

BACK TO SCHOOLS

The decision of administration of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir to reopen the educational institutions in a phased manner is really a welcome step keeping in view the damages suffered by the students during the past two years. There is no doubt that the pandemic caused huge damages on every sector, many of which are yet to recover from the losses incurred after the outbreak of pandemic but the damage suffered by the Education Department is really immense as almost two academic years of students have fallen prey to the pandemic. Pertinent to mention here that soon after the outbreak of COVID, the Government directed for immediate closure of all education institutions across the nation about two years back. Although, many alternatives like online classes, radio classes and TV classes were taken by the Government to overcome the education losses suffered by students across the nation yet, the desirable results were not achieved as it is a fact that nothing can provide an interactive atmosphere to students which they get while studying in a classroom in company of their classmates. Accordingly, repeated demands were pouring in from various sectors and organizations to allow functioning of schools but looking at the COVID scenario, the Government found the time unfit for reopening of schools for offline classes. Further, two months back, as the vaccination was available only for the citizens above the age of 18 years, students were in vulnerable zone without any protection against the deadly virus. Now, after the start of the vaccination drive for the age-group of 18 to 15 years in January, which is presently going on at a fast pace and looking at the improving scenario, the administration has taken the appropriate decision to reopen the school for offline classes. Moreover, it has also been directed that school managements shall ensure implementation of COVID SOPs diligently besides sanitizing the premises at regular intervals, so that students can remain safe from deadly virus. It was further stressed that the school shall also ensure vaccination of all eligible students without any failure and hold vaccination drives in association with the Health Department. As half of the February is over and all students are busy in preparing for their annual examinations, one thing is crystal clear that if similar situation persists, the next session will definitely be offline.

WORST ROADS

Despite big claims that the government will provide best civic infrastructure to people of Jammu city the condition of roads is dismal with almost all the stretches becoming death knells with big potholes making commuting a worst experience for all. Whether it is main road from Satwari to Jewel crossing or Bikram Chowk to Panama Chowk, all are reeling under negligence of the concerned department because there seems to be no one to look into the matter as earlier when there was the practice of Darbar Move, roads infrastructure was used to be overhauled every November without fail to welcome the Darbar but soon after the end to this century old practice things have gone worse from being bad and roads are craving for government's focus in Jammu although the situation in Kashmir is also not so promising. The ride on Bikram Chowk flyover is so bumpy that it took several minutes to get back to normal shape after travelling on mismatched plates of the aforesaid flyover. The potholes near Gandhi Nagar hospital also need a mention because patients had a bad time while moving on this road stretch. Situation of RS Pura Road is also pathetic with king size potholes welcoming the tourists going towards Suchetgarh International Border as common masses have become used to this and they not even complain about the dismal condition of the road. It is ludicrous that despite all this, the people sitting at helm are boasting about the development in J&K. It will be better if at least patch work is to be accomplished so that big potholes don't pose threat to life as anything can happen while maneuvering the vehicles to avoid big potholes. God knows that what the government has in offing as far as roads infrastructure is concerned but it is for sure that one reason for frequent breakdown of vehicles in Jammu is bad shape of roads which need urgent repairs. Government should give proper attention to this issue as this is like a stigma on the working model of LG's administration.

OFF 'D' CUFF

Uncover the inner strength to overcome problems

As we look at our lives, we find that we are constantly experiencing ups and downs. Some days, we are happy, while others bring us sorrow and pain. This feeling has only grown over the past two years as we've adapted our lives to the pandemic. Since we do not seem to have much control over the ups and downs of life, we need to learn to live a life of peace and relaxation. We can stay at an even keel through the storms of life by finding a calm centre. We can reach this still point through meditation and prayer. From the moment a soul enters this world within a mother's womb, through the process of birth and all the phases of growth that it will experience throughout its lifetime, there will be pain and difficulties. The nature of the pain and difficulties may change, but they occur through life. When we realise this truth, we begin to search for answers. This search brings us to the spiritual path and to the words of saints and mystics who have come to this world to show us the way to happiness. The saints offer us a blueprint to unravel life's great mystery so that we can attain life's purpose: to reunite our soul with God. While the road Godward may not be easy,

we can accomplish it one step at a time. First, we need to learn to withdraw our attention from the outer world and focus on the inner spiritual worlds. This process of withdrawing our attention is called meditation, and we can learn it under the guidance of a spiritual Master. Meditation is the process of experiencing God's love for ourselves by taking our attention away from the world outside and focusing it within. Doing so, allows us to defocus from the turmoil of our surroundings and connect with the source of all love, all joy, which is God. Meditation is the highest form of prayer and unlocks the gates to the reservoir of untapped love that we carry with us. If we spend some time daily within the silence of our soul, we will be connected with a place of bliss. Then the outer circumstances of our life will not affect us. The real reason to meditate is, in fact, a spiritual reason. It is to reap the spiritual benefits of the practice. Meditation helps us become aware of our spiritual nature, which is our true essence. Once we become aware of our spiritual nature, we also gain knowledge of God, and then everything else in life falls into place. **Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj**

Political outsiders & 'Bhaiyas'

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

Everything seems to be fair in the mad rush and din of elections and as such politicians resort and stoop too low and speak without thinking. The politicians threw dirt and mud upon their opponents and in the process forget political hygiene completely. The other day Punjab chief minister and leader of congress lashed at the migrants belonging to UP and Bihar, terming them as Bhaiyas and asked Punjabis not to allow them being outsiders to disturb and influence the politics of Punjab. He has made a derogative remark about UP and Bihar migrants settled in Punjab and referred them as Bhaiya and has shown disrespect to them. The General Secretary of UP congress Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has clapped while Charanjeet Singh Channi, the Chief Minister of Punjab made controversial remark about the people belonging to UP and Bihar who are living in Punjab. Channi along with Priyanka Gandhi bracketed the UP and Bihar migrants as political outsiders who are bent to disturb the politics of the state of Punjab and therefore the people of Punjab should guard against the interference of the UP and Bihar people living in Punjab and not allow them to enter Punjab. It is very unfortunate and shameful that the Punjab chief minister has stooped so low and referred the people of UP and Bihar as Bhaiyas and asked the Punjabis not to allow them to enter Punjab. This seems to be in accordance with the policy of congress of instigating the people of different states of India one against other and petting them against each other. It is very disturbing and should not be done for the interest of the nation. The Punjab Chief Minister has given an unconstitutional statement when he has remarked that the Bhaiyas of UP and Bihar should not be allowed to enter the Punjab. The constitution of India provides that the citizen of India can move to any state of India and can purchase movable and immovable property and settle any-

where. Therefore any citizen of India can settle and work in any part or state of India and so no one can be debarred from moving to any state of India and settling in any state. Thus the statement of Charanjeet Singh Channi asking the Punjabis not to allow Bhaiyas of UP and Bihar to enter the state of Punjab is unlawful and unconstitutional and thus is unwarranted and as such should not have been given by the chief minister. The remarks of the Chief Minister has the potential of disturbing peace and mutual brotherhood not only in the state of Punjab but in UP, Bihar and other places of India and therefore the head of the states executive should desist from giving unlawful statements which have the potential of disturbing the peace in Punjab. The Punjab chief minister Charanjeet Singh Channi has earned the ire of the opposition parties including the BJP, AAP and people of UP and Bihar. Rightly Channi has been criticized by the BJP and other political parties and the people of UP and Bihar on the controversial remark so much so that some politicians and the people of UP and Bihar have demanded that Channi should apologize for his anti UP and Bihar remark. The unwarranted remark of Channi and calling people from UP and Bihar as Bhaiyas has attracted expected response and criticism from the political circles and it has created much uproar and generated much political heat in the country. The fact of the matter is that the people of UP and Bihar who have settled in Punjab have and are contributing significantly to the industrial development of Punjab. If the migrants from UP and Bihar will leave Punjab the industry, economy and agriculture of Punjab will be affected adversely and therefore it is against the interests of Punjabis to say that the people of Punjab should not allow the People from UP and Bihar to enter Punjab. The remark of Channi as such is not only against the People of UP and Bihar but is against the people of Punjab and

therefore such statements have the potential of dividing the people on community basis and as such is untenable and should not have been made by the CM of Punjab. The controversial remark of Chief Minister of Punjab has the potential of disturbing the mutual brotherhood in Punjab. If the people belonging to UP and Bihar will leave Punjab, it will adversely affect the industrial production of Punjab and it will thus go against the interests of the Punjabis and so the controversial remarks of Channi are untenable and should not have been made but in the din and rush of the electioneering everything seems to be fair and it may be due to this fact that Channi has given his controversial remarks. The statements of Channi are akin to sowing the seeds of discord and hatred between the different groups and communities and it pits one community against the other and as such is very disturbing and as such the CM should have desisted from making of the controversial statement during the elections. According to rough estimates there are 150000 migrants from UP living in Punjab and some 100000 migrants have voting rights and they form part of the states electorate as people from UP have voting edge in some seats. Since the remarks of Bhaiyas has insulted the people of UP and Bihar and therefore the migrants of UP have pledged to teach congress a lesson in the elections through the exercise of the powerful vote. The migrants of UP will not tolerate the insult by the chief minister and they are going to cast vote against the congress. It is so sad that the congress is following the policy of divide and rule and is hell bent to divide the different communities in Punjab and elsewhere and this is very unfortunate and shameful and the congress should desist from giving controversial remarks. The Prime Minister has attacked the Chief Minister Punjab for his controversial remarks in an election rally at Abohar Punjab. He has said that is Punjab Chief Minister also insulting Guru Ravi Das

who was born at Kashi-Banaras in UP and there is big following of great Guru among Punjabis and by insulting people of UP, Channi is also insulting Guru Ravi Das and Punjabis will not accept this insult to the great Guru. There is mutual brotherhood between the Punjabis and the migrants from UP and Bihar and they live like brothers and sisters and the people of Punjab deserve all kudos for this mutual brotherhood. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is hand in glove with Punjab chief minister Channi and it is alleged that she was laughing when Channi was making the controversial statement about migrants from UP and Bihar. Priyanka is the General Secretary of congress incharge of UP and she should know that she is also from UP and in the insulting remarks she also is being insulted. One fails to understand as to how will Priyanka face the people of UP while canvassing in the elections as she is also going to be held responsible for the controversial remarks of Channi. Congress, Channi and Priyanka have rightly been criticized by the opposition political parties and the people of UP and Bihar. The Chief Minister Bihar Nitish Kumar has also objected to remarks of Punjab Chief Minister. Priyanka Gandhi has defended the remarks of Channi by stating that he has said that Punjabis should be allowed to elect the government of their choice and what he has said is for the AAP and its leaders who are trying to make inroads in the politics of Punjab. Charanjeet Singh Channi has also clarified that his remarks were wrongly interpreted and he has said nothing against the people of UP and Bihar living in Punjab. He further said that the people from UP and Bihar have considerably contributed in the development of Punjab and he loves the migrants from UP and Bihar like his own family. To conclude we can say that there are no political outsiders in Punjab and Chief Minister should desist from referring migrants from UP and Bihar as Bhaiyas, that too in their own country. **(The author is retired Education Officer and Columnist).**

Solar Energy: An alternative for conventional energy sources

Solar energy is emerging the new source for meeting the energy requirements of the world, India's increasing efforts to expand the share of renewable energy has led to a substantial increase in the solar power generation in past few years. The country has set an ambitious target of installing 175 GW of renewable energy capacity by the year 2022, which includes 100 GW from solar, 60 GW from wind, 10 GW from bio-power and 5 GW from small hydro-power. The Government of Jammu & Kashmir has taken into note the country's ambition to reach 175 GW by 2022 and has accelerated progress of installing renewable power generation plants. As per reports of the Ministry of Renewable energy, a total of 5063.10 MW of renewable energy capacity has been added during the year 2019-20, taking cumulative installed RE capacity to 83.38 GW as of October 2019. This includes 37.09 GW of Wind, 31.70 GW of solar, 9.94 GW of Bio-power and 4.65 GW of Small Hydro Power. Further, projects of 30.06 GW capacities are at various stages of implementation and 39.67 GW capacity are under various stages of bidding. Clean energy projects now account for more than a fifth of India's installed power generation capacity. The extended benefits of the Renewable energy sources are that they can be used to produce electricity with fewer environmental impacts. Generation of power from conventional sources is also the source of greenhouse emission attributing

to global warming and has adverse impact on the climate. Therefore, a global shift towards sustainable renewable energy generation is being witnessed. Jammu & Kashmir has an enormous potential for solar energy. Setting up renewable energy capacity would help to bridge a part of its power requirement. Thus, it further necessitates the use of renewable sources of energy to bridge the deficit gap. As challenges of climate change and global warming continuously threaten the world community, the Jammu & Kashmir government has also recognized the urgent need to tackle these challenges. To create a conducive environment and develop an excellent business ecosystem for harnessing maximum potential of solar energy through Government, Private Enterprises, Public-Private Partnerships and individual efforts, government envisions a future with reduced dependence on fossil fuel by promoting renewable energy sources. J&K Government recognises that renewable energy can also significantly increase J&K's and the Nation's energy security. J&K also aim to evolve new technologies in renewable energy generation and its application through participation of farmers, industries and public at large to boost local economy. Provision of tie up with local enterprises as Joint Venture/SPV for the investment would give a boost to local enterprises and also offers backward linkages to the industries who are investing lesser amounts. Solar power projects can be setup in a much shorter timeframe

when compared to conventional power projects and the cost of solar power has become more economical today. Solar power can also help meet energy requirements for both grids connected as well as off-grid applications such as solar powered agricultural pump sets. J&K is richly endowed with natural renewable resources for generating electricity. It has multiple microclimatic some locations like Udhampur lie under sub-tropical climate. In addition, the plains of the J&K like Jammu, Akhnour, Samba and Kathua lies in the composite climatic zone. The entire J&K receives good amount of Global Horizontal Irradiance (GHI) which varies from 4.97 to 5.17 kWh/m2/day. In order to promote this new source of energy, the J&K Government has started the scheme of providing Rooftop Solar Photovoltaic Plant on subsidised rates. This scheme is being implemented by the Jammu & Kashmir Energy Development Agency (JAKEDA) of Department of Science & Technology. Under this scheme, 40 per cent subsidy is being provided to consumers for installing Solar Photovoltaic rooftops. The solar rooftops are available from 1 KW to 10 KW capacity and five years free maintenance is also provided to the consumers. Though Jammu and Kashmir has vast potential of generating Hydroelectricity with several massive projects going on which will make the UT power surplus region in coming years, the J&K is also making remarkable strides for generating energy requirements through renewable resources.

YOUR COLUMN

Making Thannamandi a separate assembly segment welcome step

Dear Editor, Many many thanks to all concerned authorities for making Thannamandi as a separate Assembly Segment. Of course with separate assembly constituency and separate MLA, this remote and hilly area of J & K will get more UT and national level attention and hence there will be huge chances of its progress. Thannamandi is town of great historic importance and being the central location of two regions Kashmir and Jammu of J & K and being one of the important stations on Mughal Road deserve to be very attractive and developed. It is a beautiful cup shape valley surrounded by beautiful mountains namely Dorimal, Kataemar, Ratan Pir, DKG, Chamrar. My grand uncle Late Master Abdul Ghani Abid had called it mini Kashmir in one of his poem title 'Thanna Bi Kashmir Hai'. The full poem can be seen in his book 'Nakshae Na Tamaom'. The poem was written about 80 years back. The Shrine of Great Saint Hazrat Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah is also situation in this area which is the basic source of establishment of Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University Rajouri. Once again thanks to authorities for this gift and many congratulations to people of the area. **Prof (Dr) Shakeel Ahmed Raina, Rajouri.**

Domestic abuse against woman: Cause of concern

Dear Editor, Domestic violence in India is one of the controversial issues and a sensitive area for the society we live in. Generally women are killed per year from domestic violence, with thousands of others maimed or disabled. Women have reported attacks ranging from physical to psychological and sexual abuse from intimate partners. This form of abuse is the kind of aggressive behavior that one partner male shows by physical harm to their

partner female, a dominant force, or violent abuse towards the spouse. 'Tracking Numbers: the State Of Violence Against Women and Children in Pakistan' was launched on the occasion of International Women Day 2020 by Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO). The report presented a critical situation of the country about how it failed to protect its women, children and transgenders from domestic abuse, increasing members of domestic abuse have had no control since the last many years which is an open threat to the dignity of women in the community we live in. The research report has a record from the government also from the media houses between the duration from January 1 to December 31, 2020. There are some cases that came forward based on true stories, how they suffered domestic abuse and violent behavior by their partners. Women are endured violent beatings during their pregnancy, they had spent before marriage period with their parents and then they were married. The victims also mentioned that they suffered abusive behavior right after they got married. They getting divorced would be worse than her dying was the statement given by the victims. Another example of domestic abuse is Akifa who was a well-educated young woman, she secured a masters degree as well and she was married to a rich and self-made man according to her statement but she mentioned that her husband was an abuser behind the perfect marriage she faced physical torture from her partner, she faced an emotional abuse, mental torture, abusive language, and dirty taunt, the husband never cared about the environment where he uses to use abusive language the place, not even the gathering. Various factors are associated with home violence in India. Poverty, illiteracy, and social and monetary taboos are taken into consideration as primary motives for domestic violence in the country. Lack of knowledge about women's rights and a lack of help from the government are the alternative two reasons. Every other element given for the increase in domestic violence has been because of the Increase in urbanization. As people circulate from villages and an increasing number stay other than a prolonged circle of relatives, assaults are much less likely to be prevented via the intervention of family members. Who in past instances frequently intervened in domestic conflicts? Yet some

other motive given to the abuses is patriarchalism in Indian society, which marginalizes women's role. In a few conventional societies, a man is taken into consideration to have the right and authority to physically beat his spouse. Domestic violence is one untouchable topic in the society we live in people around us cannot even relate to the stress that victims go through, depression, anxiety attacks, and also sleeping, eating disorders. Women in society should take this violence considerable issues their sake, the increasing number of violence is proof that somewhere in society no matter what race, caste, religion you belong as a woman this issue is rapidly taking place because people don't bring it to the table with their friends, family, children also. People in India need to realize that no matter what shape abuse takes it is wrong and against law, it's an exploitation of human dignity and a threat to women's life and safety which even the religion prohibits any form of abuse. Abuse cannot only take place in the form of physical action physical hurt but it can also torture an individual through words and actions you take against their mental credibility. Abusers commonly exercise power or force on their intimate partners in private which is prohibited by the law as well in the country. Some people consider marital rape as one form of abuse, beating women also throwing acid on them. In any relationship, if a man takes a dominant position and becomes controlling over his partner the cycle of abuse starts from there, there can be many reasons, for example, a jealousy factor, competing with your partner in general, calling them while using abusive language. People specifically parents of both the partners should be confident enough to train their children before marriage to talk about these issues openly, they should create a comfortable space with women especially so that they have an idea to tackle these issues in a better way from the beginning. The Lawmakers in the country should provide possible laws of protection against domestic abuse, the country needs to take major steps to prevent this form of abuse against women. We as a nation represent our women and we as individuals need to provide them safety and also the right to live a safe life. **Mool Raj, Doda.**