

DRIVING SAFELY 8 years of service, good governance & welfare of poor

It is shocking that people are losing lives to unsafe travel as accidents on roads have become a norm rather than an exception because one finds several news reports of fatal accidents in newspapers on almost daily basis. This is something which needs to be stopped by all means as society cannot afford these avoidable deaths as seven army Jawans lost their life and several others received injuries after the vehicle they were travelling in skidded off the road and fell in Shyok River in Ladakh. The roads in the U/Ts of J&K and Ladakh have lately turned out to be killer ones despite the modernization and state of art vehicles replacing the old ones having less sophistication. It is sad that three days before, nine commuters were killed in an accident on the Zojila Pass connecting Srinagar with Kargil in central Kashmir. A car carrying passengers was travelling from Kargil to Sonamarg when it skidded off the road and rolled down 400 feet in the night. The bodies of the victims were retrieved from the accident site and identified. Among those killed were visitors from Gujarat, Jharkhand, Punjab and Chhattisgarh. This is really sad that deaths on roads have become unstoppable and people are losing lives unnecessarily. In yesterday's accident, reportedly, a party of 26 soldiers was moving from the transit camp in Partapur to a forward location in Sub Sector Hanif when the vehicle carrying the soldiers skidded off the road and fell in Shyok river resulting in injuries to all occupants. Seven soldiers succumbed to injuries which is tragic as these lives could have been saved had the driver shown some maturity and have followed the traffic safety rules. There is dire need that people should be given proper training and orientation to drive in places having difficult terrains as Ladakh, Kashmir and even Jammu in J&K and Ladakh U/Ts do have places where it is quite difficult to navigate on roads due to dangerous twists and turns and other constraints. It is the right time that the government should revisit the policy and try to come out with a solution to improve driving skills of the people or else deaths on roads will become inevitable.

SAVIOUR ARMY

During crisis, the people always pray that Indian army personnel reach the scene as the presence of Jawans means guarantee for safety and security of all as was seen in case of landslide that hit Mughal road at Peer Ki Gali area. Beyond any doubt the army is a true saviour for the people of the country as the indomitable spirit of men in green is unmatched and this fact is unquestionable in any situation. Showing the same spirit, the army personnel assisted the local police in rescuing ten passengers including a child who were stuck along Mughal road axis due to landslide which occurred on account of inclement weather. Reportedly, a landslide had resulted in trapping of six vehicles with 10 passengers in no network zone in an area prone to shooting stones near Peer Ki Gali on Mughal road. As the rescue operation was launched by the army and police at around 11 PM on Friday, four trucks and two light motor vehicles were found trapped with passengers scared for their lives. This is the greatness of Indian Army that soon after the stranded passengers saw the men in green their lost confidence was regained and they became spirited as if God has come for their rescue. This makes the Indian Army different from any other department in the country because people have undaunted faith on this force which seldom disappoints the people of the country because in most of the cases the operations accomplished are flawless and without any shortcomings. Showing the same spirit, all the stranded persons were rescued from the Peer Ki Gali area and were given first aid and refreshments in the nearest Army post located in Poshana. The people like in many other cases have expressed gratitude towards the soldiers of the army and of course the police for rescuing them from a dangerous situation. Once again, army has proved that it is the real saviour of the people and mere presence of army Jawans is the guarantee for the safety and security of the citizens of the country. This characteristic of the army makes it a unique and valiant force of the country.



True Dharma is not Religion, Cult, or Path

Dharma is not a sampradaya, cult; panth, path; or a mind-created religion. Dharma is the guna, attribute, Nature has bestowed on every creation - matter and being. The guna of salt is saltiness; it remains salty even if it is washed or crushed. A sandalwood tree has a unique fragrance, fruits have their distinct flavours and juices - their guna, dharma, which cannot be altered. Man is also created by Nature, so he has to be true to his particular gunas. The dharma of man is to manifest divine qualities, be compassionate, and create beauty and harmony all around. And he is equipped with the intelligence to be thoughtful, sensitive, concerned and considerate about the welfare of all.

A child, by nature, will smile at others and reach out to play even if someone approaches him with maligned intentions. That child-like simplicity and trust form the basic nature of every being. These are sanatana, natural qualities, the guna dharma, as stated in the Bhagavad Gita. To remind, resurrect and establish this, avatars manifest from time to time. They lead by being an example so that man does not lose his manavta - humanity. The dharma of man is shashivrat, sanatana satya - eternal and perpetual truth. Human-created religions usually enslave one to certain ideologies and philosophies. Real dharma is true spirituality that directs and propels one on the path of growth and evolution. Man is made of five elements, and the qualities of these are to be reflected in the conduct of the being. These qualities are basic instincts, gunas, that form the manava or human dharma, which need not be soiled by mind tactics. Religious followers take pride in belonging to a particular religion, and being a real and good human is not their focus.

Each religion has adopted a fraction of the pure manava dharma. The Buddhism lay emphasis on compassion; Christianity on service; Islam on honest earnings; and Hinduism on karma. However, Sanatana Dharma has only one law - imperfection has to go. It directs that everyone should be helped and, guided to live and blossom according to their individuality, attributes and basic specificity, nature and disposition. It is based on the principle that supports and governs the whole Universe, and regulates all its components for constant growth, following the cycle of creation, perfection and destruction.

The gunavatta, quality of human, needs to be refined and maintained. This is the truth of the eternal Sanatana Dharma. So much effort is made to maintain and improve the qualities of other species. People want purebred pets, but is anyone concerned about the quality of the human species?

While the body is purified by water, mind by the truth, intellect by jnana, the soul gets purified by Sanatana Dharma so as to get merged with Absolute Reality - Supreme.

Meena Om

JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA

Today the Bharatiya Janata Party government at the Centre completed its successful 8 years under dynamic and decisive leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The last 8 years have been a trend-setter for India where the nation has broken various shackles and has moved on from the politics of casteism, dynasty, corruption and appeasement to the politics of development, growth, unity and nationalism. This remarkable journey has been that of strengthening democracy in its real sense by empowering marginalized sections of our society - from poor to backward classes, Dalits and minorities, tribals and oppressed classes to women and youth. It has also been a journey of changing the Indian psyche - from 'nothing is possible in this country' to 'everything is possible if government and the people have the will and commitment'. It is the commitment of the 135 crore Indians towards the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi which today reflects on the ground. It also proves that if the leader has a policy and programme, intention and dedication, every challenge can be addressed, every problem can be solved.

The nation has not just changed under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a new chapter of remarkable growth and fast-paced development is being written. As the nation celebrates 'Azadi Ka Amrit Kaal', Prime Minister Narendra Modi has shown firm resolve and resilience to address and solve the nation's challenges and problems head-on. Today the eight years of changing India reflects in every Indian's eyes. In the last eight years our poverty rate has reduced from 22 per cent to 10 per cent, while extreme poverty has fallen below 1 per cent and has remained static at 0.8 per cent. In the last eight years our per capita income has doubled while our foreign reserves have also increased two-fold. In the past 70 years since Independence only 6.37 lakh primary

schools were constructed, but under the Narendra Modi government 6.53 lakh schools have so far been built. In the last eight years our literacy rate has improved by 6 per cent, which is an exemplary achievement.

Under Narendra Modi's Government, 15 new AIIMS have been sanctioned, out of which 10 have become operational while 5 are in its advanced stage of construction. Similarly, the number of doctors has jumped by over 12 lakhs. In the past 8 years India has created the second largest road network in the world, while our solar and wind power generation capacity has doubled in the past five years. Year after year India has broken records in foodgrains production. In 2012-13, our food-grain production was 255 million ton which increased to 316.06 million tonnes in 2021-22, which is highest-ever in our history. Despite global economic slowdown due to the COVID pandemic, India has managed to clock a record in exports at \$418 billion in the last financial year.

Under Narendra Modi government new benchmarks have been made, several milestones have been crossed in the service of the nation, good governance and welfare of the poor. As India bravely battled the Corona pandemic, it was Prime Minister Narendra Modi who led from the front. He not only gave India not one but two 'Made In India' vaccines, he opened government coffers to provide free rations to over 80 crore Indians for the past two years with an expenditure of Rs 3.40 lakh crore. While India carried out the world's largest vaccination drive free of cost, the food distribution programme is also the world's largest food distribution programme. The world has hailed these two important feats of India. There are several firsts that are associated with the last eight years of the Narendra Modi government. Common man got free medical insurance coverage through Ayushman Bharat Yojna, while farmers and labourers got monthly

pension. For the first time farmers started getting the benefit of Kisan Samman Nidhi for farming purposes, while it was our government which formed a policy for organic farming. Then there are several path breaking schemes -- Jan Dhan Yojna, Ujjawala Yojna, Kisan Samman Nidhi, Ayushman Bharat Yojna, Gareeb Kalyan Yojna, Swachh Bharat Yojna, Awas Yojna, Jal Jivan Mission, Digital India, Gram Vikas Yojna, GST - which has not only empowered citizens but also strengthened our economy and made India resilient and self-reliant. This is the reason behind India's robust and strong social and economic system despite harsh global conditions. Schemes like Atmanirbhar Bharat, Vocal for Local, Gati Shakti Yojna, PLI (production linked incentive) have catapulted India into the top of global world order.

In previous regimes what was lacking was the willpower to deal with some of our perennial problems, and everything was left to fate. But Prime Minister Narendra Modi's innovative and decisive approach in dealing with the problems made all the difference. It was due to the firm resolve of Prime Minister Narendra Modi that led to the scrapping of Article 370, construction of grand Ram Temple in Ayodhya, abolition of rigorous triple Talqa, passing of CAA and surgical strikes on terror camps across the border. It is the unique style of Prime Minister Narendra Modi which led to the identification of 1,800 old laws which had become redundant, and so far 1,450 of them have been scrapped. No previous government had thought about it. This led to making lives simpler for citizens and improved efficiency of the government. Foreign policy is one field where India has excelled under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. We have created several records and crossed new milestones. India's foreign policy has been reworked in India's advantage. From Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan to Ukraine,

Gyanvapi row: Political heat difficult to douse

M R LALU

Today, the gyan (knowledge) emanating from Gyanvapi of the ancient city of Banaras, is truly exhilarating to some people in the political spectrum. They don't have to dawdle in search of issues that they can put fuel on for electoral gains. Issues of their taste are plenty and waiting for the apt moment to surface in bubbles and turn into whirlpools. Of course, for the BJP, the political climate in India gives it a free package of benefits. And it knows to which direction the mat of the mast would turn. But for the Congress, bad times never end. With Kapil Sibbal making his exit, stretching the line of dissenters escaping the sinking ship, the party once again got entangled in a hotchpotch of issues making the intellectual churning, that went on to dehypnotise it at Udaipur futile. And BJP for all the reasons has the last laugh. The appearance of a Linga (phallic symbol) in the controversial mosque complex would probably give the party a nudge to what it aims for the 2024 general elections. The Ram temple in Ayodhya would also be ready by then, and the opposition parties must be aware of the blessings that the BJP is destined to tap from the divinity. It is sure that the issue is catching heat and the Hindus for no reason would be in a mood to sit silent but tragically, except BJP, no political party seems to be gaining a coin out of it.

It is disturbing for a believer of Bhagwan Shiv to have him concealed in a well, probably in an abluition tank. This indeed has the power to rake up anger despite the opposite side justifying calling it a fountain. This may be the beginning of a judicial process, which may as usual, go for decades, before the judiciary spells out its final word. Starting from Somnath to Ayodhya, the resurrection of ancient Hindu monuments has often turned the political climate in the country into an unpredictable turn. Babri, for that matter, was the one that the BJP gained little political relevance and the name of Bhagwan Ram did the magic consequently, making the party rise to become the ruling brigade in the country. The medieval history of India is a wholesome approval for the

unapologetically horrendous brutality with which the cultural mansions in the country were pulled down. Numerous worship places of the Hindus were toppled and buried and the sentiments are high when someone sees his deity being thrown in an abluition tank. This is potentially capable of raking rage among the non-political elite in the country too. To ensure the identity of the structure found in the well is the job of the court. But we need to appreciate the silence and contentment with which the entire issue is so far being debated and brought under judicial surveillance. The Gyanvapi seems to have the energy to fly beyond the Places of Worship Act of 1991, which demands the preservation of all shrines as inherited by independent India. It seems this issue needs no force from any political party to catch fire. The common man, with much of his spiritual inclination, gets pained to see the discovery of the debris of the cultural monuments, which he believes to have belonged to his forefathers, from under the worship places occupied by a different religion and it gives enough reason for him to dig out the truth. A person, with an ardent respect for his ancestors and their cultural architectural eloquence would raise his eyebrows on what he calls a remnant of brutality.

Now, it is not only a subject of politics that it would be criticized as, but also an issue that a huge lot of people would be genuinely seeking to solve. The demolition of the temple of Gyanvapi by Aurangzeb in 1669 and the remnants of it including Shivaling and remorseful Nandi, the bull, would impact the course of Indian politics. This should indeed be seen along with the arrogance with which the temples are captured by governments across the country while worship places of minorities are free to run by those communities. Temples administered by local devotees in various parts of Kerala were forcefully captured by the state government recently with an evil intent to seize the revenue that such temples make. Despite the opposition ranging from all sections of the believers, the state government was audacious to break into selected temples and forcefully bring them under its control. But most of the national

media remained silent on what they think is genuine with the majority in a secular democratic republic. The historical wrong by the invaders are deliberately painted to be excusable by the liberals at the present context, but nobody, not even the intellectuals raise their voice against the arrogant administrative invasion of Hindu temples by the governments. Imagine an attempt of the same type being carried out on any minority community in India. The discontent and unrest and the secular liberal hubbub would be heard beyond the boundaries of the country.

India, which is a 5,000 years old civilization, is measuring its own elements of culture by the tools of constitution that it has framed hastily, to douse questions on the destruction of its civilisational identity. Those who try to justify their stand against the demand made by the Hindus are gleefully hiding behind the Places of Worship Act today; while forcing the government to enact the efficacy of the act. They were bad mouthing against the government when it acted on the triple Talqa and many other issues that haunted societies. They praise the law of the land when it suits them and denounce it when it does not. The Hindus had to fight a long legal battle to get their holiest worship place Ayodhya back which they believe is the birthplace of Bhagwan Ram. I think cries for another disputed cites couldn't have been louder as it is today, if the Muslim community was magnanimous enough to let the Ayodhya dispute settle outside the court, amicably permitting the Hindu side to build a temple on the site. Lengthy is the judicial process in the country but the confidence it gives to the parties to take the disputes to the judiciary is remarkable. And Muslims, with no intention to stop their claim on important spiritual places dedicated to the major deities of Hindus in Ayodhya, Mathura and Kashi; are determined to keep the political heat at its flashpoint. They should have been magnanimous, allowing the Hindus to worship in these disputed places, which they believe are sacred for them. In such a situation, animosity between both the communities is sure to decrease and a good signal for India as it aspires to be a global power.

YOUR COLUMN Genuine demand of PM package employees

Dear Editor,
Unfortunately the target killings of Kashmiri Pandits continue unabated, which is very deplorable and sad. The Pandits are becoming cannon fodders for the guns of the indoctrinated Islamist terrorists for no fault of theirs but for the only reason that these unfortunate people belong to a different faith and religion. It is very sad and disturbing that this time the barbaric brutes have once again targeted the innocent youth of the miniscule Kashmiri pandit community. The terrorists have killed a PM Package employee Rahul Bhat (a clerk in the Revenue Department) that too in the office premises which in itself show that even the offices at Tehsil Headquarters are not safe for the minorities who are working there. After the last year's killing of a PM Package employee Deepak Chand (also killed in school premises while on duty), the LG's administration had assured full proof security and

safety of all Migrant Package employees who are working across the Kashmir valley in different departments. But very unfortunately again Package employees are becoming the soft targets in Kashmir and now all the package employees are feeling total unsafe and insecure in the valley. These package employees are not scapegoats and cannot serve in Kashmir at the cost of their lives. However, it is also not feasible to provide security to each and every PM package employee in Kashmir. Even the police personnel are being targeted in Kashmir valley by the terrorists day in day out. Under the fear of gun, these PM package employees wouldn't be able to serve in Kashmir further as there is fear-phycosis among them. Instead of experimenting with PM package employees, the government must absorb these unfortunate sons of soil in different departments outside the valley. So if centre government is really serious and concerned about the plight of PM package employees, then these migrant package employees may immediately be adjusted in different departments across the Jammu province and in other states of India. Is LG's administration listening is the million dollar question?

Pappu Ji Kaul,
Jampur, Jammu.

PROGRESSING J&K Tourist Villages Development Programme gains momentum; tourists visit new destinations 5 villages within Dal Lake to be developed as 'Tourist Villages'

The Tourist Villages Development programme under Mission Youth initiative, which aims at developing 75 villages having distinction in terms of scenic beauty, adventurous terrain, art and cultural, history and archaeology, is gaining tremendous momentum with heavy tourist influx thronging the new destinations.

According to Mission Youth official, broad objectives of the programme are to develop new tourism destinations which will integrate social, cultural and spiritual characteristics with economic contours having requisite infrastructural facilities for tourists within such selected villages. The activities to be covered under the programme included promotion of local hospitality, adventure and sports facilities, construction of budget accommodation, tourist complexes, wayside amenities, Tourist Facilitation Centres, special tourism projects, sound and light recreational facilities besides eco friendly transportation facilities. The villages to be covered under the programme are being selected on the basis of their rural tourism potential in consultation with Tourism Department by an expert committee of Mission Youth.

The scheme has twin benefit of promoting rural tourism and employment generation for local youth. The gamut of financial assistance worth Rs 10 lakh including Rs 8.50 lakh from banking partner; Mission youth J&K will provide an amount of Rs 1.5 lakh or 15 per cent of project cost (whichever is minimum) as special upfront incentive (subsidy) under the scheme. Moreover, the beneficiary must be unemployed and registered with the concerned District Employment and Counseling Centre. The initiative is destined to promote home stays across the UT and will strengthen the rural economy in the region, turn youth into entrepreneurs besides empowering women by offering them numerous opportunities of employment.

The J&K administration through Mission Youth has embarked on a task to rejuvenate and transform more than 75 villages in the Union Territory by promoting tourism and giving sustainable employment to youth. The government has launched this programme to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of Independence under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav under the Mission Youth which will work towards giving a facelift to 75 villages that are already famous for their historical background, picturesque landscape and cultural importance.

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, has said that administration will recognize the uniqueness of each village and showcase the landscape, foster the indigenous knowledge system and promote cultural diversity and heritage of these villages. "It has been learnt that the initiative has also been launched keeping in view the potential of J&K for film shooting purposes. The initiative is also aimed to promote shooting of films and offering financial aid to the villages for their sustainable development," he said.

LG maintained, "All villages which are part of the initiative will also be provided a digital footprint. This move is also aimed at providing maximum job opportunities to youth from different backgrounds and ensuring their participation in the policies that have an impact on their lives." As per officials, the initiative of Tourist Village Network has the potential and propensity to mobilize the diverse geographical and socio-economic landscape of the Union Territory. There are several regions in J&K which despite having greater tourism potential have not been able to garner requisite attention due to infrastructural bottlenecks. Destinations which lag behind in sphere of tourism infrastructure, can overcome the downsides by introducing home stays as a means of accommodation facilities for the tourists which do not require heavy investment. It is important to note that the government started the movement of promoting home-stay tourism in the UT by launching Panchari, a village in Udhampur district with mesmerizing beauty as first tourist village with home stays. Meanwhile, the Government has decided to develop 5 tourist villages within Dal Lake in Srinagar which included Kachri Mohalla, Sofi Mohalla, Tinda Mohallah, Akhoun Mohalla and Vegetable Market. These villages will have all basic facilities for inhabitants as well as tourists and local visitors. These villages will also provide home stay facilities to tourists.