

BJP’S TRIUMPH

The recent assembly elections in India, notably in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, underscore the inherent dynamism and unpredictability of democracy. Despite the fervor surrounding the electoral process, neither the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) nor the Congress could claim absolute confidence in victory. The BJP's resounding success in Madhya Pradesh, coupled with Rajasthan's adherence to the tradition of changing governments every five years, has significant implications for the political landscape. The Congress, having recently gained momentum with a victory in Karnataka, now faces a setback, weakening its position both in these states and at the national level.

The defeat of the main opposition party is anticipated to impact the strength of the opposition alliance in the lead-up to the Lok Sabha elections, while the BJP, having faced setbacks in Karnataka, experiences a resurgence in morale, particularly with its robust performance in Madhya Pradesh. The outcome of these state elections is poised to shape the narrative and dynamics of Indian politics as the country approaches the crucial Lok Sabha elections.

A Tale of Transformation: Jammu & Kashmir’s Journey to Prosperity

BY NAMAN CHHIBBER

In the heart of the Himalayas, where every mountain seems to whisper tales of resilience, Jammu & Kashmir has undergone a fascinating metamorphosis since that pivotal day on August 5, 2019. J&K (Before August 5, 2019) was a canvas touched by contrasts. The breathtaking landscapes and cultural richness were overshadowed by a sense of uncertainty. Markets were hushed, and opportunities seemed like distant peaks, visible but challenging to reach. The region, though rich in potential, was caught in a narrative that whispered more of what could be rather than what was.

Fast forward to today, and the transformation is palpable. The once-sleepy markets have transformed into a lively symphony of commerce. From the aroma of traditional spices to the chatter of eager entrepreneurs, Jammu & Kashmir's economic pulse beats stronger than ever. New roads wind through the valleys, connecting towns and bustling markets, creating a tapestry of progress that even the mighty Chenab would envy.

The rhythm of change extends to the local youth, navigating dreams in the valley of aspirations, who now find themselves dancing to the beats of new job opportunities. The air is charged with enthusiasm as aspirations take flight. The youth aren't just job seekers now; they are dream chasers, contributing their bit to the region's evolving narrative.

Picture this: under the majestic Pir-Panjal sky, local innovators are weaving tales of entrepreneurship. Start-ups, like wildflowers after a monsoon shower, are sprouting across the region. Investors, drawn by the potential of this vibrant landscape, are pouring support into these ventures, turning dreams into reality.

Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir isn't just about economic growth; it's a celebration of culture and tradition. The vibrant pashmina shawls, the intricate papier-mâché, and the aromatic saffron-all are becoming stars in their own right, attracting not just locals but curious wanderers eager to take home a piece of this cultural tapestry.

In the valleys and on the peaks, stories of resilience are emerging. Meet Raja, who turned a quaint café into a local hotspot, or Aisha, the tech-savvy artisan who brought age-old crafts to the online world. These local legends like characters in folklore, beat the drum of a new, dynamic Jammu & Kashmir.

And let's not forget the tourists who, like curious characters in our story, are flocking to witness this transformation. The picturesque landscapes, the welcoming locals, and the air filled with the aroma of kehwa-it's a symphony that resonates with every traveler.

Amidst this vibrant narrative, Jammu & Kashmir is gearing up for an event, first of its kind that encapsulates the essence of Swadeshi, fosters self-reliance, and celebrates the rich cultural beauty of the region. Brought up by LEAD - LJK (Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir) Economic Growth And Development Dialogue, with the theme of promoting Swadeshi and fostering Swavlambhan, "Mahotsav 2023" will be a showcase of J&K's cultural treasures. It's a platform for local artists, entrepreneurs, and businesses to shine, bringing forth the Sanskritik diversity that makes Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir unique.

Mahotsav Highlights:

"Promoting Swadeshi: Immerse yourself in the vibrant hues of local art, from traditional paintings to contemporary expressions.

"Folk Performances: Witness the magic of traditional folk performances that echo the soulful tales of Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir.

"Business Expo: Explore the entrepreneurial spirit as local businesses display their Swadeshi products, from handcrafted artifacts to authentic spices.

"Meet the Entrepreneurs: Hear firsthand from local entrepreneurs who have embraced Swavlambhi and carved their paths to success.

"Culinary Delights: Indulge in the flavors of Swadeshi as local chefs showcase the culinary richness of the region.

"Celebrating Sanskriti: Engage in performances, workshops that celebrate the cultural diversity of Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir, from traditional crafts to modern innovations.

Now, let's pose the question that lingers in the minds of many, especially a young boy: What has changed (after August 5, 2019)? For him, the answer unfolds in the bustling markets, the stories of local heroes, and the vibrant atmosphere of upcoming "Mahotsav" that celebrates the Swadeshi spirit, fosters Swavlambhan, and showcases the Sanskritik beauty of Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir.

From the echoes of uncertainty before August 5, 2019, Jammu & Kashmir has emerged as a canvas alive with contrasts, a symphony of progress under the Pir Panjal sky. The valley of aspirations witnesses the dance of dreams, tales of entrepreneurship are spun, each start-up a wildflower in the blooming landscape. Local traditions have transformed into treasures.

As I anticipate the upcoming Mahotsav -I see it as the confluence of rivers, bringing together art, culture, entrepreneurship, and diversity in a kaleidoscope of local splendors. I find myself at the crossroads of a region redefined-a Jammu & Kashmir that invites dreamers and doers to be part of its blooming story, a destination where every mountain whispers tales of triumph, and where the promise of a new dawn is fulfilled in the vibrant markets of hope. It's a destination not just for adventure seekers and nature lovers but also for those seeking the warmth of a community on the rise.

And so, as we traverse the tapestry of Jammu & Kashmir's crux of change, Jammu & Kashmir is no longer just a place on the map; it's a story unfolding-a tale of resilience, growth, and the promise of a prosperous tomorrow - a promise felt keenly by the young man who calls this place home.

INDI Alliance’s & psephologist’s nightmare as BJP wins three states

■ Y.V SHARMA



Lo & behold, BJP has won elections in three important states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh to which elections were held recently. Even in Telangana it has done fairly well though will have to make a massive effort in taking its message of "Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas & Sabka Vishwas" to the people of the state.

To a discerning ear the people of Telangana too have begun to feel that there is life beyond the "hereditary parties"& the key to progress & prosperity lies in the civilisational& infrastructure development of the country. The path to progress is in staying connected to one's roots&taking pride in one's civilisation whiletaking strides& making best of the opportunities provided by the present political, social& economic environment provided by Sh. Narendra Modi government in the ever changing, ever improving scientific, industrial & engineering fields.

This victory has come to BJP in spite of the self-styledpsephologists, political Pundits &print/electronicmedia who were declaring a doom for the BJP. Obviously, they were not able to gauge the mood of the people of the states where elections were held. They did not realise that their old templates& tools of psephology were no longer valid.

The reason for failure of the old templates & tools are manifold. It has something to do with the old order that is failing to see the titanic shift in the faith, belief systems& aspirations of the modern-day Indian society.

The Indians have steadily started to understand that the old templates from the day of independence, in fact much before,made the Indians believe that they belonged to a regressive civilisation &for the new nation to take a respectable place in the comity of nations they had to look for new culture &adopt newvalien attributes. The political leaders pushed India into socialist system of economy thereby fettering the growth of the newly independent state. Consequently, when the GDP of the nation continued to stay below 2% for decades following independence,they conveniently called it Hindu rate of growth!! This was one of the first deliberate slurs flung on a civilisation that had traded successfully& excelled in businesses with nations beyond its civilisational &cultural boundaries since times immemorial.

The leadership of the time forced secularism on a society that was liberal in its thought, behaviour &was tolerant towards new ideas. It heartily welcomed people from all across the globe.Many of the foreigners who came here settled down permanently. The resistance from the original inhabitants came only after the outsiders started trampling on their feet&tried toshow them down by exhibiting

their superiority.Later attacks on India & its culture& civilisation over the years were downplayed & portrayed as if they led to some kind of "enlightenment" in Bharat.

After independence & traumatic experiences of partition of the Indian sub-continentthe Bhartis were systematically pushed into a feeling of guilt as if the partition&its aftermath was their fault. The "two nation theory" was conveniently thrust on Veer Savarkar, a great patriot & nationalist, while whitewashing the role of Sir Syed Ahmed Khanwho was its original propounder.

Fast forward to recent times.

Secularism became a tool to malign Hindus who were& are naturally secular because of their civilisational belief in it. They were compelledto take recourse tolegalrouteof building a Ram Temple at Ayodhya in spite of historical evidence & Indie civilisational faith that Shri Ram was born here& that the original temple wasdenolished onBabur'sexpress orders. Shri Guru Nanak Dev jivisited this temple in 1510/11. During the court hearings, the nation became witness to the so-called liberals, secularists& the leftists challenging the existence of Shri Ram& foul mouthing him. This was a direct attack on the essence of the Indian civilisation, culture & tradition.

Secularism led Dr. Manmohan Singh to declare in 2006 that minorities must have first claim on the resources of the country.

And recently there was a full-fledged conference in Tamilnadu titled "Time to Eradicate Sanatan Dharma."The speakers in the conference &thereafter compared Sanatan Dharma to dengue, malaria &AIDS. They used all kinds of obnoxious words against Sanatan Dharma unashamedly without any condemnation from the INDI Alliance partners.

That is not all, the leftists & "seculars" are demanding a caste census so that they can divide Sanatan Dharma on caste lines & reap political benefits of a divided nation while every effort is made to consolidate other community from Guwahati to Gaza!

Added to this are foreign jaunts of Rahul Gandhi where he meets the "agents" of George Sores, the American billionaire, who has openly declared earmarking of funds for defeating Modi in 2024 elections. Rahul Gandhi has no hesitation in taunting,belittling& showing downthe efforts of the Indian government led by Narendra Modi to put India on a road that will transform Bharat into a developed country by 2047 - the centenary year of the Indian republic.

That is not all. When Narendra Modi government stands upto the attempted aggression by the Chinese forces an INDI Alliance partner choose to invite them to "settle the Kashmir problem" & the INDI Alliance "leader" meets the Chinese ambassador in a hush-hush manner.

And then they believe that India is not

watching them!!

Unmindful of the tactics of the "opposition parties" the government led by Narendra Modi is continuously in the process of transforming the face of India. The air, road & rail infrastructure, power infrastructure, water ways, provision of piped water to households&provision of houses to the poor &down-troddenis in the centre of his scheme of things. They are not schemes & projects onpaper alone, as used to be the case under earlier governments, but thescale & speed at which the projects are executed &commissioned is a new high for project execution in Bharat. It was a delight to travel over Ambala - Narnaul &Kundlini - Manesar -Palwal (KMP) expressway recently. These expressways are amongst the best in the world witcomplete access control. These two are a few amongst the hundreds that have come up all across the country.

J&K is also reaping the benefits of anindulgent government at the centre. The Indian Institute of Technology & Indian Institute of Management near Nagrota have completely transformed the landscape & educational environment of the area. Jambu Zoo is another tourist attraction that has come up in this area though it is yet to be fully populated with animals. AIIMS is likely to be made functional very soon.

The Jammu - Srinagar National Highway & the tunnels over it are just mesmerising, though work is still in progress in some sections of the road. The Delhi - Amritsar - Katra express way, ring roads in Jammu & Srinagar & several other such road connectivity projects are going on at a very fast pace. The road from Banihal to Srinagar is a traveller's delight. So is the road from Srinagar airport to the city. Embankments of Jhelum River, Polo View, iconic Lal Chowk& several other projects have completely transformed the face of Srinagar.

By the beginning of 2024 the Delhi - Srinagar rail link is also likely to be commissioned that will add a new dimension to the tourism & travel industry.

If you travel from Kishtwar to Padder you will come across three hydroelectric projects the work on which is in progress. Once commissioned they will together add 3000 MW to the installed capacity of power generation in J&K which will be equivalent to the generation capacity developed in last 75 years. This is Modi magic.

The Ayushman Bharat card available to each & every resident of J&K has made the treatment of the sick much easier & affordable for the common man. The free rations provided to the poor of the country during covid pandemic & later extended for some more time has made it possible that no Indian stays hungry.

But then neither Kashmir based political parties nor the INDI Alliance (or what remains of it)can see it. They can't see that

offices, schools, colleges, businesses & other establishments in Kashmir are working 365 days in a year. The calendars declaring bandhs & strike call have become things of the past. There is no stone pelting & common people are generally attending to their errands gainfully & happily. During the CMship of the Kashmir politicians around 250 youth died in stone pelting. Incidents of terrorism are still there, but the Kashmiri political leaders need to be asked as to what their contribution is in minimising them. Do they speak against this ideology? No!

Even now they side with theanti-national elements who work overtime against national interest or raise slogans against India.

The unprecedented tourist flow to Kashmir is also not visible to them. They also forget that it was because of machination of the Kashmir based political parties that President's/Governor's rule had to be applied nine times in J&K since 1947 in which Jammu political parties or individuals had no role.Thus, democracy was always derailed in J&K because of the Kashmiri political leadership. They also forget that as soon as situation improved in J&K during President/Governor rule &they came to power through democratic elections the situation in the erstwhile J&K state would always deteriorate because of their mis-governance, nepotism & pandering to the extremist elements. Yes, we should have elections in the UT of J&K& BJP wants them as much as any other political party&BJP will fight elections to win them. However, with what face are the Kashmir based political parties looking for elections. As per their record, whenevervoted to power, they areadept atencouraging lawlessness, terrorism &finally President/Governor rule back again.

The divisive politics of Kashmiri politicians resulted in the Amarnath agitation in 2008 in Jammu region that increased the gulf between the two regions of the erstwhile state.

The shrillness of Mehbooba Mufti, when she was a coalition partner of BJP, during the unfortunate Rasana case & her abuse of Jammu people led to widen the chasm between the two regions. BJP was compelled to withdraw support to the Mehbooba government as it was felt that her political interests lay elsewhere.

Thus, while the political dispensation represented by INDI Alliance is busy in maligning the central & state BJP governments, Narendra Modi is busy making India ready for the centenary celebrations of the country in 2047 with a dream to make India a developed country.No wonder INDI Alliance & their cahoots in media &their psephologists misread the mood of the people in the states that went to elections recently.

(The writer is Spokesperson J&K BJP).

Strengthening India-Kenya Relationship

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

India-Kenya relations are bilateral diplomatic relations between the Republic of India and the Republic of Kenya .As littoral states of the Indian ocean ,trade links and commercial ties between India and Kenya go back several centuries .Kenya has a large minority of Indians and persons of Indian origin living there who are the descendants of laborers who were brought in by the British to construct the Uganda railways .Given deteriorating race relations between Indians, and Kenyans J.L.Nehru appointed the senior diplomat Apa Pant as High commissioner to Kenya and asked Indians living there to mix with the Kenyan people and slowly and steadily the relations between the two countries developed and today our bilateral relations are based on solid foundations because there are so many similarities between the two states .The PM Modi had embarked on the relations between India and Kenya in 2016 and cemented further ties between the two countries which share same concerns and views on a host of bilateral issues .Presently Kenyan President William Samoei Ruto is on a visit to India from December 4to 6 on the invitation of president Droupadi Murmu .He is accompanied by a high level official delegation. The visit comes as Mr Ruto's first to India in his present capacity .During his visit Ruto met president Murmu and had a guard of honor at the Rashtrapati Bhawan on 5th December .He was given a state Banquet by president Murmu .Kenyan president held detailed discussions with prime minister Narendra Modi and he also participated in a business and investment event in New Delhi .A presidential visit from Kenya is taking place after a period of six years and it is expected to strengthen and invigorate the bilateral relations between the two countries .Kenyan president William Ruto termed his countries ties with India fantastic and thanked PM Modi for making sure that the

African Union (AU) becomes a permanent member of the G20.He said ,"India has made a very huge contribution .We want to thank Prime minister Narendra Modi for making sure that Africa became a permanent member of G20 during his presidency .And we will be having further conversations with him .India and Keya signed five bilateral agreements to boost the mutual ties between the two countries .The five agreements signed by the two sides included a memorandum of understanding -MOU on sharing successful solutions for digital transformation ,an MOU between Indira Gandhi National Open University and the Open University of Kenya ,an agreement on cultural exchange for period 2023-27 are the agreements signed between the two countries and these agreements will go a long way to boost and strengthen the bilateral ties between the two countries .India extends dollar 250 million line of credit to Kenya ,besides signing five significant agreements and all this will bolster the bilateral ties between India and Kenya .The bilateral trade between the two countries is valued at dollar 3.3 billion with Indian exports making up a significant part of the figure ,while Indian investments in Kenya were worth dollar 3.2 billion .India and Kenya decided to bolster cooperation in health and agriculture ,including an Indian line of credit of dollar 250 million to modernize farming in the African country, even as the two sides signed five agreements in areas ranging from education to digital transformation .India and Kenya are maritime neighbors .The contemporary ties between India and Kenya have now evolved into a robust and multifaceted partnership ,marked by regular high -level visits ,increasing trade and investment as well as extensive people to people contacts .The state visit of PM Narendra Modi to Kenya on 10-11 July gave a new impetus to bilateral partnerships.PM Modi and president Uhuru Kenyatta discussed a wide

range of bilateral issues .India ,Kenya inked 5 pacts and India announced dollar 250 million LOC for Kenyan agriculture sector .India announced a USD 250 million line of credit to Kenya for modernization of its agricultural sector as PM Modi and Kenyan president William Samoei Ruto agreed to shore up bilateral ties in areas of defense ,trade ,energy ,digital public infrastructure and healthcare .In a pivotal visit by the president of Kenya,William Samoei Ruto ,to India ,both countries have solidified their longstanding relationship through a series of five Memoranda of Understanding-MOU's and strategic cooperation spanning diverse sectors ,said Dammu Ravi ,secretary (ER) of the ministry of external affairs ,while giving insightful remarks on the significant outcomes of President Ruto's visit .Agriculture and education took centre stage as an intriguing development emerged after Kenya expressed its intention to offer agricultural farmland to Indian companies aiming to promote farming activities in the region .Interestingly ,the Kenyan side has expressed interest in offering to India agriculture farmland for farming purposes ,to be able to encourage Indian companies to go there and do farming .Simultaneously ,MOU's were inked between the open universities of both nations ,igniting a collaborative effort in the field of education .

These agreements set the stage for multifaceted exchange that encompasses cultural ,sports ,digital solutions, and digital transformation initiatives. "Education is another area .The open universities of both sides ,JGNO and Kenyan open university ,have entered into a MOU .Space is another area of cooperation .So there are the five MOU's that have been signed. "said the MEA Secretary. Kenyas keen interest in learning from India extends to the fintech space with specific focus on UPI and Aadhaar.

The health sector emerged as a signifi-

cant area of cooperation ,with discussions ranging from medical expertise exchanges to collaborative efforts in traditional medicine.

They have expressed interest in having greater cooperation ,particularly with Indian specialist doctors visiting those countries ,and in turn they would like to have longer stay for their specialists ,nurses and medical doctors to come to India to learn from us.

Traditional medicines also figured very strongly in the bilateral talks.PM Modi says close ties between Kenya and India will strengthen all our efforts in the Indo-Pacific.

Approximately 80000 people of Indian origin in Kenya ,who consider that country as their second home ,are the biggest strength of the ties.

India announced a dollar 250 million line of credit to Kenya for modernization of its agricultural sector as PM Modi and visiting Kenyan president Ruto agreed to strengthen bilateral ties in the field of defense ,trade, energy, digital public infrastructure and healthcare .After Modi-Ruto talks ,the two sides signed five pacts providing for cooperation in a range of areas including sports ,education and digital solution and unveiled a joint vision document to scale up maritime engagements in the Indian ocean.

India also raised the issue of two Indian nationals who went missing in the east African country in July last year. After talks ,Modi said India has been a reliable and committed development partner for Kenya and that New Delhi is fully prepared to share its achievements in digital public infrastructure with east African country .Thus it follows that the relations between India and Kenya are strengthening with the active participation of these two countries and in the near future will bolster the ties between India and Kenya.

(The author is a columnist, social and KP activist).

YOUR COLUMN

Concern for the Earth

Dear Editor,

This year at COP 28 in the Central Asian country of the United Arab Emirates, leaders from around the world came together and expressed their commitment to clean up our Vasundara. If seen in

the context of tackling climate change, it is a very successful effort. But we all know that paperwork won't change today's environment. Our Earth experiences various climate changes from time to time, including famine on land, melting ice in the polar regions, rising sea levels, and imbalances in the composition of the atmosphere. In addition, all signatory countries of the Paris Agreement promised to control rising temperatures.This was rarely seen.We are talking about zero emissions, which means

that greenhouse gas emissions must be so low that the trees, plants and oceans in our atmosphere can absorb them, so that humanity does not have a problem.But all of this will not be done by simply talking or holding conferences.It is hoped that strict and comprehensive steps will be taken to prevent climate change and deal with the challenges it poses.

A Nawas
Kollam Kerala