Every year due to dumping of various non biodegradable products like plastic and e-waste material, our soil get polluted. Deforestation is the main hindrance behind pollution control. Trees, which are mandatory for maintaining natural balance on this green planet, are decreasing at a rapid pace due to our carelessness and casual approach. No doubt industrialization is necessary for our generation, our all comforts and pleasure of life related with this advancement. But we should keep in

mind that any kind of interference with nature and its design can harm us. Due to this imbalance in natural design we are facing the crisis of nature in every field. Now we are facing the problem of floods, drought, landslide and other natural havoc. All these calamities suddenly enter in our life due to global warming. Our carelessness and casual approach is responsible for this global warming. Every year we organise a lot of global summits and programmes on environment related issues but on ground level the picture is different. Nobody is giving priority to these resolutions on ground level. There is an urgent need to think and act globally for this issue but has become a global problem for everyone, because we are the inhabitants of same planet. Our earth is the only living planet for our survival. Carelessness of one nation affects life of people in other nation. National Pollution Control Day is the very apt moment for brainstorming over this vulnerable issue. Our natural resources are our indispensable treasures. This green planet is now in danger. It is the duty of every individual to think and act globally for this. Our small and valuable contribution can change the future of our coming generation. Otherwise, our coming generation will not enjoy the benefit of these treasures of nature. We are known for the worshippers of nature since time immemorial. There is need to accelerate our age-old glory, and it can only happen if we educate our new generation in this direction.

YOUR COLUMN

Promoting tourism in Doda

Dear Editor,

I would like to invite attention of Govt of Union Territory of Jammu -Kashmir about some of the tourist destinations in District Doda. The Chenab Valley in Doda district is blessed with numerous scenic places where one can feel peace of mind. The major tourist attractions in Doda included Kalhotia, Dhara Top, Dedani Padri, Lal Draman, Gala Dhar, Padi Dhar Bhadarwah, Jayi Valley, Chinta, Guli Danda, San Bai (Golden Well), Sabzi Dhar, Stubar Dhar and many others. It is pertinent to mention here that the administration is not developing these places of immense beauty which are regarded as unexplored Heaven on Earth. All these places lie in sub-Himalayan mountain range from Batote to Bhadarwah, which is famous for natural beauty. The beauty

of these places is no less than of meadows of Sonamarg or Gulmarg. Bhadarwah is often called as Chotta Kashmir and can be compared to Switzerland due to its beautiful hills, dense green Deodar and Sal forests, blue and snow-capped mountains.

Dedani is a paradise for tourists whereas Padri's scenic beauty attracts thousands of people from across length and breadth of Jammu-Kashmir Union Territory. On occasion of Baisakhi and August 25 every year, a festival is held at Galan Durga Mandir in Dedani since times immemorial. People from all walks of life, religions, beliefs, faiths and regions visit Durga Mata Mandir Dedani. A road from Hambal to Dedani village is under progress and is expected to be completed soon. The road work has reached upto village Satula. I request to Union Territory of Jammu-Kashmir to complete the road from Satula village to Durga Mata Temple immediately so that the people from Jammu-Kashmir can visit the temple on those two days of the year.

EDITORIAL

What is age relaxation?

■ AKSHMA

It is something that is supposed to be benefiting people who are overage for a job. There is an age limit set for a post and later on relaxation is given so that more people can apply for it. Recently, Sub-Inspector vacancies were announced with usual upper age limit of 28 years and later on to provide benefit to more people, age limit was relaxed to 30 years. It is good for the candidates who were earlier over-age and now they can apply for the posts and secure a Government job. But similar is not a case with Jammu & Kashmir Public Service Commission (JKPSC). The upper age limit was 37 years for open merit candidates. In 2021 notification the age limit was reduced to 32 years. So, instead of a granting relaxation, the age limit was reduced. Where the upper age limit should have been 42 years (like that of Haryana PSC), it was reduced to 32 years. When aspirants for the jobs protested about it, JKPSC announced that they are relaxing it for one last time and afterwards there will be no relaxation.

Firstly, this was not relaxation as they kept the previous limit only which is 37 years. Actual relaxation was done in SI vacancies where the age limit was 28 years and now relaxed upto 30 years. Secondly, this is totally unjust for the candidates who were preparing for a long time and will be overage by 5 years now. Normally, we all are getting aged year by year and in this case, people are aged by 5 years directly. So, the candidate either exhausts his six attempts or be 37 years of age to be out of the race for the prestigious exam.

The reasoning behind this move of the Commission was that the JKPSC will be brought on the lines of The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

Well, if that is the intention then it is in the interest of the youth of J&K. But is that really so? State PSCs are different from UPSC in many ways. States come out with vacancies not so often as UPSC. States do not conduct Civil Services Exam every year like UPSC. This is 'The' Reason that upper age limit of the states is more than that of UPSC. The states, like UPSC have also kept the limit on the number of attempts.

The beauty of UPSC is that they conduct exams every year without fail. Even during the first year of the pandemic of Corona Virus they did not cease to conduct their business although it was delayed but justified.

The state and the Centre come up with vacancies according to their own requirements. Centre requires IAS officers every year so they conduct exam every year. Same is not true of the states. J&K comes up with Civil Services vacancies almost after three years.

If there is a vacancy after three years and the age limit is 32 years or 6 six attempts, how an aspirant who is 21 years old will exhaust all six attempts, He/ She will be overage before utilising his/her full number of attempts.

He/ She will be able to make use of a maximum of 3-4 attempts. Changes do not happen overnight nor do overnight changes help everyone or liked by everyone.

Changes could be done, but, in a slow and a gradual manner so that more and more people are in a position to accept them and understand them. JKPSC should conduct regular PSC exams at least for 10 years (every year) and show the youth of the state/UT its commitment to be on the lines of the UPSC.

Once they are successful they can change the upper age limit to 32 years. Another argument is that why at all reduce the upper age limit when the government should increase it instead, in J&K and keep it similar to other state PSCs.

Uttar Pradesh has an upper age limit of 40 years, Rajasthan 40 years, Haryana 42 years, Andhra Pradesh 42 years, Maharashtra PSC has 38 years, Punjab 37 years, Tamil Nadu 36 years. Kerala PSC is one such state PSC where the upper age limit is 32 years.

Education standards and literacy rate of Kerala is much higher than that of J&K. Kerala performs way better in terms of state gross domestic product (SGDP) as compared to that of J&K.

Hence, it is not justified that J&K can also have an upper age limit of 32 years because Kerala has the same as UPSC.

JKPSC, though states that they will conduct JKAS exam on the recruitment pattern will be similar to the pattern of UPSC, but the current reservation pattern is opposite of UPSC.

JKAS in its year 2021 vacancies has more than 50 per cent of reservation for various categories of people and less than 50 per cent for open merit candidates.

The Supreme Court on May 5, 2021 struck down Maharashtra government's decision to exceed 50 per cent reservation for Maratha community in education and jobs.

The apex court said 'The 2018 Maharashtra state law violates the right to equality'.

The reservation pattern will give way to wrts and petitions which are common to JKPSC. In the recent exam of October 24, 2021, PSC had put a few wrong questions for which they ultimately had to revise the answers or delete the questions altogether.

The youth of J&K needs more stable and feasible policies in the state government or Central Government jobs.

If the centre is really planning to give J&K back its status of statehood, it must understand the feelings and requirements of J&K from the state's perspective and not from the centre's perspective. Bringing sharp changes like reducing age in services lead to a doubt in the minds of the people of J&K that is the UT getting close to taking its statehood back or is it going to remain under the centre indefinitely.

like to request Govt of Union Territory of Jammu-Kashmir to declare a holiday on August 25, when people from all walks of life throng the temple from across the length and breadth of district Doda and abroad. 25 August festival is attended by Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Buddhists not only from Doda but also from Jammu. The day is important for creating oneness, brotherhood and harmony among all castes and creeds of people. The demand for declaring a holiday on August 25 by people is pending since long time but we hope that the Government will fulfill the same as early as possible. Padri is a hidden heaven on Earth and an unexplored tourist attraction that needs immediate attention of Govt for promoting tourism, besides need of hour is to include this lush green beautiful landscape on tourist map of Union Territory of Jammu-Kashmir. Last but not least I would once again request LG of Jammu-Kashmir to do useful in this connection so that the economy of the area can be boosted due to its natural beauty.

Mool Raj