

SHUNT OUT ALL

It is good that Jammu and Kashmir Government has taken serious note of the fact that many of employees force in the UT are indulging in activities which are detrimental to the interests of the nation and can safely be called as anti-national or terrorist acts, and is showing them the doors along with booking them under relevant laws. This is something very much necessary as no one should be given long rope to remain in government service and indulge in anti-national activities. In this context, government has terminated the services of three of its employees for alleged terror links. Those who have been shunted out include a Professor in the Chemistry Department of Kashmir University, a teacher in the School Education department and a police constable. The variedness of the professions of those who have been kicked out from the government service shows the graveness of the issue thus making it imperative to have the security audit of all the employees and shunt out all the defaulters because the government cannot take chances in this matter which is very sensitive and concerning the security and safety of the people of the country. Reportedly, the accused professor was actively associated with Jamaat-e-Islam (JeI) and had crossed over to Pakistan for terror training. He remained an active terrorist of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) for three years before his arrest by the security forces in 1993. He also remained an active cadre of JeI and worked as a terror recruiter. Looking into all this, he was the sure shot case for dismissal and must be booked for probing all the allegations. The other one, the teacher was a terror over ground worker (OGW) who used to radicalise people and the third one was the informer of the terrorists, who used to tip-off the terrorists and OGWs about anti-terror operations and also leaked names of police personnel involved in anti-terror operations. The action against the trio is well justified and the need of the hour is to shunt-out all such elements working in the government departments as they nothing but the ticking bombs which can prove very dangerous if not tackled well in time.

TRUE GAME CHANGER

As the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is presently facing numerous challenges with unemployment at the top, the administration under the able guidance of the Union Government has taken several proactive measures to tackle the menace effectively. Where earlier the previous Governments in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir used to allure youth on fake promises of providing white-collar Government jobs, on the other hand a number of highly-qualified unemployed youth was forced to join low profile jobs due to non-availability of adequate employment opportunities. Understanding the gravity of the situation, the Government as well as administration of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir tried a lot to ensure availability of adequate employment opportunities to youth in all the areas of Jammu and Kashmir. Not only a 24X7 vigil has been maintained by the forces on the borders to foil any mischievous attempt of enemies but they were also inspired youth to join entrepreneurship for becoming job providers in place of job seekers thereby helping the Government in meeting the emerging unemployment scenario effectively. Recently, while redressing participants during the National Academia-Industrial Conclave at Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), the LG Manoj Sinha categorically mentioned that new set ups will prove as a game changer for ensuring economic growth in the Union Territory. While congratulating the youth aspiring to establish their own set ups, the LG assured them that the administration is determined to ensure proper incubation and other necessary support to them so that they may not face any problem. He further said that the administration is committed to ensure provision of necessary guidance and seed funding support to brilliant ideas so that they can be realized into profit generating units without causing any inconvenience to the aspiring candidates. On the occasion, the LG also congratulated the stakeholders for inking several MoUs with the Industry Associations, Businesses, Institutions and the Government. It is expected that the UT administration will not only ensure necessary hand holding and support to the budding entrepreneurs but will also provide them all necessary guidance so that they can become a companion in the UT's journey towards growth and development.



OFF 'D' CUFF

The Gita Has Negativity Cancelling Features

We all have the devil in us, something that makes us pursue self-destructive ways. Yet, even the worst among us has some divine qualities. While personality traits are often hereditary and seem beyond our control, we have the power to change.

Just as modern devices have noise-cancelling features, the Bhagavad Gita helps identify our best qualities and cancel the effect of our negative traits. The Gita chapter 16 enumerates 26 qualities of the divine and six traits of the demonic. What makes us opt for evil against our own better judgement? It is easy to take to the demonic. The divine path is uphill and difficult in the beginning. Therefore, for a few seconds of pleasure, we are often ready to forsake a lifetime of bliss.

Fearlessness, purity of heart and charity are some of the divine qualities enlisted. Fear arises from ignorance, selfishness, viciousness and a sense of otherness. Prahlad, the child, was fearless against the might of his father Hiranyakashipu. Yet the most wealthy and powerful in the world are fearful!

Purity of heart comes when you are free from selfishness and desire. Get inspired with a higher ideal and lower desires lose their grip on you. Then objects of desire come to you unsought. Nachiketa only wanted Realisation, but the pleasures and wealth of heav-

NEP-2020 envisions India-centric education system

■ ER PRABHAT KISHORE

Education is a fundamental requirement for the development of an egalitarian society. In this context, three National Education Policies namely NEP 1968, NEP 1986 and NEP 2020 have been introduced in India so far. The new NEP 2020 adopted on July 29, 2020, aims to universalize education from pre-school to secondary level by 2030. It envisions an India-centric education system and provision of quality education and equitable access to all students in a sustainable manner. There are ten themes aligned with the policy objectives of the NEP 2020.

Early Childhood Care & Education: The Foundation of learning - Early child development encompasses physical, socio-emotional and cognitive development between 1-8 years of age. The early years of the learners are critical, as it is the period of life when the brain develops most rapidly and has a high capacity for change, and the foundation is laid for health and well-being for life. The NEP states that, the overarching goal will be to ensure universal access to high quality Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE) across the country. Special attention and priority will be given to the territories that are particularly socio-economically lagged behind. ECCE shall be delivered through a significantly expanded and strengthened system of early-childhood education institutions consisting of (a) stand-alone Anganwaris, (b) Anganwaris co-located with primary schools, (c) pre-primary schools/sections covering at least age 5 to 6 years co-located with existing primary schools, and (d) stand-alone pre-schools- all of which would recruit workers/teachers specially trained in the curriculum and pedagogy of ECCE.

Foundational Literacy and Numeracy: An Urgent & Necessary Prerequisite to Learning- The ability to read and write, and perform basic operations with numbers, is a necessary foundation and an indispensable prerequisite for all future schooling and lifelong learning. NEP 2020 accords top priority to the attainment of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy by all students upto Grade-III. It stresses the need to develop a robust system of continuous formative/adaptive assessment to track each student's learning. The early grade curriculum will be redesigned to have a renewed emphasis and teachers to be trained, encouraged, and supported to impart foundational literacy and numeracy.

Curtailling Drop-out Rates and Ensuring Universal Access to Education at all levels- As per NEP 2020, two holistic initiatives will be taken to bring drop-out children back to school and to prevent further drop-out. The first initiative is to provide effective

and sufficient infrastructure so that all students have access to safe and engaging school education at all levels from pre-primary school to Grade 12. Besides providing regular trained teachers at each stage, special care shall be taken to ensure that no school remains deficient in the infrastructure sector. The second initiative is to achieve universal participation in the school by carefully tracking students as well as their learning levels in order to ensure that they (a) are enrolled in and attending school, and (b) have suitable opportunities to catch up and re-enter school in case they have fallen behind or dropped out. Suitable facilitating systems shall be put in place to provide equitable and quality education to all children from Foundation stage to Grade 12 till the age of 18 years.

Curriculum and Pedagogy in Schools: Learning should be Holistic, Integrated, Enjoyable and Engaging- NEP 2020 mandates that the learning should be holistic, integrated, inclusive, enjoyable, and engaging. In order to minimize rote learning and to encourage holistic development and 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, scientific temper, communication, collaboration, multilingualism, problem solving, ethics, social responsibility, digital literacy, curriculum, textbooks, pedagogy and assessment shall be transformed by 2022. It stresses that in all stages; experimental learning will be adopted, including hands-on learning, arts-integrated and sports-integrated education, story-telling-based pedagogy, among others, as standard pedagogy within each subject, and with explorations of relations among different subjects. To bridge the gap in achievement of learning outcomes, classroom transactions will shift towards competency-based learning and education.

Teachers- Teachers are the frontline providers of quality education. They represent the key vehicle towards a progressive, just, educated, and prosperous society. It is known that inadequate quality of training, recruitment, service conditions and lack of empowerment of teachers affect their skill and motivation levels. NEP 2020 has made several provisions to empower teachers and inspire the best individuals to enter the system to ensure the best possible future for our children and our nation. The primary goal of transforming the service environment and culture of schools will be to maximize teacher's ability to perform their jobs effectively and to ensure that they are part of vibrant, caring, and inclusive communities of teachers, students, parents, principals, and other support staff, all of whom share a common goal, to ensure that our children are learning.

Equitable and Inclusive Education: Learning for All- Sustainable Development Goal 4.0 obliges India to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' by 2030. In tune with SDG goal, NEP-2020 provides a renewed impetus to inclusive and equitable education. It re-focuses on the need to provide children with disabilities, and those belonging to disadvantaged groups and weaker sections the same opportunities of obtaining quality education as any other child. It is also in full sync with RPwD Act 2016 which mandates that students with and without disability learn together and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of students with disabilities. By 2040, India should have an education system that is second to none, with equitable access to the highest-quality education for all learners, regardless of social or economic background. Many schools have already taken initiatives to promote inclusive classrooms. Innovative teaching pedagogy on the subject needs to focus on inclusive practices so that similar initiatives can be taken by other schools.

Efficient Resourcing and Effective Governance through School Complexes/clusters- The establishment of school complexes/clusters and the sharing of resources across complexes will have a number of other benefits, such as improved support for children with disabilities, more topic-centered clubs and academic/sports/arts/crafts events across school complexes, better incorporation of art, music, language, vocational subjects, physical education, and other subjects in the classroom through the sharing of teachers in these subjects including use of ICT tools to conduct virtual classes. Improved student support, enrollment, attendance, and performance through the sharing of social workers and counselors, and school complex Management committees (rather than only School Management Committees) for more robust and better governance, monitoring, oversight, innovations, and initiatives by local stakeholders. Building such larger communities of schools, school leaders, teachers, students, support staff, parents, and local citizens would energize and empower the schooling system, and in a resource-efficient manner.

Standard Setting and Accreditation for School Education- The NEP, 2020 envisions an effective quality self-regulation or accreditation system for all stages of education, including pre-school education - private, public, and philanthropic - to ensure compliance with mandatory quality standards. To ensure that all schools adhere to certain minimum professional and quality standards, States/UTs will set up an inde-

pendent, state-wide body called the State School Standards Authority (SSSA). In addition to the standard criterion for accreditation, to ensure academic quality, a separate School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Framework have to be developed by SCERTs. All schools, including private schools, will be assessed and accredited on the same criteria, benchmarks, and processes, with an emphasis on online and offline public disclosure and transparency. Educational outcomes and the transparent disclosure of all financial, academic, and operational matters will be given due importance and suitably incorporated in the evaluation of schools. By ensuring a uniform process of accreditation and quality framework for both public and private schools, the objective of reforming the public education system could be ensured.

Technology in Education: NDEAR-The recent rise in epidemics and pandemics necessitates that we are ready with alternative modes of quality education, whenever and wherever traditional modes of education are not possible. In this regard, the NEP 2020 recognizes the importance of reaping the benefits of technology while acknowledging its potential risks and dangers. This calls for carefully designed and appropriately scaled pilot studies to determine how the benefits of online/digital education can be reaped while addressing or mitigating the downsides. National Digital Education Architecture is being envisioned as a digital infrastructure for education that will help not only the government at Centre, State and UTs but the entire education ecosystem including private sector, non-profit and technology players to enhance the quality of education in the country through innovation and experimentation. It is part of the 'Digital India' initiative of the Government of India and it endeavors to make lives simpler for students, parents, teachers and administrators.

Reimagining Vocational Education and Skill Building-NEP 2020 aims to overcome the perception of lower social status associated with vocational education and requires integration of vocational education programme into mainstream education in a phased manner. Beginning with vocational exposure in early ages in middle school, quality vocational education will be integrated smoothly into secondary and higher education. It will ensure that every child learns at least one vocation from class 9 onwards and is exposed to many more professions. It will emphasize the importance of skill building, dignity of labour and various professions associated with Indian art and craftsmanship.

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Celebrating Buddha Purnima

■ D R BHAGAT

Buddha Purnima is a unique day in the history of Buddhism. It is the day when Lord Buddha was born, got enlightened and also got Mahanirvan. Siddhartha was a prince having all the comforts of princely life. But after watching the people suffering from pain and diseases, he lost interest in all these comforts and wanted to search for reasons of these sufferings. He decided to become an ascetic. Buddha or Siddhartha after leaving all his princely comforts set out his journey in search of the truth. He started severe austerities which was the way of that time to become an ascetic. He started fasting for many days and put his body in unfavorable conditions and became very weak. But at last he came to know that there is no need of practicing severe austerities and weakening your body because a strong body has a strong mind. He came to know that food is a vital source of energy to keep our body and mind fit, alert and active. Body, mind and intellect work in unison. After visiting many places in search of truth, he sat under a banyan tree and meditated continuously for 49 days after which he was enlightened with divine thoughts. He then decided to spread his spiritual philosophy. For his mission, he first visited Sarnath. He formed a group of monks and nuns known as Sangha to preach his teachings besides himself. He gave four noble truths which are 1) Life often involves sufferings 2)The reason for the sufferings is the desire and attachment 3) To cure sufferings we have to stop wanting 4) The way to stop wants is not to change things but to change our own mind. He gave the eight fold path which when adopted can relieve you from sufferings. This path includes right thought, right speech, right actions, right livelihood, right efforts, right mindfulness and right concentration.

Buddha said that his religion is neither an arduous path and nor a simple one. Once Buddha visited a village named Kalama along with some other preachers. The people told them that some Brahmins have also visited this village and asked them to follow their tenets and fur-



ther criticized other religions which confused them. He advised, "Do not believe in rumour, or in anything, merely because it is accepted by me or it is based on some seemingly brilliant authority or some ancient and venerable tradition or it seems extraordinary. But accept it and then live upon only when after observation, analysis and reflection it is found in accord with reason and experience and is also conducive to general good." Buddha said that death is an established certainty and one should accept it happily. As per a legend a woman named Krishna Gautmi was married in a prosperous family. She had a son and was highly attached to him. One day all of a sudden her son expired. Gautmi in grief lifted dead-body of her son and roamed from one place to another asking everybody to revive her son. People were highly pained to see her pathetic condition but they could do nothing for her. Then someone suggested her to visit Gautam Buddha who might be able to revive her son. Gautmi, in a hope, went to Buddha who was at that time staying around that place. Weeping profusely, she humbly pleaded Buddha to revive her son. Buddha uttered, "One who is born has to leave his physical body one day as death is an eternal reality". But Gautmi was not consoled and again prayed Buddha to revive her son. In order to make her know the truth Buddha said, "For revival of your son you have to bring some yellow mustard seeds that too from a house where no death has taken place so far." Gautmi said she can manage such seeds. She along with body of her

son went from door to door and could not find even a single house where no death had occurred. She started realizing reality and after placing the body of her son in a nearby jungle, returned to Buddha and uttered, "Lord, now I have understood the reality". She was then ordained by Buddha and became a Nun.

Although Buddhism started in India yet it spread in other countries like Tibet, Sri Lanka, China, Mangolia, Japan, Korea and some other countries also. The great Maurya King Ashoka after the battle of Kalinga embraced Buddhism and also declared it a state religion. One of the greatest intellect and social reformer of last century Dr B R Ambedkar also embraced Buddhism after he was convinced that it teaches humanity. Along with Dr Ambedkar thousands of his followers also embraced Buddhism and they were known as Neo-Buddhists. In India the regions where most of the population of Buddhists resides are Maharashtra, Utter Pradesh, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh.

The Buddha Purnima is celebrated in many parts of India and the world. The main functions in India are held in Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, Rajgir and Kushi Nagar. On this day the Buddha temples are decorated and lighted with colourful lights and message of Buddha is spread. Many countries celebrate this day with their own traditions. The life of Buddha is quite fascinating and inspiring. The advent of Buddha is most momentous event of human history and civilization. What the enlightened one practiced and preached is the proud possession of our common ancient heritage. He showed us the path of liberation and nirvana. Buddha, Sangha and Dharma are the three jewels of Buddhism which refer to Buddha's teachings, institution of Buddhism and practices and preaching of Buddhism. The teachings of Buddhism have a universal appeal which is a dominant factor in its spread. Buddha's message of love, compassion and a disciplined and recluse life are some of the traits of his philosophy which are relevant even today in this era of desires, hate and sufferings.

JUBILANT J&K Entries for UT's first National Film fest to close on May 16; mega event to begin on June 15

Jammu & Kashmir's first ever 'National Film Festival', which is going to begin on June 15, will give a golden chance to Indian filmmakers, music producers and artists to win numerous awards under different categories. Entries for participation in the mega event will close on May 16. Indian filmmakers and music producers besides artists have been invited to submit their original films - fiction, documentary, OTT or short films and music videos for the first National Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir for a chance to win awards under three broad categories including Feature Films, Non-Feature Films and Music Videos. There are over 40+ awards to be given during the Film Festival Award ceremony and the winners will receive mentioned cash components as well a certificate and a medal.

The list of awards and prizes, rules and terms have been mentioned in the website <https://filmfreeway.com/nffjk> while the entries can be submitted at - <https://filmfreeway.com/nffjk>. The last date for receiving entries on the website is May 16, 2022. The UT will witness jamming of ideas, creativity, lights and music during this mega National Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir (NFFJK), a grand event to be organized by J&K Film Development Council (JKFDC) in association with the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) in Srinagar from June 15 to June 20, 2022. The idea behind this film festival is to highlight film, music and creative ecosystem in J&K along with UT's natural splendor and socio-cultural magnificence to the world.

The Film festival, which will be a congregation of best of films and music, film-makers, music artists and allied talents, will serve as a reservoir of creativity and inspiration for anyone across the world who aspires to live, love and breathe films and music. The competition is being organized to recognize Indian talent in music, feature, short-films, documentary and film making besides providing opportunities to connect to the sparsely located film-making community of the J&K through networking and collaborative projects. A filmmaker and a famous artist, while appreciating the holding of this festival, said that the event would provide them with an opportunity to explore the works and perspectives of other filmmakers besides building an audience for the work of filmmakers. "It will also develop the skill of film-making using minimal efficient resources. It will work to the advantage of identifying young and fresh talent in the film-making and music industry in Jammu & Kashmir. The event will also centre-stage the filmmaking process and incentivize local talent to pursue a career in filmmaking and world of music as well," he said.

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, at the launch of the Union Territory's Film Policy, had said 'It has been worked out to facilitate overall growth of film industry in the region including setting up of a film development council and revival of closed cinema halls'. The policy, launched at a star-studded event in the presence of actor Aamir Khan and filmmaker Rajkumar Hirani, aims at establishing Jammu and Kashmir as the first choice for film shooting destination for the filmmakers.