


PROVIDE SUCCOUR

As the Divisional Commissioner Jammu has directed all the DCs and other concerned officials to review the implementation of Project Assist Flagship Scheme of National Foundation for Communal Harmony (NFCH), it is likely that sooner than later the young victims of violence will get the well-deserved succour. It is pertinent to mention that the aforesaid direction by the Divisional Commissioner has been made looking in the fact that a low number of cases are being referred to the National Foundation for Communal Harmony (NFCH) for financial assistance to the violence-hit children. Project Assist is the Flagship scheme of National Foundation for Communal Harmony (NFCH) an autonomous organization under Ministry of Home Affairs Govt. of India having main objective of providing assistance for the physical and psychological rehabilitation of the child victims of communal, caste, ethnic or terrorist violence, with special reference to their care, education and training besides promoting communal harmony, fraternity and national integration. The Divisional Commissioner Jammu taking cognizance of the situation has directed the officials to ensure that no eligible kid is left-out. No doubt the onus to provide financial assistance to the children whose parents have lost their lives in terrorism and cross-border firings lies on the government for it being the welfare state. The concerned DCs have been exhorted to engage non-government organizations (NGOs) for identification of such children and also encourage the school dropouts falling in this category to rejoin schools to become meaningful citizens after getting education through government assistance. The DCs were also asked to identify all eligible beneficiaries in their respective districts, facilitate their documentation and forward the cases to the NFCH. The eligibility for getting the assistance is that the child becomes an orphan or destitute in the sense that either both the parents or the surviving parent or the main bread winner is killed or permanently incapacitated because of communal, caste, ethnic or terrorist violence, annual income of the victim's family does not exceed Rs 1 lakh and the child is not receiving any assistance on regular basis from any other source (one time financial assistance provided by state government /union territory administration for such victim is not considered as another source of assistance for this purpose). Besides, the aforesaid assistance is admissible up to age of 25 years. However, if a child remains for more than 3 consecutive years in a class he / she will not be eligible to get the assistance.

NEPOTISM UNACCEPTABLE

The accusations made by the transport community against Zonal Police Headquarters, Jammu is something which should be probed on priority as allegations leveled are of serious nature and under the realm of LG's Administration such kind of things are unacceptable. It is pertinent to mention that the transport community in Jammu has alleged that hiring of vehicles through tenders by Zonal Police Headquarters, Jammu has turned out to be a classical example of favouritism/bias towards the selected contractors for the last three years. The transporters have also urged LG's office to intervene in the matter and break the nexus. If the allegations are true then the LG should not only break the nexus but also give directions to take action per law against those who are giving a bad name to administration because the incumbent government has special characteristics of corruption-free governance and such things if true are not tolerable at all. It has been pointed out that the procedure adopted for selecting the 'Single' contractor for supplying of vehicles of different categories is itself a mockery of the system of tender. The vehicles hired are mainly utilised in connection with Lok Sabha/Assembly/ Local Body elections. In 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 special conditions were imposed in the tenders, such as minimum annual turnover of the bidder has been raised from Rs 20 lakh in 2019-20 to Rs 35 lakh in 2020-21 and then next year to Rs 1.5 crore. This year also same Rs 1.5 crore has been fixed just to manipulate and provide benefit to the blue-eyed. Besides many other objectionable clauses, the transporters have alleged that a new condition of three years' mandatory experience of working with Police Department has been inserted which itself is a mockery of the system and to debar other local transporters to participate in the tender process. This clearly shows a nexus of some officers with a few transporters which needed to be exposed and broken. The conditions as alleged by the transporters need to be probed because a fair deal seems to be missing the whole gamut and under the Modi Government such kind injustice is not at all justified and therefore government should take cognizance of the allegations and act according to law to find the conspiracy if any and also take legal action against those who have marred the process of tendering by doing nepotism.



How to be OFF 'D' CUFF

This is an age of opinions and approvals. For a lot of people, others' opinions matter a lot. They want 'likes' and 'comments' on social media and appreciation in the real-life in order to feel good.

There is nothing wrong in that, however, when it becomes a habit and when someone becomes totally dependent on such opinions for their own happiness, then problems may arise.

An absence of positive opinion or the presence of a lot of negative opinions may give rise to anxiety, stress, and sometimes, depression leading to serious circumstances.

So, everyone should try to be 'opinion-proof' for living a happy and balanced life.

It is possible. Here's how.

Start by Knowing Yourself

When you'll start knowing yourself, changes will start happening within you. Other people cannot know you because they know you just from outside. Only you can give your original introduction. Only you can know about yourself in totality because

Strawberry cultivation emerging as lucrative option for farmers

As a soldier never accepts defeat, after a glorious tenure in Indian Navy, Dheeraj Kumar began with second innings as Agriprenuer. Besides making handsome income, he has become talk of the town because of his progressive vision to tap Horticulture potential which is a deviation from what people usually prefer.

Many farmers are quitting agriculture nowadays and moving to cities in search of better livelihood. Under these challenging circumstances, Dheeraj Kumar coming from an entirely different background has become a role model for many aspiring Agripreneurs especially the youth who are looking forward to make fortunes in Agriculture & Allied sectors.

Crediting his success to the District Administration, Dheeraj Kumar expresses his gratitude to the Department of Horticulture Kathua for providing Financial as well as technical assistance & support besides acquainting him about the tailor made schemes.

According to Horticulture Office Kathua,

The Progressive farmer Dheeraj Kumar hailing from Haripur Village of Border Sub Division Hiranagar has cultivated strawberries on a field measuring 22 Kanal. With the handholding of the department, he has cultivated 03 different varieties viz. Camarosa, Winter Dawn & Nubila. Regarding the support extended by the department, an official said that out of the total investment of Rs 6 Lakh by the farmer, the department has provided subsidy to the tune of Rs. 2.86 Lakh which is nearly 50 per cent of the total investment and it is expected to produce a yield of Rs. 15-20 Lakhs which is in line with the PM's vision of Doubling the farmers' income.

In addition to this, the department has also provided the subsidy to the farmer on purchase of power tillers and installation of the drip irrigation system. Hailing the efforts of the Govt, Dheeraj Kumar said that the enhancement of the amount of subsidy to Rs. 13,000/kanal from the earlier ceiling of Rs. 3125/Kanal has come as a shot in arm for new comers like him. This

is a huge relief for the farming community as it will make the sector more lucrative for the aspiring agripreneurs.

Sharing his success story, Dheeraj Kumar said that he has engaged around 10 people for levelling, picking, packaging and transport purposes, which he termed as a gratifying experience as offering the avenues of employment to the locals has given him great happiness. Full of confidence, Kumar said that he is supplying his produce to the Big Malls and Business houses viz. Jammu Basket, Easy Day, Big Bazar, Markets in and around Pathankot and areas in the periphery of Punjab adjoining Kathua. "I am also exploring the option of Online selling of the produce and is in talks with a few e-commerce platforms as well" he said.

A winner of Horticulture Expo Jammu Award, Dheeraj Kumar said that there was no looking back for him after he opted for the State of the Art technology viz drip irrigation which besides lowering the water dependency ensures More Crop Per Drop.

Advocating the use of Technological knowhow for improving the yield, he said "All is Well in mixed farming" and called for adoption of best practices and deviating from the traditional methods of cultivation which focuses on only single crop to mixed farming which offers better dividends for the same input. He also suggested the use of Neem based pesticides which are organic in nature and rules out the chance of carcinogens in the produce. Jubilant over his achievement in a short stint, Dheeraj Kumar narrated that over 200 farmers from different parts of the J&K have visited him to have first hand information and to use his experience to turn their fortunes as well.

In light of the revamped schemes and subsidies offered by the Govt in Agriculture & Allied Sectors, there is an ample scope for the youth as well as the farmers who aspire to become agripreneurs and to go back to the agriculture sector which has a tremendous potential to transform the economy of J&K, he added.

Lotus may bloom again in UP

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

Now that the six phases of the most interested and significant assembly elections in UP have taken place and the seventh phase is going to take place in a day or two, there is every indication that the lotus may bloom again and give a significant victory to the mighty BJP. No doubt there is a stiff fight and rivalry between BJP and SP in the elections but at the end of the day, it seems that the BJP will again win elections after defeating the SP and bounce back to power. However nothing certain can be predicted about the fortune of the political parties in the elections, but it seems that there is every possibility that the BJP will come back to power. As for as the election rallies, road shows and corner meetings are concerned, there is enough indication that the lots will bloom again and give a significant win to BJP in the assembly elections of the UP assembly. Looking at concentration of the people in BJP rallies and road show, there is enough indication that BJP may win the elections and come to power after defeating its nearest rival SP in the assembly elections. Though nothing specific can be said at the moment about the fortunes of the political parties who are fighting the interested assembly elections, however it is a stark reality that the lotus may again bloom in the elections because the ground reality seems to favour BJP and there is every likelihood that the BJP may win the interested assembly elections after defeating its nearest rival SP in the elections. So far as the enthusiasm and fervor of the BJP is concerned, it seems that the lotus may bloom and give a significant win to the saffron party in the assembly elec-

tions. The UP elections are more significant because these are considered as the semi finals for the general elections of 2024. Therefore all the political parties are attaching much importance to these assembly elections of 2022 because after all these are the basis for the government formation at the national level. Thus the political parties and all the stakeholders attach much importance to the much interested assembly elections of UP because after all these elections are going to influence the results of the general elections of 2024 and therefore the assembly elections of 2022 are fought by the political parties with this end in view and thus the different political parties try their best to get a upper hold in these assembly elections. There is stiff fight ,rivalry and competition between the different political parties but the main fight is between the BJP and SP and seeing the reality it seems that the BJP will once again come to power in the most significant state of UP. Thus so far as the enthusiasm and election fervor in the rank and file of the BJP is concerned and so far as the mass support of the people to the BJP is concerned ,there is all likelihood that the lotus may again bloom and give a win to the BJP in the politically significant assembly elections of the UP because these assembly elections have a great bearing and ramifications upon the general elections of 2024 and so the political parties and all stakeholders give much importance to the assembly elections of UP. There is much caste and social engineering as well as the religious and caste polarization in the current assembly elections of the UP, but after considering it all there is enough indica-

tion that BJP will steal the show in the ultimate analysis after defeating its nearest rival SP in the much interested and significant assembly elections. Though, it is difficult to predict the outcome of the assembly elections but it is crystal clear and obvious that the BJP may once again come to power in the politically significant state of UP after winning the assembly elections. So far as the crowds in the election rallies and the road shows of the BJP and the concentration of the people and the amassing of the people in the BJP rallies is any indication, it seems that the BJP may win again in the UP assembly elections and surprise all. There is enough rush and crowd in the election rallies of the star campaigners of the BJP in the UP elections as in all the six phases which took place up to now and to the seventh phase which is taking place in a day or two, there is much crowd and concentration of the people and from this rush and crowd there is enough indication that the lotus may bloom once again in the assembly elections of the UP. There are enough indications that the BJP may again come to power after defeating its nearest rival of SP in the assembly elections of UP. But the mighty BJP should not be complacent with the enthusiasm and election fervor of its rank and file but fight the assembly elections with much vigor and determination so that all the predictions with regard to its successes will come true. However there are clear indications that the BJP may gain in the assembly elections and at the end of the day the lotus will bloom again in the elections. All the eyes of the people and the political pundits are set on the outcome of the UP elections because of the fact that the assembly elections of UP

are politically significant and so much importance is attached to these assembly elections. But all said and done it can be said that the mighty BJP will come victorious in the assembly elections of UP because there is enough indication and likelihood that the BJP will win the UP assembly elections and after the stiff fight and rivalry of the SP, the BJP will win the assembly elections of UP but not hands down, it has to fight the elections with all its might and force at its disposal, however at last the BJP will win the assembly elections of UP and there seems no controversy about the outcome of the much interested assembly elections. Thus it is obvious that the BJP is going to win the assembly elections of UP after defeating its nearest rival SP in the much significant elections. However we have seen it that the assembly elections of the UP are not a childish task but these are much challenging and the different political parties are thus attaching much importance to the assembly elections and at the end of the day there is much certainty that the BJP may win the assembly elections after defeating its nearest rival SP. Thus there is no doubt in the minds of the people about the outcome of the assembly elections of UP because it seems to be certain that the BJP may win the significant elections and defeat its nearest rival SP which is making all efforts to give a stiff fight to the BJP but at the end it is likely that the BJP will win the assembly elections of UP and defeat the SP and other inconsequential political parties. Thus the lotus is all set to bloom again in assembly elections of UP.

(The author is a Columnist and Social Activist).

YOUR COLUMN

Putin's nuclear threat

Dear Editor;

Disconnect between western and Russian narratives in the current conflict could prove fatal to the world. Looking at emerging trend, it seems that Vladimir Putin has gone out of mine. At least this is what leaders of the west would like you to believe. According to their narrative, Vladimir Putin - isolated, alone, confused and angry at unfolding military disaster Russia was undergoing in Ukraine-lashed out, ostensibly threatening entire world with nuclear annihilation.

In a meeting with his top Generals on Sunday, the beleaguered Russian President announced, 'I order Defence Minister and the Chief of General Staff of Russian Armed Forces to put deterrence forces of Russian army into a special mode of combat service.' The reason for this action, Putin noted, centred on fact that, 'Western countries aren't only taking unfriendly actions against our country in the economic sphere, but top officials from leading NATO members made aggressive statements regarding our country' in relation to the ongoing situation in Ukraine. The 'deterrence forces' Putin spoke of refers to Russia's nuclear arsenal. What made the Russian president's words resonate even more was that last Thursday, when announcing the commencement of Russia's 'special military operation' against Ukraine, Putin declared that 'no one should have any doubts that a direct attack on our country will lead to the destruction and horrible consequences for any potential aggressor.' He emphasized that Russia is 'one of the most potent nuclear powers and also has a certain edge in a range of state-of-the-art weapons.' When Putin issued that threat, 'The Washington Post described it as 'empty, a mere bearing of fangs.' The Pentagon, involved as it was in its own review of US nuclear posture designed to address threats such as this, seemed nonplussed, with an anonymous official noting that US policy makers 'don't see an increased threat in that regard.' For North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's part, the Trans-Atlantic military alliance, which sits at the heart of the current crisis, issued a statement in which it noted. Russia's actions pose a serious threat to Euro-Atlantic security, and they will have geo-strategic consequences. NATO will continue to take all necessary measures to ensure the security and defence of all allies. We are deploying additional defensive land and air forces to the eastern part of the alliance, as well as additional maritime assets. We have increased the readiness of our forces to respond to all contingencies.' Hidden near the bottom of this statement, however, was a passage which, when examined closely, underpinned the reasoning behind Putin's nuclear muscle-flexing. 'We have held consultations under Article IV of the Washington Treaty,' the statement noted. 'We have decided, in line with our defensive planning to protect all allies, to take additional steps to further strengthen deterrence and defence across the alliance.' Under Article IV, members can bring any issue of concern, especially related to the security of a member country, to the table for discussion within the North Atlantic Council. NATO members Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland triggered the Article IV consultation

following the Russian incursion into Ukraine. In a statement issued on Friday, NATO secretary general Jens Stoltenberg expanded on the initial NATO statement, declaring that NATO was committed to protecting and defending all its allies, including Ukraine. Three things about this statement stood out. First, by invoking Article IV, NATO was positioning itself for potential offensive military action; its previous military interventions against Serbia in 1999, Afghanistan in 2001, Iraq in 2004, and Libya in 2011, were all done under Article IV of the NATO charter. Seen in this light, the premise that NATO is an exclusively defensive organisation, committed to the promise of collective self-defence, is baseless. Second, while Article V - collective defence - protections only extend to actual NATO members, which Ukraine is not, Article IV allows the umbrella of NATO protection to be extended to those non-NATO members whom the alliance views as an ally, a category Stoltenberg clearly placed Ukraine in. Finally, Stoltenberg's anointing of Ukraine as a NATO ally came at the same time he announced the activation and deployment of NATO's 40,000-strong response force, some of which would be deployed to NATO's eastern flank, abutting Ukraine. The activation of the response force is unprecedented in the history of NATO, a fact that underscores the seriousness a nation like Russia might attach to the action. When seen in this light, Putin's comments last Thursday were measured, sane, and responsible. Since the Article IV consultations began, NATO members have begun to supply Ukraine with lethal military aid, with the promise of more in the days and weeks to come. These shipments can only gain access to Ukraine through a ground route that requires trans-shipment through NATO members, including Romania and Poland. It goes without saying that any vehicle carrying lethal military equipment into a war zone is a legitimate target under international law; this would apply in full to any NATO-affiliated shipment or delivery done by a NATO member on their own volition. What happens when Russia begins to attack NATO, EU, US, or allied arms deliveries as they arrive on Ukrainian soil? Will NATO, acting under Article IV, create a buffer zone in Ukraine, using the never-before-mobilised response force? One naturally follows the other.

The scenario becomes even more dire if the European Union acts on its pledge to provide Ukraine with aircraft and pilots to fight the Russians. How would these be deployed to Ukraine? What happens when Russia begins shooting down these aircraft as soon as they enter Ukrainian airspace? Does NATO now create a no-fly zone over western Ukraine? What happens if a no-fly zone, which many officials in the west are promoting, is combined with the deployment of the response force to create a de facto NATO territory in western Ukraine? What if the Ukrainian government establishes itself in the city of Lvov, operating under the protection of this air and ground umbrella? Russia's nuclear doctrine in June 2020, Russia released a new document, titled 'On Basic Principles of State Policy of the Russian Federation on Nuclear Deterrence,' that outlined the threats and circumstances that could lead to Russia's use of nuclear weapons. While this document declared that Russia 'considers nuclear weapons exclusively as a means of deterrence,' it outlined several scenarios in which Russia would resort to the use of nuclear weapons if

deterrence failed. While the Russian nuclear policy document did not call for the pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons during conventional conflicts, it did declare that 'in the event of a military conflict, this policy provides for the prevention of an escalation of military actions and their termination on conditions that are acceptable for the Russian Federation and/or its allies.'

In short, Russia might threaten to use nuclear weapons to deter 'aggression against the Russian Federation with the use of conventional weapons when the very existence of the state is in jeopardy.' In defining Russia's national security concerns to both United States and NATO last December, Putin was crystal clear about where he stood when it came to Ukrainian membership in NATO. In a pair of draft treaty documents, Russia demanded that NATO provide written guarantees that it would halt its expansion and assure Russia that neither Ukraine nor Georgia ever be offered membership into the alliance.

In a speech delivered after Russia's demands were delivered, Putin declared that if the US and its allies continue their 'obviously aggressive stance,' Russia would take 'appropriate retaliatory military-technical measures,' adding that he has 'every right to do so.' In short, Putin made it clear that, when it came to the issue of Ukrainian membership in NATO, the stationing of US missiles in Poland and Romania and NATO deployments in Eastern Europe, Russia felt that its very existence was being threatened.

Russian invasion of Ukraine, when seen from the perspective of Russia and its leadership, was the result of a lengthy encroachment by NATO on the legitimate national security interests of the Russian state and people. The west, however, has interpreted the military incursion as little more than the irrational action of an angry, isolated dictator desperately seeking relevance in a world slipping out of his control. The disconnect between these two narratives could prove fatal to the world. By downplaying the threat Russia perceives, both from an expanding NATO and the provision of lethal military assistance to Ukraine while Russia is engaged in military operations it deems critical to its national security, the US and NATO run the risk of failing to comprehend the deadly seriousness of Putin's instructions to his military leaders regarding the elevation of the level of readiness on part of Russia's strategic nuclear forces. Far from reflecting the irrational whim of a desperate man, Putin's orders reflected the logical extension of a concerted Russian national security posture years in the making, where the geopolitical opposition to NATO's expansion into Ukraine was married with strategic nuclear posture. Every statement Putin has made over the course of this crisis has been tied to this policy. While US and NATO can debate the legitimacy of the Russian concerns, to dismiss the national security strategy of a nation that has been subjected to detailed bureaucratic vetting as nothing more than the temper tantrum of an out-of-touch autocrat represents a dangerous disregard of reality, the consequences of which could prove to be fatal to the US, NATO, and the world.

President Putin has often complained that the west does not listen to him when he speaks of issues Russia deems to be of critical importance to its national security. The west is listening now. The question is, is it capable of comprehending seriousness of the situation, for while the answer so far, seems to be no.

Mool Raj.