

PROMOTING SPORTS

Playing sports is generally a great way to improve your fitness and health. Playing not only keeps your body healthy but also improves your mind and mental health. Actually, activities like sports improve your blood circulation, mood and mental health. Apart from this, in today's stress-filled world, sports is the only thing that can help you become stress free in just a few minutes.

Nowadays, due to sedentary lifestyle, lifestyle diseases like obesity, diabetes and heart attack are increasing among people. In such a situation, it is important that you speed up your stalled life. Sports gives you mobility and makes you active. It keeps your heart fit, makes bones healthy, reduces the risk of obesity, improves sleep and brings coordination and balance to the body.

Engaging in sports is not just about physical fitness but more than that. Playing sports often means being part of a team and allows for skill building in many areas. As well as learning all the techniques involved in the game, children can also develop their life skills. Playing team sports promotes cooperation and sharing, resilience, goal setting, and relationship building. Learning how to lose is also an important skill that can often be learned through playing sports.

In J&K, the Government has therefore accorded a high priority to the promotion of sports in the UT by organizing various national and UT level games.

Credibility of the incredible legislators

SHIV KUMAR PADHA

The standard, moral and ethical values of the public representatives, who were ever considered as the esteemed persons of the society, have come too low to be called as credible spokespersons of those who exhibit blind faith and repose full confidence in their integrity and sincerity towards them. Due to their incredible and unpredictable behavior, people are losing their faith and confidence gradually in them. Owing to their smoky attitude and behavior they are being compared with the one double hood snakes where nobody can guess whether they are coming towards or going away. The integrity and conduct of majority of our parliamentarians and those of the legislators have come under scanner which have compelled the voter to trust the distrustful person than to trust the so called public representatives.

Who, in India, doesn't want to become parliamentarian or legislator where money and position makes the mare go. The political arena has become the prerogative of the rich, elite class and the legacy of the political champions who have been sitting in the higher echelons of power and position since decades together. According to them, investment in the political market has become more profitable than in any other professions as politics is no more considered a pious and noble job these days but has become one time investment and whole life benefit, where there is no danger of losing the capital rather the investment goes on multiplying even up to their coming generations. People have seen how an ordinary man, after jumping in the politics and attaining the position of a legislator or parliamentarian becomes multimillionaire over night. The unlimited power, opportunities and avenues of creating assets disproportionate to their source of income salivates them which in turn becomes the biggest and uncontrollable temptation for the rich and upper strata of the Indian society.

The process of Defection in the Indian politics, changing the loyalties and crossing the floors by the legislators and the parliamentarians for personal loaves and fishes of the offices has been considered and accepted as a common phenomena in the Indian political scenario ever since the dawn of independence in the country which has resulted into the fall of many people friendly governments and formation of the opportunist one's, which tantamount to the betrayal and breach of confidence with the gullible voters.

In political scenario defection is a situation when a member or a group of political party leaves his party and joins hands with other for the personal or defecting group benefits. The 10th Schedule of the Indian Constitution, which talks about the anti-defection law, is designed to prevent political defections prompted by the lure of office or material benefits or other like considerations. The anti defection law was passed by Parliament in 1985 and reinforced in 2002. As per the 1985 act. A defection by one person will be considered as defection and by one third of the elected members of a political party a merger. But the 91st Constitutional Amendment Act 2003 changed this and now at least two thirds of the members of a party must be in favor of the merger for it to have validity in the eyes of the law.

Defection by the legislators occurs in many democracies which undermine the stability of the cabinet which is dependent on the support of the elected legislators. Such instability can amount to a betrayal of the people's mandate as voiced at the time of elections. Following the recommendations from many constitutional bodies, Parliament, in 2003 passed the ninety-first amendment to the constitution of India. The strengthened the act by adding the provisions for the disqualification of defectors and banning them from being appointed as ministers for a period of time.

It will be pertinent to call the preceding decade, since, 2014, a decade of political tsunami which has taken many so called honest, democratic, secular, honest political champions in its spate. Who are, in a state of confusion, changing their loyalties like the attires? They are in a fix which political party suits to their individual hidden agenda and which can help secure a lucrative position in the parlor of power in the forthcoming elections. The mentality of deserting the parent political parties by the elected representatives have not only brought the standard of present politics down to the lowest ebb but they have lost their faith and credibility among the voters and the parties they desert. Such type of Legislator and parliamentarians are a slur and a blot on the democratic set up of any country. Such type of opportunist politicians are looked down upon by the people because their sole aim is to fight for the loaves and fishes of offices and not the welfare of the masses.

Owing to their opportunistic attitude their loyalties are showcased in the political markets where any highest bidder can purchases. It is matter of great shame that the political parties, in order to check the horse trading, shift their MLAs to the different states of the country, like the political prisoners, by the chartered flights and the luxury buses and quarantined them in the five and seven star hotels.

Even an ordinary citizen with an iota of intellect is compelled to think how these legislators having taken the oath of the constitution brought their position and prestige too low to be called as the sincere and honest law makers.

(The writer is a social activist from Basohli).

Food Security & Farmer Welfare-A Modi Guarantee

PIYUSH GOYAL



At a time when global food supply is stressed by the market's vulnerability to war, weather and volatility, the situation in India is conspicuously comfortable - both for consumers and farmers.

On Thursday, PM Modi-led cabinet raised the Fair and Remunerative Price of sugarcane by 8%, for the benefit of farmers, who are already getting the highest cane price in the world, while the government is ensuring that Indian consumers get the cheapest sugar in the world.

There is a series of such initiatives that combine farmer welfare with consumer interest. Earlier this month, PM Modi once again ensured the supply of grains for our citizens at affordable prices with the launch of "Bharat Rice" at Rs 29 per kg, carrying forward his mission to provide nutritious food to every citizen.

Thanks to our hard-working farmers, who are making the country atmanirbhar with more than adequate production of most farm commodities, the government is providing free foodgrains to over 80 crore people under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), and very reasonably priced food products for the rest of the population.

Bharat Rice, Atta, Daal - The Modi government has always acted swiftly to counter any abnormal rise prices of sensitive food

commodities. Last year, it launched "Bharat Dal" at the highly subsidized rate of Rs 60 per kg, and "Bharat Atta" at the low price of Rs 27.50 per kg. Similarly, Central agencies sell affordable onions. It even supplied tomatoes when prices were soaring, with Central government picking up a large bill for the differential. The sale of "Bharat" food items has been quickly sealed up and is available at more than 18,000 outlets.

Unprecedented, swift - Never before has the Central government sold foodgrains or pulses in the retail market. PM Modi always responds decisively to control prices. Last year, as soon as unseasonal rains disrupted the supply of tomatoes, the government swung into action and reversed the rise in prices. PM Modi has ensured that good-quality daal, rice and atta are supplied at moderate rates. These measures are implemented without discrimination, to help every section of society.

Another unprecedented action of this government is to have a dedicated Price Stabilisation Fund to create a buffer of agricultural commodities for prompt market intervention. The government took the landmark initiative to ensure availability and affordability of major pulses and onion with a cumulative budgetary support of Rs. 27,489 crore.

The government has given a strong message that any attempt to hoard supplies or to manipulate the market will backfire. While a record wheat harvest is expected in a few months, the government is not taking any chances. It has imposed stock limits on

wheat and is ready to increase supply in the market.

Every day, retail and wholesale prices of 22 essential food commodities are monitored. With inputs from 550 price-monitoring centres in 34 states/UTs, price trends are analysed for taking appropriate decisions for release of stocks from the buffer to cool down prices, and imposition of stock limits to prevent hoarding.

Affordable sugar, happy farmer -The ex-mill price of sugar has fallen 3.5-4% after the start of the new cane-crushing season, while ensuring that farmers are earning well and paid on time. The ethanol-blending programme has boosted the viability of the industry had helped millers clear about 99.5% sugarcane dues in 2022-23. This is the lowest-ever pendency of dues, demonstrating PM Modi's focus on farmer welfare.

Cooking oil prices in India are at a two-year low following proactive steps including changes in import duties. In the past year, retail prices of mustard oil are down 18.3%, Soyabean oil 17.1%, Sunflower oil 23.8% and RBD Palmolen 12%. The government is also taking effective steps to control wheat prices. The all-India average prices of wheat and atta in the retail and wholesale markets are showing a declining trend.

Indians First - The government has restricted exports of wheat, rice and sugar to ensure adequate domestic supply and moderate prices, while making sure that farmers get remunerative prices. It has stepped up sales of rice and wheat under the Open Market Sales Scheme to increase

domestic supply. The launch of "Bharat Rice", which follows the series of other measures will go a long way in moderating rice prices.

Free Food in PM's third term - The free-food scheme had helped Indians withstand the ravaging pandemic that choked the global economy. The pandemic is behind us, but the PM's compassionate leadership, and consequently the generous welfare scheme, continue. The government has already committed a staggering Rs 11.80 lakh crore in the next five years under the PMGKAY, in PM Modi's third term in office. This scheme carries forward the PM's impeccable record of running generous welfare schemes without compromising on fiscal discipline. Similarly, this government ensures ethics and discipline in the market for essential food commodities.

Best decade for prices - As a result, the past decade has been India's best in inflation control, despite the twin shocks of the pandemic and the Ukraine crisis which made it very challenging. This has been achieved despite the fact that we inherited from the UPA a "Fragile-5" economy that was dogged by rampant corruption, scant regard for the poor, and double-digit inflation. India's best performance in food security and inflation control came when the country faced the most challenging external environment. It only reinforces the conviction of 140 crore Indians that Modi hai to mumkinhai.

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From Panic to Power: Turning Exam Stress into Success

Family and teacher support is key, yet managing stress is the student's own responsibility

MONIKA DOGRA



While exams are just around the corner, a majority of students find themselves increasingly anxious about the upcoming challenges. This period is marked by significant stress, which can deeply affect students' well-being and performance. The anticipation of exams often triggers a wide range of emotional and physical responses, from sleep disturbances to a noticeable drop in confidence levels.

The pressure to excel, blended with the fear of failure, compounds the stress, making it a critical issue that demands attention. Not only the academic outcomes are at stake, the intense stress experienced during this time can have lasting effects on a student's mental health. Thus, understanding and addressing the roots of this exam-related anxiety becomes crucial.

Among various factors, the primary cause of exam stress is often the pressure from parents to achieve top results. According to many surveys, student suicidal attempts are more prevalent during the time of examinations or the declaration of results.

A significant release of various hormones in the body to combat situations of stress might lead to an edgy and nervous feeling much before the exam starts that may continue well up to the time of the declaration of results. Early signs of excessive stress are headache, loss or change in sleep pattern, loss of appetite and temper, tired and sick feeling, loss of concentration and sense of restlessness.

While it is perfectly normal to feel some stress, it is the high-risk students that pose a worrisome situation and they should be recognized early and intervention should be done accordingly.

Creating a conducive environment for a child's study during examination days is a critical responsibility that falls on the shoulders of parents. Apart from providing the physical tools for study, it involves creating an atmosphere that is emotional and physically supportive to a child. A key aspect of this is to ensure the study space at home which is free from noise and other distractions. In a household where the everyday noise is maintained at a decent level, it becomes simpler for children to concentrate and grasp the content of their studies.

Parents must ensure that maintaining a clean and hygienic environment is essential for an effective study space. A cluttered, disorganized space can lead to feelings of both overwhelm and anxiety, adding to the stress that examination brings with it. By maintaining a clean and orderly study area, parents can help minimize these stressors, allowing the child to focus on the task at hand. This extends to the importance of a balanced diet, which is often overlooked during stressful times. Nutritional meals fuel the body and the brain, providing the energy and focus needed for effective study.

The emotional atmosphere of the home plays a crucial role in a child's ability to manage stress. A home filled with parental conflict or hostility between family members can significantly heighten a child's anxiety levels, detracting from their ability to study effectively. Demonstrating love, support, and understanding can make a significant difference in a child's stress levels and overall

mental health during exams.

Moreover, the role of parents in managing exam stress isn't limited to creating the right study conditions. It also involves recognizing the importance of breaks and leisure activities, providing a holistic approach to their child's well-being. Encouraging the child to take regular breaks and engage in activities they enjoy can help prevent burnout and maintain a healthy balance between study and relaxation. This balanced approach helps ensure that the child remains motivated and mentally well, enabling them to perform their best during examination periods.

While guidance and discipline are necessary, adopting an overly strict approach can prove to be highly detrimental. Studies conducted have shown that children who constantly feel overshadowed by their parents' advice and suggestions tend to underperform in their examinations.

Teachers play a pivotal role in alleviating stress among students who are gearing up for examinations. Often, students have that one teacher they particularly admire and see as a mentor or role model. This admiration places teachers in a unique position to influence their students positively, especially during the high-pressure exam periods. It's important for teachers to ensure they are highly accessible to their students during these times. Being available to answer questions, clarify doubts, and provide guidance can significantly ease students' anxieties.

Moreover, teachers can extend their support beyond academic assistance, offering encouragement and strategies for managing stress, time, and study habits.

This holistic approach not only helps students in their immediate preparation for exams but also equips them with valu-

able skills for managing stress in future academic endeavors.

Sleep is another important contribution to the performance of a student in an examination. The heightened stress levels can lead to acute insomnia, adversely affecting student's health and mental state. This sleeplessness can have serious consequences, not only on personal well-being but also on academic performance. The elevated levels of anxiety about exams potentially reduce performance in the exams, creating a vicious cycle. In this dynamic between stress and exams, sleep emerges as a critical factor.

The relationship between stress and sleep is bidirectional. High stress levels can make it difficult to fall asleep or maintain a deep sleep, which in turn, can exacerbate stress. This cycle can be particularly detrimental during exam periods when the brain needs rest to function optimally.

Contrary to the belief that the brain shuts down during sleep, it is actually engaged in vital processes, most notably the consolidation of information learned throughout the day. This means that quality sleep is essential for memory retention and learning, reinforcing the idea that adequate rest is not just beneficial but crucial for academic performance. Ultimately, while support from family and teachers is invaluable, the responsibility to manage stress rests with the students. By actively organizing their study schedules, employing effective time management tools, and adhering to a disciplined study plan, students can not only achieve academic excellence but also develop life skills crucial for future success.

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Satguru Ravidas: Mystic saint of Bhakti Aandolan

ER. PRABHAT KISHORE

India has witnessed the birth of a number of Avtars, Santsand powerful spiritual personalities who have illuminated this Holy land with their succinct teachings and awakened the masses about the real essence of Bhakti. Satguru Ravidas was one of the renowned Sant of Bhakti Aandolan, who created an enduring impetus through his devotional songs and verses. He was the leading stars of Sant Parampara or Nirgun Sampraday and valued the worship of formless God.

Born on Maghi Purnima of Vikrami Samvat 1433 at Shri Govardhanpur village (now renamed as Sri Guru Ravidas Janma Sthan) in Kashi in a Dalit family, Guruji was the backbone of the Bhakti Aandolan. He fought against discrimination based on caste, creed and colour and taught lesson of universal brotherhood. Because of his untouchable social status, he has now become an important figure for downtrodden sections of the society, although his followers are also from the upper castes like Krishna-Bhakt Meerabai, the Rajput queen of Chittoor. He is considered to be spiritual Gurn of Meerabai, which she had expressed through her verse "Guru Milya Ravidas Ji, Dini Gyan Ki Gutki; Chot Lagi Nijnam Hari Ki, Mharey Hivrey Khatki".

Guru ji was a great follower of Lord Ram and Krishna and his writings are full of names like Ram, Raja Ramchandra, Krishna, Govind, Raghunath, Hari etc. He was the true messenger of God. He took birth on earth to save the true Dharma, as at that time the social as well religious pattern was distressed due to several man-made discriminations over social beliefs, castes, colour etc. He taught that one is not identified by his caste or beliefs in God, but is known for his Karma (great work). "Ravidas Janma Ke Karnai, Hot Na Kou Neech; Nar Kun Neech Kari Dari Hai, Oehhe Karam Ki Keech" (No one is inferior by birth, but his doings make him inferior. So, always focus on great deeds). On the tune of Bhagwad Gita, he preached in his own version as "Karam Bandhan Mein Bandh Rahiyo, Phal Ki Na Tajjiyo Aas; Karma Manush Ka Dharma Hai, Sat Bhakhai Ravidas". (i.e. Always per-



form your duty and do not desire its fruit, because duty is our Dharma and Fruit is our destiny".

Regarding untouchability and discrimination, he spread the message that God has created man and not man has created the God. So, every human being has equal right on this earth. "Tohi Mohi, Mohi Tohi, Antar Kaisa; Kanak Katik Jal Tarang Jaisa", i.e. There is no difference between you (God) and me as there is no difference between the Gold & its ornament, and water & its ripples. He expressed his feeling as "Let us make this world without any discrimination and race like colour".

Sant Ravidas had given a variety of spiritual and social messages through his writings. He said "If you cannot do well, at least do not harm others. If you cannot live like a flower, at least do not live like a thorn". He

gave emphasis for education by saying "Avidya Ahit Keen, Taatay Vivek Deep Bhava Maleen" (i.e. Lack of education has caused great harm and it has eclipsed our rationale).

Sant Ravidas is revered by both Hindus and Sikhs. He expressed his passion and love for Waheguru through his poetry and music. Nearly 40 of his sacred hymns have been made an integral part of the Sikh scripture, the Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji by the 5th Guru Arjun Dev Ji. He is known as the inventor of Gurumukhi Lipi (script) and entire Sikh Vani is written in Gurumukhi. Although, after some untoward incidents, the Ravidasa Samaj has parted itself from Sikhism and replaced Guru Granth Sahib with Amritvani having nearly 240 hymns of Ravidas. The Panch Vaani text of the Hindu Warrior-ascetic group of Dadupanthi tradition within Hinduism also includes numerous poems of Ravidas.

Ravidasji was a great saint and preferred to live as a common man. Guruji's teachings of equality and brotherhood in the society are the greatest inspiration to us. There will not be unity among human beings, without abolishing the caste system. "Jati Jatimein Jati Hai, Jo Ketan Ke Pat; Raidas Manush Na Jud Sakai, Jab Tak Jati Na Jat". He had propounded and advocated the concept of Begumpura (Be-Gum-Pura) or a city without sorrow (Gum), which would be stateless, classless, casteless and where there would be no discrimination. "Begam Pura Sahar Ko Nao, Dukh Andohu Nahi Thi Thao". He expressed his pivotal message as "Aisa Chahun Raj Main, Jahan Milai Saban Ko Anna. Chhote Bade Sab Sam Base, Ravidas Rahe Prasanna".

He cautioned the people against unwanted customs and beliefs. In one of his hymn he pointed out "Man Changa To Kathauti Mein Ganga" (i.e. If your heart is pious, then the Holy river is right in your tub and you need not go anywhere else to take a dip).

The teaching of Guru never fails and his word never goes wrong. He is the true source of light in life. The valuable teachings of Sant Shiromani Guru Ravidas are a great treasure for those who are heading on the divine path of Bhakti to get liberated from all the shackles.

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