

## PLAY SAFE

As the Met Department has predicted snow and rains in Jammu and Kashmir between 5th December to 7th December people should refrain from venturing out unnecessarily in as hilly regions and near the rivers and water streams there is always a danger of mishaps due to inundation or landslides. The Union Territory Government has issued a weather advisory for the people ahead of forecasts of light to moderate snowfall and rainfall in Union Territory. It is advisable to refrain from going out especially in avalanche prone areas till improvement of weather. Already the region has witnessed so many mishaps due to avalanches, mudslides and flooding of rivers and Nullahs leading to loss of life and property. As a convention, district administrations of various areas especially in Kashmir have shared the telephone numbers of the concerned officials which can be contacted in case of any exigencies. Taking things very seriously, all district and Sectoral Officers especially officers and officials of Irrigation & FC, PHE, PDD, R&B, Mechanical and Revenue have been directed not to leave their respective Headquarters without permission from the Deputy Commissioner's office and keep their men and machinery ready to meet any exigency.

The Weatherman has forecast widespread light to moderate snowfall and rains in plains of Jammu and Kashmir. As higher reaches of Kupwara, Baramulla, Bandipora, Shopian and Ganderbal districts may receive 6-9 inches of snow there may be temporary disruption of air and surface traffic over passes like Zojila, Sinth Top, Razdan Top and Mughal Road due to snow and freezing temperatures. Those people who have to travel on Jammu-Srinagar Highway should also contact traffic police prior to embarking on their voyage to Kashmir or vice versa. As the axis along Jammu-Srinagar highway at many spots have become critical due to ongoing construction activity, therefore it is advisable that people should defer their journey if there is no exigency. Besides, people living near rivers and other streams should also avoid going near the water bodies as in past many untoward incidents had happened due to rains in this season. The Government these days has become proactive in issuing advisories about weather vagaries and therefore it becomes imperative that people should take benefits of these warnings and remain safe.

## OFF 'D' CUFF

## The punishment of criminals

Q U E S T I O N : SHOULD A criminal be punished, or should he be forgiven and his crime overlooked?

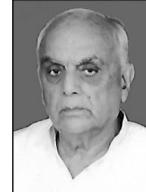
**Answer:** There are two kinds of retributive actions: One is revenge and retaliation, and the other—punishment and reparation. An individual has no right to seek revenge, but the body politic has the right to punish the criminal. Such punishment is intended to dissuade and deter others from committing similar crimes. It is for the protection of the rights of man and does not constitute revenge, for revenge is that inner gratification that results from returning like for like. This is not permissible, for no one has been given the right to seek revenge. And yet, if criminals were entirely left to their own devices, the order of the world would be disrupted. So while punishment is one of the essential requirements of the body politic, the wronged and aggrieved party has no right to seek revenge. On the contrary, he should show forgiveness and magnanimity, for this is that which befits the human world.

The body politic, however, must punish the oppressor, the murderer, and the assailant, to dissuade and deter others from committing similar crimes. But that which is essential is to so educate the masses that no crimes will be committed in the first place; for a people can be so educated as to shrink entirely from any crime, and indeed regard the crime itself as the greatest chastisement and the most grievous torment and punishment. Thus no crimes would occur in the first place such that punishments would be required.

We must speak only of that which is practically feasible in the world. There is indeed an abundance of lofty ideals and sentiments

Bahai Faith

## Birds of same feather now question each other



■ ER P L KHUSHU

**A** famous proverb mentions that the 'Birds of the same feather, flock together'. But in Kashmir politics, it is reverse this time with Kashmir based politicians, who posed to flock together as 'Gupkar Alliance' some time back. It is probably the compulsions of the anticipated assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir; when the scruples of morality are thrown to dust by these politicians as usual. One of the prominent leaders of a main political parties have now started raising fingers against the leadership of another political party, for the lax attitude of their governance during their rules in Jammu & Kashmir, or even on the factual political statements given by one of the imminent and prominent political leaders of the congress party. Strange apathies are coming forth. For Gupkar Alliance, this proverb of 'Birds of the same feather, flock together' appeared to be applying them in its true sense, when the alliance was appearing to be a grand alliance of veteran politicians to combat the so called onslaught of the abrogation of the Articles 370, 35 A and the like, as per statements of the alliance partners of that alliance at that point of time, but what happened to it now? It fizzled out unceremoniously and busted like a micro balloon. Some people that time called it as 'Gupkar Gang', which was appearing not good apparently, as it emerged under the leadership of a notable politician of Kashmir, who commands name and fame across the country. But seemingly without meaning so, it appears to be so. What a paradox? Was all that a drama? This alliance collectively alarmed the central government of dire consequences if all the laws like abrogation of article 370, 35 A, Jammu & Kashmir State Reorganization Act and the like are not withdrawn. It was looking like a big revolutionary cry from the surmounting heights of Gupkar nests of these political leaders, which is now appearing as hoax sounds of the insignificant souls. How long should these erstwhile dynasty rulers befool the people of Jammu and Kashmir; when the people of Jammu, who have been deprived of the development of Jammu by all these dynasty based leaders of Kashmir during their ruler ship for decades, are already aware of the jackal's cries of all these people. After hitting out a prominent and a veteran Congress leader of highest national stature, for backtracking on demand of revocation of Article 370, one of the prominent leaders of National Conference blamed the People's Democratic Party (PDP) for the abrogation of Article 370 & 35-A, which granted special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. While addressing a public gathering somewhere in Jammu and Kashmir he said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) took advantage of our weaknesses'. He is reportedly having said that 'following the Assembly elections of 2014 in Jammu and Kashmir, he had extended a hand of friendship to the founder of PDP. Equally he is supposed to have said that he warned him against stitching an alliance with the BJP and told him it would prove to be extremely dangerous for the people of Kashmir'. He went on to add, that he had told the leadership of PDP of that time that neither he was interested in the Chief Minister seat nor any of his colleagues wanted a berth in his Cabinet. He further said that, 'We offered to back him in the Assembly without any conditions and requested him not to join hands with the powers which would be harmful for the people of J&K and State as whole.'

What an unequal analogy. Does this leader of the national conference want to convey to the people of Jammu & Kashmir the "Adago" of "Holier than Thou"? Has he forgotten his own time and action, when he embraced BJP as a minister in the NDA Government headed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee. He was a member of 14th Lok Sabha, representing Srinagar constituency of Jammu & Kashmir. He was the Union Minister of State for External affairs in Atal Bihari Vajpayee's NDA government, from 23 July, 2001 to 23 December, 2002. In 1998, at the age of 28, he was elected to the 12th Lok Sabha, becoming the youngest member. In 1998-99, he was a member of both the Committee on

Transport and Tourism and the Ministry of Tourism's Consultative Committee. In 1999, he was elected to 13th Lok Sabha (2nd term as a Member of Parliament). On 13 October 1999, he took oath as Union Minister of State, Commerce and Industry. On 22 July 2001, he became the youngest Union Minister, when he was made Union Minister of State for External Affairs. This was NDA government led by BJP. Should it be said that he was the first state politician of a major political party to join hands with BJP and thus endorse its agenda and manifesto, which prominently exhibited the abrogation of Article 370. Why should he try to befool the people of Jammu and Kashmir particularly the people of Kashmir by his dubious statements full of erosions and misrepresentation of facts? In fact, it shows that the political party of Kashmir to which he belongs to, that is national conference, was the first political party to join hands with BJP at the center, thus endorse its manifesto of removal of article 370 etc. It is not this case only, this is true of all such dynastic political party rulers who swap political adjustments for their innate intentions of remaining in power perpetually and then issue sermons on the occasions of the likely elections in Jammu and Kashmir, or the actual elections.

In response to this political leader's, remark that the situation would have been different if they had been in power during the repeal of Article 370, one of the apex leaders of Peoples Conference said that it was his new lie. "He is the Valley's biggest liar. He would have done nothing, as we had seen what he did in 2010 when children were getting killed and the Union Home Minister was considering whether or not to give relaxation in curfews. He had the option to resign, but he decided to stay in power", he said. Incidentally this political leader of the Peoples Conference was the Chief Spokesperson of the 'Gupkar Alliance' at the time of its first birth. What to believe and whom to trust as the saviors of the political stability in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in Kashmir which is engulfed in acute devastation due to terror and itsism. These political parties and its tall leaders are responsible for the terrorism in Kashmir for their motivated claims of being the actual representatives of the people of Kashmir, when the situation is otherwise. They have inherent motives in all such rumblings and bunglings in their political stances which is to exploit the people of Jammu and Kashmir particularly Kashmir, for their vote bank aims and remain somehow in power. These opportunistic politicians have never bothered for the development of Jammu and Kashmir or for the welfare and the prosperity of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The rift within congress and NC came to the fore after NC vice president Omar Abdullah disapproved of Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad's comments on Article 370. Contesting Azad's observation that it is futile to talk about Article 370 as it won't be restored, Abdullah reminded him that the Congress party had incorporated it in the Constitution. Again to the misfortune of the restoration of peace, and the curtailing of the terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir the NC leadership has been adding fuel to the fire of terrorism in Kashmir by their vague and inappropriate utterances. The NC President has often been advising the Government of India to talk to Pakistan about the Kashmiri imbroglio. It certainly is a direct insult to all those who have suffered badly due to the terrorism spread in Kashmir which is sponsored by Pakistan for decades now. Kashmiri Pandits are the principal targets in this regard. Dr Farooq says that if India can talk to China, why then India should not talk to Pakistan as well. He is reminded to know that it is not India that is talking to China. It is now China talking to India. From Gupkar the president of NC even spoke of landing in China. In an unpleasant interview to media, some time back, the president of NC is on record to have said that at this moment the Kashmiri people do not feel and do not want to be Indian. He even went so far as to say that they would rather be ruled by the Chinese, a point he reiterated when he was asked if he really meant this. Similarly to remind people of Jammu and

Kashmir, the apex leader of PDP, has recently criticized BJP on the issue of 'hijacking Hindutva and Hinduism'. Her observations are more obscure and unacceptable as she was in coalition with BJP in running the government of Jammu and Kashmir; prior to the abrogation of article 370 and 35A. 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. She has no right now to call BJP a communal or a fascist political party as she was the Chief Minister of that unnatural alliance of political parties. BJP is equally to be blamed for the same. Why did she opt to go for alliance of her political party with BJP with divergent political manifestoes of these two political parties, can be anybody's guess? The answer is simple. She wanted power, which she got at the cost of her political manifesto. Even she meant to make her brother and one other close relative of her as the minister of Jammu and Kashmir during her chief minister ship. She is on record to have said then that PM 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 that 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, 35 A, but a positive contributor to this process of abrogation of articles 370 and 35 A, being a part of the government with BJP when she headed the coalition government between PDP and BJP. She obviously has no right now to speak against the abrogation of the articles 370, 35 A, by arousing the regional and the communal bias, in the minds of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. By siding with Taliban or showing sympathy to Pakistan by asking the government of India to talk to Pakistan on the issues of terrorism or unrest in Kashmir due to terrorism is hypocrisy and an absurd political ad hoc gimmick which reflects about the political immaturity of the person concerned. It is unfortunate for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The founder of this political party was a visionary and a tall leader, who had a national standing and created this new political party for ensuring peace and tranquility in Jammu and Kashmir along with ensuring an end to the terrorism and its root cause. He never spoke anything like secession, which is almost common now with the present leaders of various political of Kashmir directly or indirectly. What are these dynasty political leaders of Kashmir up to? If they say and propagate that abrogation of the articles 370 and 35 A is the worst event in the history of Kashmir; then they are on the wrong side of the history. If at all there is any worst event in the history of Jammu and Kashmir, it is the forced migration of the Kashmiri Pandits from the valley. It is not the 5th August 2019, when the articles 370 and 35 A were scrapped, which should hound them. It is actually the 19th January, 1990, which is the darkest day in the history of Kashmir; when Kashmiri Pandits were alarmed from the mosques to pack up and leave the valley, with a vicious and a slang language which cannot be reproduced here. They have no regrets for that. This is their so called pseudo secularism. They say something in Jammu posing as the most secular leaders and while going to the Chenab belts like Banihal, Doda, Kishtwar and then to Rajouri, Sanderbani and Poonch, etc where population is more of Muslims, they mostly have a communal tinge in their speeches to polarize the political atmosphere for their vote bank politics. This in particular is very much common with these political leaders presently, smelling that the Assembly elections might be held immediately, after the process of delimitation in Jammu and Kashmir is complete and are thus polarizing the ground situations with regional and parochial suspected communal bias.

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

## Restoration of Statehood to J&amp;K

■ OKMAR DATTATRAY

**I**t is very disturbing and unfortunate that the state of Jammu and Kashmir had been bifurcated into two union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh on 5th of August 2019 by passing the necessary resolution in this regard. The erstwhile state had been downgraded into two union territories and the decision is not in the interest of the people of Jammu and Kashmir but goes against the interests of the people. Ever since this decision of the union government and its implementation on the ground the political parties both of the regional level and also the opposition party of congress are demanding the restoration of the statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. Not only various political parties are demanding the reversal of the decision of the downgrading of the state into two union territories. But the people of Jammu and Kashmir are also demanding the restoration of the statehood to the erstwhile state. There are instances in the country were in the union territories were elevated and upgraded into the full fledged states and this is understandable. But the decision of the powers to convert the state of Jammu and Kashmir into the union territories is a rare decision and draconian one and it is against the people of Jammu and Kashmir and hence the people and the political parties are demanding the status of the full fledged state. Even the Prime Minister Modi and the home minister Amit Shah has made it clear in the August parliament that the statehood will be restored to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir at the opportune time. But the statement of the prime minister and the home minister regarding the restoration of the statehood to Jammu and Kashmir is vague as it does not specify the time limit within which the statehood to Jammu and Kashmir will be

restored. When we say Jammu and Kashmir it means the united state of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. The opposition political parties and the people of Jammu and Kashmir are becoming impatient and are hence demanding early restoration of the full statehood to the erstwhile state. It is in the interest of the people to grant the statehood to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The National Conference Vice President Omar Abdullah and the former chief minister has said that the abrogation of the controversial article 370 of the Indian constitution which grants special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir is understandable as from the day one of the formation of the BJP it was and continues to be in the agenda and manifesto of the party. However the downgrading of the state into two union territories is beyond compression and is anti-peoples act. Thus sooner the erstwhile state is given the full statehood it will be better and a pro-peoples decision. The ex-chief minister and the congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad has also demanded the restoration of the statehood to Jammu and Kashmir before the holding of the assembly elections. He has said that the jobs to the youths of the Jammu and Kashmir and the lands of the people should be protected and for this the statehood should be restored to the disturbed Jammu and Kashmir. The former chief minister has also said the bill to restore the full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir should be tabled in the parliament of the country and it should be passed to give some respite and relief to the alienated people of Jammu and Kashmir. The BJP's organizing secretary Ashok Koul has said that the statehood will be restored to Jammu and Kashmir once the selective killings and terrorism is eliminated. Thus it seems that the BJP government is in no hurry to restore the

statehood to Jammu and Kashmir as the party has laid down the dead line of stopping of the targeted and selective killings and has made it as a prerequisite for the restoration of the statehood. Whatever is the stand of the powers the need of the hour is that the much due elections should be held in Jammu and Kashmir to usher in true democracy so that the orphaned people will have a sigh of relief and their alienation is removed. The political parties of the regional standing like NC, PDP, PC should show flexibility and magnanimity and should not make the restoration a pre-condition for taking part in the elections of the assembly. Thus the holding of the much due assembly elections should not be made a prerequisite for restoration of the statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. The restoration of the statehood to Jammu and Kashmir and the holding of the elections of the assembly are two separate things and these should not be clubbed together. Therefore the assembly elections should be held as soon as possible in Jammu and Kashmir to give the alienated people the chance to form a government of their choice. Then after the assembly elections in the disturbed Jammu and Kashmir the statehood should be restored by passing a bill in this regard in the country's Parliament. Union territory is not in the interest of the citizens and thus statehood should be restored to stop the sufferings of the people. In a Union Territory the Government is remotely controlled by the centre and the centre representative the LG is in charge of the Government and all the functions of governance are performed by the LG's administration. In fact it is the centre rule and the citizens feel orphaned and thus demand the restoration and revival of the statehood to relieve the people from the misery and sufferings which are heaped upon the people because

of the center dispensation. It is in the fitness of things to hold the much due elections in the UT so that the ground is made fertile for the easy restoration of the full statehood. In fact the assembly elections should precede the restoration of the statehood. The ball lies in the hands of the centre government and it should take a final call on the subject of the elections and order the holding of the elections. However, for the holding of the assembly elections, the delimitation of the assembly constituencies should be done on the bases of the 2011 census and after the delimitation the assembly elections should be conducted in order to provide the people of Jammu and Kashmir a democratic government which can solve the problems of the people. Once the assembly elections are held in Jammu and Kashmir the road will become clear for the restoration of the statehood. Thus assembly elections should be held prior to the restoration of the statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. Since the political parties national and regional are ready to take an active part in the assembly elections and they have decided to jump in the assembly elections. So the centre government should initiate the political process and order the much due assembly elections which will pave way for the restoration of the full statehood in the ultimate analysis to empower the people. To conclude we can say that the full statehood is our right and the centre government should grant the right of statehood to the people of Jammu and Kashmir so that their alienation is removed and they feel belongingness to the state and feel satisfied. The centre government should balm the hurt psyche of the people and for this the restoration of the statehood is the answer.

(The author is a retired Education Officer and Columnist).

peak. In schools, colleges and public places, about 90 per cent of the youth will find themselves connected to social media on mobile. Most importantly, it is a waste of their precious time. Sometimes people even mislead each other by creating fake accounts. For the last two decades there has been talk of computer addiction but now smart phones have infiltrated our daily lives without which we cannot survive. This technological advancement has given us a new addiction to selfie-culture. Many people have lost their precious lives while taking selfies in dangerous ways. This tendency is very deadly in the student body as it adversely affects the learning of the students.

In today's world, as soon as an incident or accident happens, the news of it spreads like wildfire through social media. Sometimes lies are spread to spread rumors and mislead the general public. Editing a photo, video or information is disguised as provocative, spreading false and inflammatory information about the death of a great personality or religion. There has been a huge increase in cyber crimes, which have a devastating effect on society. Excessive use of social networking sites not only leads to addiction but also causes many health problems. Problems such as brain and ear tumors, heart disease, blood pressure, migraines and obesity can occur. Obesity further leads

to diabetes. In addition to these hazards, mobiles also cause accidents while driving. Children are suffering from mental problems like autism at an early age. Excessive use of social media has also severely damaged relationships and love in relationships. Family members live in the same house as strangers. In a study published on the website TimesUnion.com, researchers said that a social media drug addict who took part in the study could not control his irritability and emotions when he was kept away from Facebook for some time. They were also found to have problems with the ability to do, which can lead to increased drug use. Newspapers carry such stories almost daily, in which many young people endanger their financial, sexual and mental well-being. Most of them are girls. So before contacting anyone, it is important to know about them. Do not share personal details, photos and videos or anything related to a bank account with an unknown and untrustworthy person. By creating fake accounts, such people pretend to be foreigners or big businessmen and even prey on housewives and men. Friendships on social media may not be as comfortable as they seem. There is no difficulty in befriending those you already know, but with the passing of a series of friendships with a friend of a friend the trust decreases. Sometimes the face that is visible, in fact that face and name and

address are all fake. It can be difficult to know who is extending a hand of friendship for what purpose. There are a few things to keep in mind when making friends on social media. If you are going to make friends with others or strangers, it is important to know about it first. Only then should any kind of information be exchanged. So check their social wall to see what kind of posts they share, what their background is, whether your interests match each other. After all, if it seems right, make friends, otherwise step back. Stranger friends need to be monitored later. Sometimes what is seen is not what it seems. If social media is used to protect our environment from pollution, to raise awareness against social evils and to highlight social problems, it can change the face of our society. There is a need to use social media wisely. It was designed to facilitate our interaction and not to harm each other. So use social media but with full caution and restraint. Not all social media has its downsides. Social media is also proving to be helpful in many activities these days. This is a great way to get your point across to the community, provided we use it properly. Try to convey the correct information to the people and not just use it to mislead the youth. That is why we need to recognize our obligations to society.

Vijay Garg.

## YOUR COLUMN

## Using social media in right way

Dear Editor,

We are living in the 21st century of Science. During this time every technology has evolved a lot. The same development has had a huge impact on the Internet. Today Internet access is available not only on computers but also on mobile phones. Meanwhile, social media is used as a status symbol when needed. Many websites have been created to increase the interaction between the people, which are called social sites, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Google Plus, Line and Viber. There are countless such sites and apps. One can open an account and connect with other people using it and share text messages, photos and video-audio clips with each other. In addition, many social networking sites offer free calls.

The purpose of social media is to provide information, entertainment and education but without the need for internet, excessive and misuse of internet proves to be bad for us and the trend of unnecessary use of social media among our youth is at