

IMPROVING POWER EDIFICE

Right from the first day of the bifurcation of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories, the Government is trying its best to fulfill all demands of people besides addressing their grievances so that they may not suffer. But it was observed that despite several significant decisions taken by the ruling dispensation, there are some issues which continue to haunt the populace of J&K, both in rural as well as urban areas, including inadequate power and water supply. Where, on one hand, on the directions of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, PHE authorities are on their foot to ensure tapped water supply in every household very soon, on the other hand strenuous efforts are going on to ensure quality and adequate power supply across the Union Territory by improving the distribution network besides adopting a stern approach against non-regularized consumers and power theft cases. In its ongoing efforts, the administration inaugurated almost 20 power distribution projects in Bajalta, costing approximately Rs 41 crore. While terming the electricity a prerequisite for ensuring economical development, the LG Manoj Sinha said that the present administration is working hard to ensure round the clock power supply for people without any power cut. Seeking cooperation of people in the efforts of Government to improve the power sector by using electricity judiciously and paying electricity charges in time, he said that Government is taking a stern approach against power theft cases which are the main reason for transmission losses. The LG further said that a number of outside investors are ready to set up their units in J&K, which require adequate power supply, as such the administration is working dedicatedly to meet the objectives at the earliest. Criticizing the successive Governments of erstwhile state for adopting apathetic attitude towards the most important sector, LG said that J&K has been bestowed immense sources for power generation but it is really sad that earlier, the potential was not fully tapped due to which at present the UT has to face a lot of hardships in respect of electricity supply. Few days earlier also, the LG has inaugurated a number of power reformation projects in Samba. This spree of initiatives to improve the existing power network shows that the administration is determined to make J&K self-dependent in the power sector.

GOVT KNOWS BETTER

The central dispensation and J&K administration have their own means and system to assess the threat perception of VIPs and any decision regarding the security of the aforesaid personalities is taken after gauging every minute aspect. In this context, the central dispensation has sealed down the security cover of former Chief Ministers by removing jammers and ambulances from their security detail. Though during the political season when the elections will be on cards, the former chief ministers are likely to play a victim card over the issue but the matter of the fact is that every step taken in this regard is after proper consultation of the top hierarchy of security forces and the top brass of the government because no government will act against the interest of the state and its image as well. If by chance anything untoward happens, the responsibility of the same will lie on the government therefore there is no need to raise apprehensions over the issue as the government is well aware of its responsibility. From now onwards, former chief ministers Farooq Abdullah and Ghulam Nabi Azad will continue to have the National Security Guard cover as both have been categorised as Z-plus proteetees and Omar and Mehbooba will continue to have Z-plus cover in J&K but are likely to have reduced security outside the UT. This security set-up itself makes it clear that government and the concerned security agencies have taken cognizance of the threat perception of the aforesaid former chief ministers and then only things have been decided. Surely, with the changing times in J&K the security requirement has been changed and whatever the government has decided is in the best interest of the people of the UT and entire country. On the first week of January this year, the Centre has downgraded J&K's Special Security Group (SSG), an elite protection force set up on the lines of Special Protection Group (SPG) guarding the country's VIPs, and withdrew the special security cover of all former CMs of J&K. The Centre has amended sections of the J&K Security Group Act-2000 and limited SSG protection to only the current CM and his family.

OFF 'D' CUFF

Sometimes, Meditation could be as easy as 'thinking'!

Practicing meditation can certainly be challenging. It's not easy to practice it in the right way. And that's why seekers take guidance from a Guru who makes them understand the right way to practice it. However, it is also true that sometimes meditation- the way it is- could be as easy as 'thinking'.

This is because Meditation is not about pushing the mind to be absolutely calm. But, it's a letting go of resistance to whatever seems unpleasant; this act of letting go can be learned. And sometimes you can do the same effortlessly under the right guidance.

Here's an interesting story showing the same.

The monk and the confused King

Once an enlightened monk visited a famous kingdom and earned a great name for him among seekers. His fame made the emperor curious about him and he visited him.

The next morning, the king came to the monk, but still confused over the monk's instruction on carrying the disturbed mind.

A New Dawn in the King's Life

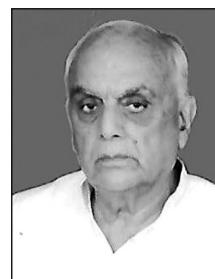
When he arrived, he saw the monk sitting in a meditative pose with a stick in his hand.

Shri Sudhanshuji Mahareji

As different streams having different sources all mingle their waters in the sea, so different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to God. -Swami Vivekananda

EDITORIAL

Rahu-Kaal in astrology & Rahu-Kaal in politics



■ ER P L KHUSHU

Rahu / Ketu are two shadow planets having no physical form of their own. They are the two nodes of Moon, when these two shadowy planets are always considered to give bad and malefic effects upon a person or a situation. Rahu is a shadow planet and king of meteors among the Navagrahas (nine planets) mentioned in Hindu

texts. During Samudra Manthana, an Asura named Svarbhanu, disguised as a Deva, appears and drinks amrita. Svarbhanu later is caught and is cut into two parts by Bhagwan Vishnu's Sudarshan Chakra. These two parts became Rahu and Ketu. Rahu is considered a malefic planet (planet giving adverse results), which tries to eclipse the Sun and its prevailing time, when Sun is the king in the planetary cabinet. Sun sustains the universe. It gives energy and synergy to the various creatures on earth. It is believed to influence a person or a situation with inauspicious results.

Rahu Kaal is a phrase that relates to an inauspicious time period each day, which is not regarded favorable for beginning a new task. In Hindu astrology, it refers to 90-minute period between sunrise and sunset every day, on different timings of the day. Rahu Kaal is also known as Rahu Kalam or Rahu Kala. It is considered very important by those who believe in astrology. Especially in South India, people believe Rahu Kalam to be quite crucial even in day-to-day activities. Rahu Kaal in simple language occurs every day, which is considered inauspicious as per Vedic Astrology. Rahu governs this period. No important activity should be undertaken during this period. If any action or work or adventure is begun in Rahu Kalam, it is said, that action does not give positive results. Those activities that have already been started do not get affected by this period governed by Rahu. Anything that is considered auspicious or very important should not be started during Rahu Kaal. Those who believe in it avoid activities such as new work, marriage, buying anything, and trading in this period. In the present day prevalence of deep polarization of various political parties in India, this concept of Rahu - Kalam gets applied to various political parties in India, which have lost power and position, when such political parties have apparently become the targets of perpetual Rahu - Kalam perpetually, even though this period of Rahu - Kalam is limited to a short period during the 24 hours of a day. In the phraseology of the present day intemperate verbose once referred to an academic discussion of discontent and anguish in political debates between various political parties, it is referred as being the worst time for a situation or for a political party. Thus, Kapil Sibal, the member of the upper house of parliament made a sarcastic remark, while expressing his views on the recent union budget that India is not in Amrit Kaal but in Rahu - Kaal since 2014'. Amrit - Kaal as the word suggest is supposed to be a period of Amrit, the Nectar for a person or a situation. Probably he needs to be reminded of his own phase of passing through Rahu - Kaal as a prominent member of the congress party, along with other 22 prominent and senior members of the Congress, when they had to become rebels within their own party because of having lost importance and strategically reduced to naught, for the congress party. Who is responsible for their such a situation Rahu-Kaal or something else having similarity with the word Rahu - Kaal. It is essentially needed to remind all of them, that the congress as a whole is under Rahu Kaal, likely to be consumed fully to its extinction by Rahu, through a denominator in the congress party

of almost of a similar name with a little difference.

To quote the Finance Minister of India in this context in the Rajya Sabha, Sitharaman took strong exception to senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal's remark that India is not in Amrit Kaal but in Rahu Kaal since 2014'.

She said that 'Rahu - Kaal' was then, when an ordinance brought by the Prime Minister of their own party was torn in front of the media, she said referring to the 2013 incident of Rahul Gandhi. "That was the Rahu - Kaal," she said. Rahu - Kaal is what produces G-23. G-23 is a grouping of 23 Congress leaders including Sibal who have voiced concerns over the party's leadership style. "Senior leaders of the party are leaving the party. That is Rahu - Kaal," she said. "No wonder Congress party which is facing the 'Rahul - Kaal' in getting 44 seats and remaining there and is not able to come out. Where Rahu - Kaal is there, where the Congress is in power. Elaborating that congress was in Rahu - Kaalam phase, when faced with criticism for her latest budget not doing enough for the poor, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman mocked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's 2013 comment of poverty being a state of mind, and asked if this is the poverty she was supposed to address. Replying to the discussion on budget 2022-23 in the Rajya Sabha, she said her budget brings stability to the economy and has measures to create jobs. Without naming Gandhi, she referred to the Congress leader's remarks on poverty to counter the criticism from opposition leaders, including former finance minister P Chidambaram of the budget leaving out the poor. She said, "Please be clear, is this the poverty that you wanted me to address, the poverty of mind?" she said. "Your former (Congress) president said the poverty does not mean scarcity of food, money or material things. If one possesses self-confidence, then one can overcome it. He said it is a state of mind.

Modi's selfless service with a sharp and an apt mind considerations of 'Sab-Ka-Sath, Sab-Ka-Vikas, Sab-Ka-Vishwas' and now 'Sab-Ka-Prayas', to uplift India and its people on all the fronts of its economy and development along with the removal of poverty from this country is not palatable to the dynastic (Parivaravat) rulers. They are doing so, as they have lost their kingdom and power, when such people are now using all the ignoble comments and vicious campaigns against the present good governance, which is being provided by the present political hierarchy ruling India, under the stewardship and leadership of Modi, the giant politician and a statesman, with self less motives of serving India in all respects. In fact, Rahu - Kaal is dominating their minds and unworthy of being good and devoted leaders to lead this country with corruption free administration and development of all sorts. The imprints of their corrupt acts while ruling this country are known to the whole nation. In fact, now history is privy to it, when congress is reduced to a figure of just fifty MP's in the Parliament of India. Still vague and meaningless observations are coming from the mouths of some prominent leaders of this party, who have inherited the leadership of this party by default and not by design.

Rahul Gandhi unfortunately chanted a course to say in the Parliament that the state has been sought to be transformed from a democracy to rule by a 'King', a Shahenshah, a ruler of rulers', something that the freedom movement had fought and defeated in 1947. This was his oblique reference to Modi, certainly feeling frustrated and crest fallen, with the democratic fame and name of Modi, spreading like wildfire all over the country and abroad. This implied makes this leader of congress to feel that there are no chances for him for ages to come to power not to speak of his becoming the Prime Minister of India, a wishful dream of his, his mother and sister. What a bashful

remark and that too inside Parliament, against a person who is leading the country for its prosperity with corruption free administration relentlessly and round the clock working. This is Rahu - Kaal which is prevailing upon the conceit of thinking of such Congress leaders to the final and perpetual extinction of this political party. The deepening crisis facing the Congress since it was trounced in the 2014 general elections is indeed multifaceted. Ideologically, it has lacked clarity on issues like the Ram Temple and the abrogation of Article 370 and, organizationally, its mass party structure has been unable to combat the strong cadre-based model of the Sangh Parivar. Add to that a growing number of defections and limited success in overcoming the various contradictions in India's political mosaic to make concrete the idea of 'opposition unity'. The fact whether for good or ill is that India's Grand Old Party seems unable to look beyond 'the family' for the top party post, when in recent months a few leaders have openly expressed dissatisfaction with the manner in which the party is run. Last year, a group of 23 senior Congress leaders, including former chief ministers, Union ministers and party general secretaries, called for ideological clarity, an overhaul of the party's organization and addressing the leadership vacuum.

So is the case with the, 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections when Narendra Modi tsunami dismantled the entire opposition barring a couple of states where regional satraps still rule the roost. The mandate was not only for Prime Minister, but also a referendum on Rahul Gandhi's leadership and acceptance as a leader who cannot replace Modi. The mandate shows that people not only rejected Rahul Gandhi but also the top brass of the Congress. It has swept both rural and urban areas. Has Rahul Gandhi become a liability for this grand old party? With this degree of performance, can Rahul Gandhi continue to successfully function as the leader of the biggest opposition party? Should he quit and make way for some other deserving candidate? Is this the effect of Rahu - Kaal on Congress and its leaders, particularly those belonging to now a mother, son and sister trio to call this combination as Indian national Congress as also high command of Congress party? Let it be diagnosed as to how Rahu - Kaal worked with the unproductive leaders of congress party. Immature anti Rafale campaign against an honest government led by an unblemished Prime Minister with an unparliamentarily cries that 'Chowkidar Chor Hai' campaign did not work at all and engulfed the Congress party within its own irritant fire and lost the governance to a point of almost no return. This is what Rahu - Kaal did to Congress, through its own actions like that of Rahul. Congress party for its revival shall have to locate the Rahu within its own party, to save it from perfect extinction. Losing to Smriti Irani in Amethi has dealt a major blow to the credibility of Rahul Gandhi. For long, he is going to be considered a non-performing MP. His massive lead in Wayanad would never ever compensate for the loss in Amethi. To put it neatly, Narendra Modi has defeated Rahul Gandhi with a resounding mandate both in India and in their family bastion, with the blessings of the 'Amrit-Kaal' upon him and the destruction of Congress with the shadow of 'Rahu - Kaal' upon it. Let the Congress leader who used this phrase of Rahu - Kaal against Modi government in the Parliament know its implication for his Congress party for future as well, when he is in deep oblivion along with other 22 senior members within Congress party, serving the wrath of 'Rahu - Kaal', for their good intentions and ideas of revitalizing Congress in country.

The author is a Chartered Consultant Civil Engineer, passionately attached and devoted to his Motherland - Jammu & Kashmir.

Re-opening of schools in J&K

■ RAYEES AHMAD KUMAR

Schools in both the geographical divisions of J&K are reopening within a week or two after observing break of several months. Kashmir based educational institutions are observing winter vacation these days while in Jammu division these seats of learning have been shut due to pandemic situation. Now when the administration has geared up to reopen these institutions and all the necessary precautions with regard to check the further spread of COVID infection are being put in place, there is enthusiasm and excitement among both the students as well as their parents who seem eager to find their wards again in classrooms learning in the formal way. All other alternative ways of teaching especially to our primary grade students have proved either completely failure or less productive. It can't be completely denied that during pandemic period there was no alternative other than to use modern technology and initiate online mode of teaching but for a longer period instead of yielding better results the excessive use of cell-phones and exposure to computer screens for hours together is harmful to physical and mental wellbeing. So, reopening of schools and the initiation of physical classroom teaching is the most welcome step at this juncture. Our future generation has suffered heavy educational losses due to closure of educational institutions for last couple of years. Particularly those little buds, admitted during 2019 or 2020 in class 1st or nursery classes, have faced huge loss as they



are yet to see the normal classroom teaching because crucial years of their tender age have already got wasted in which they were supposed to learn basics of reading and writing. This loss would not be compensated for them. Therefore children, parents, teachers and all other stakeholders not only should welcome this wise decision but should cooperate with authorities at the helm of affairs to keep a check on the further spread of this infection. Following SoPs and adhering to the guidelines of health authorities can definitely bring desired outcome. Maintenance of hygiene and sanitation in and around the school premises, advising

students to shun reckless behaviour and following the advisories can also help in mitigating the loss suffered due to closure of the schools. Collectively we must act as responsible citizens so that unlike previous years authorities would no way feel the need to shut schools a month later.

A nation's overall progress and development can't be imagined without taking constructive steps for improving and strengthening its educational scenario. Former president and distinguished scientist Dr A P J Abdul Kalam had said, "Education gives you the wings to fly. History is witness to the fact that only

those states and nations have developed and succeeded in touching skies, who have prioritized the education system. Coming back to our motherland, we have seen from past many years that education of our children has become the biggest casualty, as a result of which our future generation is suffering most. Due to derailing of the sector, children, parents as well as the teachers feel equally displeased. The last 2 years have hit the education sector badly due to COVID-19 lockdown which resulted in a huge loss for students. No doubt, students are attending the online classes but the physical presence of their teachers in classrooms has its own importance which all students have been missing for the past 2 years now. Now when the administration has finalised to reopen the educational institutions on March 1, 2022 in valley after culmination of winter-break, there is new hope and both parents and their wards feel enthusiastic and overjoyed to be a part of normal physical classroom teaching. Besides adhering to the administrative guidelines there is need to take some constructive steps in order to compensate academic loss of previous years. Teachers need to be more vibrant, they must access abilities and achievements of their pupils so that future course of action can be ascertained. Parents and students must equally cooperate with teachers so that while delivering their legitimate duties in classrooms, better results are achieved. Hope the new academic year will soon see a better spring so that already derailed education sector can be overhauled.

YOUR COLUMN
Back to schools

Dear Editor,

The recent decision of Government regarding reopening of schools was apt and need of the hour, as there was no point of closing schools while keeping all other public spaces open. Amid a rapid surge in COVID-19 infections across the country, the government has decided to close down schools and colleges while directing the university authorities to take their own decisions about closures, which a number of them already did. According to the health minister, the decision was taken considering the spike in COVID-19 infections in schools and upon the directives of the prime minister. While we understand the concerns about the safety of students, we wonder whether this was based on a scientific reading of the situation and how it will bring any positive result while all the offices, factories, shopping

malls and other public spaces remain open during this time. Although the government has given a five-point directive to prevent the spread of the virus-including prohibition on gathering of over 100 people in any political, social or religious programmes; producing COVID-19 vaccine certificates to participate in any programmes, attend government and public offices, and to commute by public transports; wearing masks and maintaining health rules at public places, etc.-enforcing them will be a big challenge, if past experience is any indication. Against this backdrop, I wonder how the restrictions put on educational institutions will help curb the infection rates. Having remained shut for about 18 months from March 2020 till August 2021, educational institutions started in-person classes only last September. While a 15-day closure for schools should not be a big problem, if the closure extends beyond that, its effects on the school and college students, particularly those in the rural areas, will be immense. One may recall that during the past two years, the school drop-out rate and child labour

increased, and more female students became victims of child marriage. Many of them could not continue their education due to the digital divide. Therefore, any restrictions put on educational institutions must be well-thought-out. What the Government can do instead is bring all the students of schools, colleges and universities under its vaccination coverage. Since we reportedly have a good stock of vaccines, the government should expedite its campaigns to inoculate all students as soon as possible, with an aim to keep the educational institutions open at all costs. Another way to curb the infections could be to put restrictions on the areas that are severely infected. As far as we know, the authorities have already developed a zoning system-under which areas are divided into red, yellow and green zones, based on the number of infections. If this system can be implemented properly, with the help of local administrations and law enforcement agencies, experts believe we will be able to curb the spread of the virus.

Mool Raj,
Doda.