

BADALTA JAMMU KASHMIR

From the last four years, Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed a remarkable transformation in its Public Distribution System (PDS). Through series of innovative reforms and technology-driven initiatives, the government has successfully eliminated leakages, enhanced efficiency, and ensured the benefits of PDS reach the deserving beneficiaries. The government's decision to seed Aadhaar cards with PDS beneficiary records has been a game-changer in ensuring transparency and preventing leakages. By linking beneficiaries' Aadhaar information to their ration cards, the system has become fool proof, eliminating the possibility of duplication and ensuring that only eligible individuals receive the benefits. The successful implementation of the National Food Security Act (NFSA) has played a crucial role in reaching out to the most vulnerable sections of society. By achieving 100% Ration Card Level under the NFSA, the government has ensured that no eligible household is left out from the PDS net. To streamline the distribution process and bring in more accountability, the administration converted 6,413 out of 6,735 Point-of-Sale (PoS) machines to online status. Additionally, 322 PoS machines were put in offline mode, primarily to cater to areas with limited internet connectivity. This tech-driven approach has not only expedited the distribution process but also reduced the scope for malpractices and ensured real-time monitoring. With over 93% of PDS transactions being conducted online, the beneficiaries now draw their ration through Aadhaar authentication. This has not only minimized human intervention but also empowered the beneficiaries with a convenient and hassle-free process. The authentication system has also made it easier to track the movement of food grains, thus ensuring efficient stock management. By implementing One Nation One Ration Card (ONRC), the government has facilitated seamless portability, enabling beneficiaries to avail their entitled ration from any PDS outlet across the country. This has been of immense help to transient populations and has further strengthened the food security network. The government's meticulous de-duplication exercise led to the deletion of one million ineligible beneficiaries from the PDS system. This exercise not only ensured that the benefits reached the truly deserving ones but also saved substantial resources and reduced the burden on the exchequer. The combined impact of technology integration, Aadhaar authentication, and de-duplication has resulted in substantial financial savings. The streamlined PDS has saved over Rs 230 crores and efficiently distributed 1.6 Lakh MTs of food grains to the needy population. By leveraging technology, embracing Aadhaar authentication, and implementing innovative schemes like ONRC, the administration has set an exemplary precedent for other states to follow. The elimination of leakages, improved efficiency, and significant cost savings are clear indicators of the successful implementation of these reforms. The reformed PDS system stands as a shining example of how good governance can positively impact the lives of the most vulnerable and marginalized sections of society.

Experiencing Amarnath Yatra in 2023: A soul-stirring journey amidst Nature's Bounty, Religious Fervour

■ DR. ADIL MALIK

Liddar Valley, nestled along the south-eastern corner of Anantnag district in Kashmir, presents itself as a picturesque destination for spiritual adventure seekers undertaking the enchanting journey of the Shri Amarnath Yatra. This sacred pilgrimage, spanning 62 days from July 1st to August 31st, is one of the most revered pilgrimage tours in India. The Amarnath cave temple, located in the Himalayas, is dedicated to Lord Shiva and draws millions of devotees each year. Despite the ongoing pandemic, this year's preparations are at an all-time high to ensure that devotees can embark on a journey that combines religion and travel. To facilitate a comfortable and convenient experience for the pilgrims visiting the Amarnath cave temple, the hospitality industry has played a crucial role in ensuring that all pilgrims have a smooth journey with their needs fully met. From accommodation to transportation and food services, the hospitality sector has made comprehensive arrangements to cater to the needs of the pilgrims at every step of their journey. Lodging is a critical aspect of hospitality during the Amarnath Yatra. Numerous temporary camps and lodges have been constructed along the pilgrimage route to accommodate the visitors. These camps offer basic amenities such as beds, blankets, and hot showers. Additionally, hotels are available at different pricing points to accommodate the diverse needs and budgets of the pilgrims, allowing a significant number of them to be accommodated during the peak time of the yatra. Transportation is another vital aspect of the hospitality industry during the Amarnath Yatra. Many pilgrims find the long pilgrimage journey through the mountainous terrain physically taxing. To ease their journey, numerous transport alternatives have been made available. Helicopter services are provided for those who wish to skip the trek and reach the shrine directly. Not only do these helicopter services provide convenience, but they also offer breathtaking aerial views of the picturesque Himalayan landscape. Furthermore, pony and palanquin services are available for those who prefer a more traditional mode of transportation.

Food services play a crucial role in hospitality during the Amarnath Yatra. Numerous food stalls and kitchens have been set up along the yatra route to cater to the dietary needs of the pilgrims. These food stalls offer a variety of vegetarian meals, ensuring that the religious sentiments of the devotees are respected. Cleanliness and hygiene are given utmost priority to prevent any health issues during the journey. The efforts put into maintaining high-quality food services ensure that pilgrims have a satisfying and nourishing experience throughout the yatra.

In addition to accommodation, transportation, and food services, medical camps and first aid centers have been established at regular intervals along the pilgrimage route. Trained medical professionals and volunteers are present at every step to provide immediate medical assistance to pilgrims in case of emergencies or general health issues. These medical facilities are well-equipped with necessary medicines and equipment to handle any medical situation that may arise during the pilgrimage. Over 02 Lakh AmarnathYatris, including foreigners, have performed darshan, expressing their satisfaction and pleasure over the wide range of arrangements put in place for their convenience. Thousands of Amarnathyatris traverse the mountainous routes along the Pahalgam and Baltal axis with fervor to perform darshan at the Holy Cave. This pilgrimage has captivated devotees globally, including NRIs and citizens of different countries, making it a truly global spiritual experience. To make the religious pilgrimage of Amarnathyatris a memorable and life-time experience, around 30 government departments are providing their services relentlessly. The officers and officials are making strenuous efforts to extend essential services and basic amenities at every destination to pilgrims. Their dedication ensures that every pilgrim who visits the Amarnath Cave expresses satisfaction and pleasure over the arrangements made for their convenience. In conclusion, the AmarnathYatra is a spiritually fulfilling journey that captivates devotees from around the world. With the unwavering efforts of the government, the hospitality industry, and the strict adherence to health and safety protocols by the pilgrims, we hope that more and more devotees can gather blessings and return home with hearts filled with peace and souls filled with memories of a lifetime. The divine experience of the ShriAmarnathYatra, combined with the natural beauty of Kashmir, creates a truly awe-inspiring journey that leaves a lasting impression on the pilgrims.

(The Author is a Doctor).

Amarnath Yatra instincts sins & sufferings of pilgrims

■ RAKESH AATHUR

Om as per Hindu philosophy is the beginning of all the Goddess, divines and other creatures on earth planet as well in heaven. It had created the world and all the religions circumscribing throughout the world. Hindu philosophy did believe in one god that is Om or Shiva from which all other primary gods has been created namely Lord Vishno and Lord Brahma, union of all known as Tri-Murthy on the earth. In other words we can say that Lord Shiva is known as creator of the world so it is far away from all kind of exaggeration, contempt, creed and dignity. Though, people adore it in the temples in large numbers during shivratri festival throughout India.

People living in the different corners of the India and world are worshipping the lord Shiva in their different ways whether they are Hindus or Muslims or others. Though they are offers their prayers in the different ways but the god adored by them is frequently one god known as Lord Shiva. So many of the Pilgrimages while visiting Maeca -Madina in Saudi- Arbia had acclaimed that the god worshipped by the Muslim community from all over the world is also copy of Lord Shiva, but their mode of prayer towards it is different from others yet!

In the same way in Hindu religion Lord Shiva a sacred place where all kind of weeds & grasses like hemp, green grass, green leaves of some particular trees are offered with the milk and water consistently, in order to gratify it some people offered it with different kinds of dry fruits, fruits, flowers of different colors and dishes. But it is so astonishing God who is offered with water by the worshippers, whereas any other has not offered with such kind of weeds like hemp and water beverages. In- addition more than two and half months long Yatra has been organized every year throughout the Indian territory towards the Jammu & Kashmir holy cave known as Amar Nath cave, where according to a myth the Lord shiva had delivered with the sermon of eternal blessings of MOKSH to Mata



Parvati. And in whose honour and mystics every year there occurred with a snow-fed SHIVLING in a holy cave.

This holy Yatra is adventured in the Jammu & Kashmir where pilgrimages from all over the world used to pay their obeisance. In order to make yatra successful the locals cum others pay their greatest contribution by serving with so many of Langar halls along with the N.H.1, N.H.2, etc likely Chhan -Arorian, Samba, Jammu, Udhampur, Baltal, Chandan-Bari and other parts of northern India. People across the India and world would used to serve the pilgrimages with items like milk, beverages like cold drinks, juice, fruits, dry fruits, food items, blankets, clothes, etc for smooth aviation of the Yatra. The temples along the National Highways are rendered also full of the pilgrimages during these Yatra.

While witnessing one such temple, which is situated at Maheshwar in Samba district, it is said to be resting there since before the regime of Aurangzeb. Whether so proper about its formation none can be assured. But as per myth it is said that when there was not any temple erected of course Shivling was present there. Some animal grazers had noticed that the milking cow would use to clog its milk at it

spontaneously. The people living surrounding it in the dwellings like Katli, Karandi, and Mandis, etc would have realized so and then deciphered it as holy place in the area.

It also memorizes the very beginning of the ancient Amarnath Yatra when a saint named as Mahant Shambu Giri of Yuna Akhara (Kashi) used to attempt this Yatras every year and while passing by he used to stay here for few days which is presently known as Maheshwar. As per myth once while returning when he reached there during a night suddenly he had left his body for the abode and he was buried here underneath where present SHIVLING is erected. And very soon after of this incidence a temple has been built -up and since then this temple has rendered an epitome of Amar Nath Yatra. During this Yatra so many of the saints of the different Akharas would used to stay there and venerate it

Since then it has renowned in the samba district for its religious sanctity and it invoking in favour of several of its devotees. Its own area is estimated to be more than 12 acres with an elegant corridor. It is flanked by the Villages like Katli, Karandi, Diani, 22 mandis of Samba and Army cantonment area around it. Where

on occasion of Amarnath Yatra thousands of the pilgrimages including saints from all corners of the India would used to visit the Shivling and invoked with their best fortune for further life. There occurred AMAR NATH YATRA every year in the months of July- August used to be celebrated with great fervor variants.

Though, J&K (UT) administration has made better arrangement for the Yatra there in the J&K (UT). Despite of it there are normal management for the pilgrimages founded in the samba district and lapses of security has been revealed all over yet. Because stone pelting like incidents and seizure of the holy bomb caps from the samba district cause in-panic in the minds of the pilgrimages to opt it or not. Owing to which so many of the pilgrimages had tolerated their plans to visit the holy snow fed- Shivling yet. Despite pilgrimages and common people are thankful to the regime which has made provision of all essential services assured on the one hand and security in all respects including insurance on other hand of every pilgrimage. Though pilgrimages, who are having this Yatra are feeling rejoiced and cheerful than all such prior Yatras as per security and provision of essential service delivery.

Therefore, they arrives from all over the India and world as a holy Yatra in which a snow made SHIVLINGS would used to venerate with milk, honey, Bilpatari, hemp, and different kinds of sweets and beverages like Shatraie, watery- milk, etc. And Bholenath on this occasion blesses to its every devotee with grace and relieves sins & sufferings and bless them with mystic blessings. People comprising of all religions would used to adore it with their best efforts and they offer it with milk, hemp and leaves in worship especially on this occasion. In other words we can say that Hindus considered it as "Mukti Ka Datta" who assigns dead souls with heaven i.e Moksh after leaving this world. In other words we can say that Amarnath Yatra is the one and main Yatra which is the longest of all the holy Yatras in the world.

In 2024 it will be NDA Vs INDIA

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

Twenty six opposition parties and its fifty leaders have met in Bengaluru and deliberated on the opposition unity and this time they have been successful on agreeing a name of the opposition conglomerate .Deliberately and with a purposed the opposition leaders have named their alliance as Indian national democratic inclusive alliance abbreviated as INDIA and with this innovated scheming the opposition parties will fight the NDA in 2024 and it is likely that with this name the opposition alliance will be able to at least give a tough fight to the NDA .At the same time both the NDA as well as the opposition parties are meeting and both are busy in churning and it is to be seen as to whose churning will bring out the nectar .

In Delhi NDA's 38 parties are meeting under the leadership of prime minister Narendra Modi and it has extended and broad based national democratic alliance and are meeting to give the opposition yet another defeat in 2024 general elections ,however it is easier said than done as this time it will be very difficult to beat the united opposition .It is good that opposition parties had consensus on the name of INDIA but at the same time it can be said that in Bengaluru conclave the last rites of the UPA were performed and in its place a new conglomerate named purposefully as INDIA was formed but still the face of the prime ministerial candidate has still not been chosen and for this the INDIA will again meet in Mumbai shortly .Bengaluru again hogged the political limelight as the opposition parties are to draw plans for a joint front to fight the BJP in 2024 Lok Sabha elections .This is the second time in past two months that Bengaluru is hosting a number of political leaders since several of them gathered for the swearing in ceremony of chief minister Siddaramaiah .

The Bengaluru meeting follows the first such meeting in Patna last month to forge an anti-BJP political front .It is good for the opposition unity that congress senior leader Sonia Gandhi and chief of AAP and the CM of Delhi have attended the important conclave of opposition parties since congress had made it clear that they will support the AAP on the ordinance issue in parliament .It seems that earlier differences between the congress and AAP have been solved.' India will push back the assault on its people by the BJP ,on their livelihood ,their sense of belonging hand hard



earned freedom .Equality ,Social justice and fraternity is the bedrock of INDIA. "tweeted CPI-M leaders Sitaram Yechury .Prominent opposition leaders arrived Bengaluru and are attending the significant meeting of the opposition parties to deliberate and chalk out the future course of action and further the united opposition move that will be able to take on the NDA/ BJP in 2024 elections which are now only ten months away and all treasury benches and the opposition leaders have stepped up their activities and political meetings to grab the power in 2024.The two day mega meeting is chalking out a joint strategy to take on the formidable BJP unitely in 2024 Lok sabha elections .The session comes in the backdrop of the spilt of NCP led by Sharad Pawar after Ajit Pawar led faction joined the ruling BJP-Shiv Sena government and also the West Bengal Panchayat polls which saw widespread violence .The AAP,NCP,RJD and JDU are the prominent outfits that took part in the meeting chaired by congress president Mallikarjun Kharge .

While 15 parties attended the last meeting hosted by Bihar chief minister Nitesh Kumar in Patna on June 23rd ,in the second huddle ,top leaders of 26 political parties are attending the two day brainstorming sessions for further uniting the opposition parties.As such 26 opposition parties attended the meeting to set the tone for their 2-2024 Lok Sabha campaign by forming a coalition -Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance--to take on the ruling NDA in 2024 polls .The 26 opposition parties have wrapped up their meeting in

Bengaluru by forming an alliance called INDIA .The prime ministerial candidate will most preferably be decided after the polls and the seat sharing by the political parties and the common minimum programme as an agenda for fighting the elections well be decided in the coming days .Wrapping the two day meeting with the announcement of a novel name of INDIA to the alliance decided to settle the seat sharing between the political parties at a later date and the PM face will most likely be decided after the elections .Reiteration of the oppositions slogan 'United We Stand' marked the conclusion of the first day of the two day meeting .Ahead of the 2024 general elections ,leaders of 26 opposition parties discussed major 2024 issues in 'Taj West End Hotel in the evening as part of their efforts to present a united front against BJP government in the centre .

As the 26 leading opposition parties gathered in Bengaluru ,BJP is all set to challenge the opposition alliance.38 parties have entered NDA and are holding a crucial meeting in Delhi under the chairmanship of PM Narendra Modi on 19th July and the meeting has reiterated not to give any chance to INDIA .Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said at the press conference that the Idea of India being attacked by ideology of BJPAAP president and Delhi CM Kejriwal said ,PM could have done a lot of things but he destroyed all the sectors .

We have gathered here not for ourselves but to save the country from hatred.TMC Chief Mamata Banerjee said INDIA will win

,our country will win and BJP will lose .The next opposition meeting will be held in Mumbai and next date will be announced soon said congress .Kharge said after opposition meet leaders of 26 parties have agreed on a new name for the alliance -I-N-D-I-A .West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday said the opposition meeting in Bengaluru was fruitful .She said constructive decisions were taken .Today what we discussed ,the outcome will be good for the people of the country .The 26 political parties are the members of INDIA and these include-1- Indian National Congress,2-TMC,3-DMK,4-AAP,5-JDU ,6-RJD,7-JMM,8-NCP Sharad Pawar Group,9-Shiv Sena (UBT) ,10-SP,11-RLD ,12-Apna Dal,13-NC ,14-PDP,15-CPI(M) ,16-CPI,17-CPIML ,18-RSP,19-All India Forward Bloc,20-MDMK ,21-VCK,22-KMDK ,23-MMK,24-IUML,25-kerala congress (M),26-Kerala congress (Joseph).BJP said its alliance is on the basis and idea of India but the opposition alliance is an alliance of corruption and for protecting the dynasties .This has been refuted by the congress and opposition alliance .The INDIA says that BJP destroyed democracy and attacked vital institutions of democracy and used the important agencies to intimidate the opposition leaders.PM Narendra Modi slammed the new opposition front ,saying alliances formed on negativity have never succeeded and asserted that NDA will return to power for the third consecutive term getting 50% of the vote share .The congress leader Rahul Gandhi asserted that the fight will be "between INDIA and the Prime minister Narendra Modi." 'Congress president Kharge said ,'We will fight the 2024 Lok Sabha elections unitedly and will come out with success ."The convener of the alliance will be selected at the next meeting in Mumbai .Kharge said that our intention in this meeting is not to gain power for ourselves .It is to protect our constitution ,democracy ,secularism and social justice .In short whatever will be the outcome of the two day sessions of the opposition parties ,one thing is obvious that 2024 Lok Sabha fight will be between NDA Vs INDIA .It is premature to say which alliance will win in 2024 general elections ,but the game of democracy is on.

(The author is a columnist, social and KP activist).

YOUR COLUMN TOLL CHARGES

Dear editor;

Toll charges are often the subject of controversy. Earlier it took at least 3-4 minutes in the toll charges payment process for each vehicle. Even non-stop buses were like express buses with at least 5-6 stops for paying toll charges. After the fast tag system was introduced, the vehicle will be almost in motion and the ordeal of stopping at every toll plaza for 3-4 minutes has been buried. A bizarre incident of Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) bus coming back unable to pay the toll charges in 10-lane road of Bengaluru-Mysuru has been reported. The bus driver had to run the risk of coming back in the one-way road attracting the charges of violating the one-way rule. A suo-motu case has also been registered by the police for violation of rules. The only Expressway between Bengaluru and Mysuru is at the centre of controversy beginning from its inauguration to the toll charges collection work. Instructions have been reportedly issued by the government to private vehicles to

go for fast tag and some concession has also been extended to those who go for fast tag payment. It has been reported that the bus had no fast tag. Unable to pay twice the amount of normal toll charges, the bus had to come back without paying. It is a pity that a state-owned bus could not pay the toll charges. A situation of this kind would not have arisen if the Siddaramaiah government had not given free travel facility to women casting heavy financial burden on the shoulders of KSRTC. When the bus returned without going forward, the time of passengers, cost of diesel and the energy of drivers and conductors were frittered away for no benefit. The benefits obtained from free-travel have been neutralized with the increase in prices of essential goods and services. Had the Congress been wise, it would have reduced the bus fare by 50 per cent to all. The effect of 50 per cent fare to all or 100 per cent exemption to women only is more less the same. After all, men have also voted to Congress. In doing so, it would not have been open to the charge of discrimination on gender basis. Further, it would have discouraged unnecessary journey by the beneficiaries of free travel. The extent of revenue loss also would have dipped.

As bad are too good roads as bad roads. Too good roads are

also prone to accidents due to over speeding like too bad roads leading for mishaps. Good roads are necessary to every nook and corner of the country. Good roads are also necessary to save the precious time. Instead of laying too good national highway roads to reduce the journey time at too high a cost between too big cities inducing the drivers to drive the vehicle at high speed causing many fatal accidents, it is better to make investments in laying good roads to all the places. This would obviate the need for setting up toll plazas in large numbers paving way to concentrate on road development to all the neglected places. Certain minimum standard of quality roads for National and State Highways must be definitely maintained. But roads to the extent of inducing the drivers to drive with high speed and collect toll charges are not necessary. A number of village roads have been neglected and are crying for the attention of the government. The bad roads leading to villages are compounded by infrequent number of buses. It is the duty of a popular government to provide good roads to all the places. In doing so, developments will also take place on even footing.

Yours faithfully,