


CONTAIN INFLATION

This is a fact that there was no time in the history in India when the people were satisfied with the prices of goods whether luxury or essentials but these days situation has been deteriorated to a great extent with prices of fuel, ration, vegetables and other edibles touching those heights which no one has ever imagined. People are facing the brunt in such a manner that many lower middle class and even middle class households have shunned the use of many things to balance the budget of the kitchen. Extravagant life has become the thing of the past as it is really difficult for the people to even expect two meals of proper nourishment when the edible oil prices are skyrocketing and the vegetables also becoming out of the reach of the common man. With all this happening there is another bad news for the people here and that is another resounding hike in prices of LPG and petrol and diesel. Petrol and diesel prices were hiked by 80 paise a litre while domestic cooking gas prices were increased by Rs 50 per cylinder. This hike which is expected to follow more in the pipeline will affect the quality of life of the people as already things are pathetic and people are worried therefore government should rope in economic experts to bail out people by maintaining proper balance through time tested models of economy so that inflation could be controlled effectively. With the increase in fuel prices the over four months' long hiatus on prices of petrol, diesel and LPG has been lifted and the nod has been given for the hike. Both LPG and petrol and diesel prices had been on a freeze despite the cost of raw material spiraling, first because of demand returning with economies globally rebounding from the pandemic induced slowdown and then due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Though the government is in a fix at the moment due to unavoidable circumstances, the people are lurching for the incentives to lead not good but at least satisfactory lives.

STOP NARCO-TERRORISM

The government under the stewardship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has tackled the situation along LoC successfully by silencing the guns of the enemy nation-Pakistan which has become the headache for the country despite the truce pact initiated in the year 2003. It is now responsibility of the government to tighten noose around those entities which abetting narco-terrorism in the country through new modus operandi and by using ultra modern techniques like the use of drones which have been acquired by the western neighbour from China and some other countries. Though Home Minister Amit Shah has assured during his visit to Jammu that anti-drone systems will soon be deployed along the borders but till then things have to be managed manually by the alert Jawans of BSF and also Army which has its presence in parts of LoC. In this regard, Ministry of Defence (MoD) has informed Parliament that the security situation along western (Pakistan) borders remained largely stable. However, there are indications of an emerging narco-terror nexus sponsored by inimical elements across the border. Of course, this is the new ploy of Pakistan to cause instability especially along border areas by using money attained from narcotics to sway youth towards terrorism. Although armies of both nations have exercised restraint since February last year when they recommitted themselves to ensure the 2003 ceasefire pact but the rogue nation Pakistan is totally unreliable as it has become clear from its action along border where it is abetting smuggling of narcotics, arms and ammunition and even there is suspicion of infiltration making it significant to be alert always and do not believe in what that nation is claiming on ground. It is therefore vital for the country to remain on toes always to thwart any move from inimical elements as also to respond in case of escalation along the LoC. The country should remain abreast with what is happening on the borders and must thwart all the threats emanating from across the border including the drones which lately have become a big problem and need to be tackled quite effectively.



OFF 'D' CUFF

Symbols As An Expression of Universal Welfare

In every age, human beings have given verbal and visual expressions to their composite religious and spiritual beliefs by means of pratiks, symbols.

The pratik usually means an appearance, image, symbolic form, shape. Human speech has a limited appeal, but the language of symbols in literature and art presents a universal approach to ideas. It is an open book for all.

Pratiks are non-sectarian in core concept and form and suggest commonality of Indic thought and tradition. Due to their different sectarian affiliations and contexts, symbols become Brahmanical, Buddhist, or Jain as the case may be. The best example is that of the chakra, wheel, which in the Vedic-Puranic context is both, the wheel of Surya's chariot and the weapon of Vishnu as Sudarshan chakra, suggesting the Kaal-chakra, time.

In the Shramanic traditions, Buddhism and Jainism, it denotes Dharma-chakra, the wheel of law, dharma itself. It is never static, rather it is always in motion so as to keep society and human life in order; what in Rig Ved is called Rit.

A lot of commonality can be seen with reference to symbols such as the swastik, shrivats, padm, matsya-yugal, and the jala Kalash.

Pratiks, both as symbols and with suggestive symbolism, are found in divine images, which instead of being portraits are conceptual or mental forms. For instance, Goddess Saraswati with the swan vahana, vehicle, and a manuscript in hand has become a personified

DEDS proves lucrative for dairy entrepreneurs in J&K

With focus of Jammu and Kashmir government to ensure farmers income gets doubled by 2022, as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, dairy farming is thriving across the Union Territory. Centrally sponsored Dairy Entrepreneurship Development Scheme (DEDS), is one of the pioneer initiatives, which is transforming the rural landscape of J&K.

The scheme is being implemented through NABARD with an objective to promote setting up of modern dairy farms for production of clean milk, encourage heifer calf rearing, bring structural changes in the unorganized sector and generate self-employment.

Being an agrarian region, Jammu and Kashmir's agriculture sector contributes 16.18 per cent to its GDP, of which, 35 per cent is contributed by the Dairy Sector. The scheme is giving huge fillip to dairy development in the UT with socio-economic condition of people witnessing a huge turn around. The special initiative of J&K Government towards easing out departmental schemes in the dairy sector witnessed gradual shift as more than 10,000 new dairy units have been set up in the past two years, Principal Secretary, Animal and Sheep Husbandry, Navin Kumar Choudhary had said at the inauguration of

Pashudhan Vyapar Mela.

Jammu and Kashmir government is promoting DEDS to create self-employment and build infrastructure for dairy sector in the UT so that the socio-economic health of the rural population improves.

According to officials of Animal Husbandry, the scheme also promotes heifer calf rearing for development and conservation of good breeding stock keeping in view the future of healthy livestock. The government, under the scheme, is also promoting the unorganized sector in bringing milk processing at the village level for better returns to the farmers by employing modern tools and technology. The scheme also provides an increase in the bargaining power of farmers to sell their products by doing value addition to milk via production and processing of milk products. The scheme also encourages the J&K youth to set up the latest dairy farms for clean milk production and upgrade traditional technology to handle milk on a commercial scale, an official of Animal Husbandry said. He added that the scheme has attracted thousands of youth to start dairy entrepreneurship due to its lucrative assistance from the government viz subsidy and ease of sanctioning the benefits of the scheme.

According to the scheme, farmers, individ-

ual entrepreneurs, NGOs, companies, pensioners, groups of unorganized and organized sectors including Self Help Groups, dairy cooperative societies, milk unions, federations etc are eligible to take benefit of the scheme. The scheme also reads that an individual will be eligible to avail assistance for all the components under the scheme but only once for each component. "More than one member of a family can be assisted under the scheme provided they set up separate units with separate infrastructure at different locations. The distance between the boundaries of two such farms should be at least 500m," the scheme read.

According to funding pattern of the scheme, Entrepreneur contribution (margin) would be 10 per cent of the outlay (minimum), back ended capital subsidy would be 25 per cent for general and 33 per cent for SC/ST. Besides, effective bank loan balance portion is minimum of 40 per cent of the outlay and repayment period will depend on the nature of the activity and cash flow and will vary between 3 to 7 years. Also, grace period would be of 3 to 6 months in case of dairy farms and up to 3 years for calf rearing units.

The unemployed youth who are not defaulters of any bank or financial institu-

tions can apply for the scheme along with photocopy of ration card, land papers for a mortgage if loan amount exceeds Rs 1 lakh, photocopy of category certificate, if any. Besides, candidates with a degree certificate of BVSC & AH can also apply for Mobile/Stationary Veterinary Clinic. The components of a unit that can be funded under the scheme included establishment of small dairy units with crossbreed cows/graded buffaloes up to 10 animals (Rs 5 lakh) while minimum unit size is 2 animals. "Rearing of heifer calves crossbreed/graded buffaloes up to 20 calves (Rs 4.80 lakh) and minimum unit size is 5 calves. For purchase of dairy processing equipment for manufacturing of indigenous milk products Rs 12 lakh subsidy can be availed under the scheme. Similarly, for establishment of dairy product transportation facilities and cold chain Rs 24 lakh can be availed. The scheme also reads that for setting up of cold storage facilities for milk and milk products Rs 30 lakh can be availed. Besides, Rs 2.4 lakh would be provided for establishment of private veterinary clinics and Rs. 1.80 lakh can be availed for mobile veterinary clinic under the scheme. For setting up of stationary clinic and dairy marketing outlet/dairy parlour, the scheme will provide Rs 56,000.

Politics of Freebies

■ DR RAMESH PANDITA

Strange it may sound but the fact remains that people riding the costliest cars, living lavish & dignified lifestyles, owning millions and billions of rupees have actually been reduced to be labeled as beggars by their own Chief Minister for supporting his freebie politics and who in turn are shamelessly happy to receive a meager amount of Rs 300 or so a month as waiver on their electricity and water bills. Yes, I am talking about Delhiites, who voted Arvind Kejriwal of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) to power three since 2013 for his freebie politics, which he uses to woo voters during elections offering free electricity and water to voters. Paying electricity and water bills in time is the fundamental duty of every law abiding citizen and abstaining same is criminal, but unfortunately people of Delhi fail to understand that by not paying water and electricity bills they are being refrained from doing their fundamental duty. Instigating people to abstain their fundamental duty in the name of freebies is criminal. Still, had all such waiver benefits been extended alone to around 12 per cent BPL population of Delhi would have made some senses, but when the hands which are in a position to give alms start receiving alms, then there is something seriously wrong with them and without doubt all such people are both clouded and robbed of their wisdom. Contrary, people who deserve such exemption, no matter living in other parts of the country are far happier than Delhiites and proud to pay their electricity and water bills willingly without fail, which they deem as their fundamental duty. By embracing the idea of free electricity and water, Delhiites exhibited that their wisdom is far low to all such poor people who despite having financial instability, who manage their two square meals a day with great difficulty know very well how their small but significant contribution made in the shape of paying water and electricity bills can play a substantial role in nation-building.

The credit for introducing the politics of freebies goes to Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Chief Arvind Kejriwal, who happens to be the Chief Minister of New Delhi. Needless to mention that Arvind Kejriwal became the Chief Minister of Delhi for his main poll promise of providing free electricity and water, of course with some capping and these freebie offers worked so well with

AAP that Kejriwal became the Chief Minister of Delhi thrice since 2013. What is most unfortunate of this freebie politics is that Delhiites even don't realize that there is nothing free in this unforgiving world, one has to pay the price for everything one or the other way and so should have known to people of Delhi for being the so-called smartest class of citizens which in a way represent the face of India for being the residents of the capital of India, but unfortunately, people of Delhi proved it that human tendency is to put individual interest above the larger interest and least we forget there cannot be any interest larger than the interest of the country.

Assembly elections were recently held across Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Goa, and Manipur, in which BJP emerged victorious in four states, while Aam Aadmi Party registered a historic win in Punjab. The results were by and large expected, but congress would get decimated so badly, something which was known to the electorate of this country but was not known to Congress, which kept tossing first between Captain and Sidhu and later between Channi and Sidhu. People were well aware that Sidhu is Budhu who not just sank his own ship, but also the ship of Congress in Punjab, which was its only hope to show some presence on the national scene. For most of the politicians, individual political ambitions are supreme, which they are ready to achieve at whatever cost and so can political opportunism drag a politician to the lowest ebb of morality with the sole aim to fulfill one's political ambition. So far, the AAP contested elections across 15 states of the country but couldn't find takers of its freebies except in Delhi. In 2022 assembly elections, Arvind Kejriwal continued his experimentation with freebies in three more states viz., Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand but again failed to found takers for his freebies in these states. However AAP found acceptance in Punjab by winning 92 seats. The seed for 2022 assembly win in Punjab started sprouting in 2017, when AAP won 20 seats after contesting 112 assembly segments. Although it is presumed that people vote such candidates to power who have some following in public or may have made some credible contribution in their public life towards the growth and development of an area, region, state or for that matter to country. But, like 2013 Delhi Assembly elec-

tions the electorate of Punjab proved this assumption once more wrong by handing over a historic win to AAP in Punjab, which in turn has raised question over the wisdom of the Punjab electorate, who voted to such a party to power, which is yet to contributed an iota towards the growth and development of Punjab. Such poll outcomes do convey the bent of mind of the electorate as what they choose between their individual and the national interest.

Under the prevailing conditions, the bigger question is should the politics of freebies be seen as an attempt to legitimize the corrupt practices in the country in general and luring electorate during polls in particular; else it has already made inroads in the functioning of the country's legislature to the level of its irrevocability, with the result people have started turning blind eye to these open corrupt practices. What is more surprising is that the Election Commission of India (ECI) which is known for its efficient functioning world over seems equally blind to notice the corrupt practices undergoing in shape of freebies directly under its nose. The functioning of ECI is eulogized for its capability to conduct free and fair elections in a country having population over 1.3 billion, whereby election commissions of other countries seek suggestions from ECI in conducting smooth, free, and fair elections in their respective countries.

The ECI should take due note of the fact that we can't have two different yardsticks to measure a common problem; corruption in any form is to be criticized and curbed. How does it matter if people are being corrupted either by paying cash or by distributing freebies, the fact of the matter is, promising freebies to the electorate is bound to influence the poll outcome? Day in and day out most of the mainstream political parties of the country are openly attempting to bribe the electorate of the country by making the promise of one or the other sort. Some of the common bribery offers made by the political parties in their election campaigns to the electorate of the country include, waiver on loans borrowed, free electricity, free water; hardship allowances to unemployed men, women, household women, distributing cycles, laptops, palmtops, two-wheelers transfer of money to farmers, etc. Nevertheless, distributing liquor is an age old corrupt practice while,

the only thing which changed over the years is the form of corruption to distribute freebies both by the parties in power and by promising freebies once in power. There is no denying that all the mainstream and local political parties have to canvass the voters on different grounds, whereby they are required to present their vision document in the form of an election manifesto. Promises made in the manifesto documents which do not speak about the larger interest of the country should by all means be questioned. Any poll promise made to a specific community or pocket simply to woo the voters should be deemed as a corrupt practice. Without denial, there are communities or pockets across the country, which deserve special attention and special treatment, but that attention or treatment has to be extended to them under the national program and policy of welfare and development for one and all alike.

The election commission of India from time to time has been taking measures to ensure to have each new election better over the earlier one. All such measures which work in the direction of ensuring a free and fair election are always welcome. The people of the country in general and electorate in particular, should understand that all the freebies promised by the politicians or for that matter by the political parties are purely offered on the taxpayers' money. Need is to understand that any expending made on the freebies are going to affect the exchequer of the state and ultimately to match the deficit on account of spending made on freebies are to be matched from some source which unfortunately again leads to the tax payer's pocket. In future, the ECI should pose a blanket ban on such freebie promises which amount to bribery and corruption. Everyone has to understand that nothing comes free and everything has a cost and that cost is to be borne by one or the other. If the politicians are promising you something of free, make sure it is not going to come to you free and you have to pay the price for it sooner or later and one or the other way. No matter how so varied opinions we may give about the politics of freebies and how so hard we may try to justify the practice as legitimate, the fact remains the electorate is being corrupted to influence the desired outcome of polls and enticing electorate with freebies is one of them.

YOUR COLUMN

The Kashmir Files: A review

Dear Editor;

The Kashmir files needs to be viewed more by non-Kashmiri sections of the society in order to know the real facts about Kashmir and in this regard, the subtitles in English will greatly help them to understand the subject well. The much awaited Bollywood production, The Kashmir Files, was premiered in India on March 11, 2022. Before that, a selected gathering watched it in the multiplex hall at Wave Mall, Narwal Bye pass, Jammu. The cross section gathering of the Jammu city on the occasion included political leaders, social activists, thinkers, writers, intellectuals, senior current and retired civil and police officers of Jammu and Kashmir besides the film makers and the cast of the film. The selected local media representatives were also present on the occasion. It is a Vivek Ranjan Agnihotri production, already known for film 'The Tashkent Files' directed by him a few years back. The Kashmir Files has a very notable cast including Bollywood & small screen big names like Mithun Chakraborty, Anupam Kher, Pallavi Joshi, Puneet Issar, Mrinal Dev Kulkarni, Atul Shrivastava and Prakash Belawadi. Besides there are a number of budding artists in the film who have made an indelible mark, which include Bhasha Sumbli, Darshan Kumar and Chinmay Mandlekar who verily have justified their role by their sterling performances. The film is surely beyond regular Bollywood film-formula, based upon a story, and mostly a love-story. Infact film has not been based upon any typical conventional plot. Its story is explicitly based upon video interviews of first generation victims of Kashmiri Pandit community in 1990. That provides indeed the blend of authenticity to the content and flow of the film. Since Kashmir and Kashmiri Pandit is a very complex issue for anyone in the world, so there might be possibility of some loopholes here or there in the picture in areas of research and development. In order to overcome those shortcomings, the film maker has wisely avoided certain aspects that could have invited undue criticism and controversy. Main focus of the film is on the following four key dimensions: failures of government and administration to tackle the situation when terrorism engulfed Kashmir in 1989-90, tacit connivance of political leadership with terror module in Kashmir, displacement of the Kashmiri

Pandit community, and deep nexus of liberal-secular media and intellectual class with terrorist regime in Kashmir aimed to create a false political narrative to keep truth about Kashmir under the carpet. The film has a symbolisation-recipe based narration and presentation throughout. The family of Pushkar Nath Pandit (Anupam Kher) represents a common Kashmiri Pandit victim family while Brahm Dutt IAS (Mithun Chakravarti) and DGP Hari Narain (Puneet Issar) symbolise crippled and helpless civil and police administration of the then state of Jammu and Kashmir. Likewise, Prof Radhika Menon (Pallavi Joshi) represents liberal-left-secular coterie of India and Vishnu Ram (Atul Shrivastava) aptly acts for the then sold-out media. Dr Mahesh Kumar's (Prakash Belawadi) role brings forth one of the cruelest modus operandi of the Kashmiri terrorists in medical field. Sharda Pandit's (Bhasha Sumbli) character symbolises Kashmiri Pandit womanhood role before, during and after the displacement of KP's besides their pain and resilience both; and Farooq Malik Bitta (Chinmay Mandlekar) and Afzal (Saurav Verma) echo terror against Pandits and Jihad against India. Krishna Pandit (Darshan Kumar) is the third generation victim of terrorism against Pandits who has neither seen nor been told about the actual situation leading to their displacement from Kashmir. He is oblivious of realities of the past and is overwhelmed by the liberal and left lobby's ideological narratives till he comes into terms with his unforgettable past of thousands of years of Kashmir including his family being among the first victims of terrorism in Kashmir. He consequently emerges as a hope of Kashmir for future, once he connects himself with the truthful history and real narrative about Kashmir. The theme of the film revolves around two main narratives, i.e. continuous and consistent failure of the governments and administration to give justice to the Pandit community in and outside the Kashmir valley over the last more than three decades and attempts aimed at to mislead the nation about the real intent of Kashmiri Pandits. The film has a very powerful message for the nation which Pushkar Nath Pandit delivers through his dialogues on a phone call.....i.e., "in case Kashmir is allowed to go the way it has been, it will create more such Kashmiris throughout the length and breadth of India". And his prediction in real life comes almost true in the real life.

The Kashmir Files is not a compromise formula, based upon the oft-repeated phrase, 'forget and forgive'. It pinpoints in a very subtle way, without creating any sort of bad blood, the role of individuals and institutions, friends and

neighbours, communities and organisations that contributed to the death and destruction in Kashmir. It has also brought into focus the wishes of the Pandit community to abrogate Article 370 believing that it could solve its long pending problems including their resettlement again in Kashmir. The atrocities committed against minorities after 1990 have also found their place in the film and have a very strong import to convey. Bollywood has a general temptation to bring in sensationalism in films to play its part which this production has generally avoided barring a couple of avoidable scenes. Use of long duration frames generally brings in an element of boredom and such frames could have been broken into two or three as would be feasible. Documentation has a tremendous impact on events of our life and this fact has been well endorsed and recognized in the film. Though focused overwhelmingly on a humanitarian angle yet the picture conveys very pertinent socio-political message. Conversion of hard-core terrorists and terror planners into political class and social influencers in Kashmir valley have been depicted in a very professional way. The moral of the story includes an important note that the facts of history can't be forgotten. They need to be remembered in order to ensure that the mistakes of the past aren't repeated in future. The Kashmir files needs to be viewed more by non-Kashmiri sections of the society in order to know the real facts about Kashmir and in this regard, the subtitles in English in the film will greatly help them to understand the subject well. The film has a very positive message in the end. The film maker puts the onus and responsibility of taking the positive aspects of Kashmir to the world upon the younger generations of Kashmir and has a great belief in them. Truly so, this picture is not an end of the saga but it opens vistas for new expectations and opportunities regarding Kashmir. There is an imperative need to carry the thread of the film forward for the betterment of Kashmir. The right intent and hard labour in terms of The Kashmir Files manifest the golden words of Noble laureate, Alexander Solzhenitsin, in essence, "In keeping silent about evil, in burying it so deep within us that no sign of it appears on the surface, we are implanting it, and it will raise again a thousand fold in future. When we neither punish nor reproach the evil-doers, we are ripping the foundations of justice of which no trace will be left for our future generations for protection against evil."

Mool Raj.