

WAR AGAINST CORRUPTION

It is highly praiseworthy that the government of J&K has lately waged the war against the corrupt employees and is not excusing anyone for the misdeeds which they have done in the past or doing the same in present context. Of course the tirade against rampant corruption in J&K started with the inception of the BJP Government led by PM Narendra Modi in the year 2014, when he assured the country, 'Na Khayunga Na Khane Doonga'. This surely has become a turning point in the country as far as prevailing rampant corruption at that time was concerned and J&K being the notorious place with regard to corruption was the one which was to be dealt with special care and hard hands. No doubt that since 2014, the scenario in J&K has changed with so many corrupt officials shown the doors or put behind bars. In this context, the report coming in is telling that the Jammu and Kashmir administration has taken one more necessary step to teach a lesson to the corrupt people in the government sector by ordering the premature retirement of eight employees of the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) on the charges of corruption under Article 226(2) of the Jammu and Kashmir Civil services Regulations. Reportedly, the charges against the eight officers were confirmed by the Departmental Committees and were upheld by the designated review committee under Article 226(2), which includes misappropriation of funds, falsification of records and raising fake bills, allowing illegal constructions, committing financial irregularities and making illegal appointments during their tenure in various Urban Local Bodies (ULBS). It is pertinent to mention that Article 226(2) of the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services Regulations, 1956 allows the government employees to be retired in "public interest" upon completing the 22 years of qualifying service or attaining 48 years of age. Such employees are retired with a three-month notice or three months of pay. However, they retain their pension benefits. The step taken by the government should be taken as deterrent by others who are still in jobs and indulge in corruption because they could be the next in the line as the government is reluctant to act against all the delinquents working in the government departments because corruption free dispensation is the ultimate aim of the centre and the UT dispensation and sooner than later this will be ensured in the UT of J&K.

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Formula For Peace-in a Troubled World

Rankind seeks peace in a world at war. In the last 4000 years of recorded history, there have been approximately 8,000 peace treaties, 14,000 wars, and over a billion casualties. People everywhere search for peace. Peace is man's highest hope and his fondest dream. And most days it seems so hard to achieve. If we ask, "What's wrong with the world today?" many will point to poverty, illiteracy, poor governance, oppression, discrimination, terrorism, Corona, religious and political violence, corruption, disappearing rainforests, poor diets, lack of healthcare, broken families, overcrowded institution, and more. The world tries to fix these problems by doing good: feeding and educating children, building wells, regulating markets, conserving wildlife, funding charter schools, and thereby achieving a type of peace.

Everyone wants peace. Whether you're a national leader sitting across a table from other world leaders, a businessman facing the pressures and deadlines at the office, a homemaker trying to discipline the kids, or a student just trying to make it through the semester, everyone wants peace. The world's peace tries to fix the symptoms of sin but fails to see how the root of the problem, is something that can only be healed by God alone—not by education, law, money, regulation, or reform. Dealing with the symptoms of sin but failing to diagnose the sin itself is not new. In the Old Testament, the false prophets treated sin "lightly" and proclaimed the problem "solved" when it wasn't: "They offer superficial treatments for my people's mortal wound. They give assurances of peace when there is no peace." (Jeremiah 6:14).

Precisely because they have misled my people, saying, "Peace," when there is no peace, and because, when the people build a wall, these prophets smear it with white-wash. (Ezekiel 13:10) Our day is like Jeremiah's, in that people cry "Peace, peace when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14). Our cities are the most modern in the world, yet the streets are unsafe. Our communication technology is unsurpassed, but there has never been more confusion and misunderstanding.

Young or old, male or female, we've all experienced the pain of a broken promise. No matter how much our families, friends, and co-workers love us, at some point, someone will disappoint us. And despite our best intentions, we are likely to disappoint someone else by saying one thing and doing another: God's Word, however, can be trusted. He never contradicts himself or acts in a way that is out of character. He will never disappoint. God doesn't ignore our sin—he heals it, making his peace a different kind of peace from what we find in the world. God's peace is ours because Jesus heals our root of sin.

In a world of chaos and instability, there is a peace that exceeds all human understanding - the supernatural peace that God offers through His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus said "Peace, I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." (John 14:27) The peace offered by the world is an empty promise and can only bring temporary comfort. God offers peace in the midst of chaos. His peace doesn't change with the circumstances; it is secure in spite of the circumstances. Bible says "For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you. (Isaiah 54:10)

What is peace, really? We can look at it through a common lens and characterize it as calmness, quietness, tranquility, and contentment. Or, we can look at it through a Biblical lens and discover the true peace that God offers - God's peace is built on the sure foundation of his Word. In contrast to the world's promise of peace, God's peace is permanent and firmly grounded in his holy Word. His Word says "Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble". (Psalm 119:165) There is a very specific condition attached to the promise of great peace. This "great peace" is given only to those who love God's law. We have peace when we follow God's instruction. How wonderful and how appropriate are the words. Great peace have they who love God's law. Nothing shall offend them. Nothing will cause them to stumble. Nothing can defeat them. Because the Word of God is their foundation, they are completely secure.

Bishop Lalachan Abraham

Violence in name of democracy a lame duck

■ M.R.LALU

The streets of India are becoming battlefields on a daily basis and every passing day gives us a jolt of revolt. The hornet's nest reactions that we frequently witness these days are enough to bring the country on its knees. A sense of deliberate and well calibrated exercise of outrage is seen across its landscape.

Most of the parachute landed reforms by the Modi regime is seen to be blown away in the air itself by the mob frenzy and the impact of it goes beyond borders with more audience interestingly leaning on to manipulate and dictate terms to the world's largest democracy. Is the country at war, the war that it is fighting from inside more hazardously than the one that it has been against its warmongering neighbours? If that is the case, India has no reason to drumbeat its democratic principles anymore. If the democratic values that we designed and defined for the wellbeing of a pluralistic society are not capable enough to maintain amity and balance, there should be efforts to revisit them and modify with respect to the demand of the time. We have so far been of the opinion that the enemies from across the borders are the real threat. But the latest developments in the country educate us that the real threat is from within, which India as a country is struggling to handle, mostly bound by the liabilities that a democratic setup has actually thrown us in. By turning the whole land into a war-zone with public properties destroyed, and a mob fury topping the essence of our democratic edifice to a deplorable and laughable stage, justifying arson and destruction as a right to express dissent, the parties and the stakeholders of violence are doing a severe injustice to the country. The incendiary mob is trying to challenge the nation's audacity to pick iron gloves to crush its pig-headed out-

rage.

A steady shift of violence from the Gyanvapi to the Agnipath in less than two weeks has terribly shattered the minds of people, who uphold the values that the country principally espoused for generations, but seeing them fall apart writhing and wriggling, a sense of anxiety is simmering across India. The political involvement to tarnish the reputation that India has been successfully building on a global canvas is visible. This must be the result of a silent hopelessness that some parties have been going through - a predicament that they got entrapped in since 2014. No probable comeback at sight, most of them frantically jump into vehemently unethical and political sluffests bringing the country into the middle of a terrible trap. The government at the centre seems to be failing to explain its reforms before they are hard pushed on the polity. Every reform, for that matter, needs to be possibly put for public debate and the government must exhibit tenacity and patience and afford to look for the views evolving without prejudiced dispositions. Unless being authoritarian, no reforms can be hammered on the country. Radical reforms with long standing effects need thorough consultations in a democratic setup. The mystery behind the hullabaloo and violence leading to mass destruction of public property is gradually turning discernible. Should we call this an outcome of the nervousness that the Congress has been reeling under since the ED began to grill Rahul Gandhi on the National Herald case? The Agnipath has turned out to be a heavenly subject for the Congress party as its political horizon is clouded with bad times. The unquestionable authority of the Gandhi family in the Congress Party is seen principally shaken and browbeaten and unable to take on to the country's saffron political upsurge. It has taken a silhouetted repre-

sentation by turning the party cadre into an unruly mob as the Congress seion sat facing the ED and the Agnipath gave it a tip off moment to empty its anger further.

The mythological intensity and tenacity the government maintained while dragging Rahul Gandhi to the ED's table was criticized, but the suspicion on the Gandhi family on the National Herald case is escalating. Of course, it is untimely to comment on his culpability now. But the party that he leads needs to be tutored on how a democratic country functions when it comes to crippling the corrupt. If the corruption charges that are levelled against him are not true, his party needs to maintain restraint until he comes clean. This indeed would raise his brand value as a politician. The present depiction of disruptive behaviour by the party cadre pretending to be unleashing its aggression against the defence reform, and a genuine cause that it is trying to paint the arson and violence as, is a cowardly attempt to shield the complexity of a political huddle that Rahul Gandhi is naturally pulling his party into. The Congressmen have probably been thrown into a trap by the BJP by letting it unleash horror in the streets in the name of the ED investigation, in effect an act that the Congress party was articulating, mostly fearful of the damage the outcome of the investigation can cause to the Gandhi family and the party. An investigation, which could have been a silent process, was brought to limelight by the immaturity of its cadre, rampaging into the streets deliberately playing a victim card for its leader. This outrage and turbulence that the party designed was particularly meant for deepening the crisis that the country was already in due to the controversial remarks on the prophet by the BJP spokespersons.

Again, the uninterrupted and infuriating violence since Gyanvapi seems to have

been a framework of this desperation which could successfully throw the country into flames. Local offences which should have remained mere trifling issues within the boundary of the country were overstuffed to the level of attracting global attention. The episodes spanning from Gyanvapi to the grilling of Rahul Gandhi by ED to the Agnipath, a sequence of deliberate interventions both internal and external were intended to break the brittle bones of democracy. Narratives to camouflage guilt and paint the initiatives of the government as attack on the democratic principles, allowing hostilities to bristle and ignominious attitude being permitted to precipitate, the visible apathy with which the parties deal the essence of India is insidious. A recipe for national disaster that the political ignobility in the country has developed, injects India's veins with venom of hatred and the effect of the sedative has the power to shrink the ideological structure that we built the nation from where it began to pulsate the idea of acceptance and inclusiveness in principle and practice. By disturbing this equilibrium, the dynamism of the country's democratic values would be tyrannised. We need enough cultural backing as a country to understand the perception battle that the parties have been pitching for years. Carried away by a flash flood of controversies that the political desperation is trying to cause; every common citizen is getting entrapped in a whirlpool of chaos, unable to catch hold of the protective embankment of the democratic values which the politics in India turned slippery and feeble for the last few decades. We need tremendous intellectual involvement not emotional to understand the melodramatic impulse of politics, which often takes diplomatic somersaults in frequent intervals.

PROGRESSING J&K

People of J&K hail new land laws as major step towards development, progress

The new land laws are being hailed by the people of Jammu and Kashmir as a major step towards development and progress of J&K.

The historic initiative of the government will revamp agriculture and allied sectors besides ensuring holistic development of all sectors.

The Ministry of Home Affairs, through an order on October 26, introduced amendments to 14 laws of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir and repealed 12 others. Key amendments were made to four major state laws that governed the ownership, sale, and purchase of land in the erstwhile state, like the J&K Development Act, 1970, The J&K Land Revenue Act, 1996, The Agrarian Reforms Act, 1976 and The J&K Land Grants Act, 1960.

While progressive provisions of the repealed laws have been retained by including them in the modified Land Revenue Act, new provisions have been added to modernize existing laws. There are provisions for setting up of a Board of Revenue, Regional planning for regulating the use of land, alienation and conversion, land lease, consolidation and Contract Farming.

The Board of Revenue comprising senior officers will not only be the Developing Authority for preparing regional plans but can notify a scheme of consolidation of landholdings and also a scheme for restricting and regulating the fragmentation of agricultural landholdings to make agriculture viable.

The designation of land for industrial purposes will open up greater employment avenues for the youth who have always yearned for industrial revolution in J&K so that they can get better employment opportunities.

Recently, Jammu and Kashmir government signed 39 Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the National Real Estate Development Council to boost employment and per capita income.

"The NAREDCO will train 10,000 workers in

various skills of the construction industry, electrical, plumbing, masonry, carpentry and the likes," the Lieutenant Governor said, during the MoU signing event.

He said, "To facilitate transparent and accountable framework in the real estate sector, we have launched many portals - RERA portal, housing portal, integrated auction portal and these initiatives will help both developers and home buyers as one-stop portal for all their needs."

Sinha said there were people who did not want Jammu and Kashmir to develop at par with other parts of India. "They want industries without giving land for it and development without investments. But we will break all walls that will come in the way of Jammu and Kashmir," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs, Hardeep Singh Puri during the real estate summit said, "a large-scale infrastructure development, denied to the people of Jammu and Kashmir earlier, is now possible". "By combining rich natural resources with external investment and technical expertise, the citizens of Jammu and Kashmir will now have access to a higher quality of life", he added.

As a major initiative towards good governance and ease of convenience to the citizens, the Revenue Department started issuance of trilingual Land Passbooks in Hindi, Urdu and English to the landholders with effect from 19th of February 2022 from the districts of Jammu and Srinagar.

The land passbooks are being issued to every landholder which contain sentry from the Jamabandi in revenue estate so as to enable him to make its use for credit facilities and for other matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. The land passbook prescribed by the Revenue Department is true to the record and can be generated online by landholders without visiting a Patwari or Tehsildar or any Revenue office.

Holding an Olympic Games means evoking history

■ VINOD CHANDRASHEKHAR DIXIT

23 June is celebrated as International Olympic Day. It is a day of celebration of sport, health, and being together. In 2022, the theme for Olympic Day is Together, For a Peaceful World, and is accompanied by the social media hashtags #MoveForPeace and #OlympicDay. The first ever Olympic Day was celebrated on 23rd June, 1948. The countries of Portugal, Greece, Austria, Canada, Venezuela, and Belgium, organized an Olympic day in their respective countries. The Olympics play an important part not only the sport life but also in the cultural life of the global community.

The Olympics play an important part not only the sport life but also in the cultural life of the global community. The Olympics involve nations from all over the world and they are the major sport events in every four years in the entire world. The name Olympic is being given due to the place Olympia in Greece from which it has been started. The ancient Olympic Games were put on a stop when the Romans conquered the Greek empire. Historically, the Olympics were internationally significant event that unite people from all over the world. The Olympics are the major sport event that takes place every four years. The Olympics is the ultimate manifestation of the greatest achievements in the field of sport since every sportsperson participating in the Olympic Games. The 5th of September 1972 is considered as a black day in the history of the Olympics. Many terrorists entered the arena and killed several athletes. These games were held in Munich, Germany.

It is said that Olympic Day is based on the three pillars viz. Move, Learn and Discover.

YOUR COLUMN

Kashmir's Economy: Swinging between hope and despair

Dear Editor;

For the past several years, Kashmir remains trapped in the vortex of low growth and high inflation. Its surging number of unemployed remains a cause of social unrest. It's deteriorating law and order has shattered the public confidence on the State institutions and the administration. The State has not been a preferred destination for industrial investors.

It has a natural advantage of setting up industrial units in electronics, precision goods, food processing, herbs and other related areas. In order to achieve a self-sustaining economy with continued higher levels of investment and significant increase in income and employment, there is no option but to go for selective industrialization in the thrust areas.As regards the widening of employment base Government sector has almost become employment inelastic. Any more pressure on this sector will result into inefficiencies that the state can ill afford in a fast growing competitive world. The business corporate sector and industrial sector; so far neglected, need to be given high priority which will not only bring development dividends but will also contribute significantly towards expanding the employment base and easing out the over crowdedness in the state sector and thus paving way for improving competence in the state administrative machinery and ensuring good governance.A proper blend of education and trainings should contribute to the development of entrepreneurship among the youth who could be motivated for taking up self-employment ventures

which need to be facilitated by making procedures easy and significantly cutting on plethora of paper formalities so as to ensure hassle free flow of finance to the prospective entrepreneurs. Tourism is another area which is a gift of nature to the state. But unless we are able to create the requisite infrastructure and other facilities of high quality of international standard for the tourists, the real benefits will not flow to people in terms of income supplementation and employment generation. The downstream multiplier effect of tourism is perhaps the widest spectrum and equitable. As regards tourism, not only does it require to be diversified but it also needs to be extended over the whole year. There is ample scope for adventure tourism, pilgrim tourism, sports tourism and health tourism besides the traditional pleasure/recreation tourism. The scope for making films and other TV/video programmes is immense.

Improvement in tourism infrastructure calls for better roads, efficient connectivity, board and lodge facilities and prompt services including guidance. With normalcy gradually returning, time is ripe to take major initiatives in creating the requisite high quality infrastructure for development of tourism as one of the lead sector of the state economy.

It would, therefore, be necessary to put the economy back on the rails to enable the average person to get employment opportunities. This would require giving fillip to the economic activities that have traditionally been the mainstay of the State's economy and continue to hold significant potential for growth and employment. Such activities include Agriculture (including Horticulture), Food Processing, Handicrafts and Livestock and Poultry farming on modern lines. It would be equally necessary to ensure diversification of the State economy, especially expanding the industrial base by generally have a traditional bent of mind. Diversification of agricultural activ-

ities is the need of the hour to keep up with the changed circumstances.

The potential of Horticulture in J&K is high, given the rich diversity and varied agro-climatic situation. The state enjoys monopoly in certain fruits, vegetables and medicinal plants and there is an immense scope for increasing the production of other horticulture produce that are marketed in rich and export markets. In order to achieve this objective, it is important that the limiting factors in both production and marketing of fresh produce are addressed speedily and linkages between farmers and buyers by developing agricultural/horticultural mandies (markets) at faster pace and on modern and scientific lines. This would not only reduce supply chain costs but would also help the farmers with an assured market for their produce. Technological improvements are necessary to bring about lower costs in processing as well as reducing wastages in fruits and vegetables.Absence of post-harvest infrastructure-non-establishment of cold storages has locked the growth of this sector. Surprisingly there is not a single cold storage facility for apple preservation in the valley. The lack of this facility forces the farmers to sell their produce at cheaper rates. Cold storage facilities should be created in all the districts of the State where the fruit could be stored for a longer period.

Kashmir has unexploited capacity to produce products which have value demand and ready for attractive markets both in India and abroad (e.g. bio aromatics, medical herbs, organic specialty vegetables etc.). To enable exploitation of these opportunities, major programmes are needed to educate farmers to change traditional production habits and grow crops which the market will reward."

Mool Raj.