

LOOSE TALK

It is really unfortunate that political personalities take undue liberties while speaking in public and at times go beyond the prescribed limits of sensible dialogue thus creating distasteful situations. The alleged statement by the National Conference President and former Chief Minister of erstwhile J&K State, Dr Farooq Abdullah insulting the Tricolour is in news with ruling party BJP making lots of hullabaloo against the Kashmiri leader. There is always a thin line between saying a sensible thing and going for an irresponsible response which this time Dr Farooq has crossed as he has taken things lightly. The politicians should know well that what their limit is and upto what extent they can go because such instances do much harm to the society especially when the turf is J&K where already the government is combating terrorism, separatism and alienation since the last few decades. One can guess well that the seasoned and mature politician like Dr Farooq Abdullah cannot make such a mistake during the public speech and therefore the chance of same being a calculative move cannot be ruled out. If the same is true then it is not in good taste because insulting Tricolour is unacceptable to every Indian and also the concerned quarters should go for a legal review to adjudge whether by making an irresponsible statement, the NC patron has broken any law of the land or not? The public representatives should take good care of their language as they cannot afford to indulge in loose talk because every word which they utter means a lot to the masses of the UT and even the country also. The allegation against Dr Farooq is serious and he should mind his stride in future also because it is uncalled for to take undue liberties while going public. The politicians have much responsibility on their shoulders because their calls often decide the future course of society and if they will start acting irresponsibly there will be bedlam and things will go haywire which should not be the case. J&K being the sensitive region, its leadership cannot afford to take such liberties therefore leaders like Dr Abdullah should mind their uttering as such behaviour is not expected from the public representative of his stature.

STOP ROAD ACCIDENTS

It is imperative to stop road accidents because reports suggest that the prime cause of death of people between the age group 5 and 29 years worldwide as per World Health Organization are fatal accidents. Globally, road accidents are the tenth leading cause of death and the situation in India is also critical as nearly 1.5 lakh people die of about 5 lakh road mishaps on an average annually thus making it necessary to take the issue on war footing to stop this bloodshed on roads. Going by the newspaper headlines the situation in J&K is also crucial because no day passes when there is no news of accidents and the fatalities due to the same. One can say that factors which contribute to the rising number of fatal accidents include over-population, poor safety, absence of enforcement, distracted drivers, drugs and alcohol, over speeding, reluctance to wear helmets and not following the other safety norms. Taking the example of J&K, poor road infrastructure in the far-off hamlets also plays a negative role and of course driving vehicles in inebriated condition, as hardly people have heard or watched traffic cops using breath analyzers to penalize the drunk culprits. Though at the national level, the government is taking several harsh steps to reduce accidents on roads but in J&K the things are rolling as they used to roll years back with no significant change on ground. In this context, the UT lost three precious lives and seven others received injuries which are critical after a bus carrying a marriage party met with an accident in remote Ramnagar area falling in Udhampur district. Over speeding has been blamed this time for the colossal loss of life but what is disappointing is the fact that there is no strategy to stop such accidents in the UT and end the vicious cycle of death and destruction. The level of training of the commercial vehicle drivers should be of that extent that come what may, their speed meters should not cross the stipulated limit but the situation in J&K is dismal as neither the passengers nor the driver care for such precautions. Rather one can say that people as a whole give two hoots to the traffic norms despite such tragic incidents when the people lose their near and dear ones.

OFF 'D' CUFF

Equality of Human Beings

After an unfortunate incident in Makkah, the Prophet received a revelation from God Almighty, which has been recorded in the Quran in the chapter Abasa (He Frowned). The chapter begins thus:

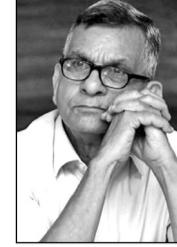
He frowned and turned away when the blind man approached him, for how can you know that he might seek to purify himself, or take heed and derive benefit from [Our] warning? As for him who was indifferent, you eagerly attended to him—though you are not to be blamed if he would not purify himself—but as for one who comes to you eagerly and in awe of God you pay him no heed. (80:1-10)

The background to these verses is that, one day, the Prophet was engrossed in a conversation with some influential persons of Makkah, hoping to convince them—and, through them, the Makkhan community at large—of the truth of his message. At that point, he was approached by one of his followers, Abd Allah ibn Umm Maktum, who was blind and poor—with the request for a repetition or elucidation of certain earlier passages of the Quran. Annoyed by this interruption of what he momentarily regarded as a more important endeavour, the Prophet “frowned and turned away” from the

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

UT status to Jammu negation of its splendid contributions, supreme sacrifices for nation-building process

■ PROF HARI OM



The nationalistic people of Jammu province celebrated August 5, 2019 as a day of thanks-giving. That historic day, Narendra Modi Government read down seditious Article 370 and abrogated discriminatory Article 35A and integrated the whole of this strategic northern region fully into India. They also hailed the decision of the Union Government to segregate Ladakh from J&K and grant it UT-status fulfilling the Ladakhi Buddhists' age-old demand seeking separation from the essentially separatist and fundamentally communal and oppressive Kashmiri leadership. Both these constitutional moves showed Pakistan and China and separatists of all hues in Kashmir the place they deserved. At the same time, however, concerned citizens of Jammu province expressed regret that the Union Government treated Jammu province at par with Kashmir and converted both the regions into a single UT. There were cogent reasons for the people of Jammu province to express regret over the Union Government's utter failure to take cognizance of the bitter and rancorous relations between Jammu province and Kashmir between 1846 and June 2018 and also its mind-boggling decision to maintain the otherwise these two highly disparate and historically, politically, culturally, linguistically, ethnically and economically distinct regions as a one political unit and convert the whole remaining J&K also into one UT. Their fundamental argument was that the people of Jammu province, unlike the secessionist Kashmiri political and ruling elite and clergy, had made supreme sacrifices for the cause of

the nation in the region; that their watchword and battle-cry all along was total integration into India; and that they consistently fought against the J&K's separate status as it had only promoted fissiparous tendencies, created what they called a separate republic within the Indian republic on purely religious grounds and sealed the fate of the minority communities in the state or linked their fate with the separatist and communal Kashmiri leadership.

The nature and magnitude of their supreme sacrifices and splendid contributions could be gauged from the fact that many Dogras attained martyrdom from time to time while fighting out the secessionist elements in and outside the political set-up. Take, for instance, their sacrifices during the 1952-53 'Ek Nissan, Ek Vidhan and Ek Pradhan' movement across Jammu province in which the founder of Jana Sangh Shyama Prasad Mukherjee also participated and laid down his life in Srinagar on June 23, 1953 for the unification of J&K with the rest of the country. The contribution of Dogra women and school and college going students, including girl students, to the movement was just superb and remarkable. Almost two dozen nationalistic Dogras were martyred by the brutal state force used by the Nehru Government-backed-to-the-hilt Kashmiri leadership to crush the movement in Jammu province. The memory of how the brutal state force martyred at least fourteen nationalistic Dogras during Gulam Nabi Azad's regime in 2008 in Jammu during Amarnath land movement is also still too fresh to be forgotten. One can cite any number of instances to establish that the history of the Dogras of Jammu province post-1947 is one of spectacular contributions to and supreme sacrifices for the nation-making process. Not just this, it was the valiant Dogra soldiers who strengthened the coun-

try's war machine to the extent that the enemies were, and are, mortally afraid of them. It would be no exaggeration if someone may say that Duggar Pradesh is a land of valiant soldiers, martyrs and patriots and a land whose people, instead of being rewarded and patronised by the powers-that-be in New Delhi, were punished to the extent that they were rendered unreal and ineffective for all practical purposes in their desperate bids to appease, please and pamper separatist leadership in Kashmir. But more than that, Dogras of Jammu province under able, skillful and effective leadership of Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu founded J&K State on March 9, 1847. That day, Kashmir became a part of Dogra Kingdom, and not the vice-versa. Earlier, between 1834 and 1841, Jammu Dogras had merged Ladakh consisting of Leh, Kargil, Gilgit-Baltistan, Chitral, Hunza, Yasin, Nagar, Ishkoman, Bunzi and Astore etc., and Kailash Mansarovar and Western Tibet with the Dogra Kingdom. The whole credit goes to Maharaja Gulab Singh, his great General Zorawar Singh and the Dogra soldiers. General Zorawar Singh would have added the whole of Tibet to the Dogra Kingdom, had bad weather and heavy snow not hampered his otherwise highly successful invasion and had he not fallen from his horse at the battlefield of To-Yo and Tibetan commander Migmor not hurled a spear killing on December 12, 1941 one of the greatest generals in the subcontinent's history, also called the Napoleon of the East. It must remain a matter of shame that the Nehru Government handed over the highly strategic Gilgit-Baltistan, Chitral, Hunza, Yasin, Ishkoman, Nagar, Bunzi and Astore etc plus other parts of the Dogra Kingdom, including Muzaffarabad, Poonch's Bagh, Pulari, Mirpur and Kotli to Pakistan on a platter in 1948 and helped the Islamist invaders con-

PROGRESSING J&K

J&K emerges as top performer in start-up ecosystem among UTs, NE states

84 Start-ups established across J&K in last few years

Jammu & Kashmir has emerged as top performer among all UTs and the North-Eastern States in ranking of States' Exercise-2021 on Support to Start-Up Ecosystems. This was revealed in the results of the third edition of 'Ranking of States on Support to Startup Ecosystems' released by Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Textiles, Piyush Goel at the National Capital.

According to the report, States and Union Territories were classified into five categories, like- Best performers, Top performers, Leaders, Aspiring leaders and Emerging Start-Up Ecosystems. Jammu and Kashmir (UT) which has been clubbed with UTs and the North-Eastern States including those States having less than one crore population has emerged as top performer while Meghalaya is best performer. Jammu and Kashmir government released a thorough start-up policy in 2018 with the goal of supporting and nurturing the establishment of at least 500 new start-ups in J&K over the course of the following ten

years. In the past few years, 84 start-ups have been established in J&K. The rankings are based on the initiatives taken to develop the start-up ecosystem for promoting budding entrepreneurs. The exercise is aimed at supporting states and Union territories (UTs) in developing their start-up ecosystem and learning from each other's best practices.

A total of 24 states and 7 UTs participated in the exercise, which ranked them under five categories - best performers, top performers, leaders, aspiring leaders and emerging start-up ecosystems. The states and UTs were also ranked under these five categories based on the population of less than one crore.

Kerala, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana and Jammu and Kashmir were categorised as the top performers. Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, and Goa are in the leaders' category. States and UTs in the aspiring leaders' category include Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chandigarh, Puducherry and Nagaland. According to the ranking, the

emerging start-up ecosystems category includes Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Mizoram and Ladakh. They were evaluated across seven reform areas consisting of 26 action points, ranging from institutional support, fostering innovation, access to market, incubation and funding support.

Speaking after declaring the awards, Piyush Goyal said that Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) had the power to spawn thousands of start-ups. 'UPI in India has democratized the payment system in India. In the next 5 years, we will have ONDC democratized e-commerce across India. So much so that we will have a few thousand start-ups may be more and a few hundred unicorns. Rather than three companies being 100 billion or one trillion size, you will have a thousand companies each of a billion-dollar. That is what ONDC has the power to do,' the Union Minister said. Anurag Jain, Secretary, DPIIT said that a number of initiatives of the government including JAM (Jandhan, Aadhar, Mobile), Digital India, GatiShakti, Ease of Doing Business were driving the start-up

ecosystem across India. "If the Start-up system has to grow further, the biggest role has to be played by States. We can play a facilitative role," he said. Jammu and Kashmir administration is working to encourage start-ups and foster innovation thereby creating job opportunities in abundance besides raising economic graph of the Union Territory.

Endeavouring to accomplish this stupendous task, J&K government is focusing on sectors such as food processing, agriculture, renewable energy, handicrafts and handloom by vigorously promoting start-ups in these vital sectors. Terming start-ups as game changer towards economic growth, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said that the government is determined to provide incubation and seed funding support to brilliant ideas and solutions. "Our aim is to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation and start-ups in J&K and the synergies between industrial and academic establishments will encourage and empower young innovators and boost private investment in start-ups," he observed.

Rise in NPAs- cause of concern

■ VINOD CHANDRASHEKAR DIXIT

NPA in banking sector may be termed as an asset not contributing to the income of the bank. NPA is part of the operational risk of the banking industry. The problem of NPAs has secured an important place not only in the realm of regulatory policy discussion in banking, but also in general public discussions on the safety and soundness of banks and financial institutions. The quality of a bank's loan portfolio can impact its profitability, capital and liquidity. Asset quality problems are at the root of other financial problems for banks, leading to reduced net interest income and higher provisioning costs. If loan losses exceed the Bad and Doubtful Debt Reserve, capital strength is reduced. The biggest ever challenge that the banking industry today faces is management of the NPAs. The NPAs in PSBs are growing not only due to external factors like ineffective recovery tribunals, willful defaults, natural calamities, industrial sickness, lack of demands, labour problems, changes in the government policies etc. but also internal factors like managerial deficiencies, inappropriate technologies, poor credit appraisal systems, improper SWOT analysis, absence of regular industrial visits etc. It is now clear that there are various internal and external factors behind the NPAs in Banks. Lack of proper supervision, monitoring and follow-up is one of the responsible for increasing ration of NPA in Banks. Lack of awareness and basic education in many parts of the rural and semi-urban areas have added to the problem. Today the quality of the loan assets is most important factor for the basic viability

of the banking system. The overdue advances of banks in India are mounting and in consequence the NPAs in their portfolio are on the rise, impinging on the banks viability.

It is very important that only specialized technical staff, equipped with the latest marketing information and technological developments at the bank level deal with the matter. There are cases where the borrower furnish incorrect position of the operations and stock statements owing to the fear that admission of the true position they would precipitate bank action on the other bank despite knowing that unit is vague they feels satisfied and reassured by the fact that stock statements shows its security at least on the paper and thus such accounts turn NPAs. Now it is a common experience of a banker that without a proper monitoring and follow-up, performing advances may be converted into non-performing assets. There is an urgent need to prepare specialized teams who can deal with the recovery and for reducing the further NPAs in banks. Rising Bad loans are a concern for banks as they have to set aside more money in the form of provisions to cover such loans.

The higher this amount, the more is the impact on profits. This will affect profitability as banks do not earn any interest on bad loans and, on top of that, they need to set aside money for such loans. Avoidance of loan losses is one of the pre occupations of management of banks. While complete elimination of such losses is not possible, bank management aims to keep the losses at a low level.

In fact, it is the level of NPAs which to a great extent differentiate between a good and a bad bank. The rise in NPA is because there is some stress in bigger accounts, which we did not see earlier. It is nice that Banks have made recovery process robust and are taking legal action. Net NPAs as a percentage of loans may not be a good yardstick to judge a bank's health as it can always make hefty provisions to bring it down.

Proper management of NPAs is of the hour. To be effective, Banks need to keep in mind the following tips.

1. It is compulsory to form Recovery Team at each branch consisting of staff members conversant with the borrowers and their villages.

2. Each Branch should have area wise/village wise list of NPA borrowers, so that follow-up becomes easier as lot of time can be saved in visiting places time and again. This will help in contacting maximum borrowers in a single visit.

3. Staff meetings should be held on monthly basis regularly & prevailing NPA level of the branch should be discussed.

The reduction in NPA achievements and progress should be reviewed in such meetings. Individual contribution of employees in reducing the NPA should be taken note of and appreciated.

4. Defaulting borrower's names under various sponsored programmes should be conveyed to sponsoring agencies for muster their help for recovery.

5. For early repayment of overdues, local pressures may be brought on borrowers. To pressurize the defaulters, influential personalities in the borrowers' village should be contacted.

6. A close rapport with government offi-

cials should be maintained and their assistance sought for recovery.

7. A recovery climate should be created by arranging village meets at frequent intervals.

8. Care should be taken to update the records of borrowers as soon as inspections are undertaken.

9. Regular inspections are necessary in suit filed accounts as there is every chance that the borrower may dispose of the assets with the sole intention to defeat the execution of decree and attachment of assets.

10. A close rapport and follow up should be maintained with the branch advocate in respect of quick disposal of suits. Execution of decrees should be hastened through branch advocates.

11. A close & constant rapport needs to be maintained with the guarantors and their assistance should be sought for early regularization of the account.

12. In the cases, where accounts are overdue, sticky and security being weak rendering recovery impossible in the normal course through attachment, reasonable compromise with bare minimum sacrifice should be considered giving top priority.

13. When there are no chances of recovery, write-off of sticky and bad debts it should be undertaken on priority basis after availing DICGC claims.

14. It is to be remembered that recovery process is an ongoing concept and constant persuasion only can bring fruitful results.

The performance of a bank is inextricably linked with its asset quality. Managing the loan portfolio to minimize bad loans is, therefore, fundamentally important for a financial institution in today's extremely competitive and market driven business environment.