

MUCH AWAITED VISIT

The administration of Jammu and Kashmir has geared up all its resources to host the first of its kind function. National Panchayati Raj Conference 2022, on occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day on April 24 at Village Palli in Samba district. The programme wherein the Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be the Chief Guest is expected to be attended by more than 1 lakh people as the administration has itself invited more than 30,000 PRI members from various parts of Jammu and Kashmir to attend the event. As it will be the first formal visit of the Prime Minister to the Union Territory after abrogation of the articles 370 and 35A, other than his visits to the border areas on the occasion of Diwali festival, the UT administration seems in no mood to take any chance and has put in place all necessary measures for smooth conduct of the event in every aspect. As per the sources, during his day-long visit to Union Territory, the Prime Minister will also interact with the PRI members from across J&K along with representatives from 700 panchayats of various parts of the country who have been invited to attend the function virtually. Pertinent to mention here that presently a 3-tier democratic set up is in place in J&K, with almost 280 District Development Council members, 280 BDC chairpersons, 4,190 Sarpanchs and 28,000 Panchs. Although a much improved scenario is being across J&K in respect of terrorism but there are chances that due to ensuring visit of the PM, terrorists may strike in Valley for which all necessary security measures have already been ensured. As per the sources, the J&K Police in active association with National Security Guards and other Paramilitary forces will ensure foolproof security arrangements not only at the venue of PM's function but across J&K in general. As the ruling dispensation has always worked for empowering the PRIs across the nation, and the Prime Minister himself is concerned regarding the development of newly created Union Territory, there are chances that some hidden surprises may be in cards for the PRI members of the Union Territory which will be revealed by the Prime Minister.

SKYWALK AT BHAWAN

The Holy Shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi located in the Trikuta Hills range of the Union Territory plays a significant role in boosting the economy of Jammu and Kashmir as a number of devotees from various corners of the world visit the holy shrine to seek blessings of Maa Durga. This religious tourism footfall increases manifold during the festivals and other special occasions making it a bit hard for the Shrine Board to provide them necessary facilities. Although, a few years back, before the constitution of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, when the affairs of the shrine were looked after by few selected priests and their families, the condition of the shrine was not so good due to which devotees used to face numerous hardships. But after the constitution of the Shrine Board, not only the functioning of the shrine was streamlined but all necessary facilities were ensured enroute so that the pilgrims can have a blissful and comfortable Yatra without any inconvenience. Moreover, proper check and accountability was also established in respect of the huge offerings, and the funds accumulated were utilized for raising several facilities for the devotees. The Shrine Board has always tried to provide all necessary comforts to the devotees by enhancing the available facilities at regular intervals. In this regard, moving a step further to ensure hassle-free Yatra experience for the visiting devotees, the Shrine Board during its recent meeting of members of board, has finalized a number of new features for the comfort of pilgrims besides further strengthening the management system especially in Bhawan area. In the meeting, the board decided to introduce facilities like Skywalks in the Bhawan area as a major step to reduce the congestion of pilgrims especially during festivities. To be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 9.89 crore, the Skywalk project (Yatra Queue Management) will be executed through CPWD and shall have a total length of approximately 160-170 meter and 2.5 meter width. A number of other measures were also discussed and finalized for providing various other facilities to Yatris so that they can return home with a lifetime memorable experience to be cherished always.

How to Overcome Anxiety

Anxiety is a form of distress, sometimes occasioned by the sad memories of losses suffered in the past and at other times by uncertainties regarding the future. Anxiety is a common phenomenon. Most men and women have lived in a state of anxiety at one time or another.

Anxiety is a killer. It defeats all logic. In most cases of anxiety, there is no external agent that is causing you to live with a sense of affliction. It is you yourself who induce this baneful mental state.

There are certain problems inflicted by the external world, which you are incapable of either solving or simply dismissing. However, as far as anxiety about them is concerned, this is a self-created problem. This being so, it means that the solution lies in your own hands rather than in the hands of others. So, why complain? Concentrate on doing your best, and having done so, you will be free of all kinds of anxiety.

Anxiety is not a physical problem. It is a way of thinking. If you are an intellectually awakened person and are able to change your thinking pattern, anxiety will not be a problem.

For example, if you are sad about a loss you incurred in the past, you

can gain nothing by constantly thinking about something which cannot come back. The easiest way to calm your mind is to accept the fact that what you have lost is irretrievable. And, if it is the future that worries you, you can restore your mental balance by saying, 'Why do I bother about something which has not yet happened? Maybe it will never happen at all.'

Anxiety is not a real problem. It is a product of a way of thinking. Change your mental habits and adopt a positive pattern of thinking, then you will have no anxiety.

Problems are of three kinds. If a problem relates to the present, you can solve it by wise planning. If the problem relates to the past, there is always a simple solution: forget it, and the problem will instantly disappear. If the problem concerns the future, it is not a problem at all, it is simply baseless fear. In other words, it has no valid existence. And if something is non-existent, how can it create a problem for you?

Discover the genesis of anxiety and you will easily be able to rid yourself of it. Anxiety is not a physical problem. It begins in the mind and it is only in the mind that it can be buried.

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

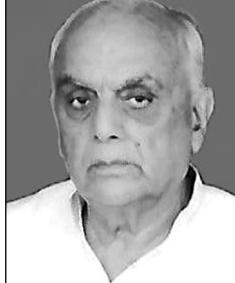
I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved.

-B R. Ambedkar

EDITORIAL

Kashmiri Pandits & 'The Kashmir Files', now & earlier

■ ER P L KHUSHU



The Kashmir Files' movie carrying the epitome of the trauma of Kashmiri Pandits, has given an opportunity to the scores of Indians to know about the truth and the harsh reality about the mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from Kashmir in 1989-90, along with their cruel genocide. This movie has made the world to know about the atrocities on the Kashmiri Pandits, that has made them the displaced persons in their own home land, when the circumstantial situations around, which includes both political and social peripherals, remained as silent spectators, thus conspicuously becoming silent abettors to such of these atrocities on Kashmiri Pandits, if not by design, but prominently by default. Kashmiri Pandits deserved a synchronic sympathy across the country by their fellow citizens, at least from the Hindus of India as they were made the victims of Islamic radicalization in Kashmir; being a limb of India under a systematic conspiracy hatched in Pakistan and implemented by radical Muslims of Kashmir; with the hidden blessings of the local politicians of Valley. But none amongst our cultural society of Hindus across the country made any poignant attempt to know the truth, if not the sad plight, about the forced displacement of their fellow Hindus of Kashmir; the 'Kashmiri Pandits'. People are finding it hard to accept that the movie is based on true stories when the victims of the genocide were never heard. It has shaken the false beliefs of decades of whitewashing and denials about this genocide and atrocities on Kashmiri Pandits.

While appreciating the courage and initiatives of the producers and preceptors of 'The Kashmir Files', who have conveyed through this film the saga of the cruelties of the radical Islamic terrorists, upon Kashmiri Pandits in 1990 and onwards in Kashmir resulting in their mass exodus and deprivation of their human rights, a bigger Kashmir Film is required to be produced in regard to the plight of their earlier untold stories in Kashmir since previous periods. Such a mega Film will have to accommodate some of the events as briefly mentioned as follows.

Truth about Martyrs Day of Kashmir, July 13: The 13th day of July, 1931, was actually a well thought of communal event, which occurred in Srinagar; Kashmir. G S Raghavan, a veteran journalist of that time describes the instances of July 13, 1931, in his book 'The Warning from Kashmir'. The Book mentions, "The hearing of a case of some rioters who were agitating against Maharaja Hari Singh the noble king of that time fell on 13th July in Srinagar jail. On that day, a mob stormed the jail and demanded admittance along with the Sessions Judge. When the Judge had crossed the gates of jail, the crowd also attempted to get in. At the suggestion of the Judge, two Muslim lawyers, representing the accused, asked the visitors to go out of the jail precincts. Finding that there was no possibility of ingress, the crowd went out and started stoning officials and set fire to police lines. The police force was then called in. All efforts to pacify the unruly mob proved futile. While there was commotion outside the jail there was also disturbance inside, prisoners tried to force open the iron gates. About this time, certain prisoners were being taken from the court to the jail. The crowd stoned the policemen and the prisoners were liberated. The prospect was by no means satisfactory. The District Magistrate's order was defied, who had been summoned to the spot by the time, and had declared the crowd to be an 'unlawful assembly' and ordered its dispersal. The order was defied and finding that the mob could neither be pacified nor dispersed, the District Magistrate directed fire to be opened. The crowd fell off but later it re-assembled and resumed stoning. It had to be dispersed with a Lathi-charge. A section of people from the crowd, however moved towards the Hari Parbat Fort, when the police had to pursue it and disperse it again. A section of these persons proceeded towards Maharaj Ganj which is a business locality and lot of sorts followed over an extensive area of Maharaj Ganj. From Bhorai-Kadal to Alikadal a long stretch, Hindu shops were raided. Other localities in and around Maharaj Ganj to Nawakadal including Bohri Kadal also became the focus points of loot and arson. The Hindu shopkeepers were molested and thus pandemonium prevailed all over". The Hindu merchants lost goods worth lakhs of rupees. The most extraordinary portion of the story was that almost simultaneously with the happenings at Srinagar, there was an uprising at a place named Vieharnag, some 5 or 6 miles away from this spot. It is stated that untold atrocities were committed there on Kashmiri Pandits; when men owning lakhs were reduced to indigence and

women were subjected to the worst possible and the most indecent assaults. A military force was dispatched to the place, but by that time the havoc had been completed. Elsewhere too, the Hindus were the victims of this carnage. Some lost their lives and many suffered physical injuries. A myth is sought to 'feudal' order, but a big farce. It was an Islamist rebellion against the Hindu king. Sheikh Abdullah too was found complicit in the uprising. He was arrested, tried, convicted and sent to prison. Sheikh Abdullah was later released earlier after getting pardoned by the Maharaja of Jammu & Kashmir and soon after Sheikh founded All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and became its founder president. Much more is there to write about this event of carnage, but due to the limitation of space enough of it is retained back to be mentioned in further issues. Reference about Hindus is implied mostly towards the Kashmiri Pandits apart from other Hindus the business men lot who were basically Kashmiri Hindus. Though, I was not born at that point of time, but I am well reminded of this sad episode as my late father would often refer to death of a Kashmiri Pandit neighbour friend of his, namely Jagar Nath, living on the other side of our house, in the vicinity of Khankahi Mohalla (where from the conspiracy for this carnage was cooked up), was killed by the rioters after an assault on our locality, along with other localities of Srinagar city. My father's sister viz, my 'Buwal' (Poofi), who was unmarried then, hid in a big earthen pot of a human size (Mache-manzi), in which the domestic grains and cereals were normally stored, to save her from assault of the rioters. So was the case with other residents and neighbours as well. It is supposed to be one of the worst communal carnages of that time. Then starts another trauma for Kashmiri Pandits in Kashmir since days of so-called democratic government instituted in Kashmir in 1947 at behest of famous congress leaders of that time, particularly Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. After Independence in 1947, India was invented on January 26, 1950, on the premise that everyone who resides in its territory will have maximum equal freedom and there will be no discrimination between its citizens. This is when the Constitution of India came into existence. But that did not apply to the state of Jammu & Kashmir, because of the Article 370 of the Constitution, which is abrogated now. This was misused in Kashmir in the garb of a proverbial word called as 'Kashmiriyat'. People in Kashmir mostly the pseudo secular political parties who have been ruling Kashmir as their ancestral right, took an umbrella cover under this fallacy of the word Kashmiriyat and blackmailed the ruling clan in Delhi, that Kashmir belongs to Kashmiri's only and is the birth right of these so called political dynasty based political leaders and they alone have the mandate to rule Jammu & Kashmir. These people misused it to the extent that they would most of the times mean Kashmiriyat as Islamiyat'.

What was the actual sense and spirit of the word Kashmiriyat. 'Kashmiriyat' in simple words means Kashmiri-ness. It was the ethno-national approach, social consciousness and cultural values of the Kashmiri people. It was characterized by religious and cultural harmony, patriotism and pride for their culture, tradition, language and a lot other stuff of Kashmiri inhabitants irrespective of their religion. It was a great secular principle that emerged during medieval times. Generally, Kashmir was a multicultural and ethnic society. But its true sense and spirit was crucified and butchered when under ethnic cleaning in 1989-1990, the original subjects of Kashmir the Kashmiri Pandits, were brutally crucified, murdered and driven out of Kashmir; under a Pan-Islamic scheme, for spreading Islam in Kashmir; as also trying to vanish the Indian hold on Kashmir; thus, turning Kashmiriyat into Islamiyat. This was not the only crucifixion and the migration of Kashmiri Pandits, when Pandits had to migrate from the Valley on so many earlier occasions too. It happened during the rule of Bulbul Shah, the Chaks, the Sultans and the Afghans etc. All of them persecuted the community and forced them to migration. To my memory it happened in Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah's, G M Sadiq's, and even Dr Farooq Abdullah's time of regimes too. So in Kashmiri Kashmiriyat was mostly Islamiyat.

Coming back to the word 'Kashmiriyat', only Kashmiri Pandits know its solemn purpose for the pseudo secular rulers of Kashmir, who designated themselves to rule Kashmir, through the legacies of their dynasties, ignoring the fact that Jammu & Kashmir was not the valley of Kashmir only, when it had two other regions too attached to it, viz, Jammu and Ladakh, which were ignored on all economic fronts like the development fronts, educational fronts, cultural fronts and the electoral fronts which limited the scope of these two zones to be equal partners in the governance process of the whole state. This is where the 'Kashmiriyat' was misused and 'Islamiyat' prevailed. Kashmiri

Pandits became the targets of 'Kashmiriyat', in respect of their getting nominations and selections to higher educational trainings, getting of government jobs, biased preferential treatments in the postings in government jobs, particularly in higher and strategic posts, discriminations in promotions in government jobs, selective treatments in the selection processes at the level of selections in the public service commission for the higher level jobs and the like. Who does not know that when Sheikh Abdullah got the reins of power of the state government after Maharaja's rule, he would very boldly advise the highly qualified Kashmiri Pandit scholars and persons of that time to locate jobs for themselves outside Kashmir, adding further insult to the injury by saying that you Pandits have a scope beyond Kashmir up to Kanyakumari, but where will Kashmiri Muslim go, thus abetting the exodus of KP's very meticulously, posing himself to be the most secular leader in the eyes of Gandhi and Nehru. It is during that period mostly when the sweet exodus of KPs started for seeking jobs outside the state. Yet KPs proved their worth and merit outside Kashmir; by getting jobs in higher and strategic places of administration both at the level of Government of India as also other state governments of this country. But it all happened at the cost of their forgetting their own home land due to Islamiyat applied through Kashmiriyat. Bakhshi Gulam Mohammad was no exception, when he initiated the process of nominating the Kashmiri Muslim students with low academic merits, to higher educational trainings outside Kashmir; in medical colleges, engineering colleges, agricultural colleges, polytechniques etc, with hefty education loan facilities. Kashmiri Pandit students of that time with highest academic merits were refused such educational trainings and hefty loan facilities, thus depriving KPs students from having higher technical educations etc. Who does not know, when G M Sadiq was Chief Minister who introduced 70/30 percent ratio in government jobs between Muslims and Kashmiri Pandit employees, which was unconstitutional and was fought very bravely by KP government teachers of that time in the Supreme Court of India and got it annulled. Mir Qasim as Chief Minister was no different in this regard and he too introduced discriminatory policies in various departments for providing promotional facilities to the Muslim employees over the KPs. Subsequent governments of Abdullahs and Miftis followed the footsteps of their predecessors in this regard. KPs cannot forget the desecration of their temples and religious places, whenever there was any problem of Israeli-Palestinian conflict, far away from the soil of Kashmir. During the Anantnag riots in February 1986, many temples, houses and other properties belonging to KPs were looted, burnt or damaged in Anantnag district. These are so many such events to be quoted, but for the constraints of space in this article. The last nail in the coffin was the final assault of Islamic fundamentalism on KPs in the year 1989-90, when KPs were killed and butchered by the terrorists, when the KPs were finally driven out of Kashmir almost empty handed. Let us hope that no further 'Kashmir Files' Film will be needed as per emotional and the communal statements being given by various authorities in power for an early and an honorable return of Kashmiri Pandits back to valley with dignity and honor. Better said than done. Let such presumptive formal statements may not fizzle out in bigger jokes for the Kashmiri Pandits. The job is a herculean one. Under the prevailing circumstances it is almost 'To Carry coal to New Castles'. But where there is a will, there is a way. But it needs bigger political will to do it. It can be done. The specific remedy in this regard is to constitute a special commission of Enquiry to be headed by some legal luminary of India not less than the status of a retired Judge of Supreme Court on India, to identify the culprits of genocide of Kashmiri Pandits and punish all those responsible for the genocide of Kashmiri Pandits along with their forced exodus, as was done in the case of mass killings of Sikhs in the communal riots of 1984, in Delhi at the time of the assassination of Indira Gandhi. This will restore the confidence of Kashmiri Pandits to horizontal heights, feeling thereby that the authorities in power mean business in this regard. Some developments show its space, when Haryana government has brought Vachan-Purti programme and allotted residential plots to 182 KPs at Bhadurgarh Haryana which was pending since 1991, when the migrant KPs had purchased these residential plots between 1991 and 1993. These residential plots remained un-allotted to its purchasers due to some amendments in the land acts. It is a historic decision taken by the Manohar Lal Khatter, the Chief Minister of Haryana in this regard.

(The author is a retired Chartered Civil Engineer and a displaced Kashmiri Pandit, who loves his Motherland the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir).

Dr B R Ambedkar, the advocate of social justice

■ ANKUSH KUMAR

Social Justice is the essence of the Indian Constitution. Social Justice is a social order in which Justice is promoted by providing equal opportunity to every citizen. The architect of the Indian Constitution, Dr B R Ambedkar, was the leading proponent of Social Justice. On the day of his birth anniversary, 14 April, we need to revisit his vision of society based on social justice. According to Ambedkar, social justice is a means to construct a just and ideal society. He believed that the pseudo secular rulers of Kashmir, who designated themselves to rule Kashmir, through the legacies of their dynasties, ignoring the fact that Jammu & Kashmir was not the valley of Kashmir only, when it had two other regions too attached to it, viz, Jammu and Ladakh, which were ignored on all economic fronts like the development fronts, educational fronts, cultural fronts and the electoral fronts which limited the scope of these two zones to be equal partners in the governance process of the whole state. This is where the 'Kashmiriyat' was misused and 'Islamiyat' prevailed. Kashmiri

propagating equality in the social justice concept is the backbone of modern society.

The third fundamental component of social justice is the fraternity. By explaining the details of fraternity, Ambedkar argued that there are two prominent forces in society: fraternity and individualism. Excessive individualism acts only for own particular interest, leading to anti-social and non-social self. At the same time, fraternity is the contrary force consisting of the emotion of fellow feeling.

While quoting the Laski, Ambedkar said that certain social conditions are required to enjoy liberty in a real sense. (a) There should be social equality among all citizens, which means social rights must be equally distributed to every citizen to enjoy and utilise their freedom. (b) Economic security must prevail for every citizen, which means an individual must be free to choose his profession without depriving the security in employment. (c) Knowledge and its related material must be available to every individual to use the freedom according to their rationality. The second fundamental component of social justice is equality, which means all humans are equal in their essence and are entitled to enjoy the same equal liberty and fundamental rights. Ambedkar recognised that the gradation and ranking of humans based on caste, creed, sex, and religion itself articulates the principle of inequality. Therefore,

(The author is a PhD Senior Research Fellow, JNU).

Transforming J&K

Progress picks pace in 400 tribal villages under IVDS

With an aim to ensure focused development in tribal areas and fill infrastructure gap, more than 70 government schemes were converged for implementation in 400 tribal villages under the domain of centrally sponsored Integrated Village Development Scheme (IVDS) for tribal development. A special grant of Rs 98 crore was provided under Integrated Village Development Plan (IVDP) for filling the infrastructure gap in more than 400 tribal villages, apart from the village plan. The scheme is being implemented by the Tribal Affairs Department in coordination with Rural Development Department and respective district administrations.

Every district formulated Integrated Village Development Plan for all villages having more than 500 tribal populations for addressing multidimensional aspects including water issues, infrastructure issues, agriculture issues, gender issues, health issues etc. The PRIs along with officials identify various issues including lack of livelihood opportunities, absence of scientific livestock management, poor health care, and improper land use in every village taken up under IVDS. The IVDPs formulated by field teams in coordination with Gram Panchayats are approved by District Planning and Monitoring Committee headed by Deputy Commissioners having members from all line departments. The State Level apex committee headed by Chief Secretary approves the plans after screening and recommendation from Tribal Affairs Department. The IVDS is focused on building rural capabilities and mechanisms and an end to end strategy which caters to need analysis and implementation of the project, along the lines of a participatory approach," an official said. The initiative is to create opportunities for gainful self-employment for rural families especially disadvantaged sections, ensuring sustainable livelihood, enriched environment, improved quality of life and good human values. This is being achieved through development research, effective use of local resources, an extension of appropriate technologies and up gradation of skills and capa-

bilities with community participation. An official of Tribal Affairs department said that plan formulation and village prioritization was done on 55 different monitorable parameters in 14 different sectors. These included Health & Nutrition, Drinking Water and Sanitation, Education, Housing, Livelihood, Electric Supply, Road Connectivity/Mobile/Internet Connectivity, Farm and Non-Farm activities, Market Interventions, Skill and Entrepreneurship, Financial Inclusion, Social Security and Digitisation. To train the key functionaries for better implementation of the scheme, Tribal Department initiated training programmes for field functionaries involved in the formulation of Village Development Plans. "More than 70 government schemes have been converged for implementation in selected tribal villages. This year's annual plan is focused on key infrastructure development in health, education, livestock improvement, youth engagement and Skilling sectors for overall socio-economic development of tribal communities in J&K," he said.

The government is continuously endeavouring to protect the interests of tribal people, including their land, education and upliftment of their socio-economic status. On September 13, Jammu & Kashmir government scripted a historic chapter with Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, handing over individual and community rights certificates to the beneficiaries of Gujjar, Bakarwal and Gaddi Sippi communities under the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006. The initiative was hailed as a significant step with the potential to transform the lives of members of tribal communities in the UT where the rights of forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers were recognized albeit to a long delay. For providing education on modern lines to Tribal children, the UT government started an ambitious project of transforming 200 Schools into Smart Schools in Tribal areas at a cost of Rs 40 crore. To ensure that Tribal youth excel in professional fields, 500 youth were selected for different professional courses with government aid.