

US designates Pak-based terrorists

For quite some time the US has been mounting pressure on Pakistan to deny safe haven in Pakistan to the Taliban, Al Qaeda and Haqqani group terrorists. The US has convincing information that the terrorists operating against the state forces of Afghanistan and the US-led NATO forces in that country run away to Pakistan to hide in their safe havens and avoid being apprehended or engaged by the official forces. Pakistan, as is her wont denies having to do anything with the terrorists operating in Afghanistan. Not only that, she profiles herself as the victim of terrorism and garners huge amounts from the US in the name of financial support to fight terrorism on Pakistani soil.

Afghan Taliban are the main opposition legions fighting the US and State forces in Afghanistan. When Osama bin Laden was attacked by the Americans in Tora Bora mountains, he managed to flee Afghanistan along with a large number of Taliban and established his headquarter somewhere in Waziristan on Pak-Afghan border. He continued the fight from his hideout there and the Pakistanis knew his whereabouts though they feigned ignorance. Ultimately, the Americans found him hiding close at stone's throw from the GHQ in Rawalpindi. And still the Pakistanis say they did not know that Osama was in such a close proximity of the GHQ.

Three individuals newly designated by the US are Rahman Zeb Faqir Muhammad, Hizb Ullah Aslam Khan and Dilawar Khan Nadir Khan with close connections with known terrorist organizations like LeT and Taliban etc. All of them are reported to be involved in raising and providing funds for terrorist organizations. From some of the details provided by the US Treasury, it appears there is a wide network of fund raising for terrorists in a number of countries in the world more especially in the Gulf. It is not clear whether the littoral countries provide funding or that these are used as conduits for transfer of money. It will be reminded that only some months back the National Investigation Agency (NIA) of India also unearthed the hawala racket that was providing money to the separatist leaders in Kashmir to foment insurgency.

Apparently, funding for the terrorists does not come from one individual or one organization. Extremists have a design to approach the donors. They play the religious card and in most cases they invoke religious sentiments among the donors telling them that Islam is in danger because the west and the modern world are arrayed against it. In doing so they are able to concoct stories and lies to convince the donors that they are fighting for the right cause. It is their policy to profile Muslims as victimised people in different parts of the world and thereby legitimize armed uprising against the duly and legally elected Governments.

Pakistan's problem is that she has taken the lead in institutionalizing terror as the part of state policy. She calls the terrorists as "non state actors" thereby trying to absolve her of the accusation that she is providing logistic support to them and allowing them to export terror to the other countries, especially the neighbouring countries, with the tacit purpose of destabilizing social and political order of these countries. In yet another alibi of sorts Pakistan has created the bogey of good and bad terrorists. What she actually claims is that Pakistani wing of Taliban against who Pakistan army is fighting in the Waziristan are bad terrorists because they are fighting against an Islamic state whereas the terrorists who sneak into Kashmir and fight the Indian troops are good terrorist because they are fighting against a non-Muslim Government. India has been repeatedly telling Pakistani rulers that patronizing terror and terrorists on her soil is a very dangerous game because at the end of the day, terror begins to consume its own children. That is precisely what is happening in Pakistan.

Samba Dry Port

The town of Samba in Jammu is going to have the distinction of becoming the first Dry Port in the State. A Dry Port means a place where merchandise is stocked and forwarded to the markets that place order for the goods which are either airfreighted or carried through surface transport. In all probability, the Samba Dry Port will be able to supply goods to foreign countries in the neighbourhood. In this connection the recent visit of a high powered delegation from Dubai led by Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Dubai Ports, Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem to Jammu and Srinagar and its exchange of ideas with the State Finance Minister is considered a good beginning. Dubai Ports Group has inked a MoU with the J&K Government for a joint venture involving Rs 1,500 crore Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) for setting up inland logistic hubs in Jammu and Srinagar capital cities. About one hundred acres of land near the railway station in Samba has been earmarked for conversion as Dry Port and in due course of time it will be a 500 acre area when the Dry Port begins functioning fully. Jammu and Kashmir Government will provide land as equity on 90 years lease to the company. The visit of Dubai Ports Group delegation follows the announcement made by the Finance Minister in his budget speech in the State Legislature last month about the Government's plan to attract foreign investment by setting up dry ports in the State to boost local economy. The logistics hubs to be established in Jammu and Kashmir with maiden Foreign Direct Investment of around Rs 1,500 crore by Dubai Ports would include two Dry Ports, warehouses, cold storage chain, controlled atmospheric stores and supply chain to transport commodities and products including horticulture and agriculture produce, handicrafts and industrial products from the State directly to the markets throughout the world.

We think that this is a welcome decision and the economy of the State will find a boost. Fresh fruits and vegetables from the State will have attractive market in Dubai. There is a large Indian and Pakistani Diaspora in Dubai and apart from agricultural products, items of handicrafts from the State, also will find flourishing market in Dubai. If this experiment succeeds, there is every possibility that the exercise could be extended to other Gulf States including Saudi Arabia as well. In this way another commercial route will be opened to link our State with the world market.

Celebrating the Peace within is Shivaratri

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

Celebrating the Shiva Tattva in oneself is called Shivaratri. 'Ratri' means night, the time for rest, when everything becomes quiet and peaceful. Shivaratri is not only rest for body, but for mind and 'Ego'.

Shivaratri means 'The Night of Shiva' and is observed in honour of Lord Shiva (The meditative aspect of the Universe). According to the legend from Shivapurana, when Shiva was asked by Parvathi what pleases him most, He is supposed to have replied thus: "The 14th night of the new moon, in the dark fortnight during the month of phalgun, is my most favorite day. It is known as Shivaratri".

This day brings deep rest to the mind and the spirit. It is like a new year for a sadhak (seeker). It is considered as an auspicious day for spiritual growth and material attainment.

Mahashivaratri is the day when the Shiva Tattva touches the earth. The consciousness, the aura or the ethereal world which is always ten inches above the material ground, touches the earth element on the day of Mahashivaratri. It is the wedding of the material with the spiritual.

Shiva is the soul (of everything) - there is no difference between the soul and Shiva.

Your true nature is Shiva, and Shiva is peace, infinity, beauty and the non-dual one.

Ratri means 'to take refuge'. Shivaratri is taking refuge in Shiva (the soul). It is celebrating the Shiva Tatva within oneself.

According to the Shiva Purana (ancient texts praising the divine through divine stories)

when Shiva was asked by Parvati, what pleases him the most, He is supposed to have replied, 'The 14th night of the new moon, of the month of Phalgun is my favorite day. It is known as Shivaratri'.

Ratri (which translates as night) is that which gives you rest, or peace. Three types of peace are needed:

1. Material peace
2. Mental peace
3. Peace in the soul

If there is disturbance around you, you cannot be peaceful. You need peace in your environment. You also need peace in the body and mind, and you need peace in the soul.

You may have peace in the atmosphere, you may enjoy good health, and you may have peace in the mind to a certain extent, but if the soul is restless, nothing can bring you comfort. So that peace is also essential. Only in the presence of all the three types of peace can there be complete peace.

Without one, the other is incomplete.

Shivaratri is taking refuge in the divine consciousness which brings peace and solace to all layers of consciousness. So resting in the Shiva

Tattva is Shivaratri.

When the mind, intellect and ego rests in the divine that is the real rest, and the deepest rest (the complete peace). This is why it is very useful for people to meditate on this day.

A Day for Meditation

Shivaratri is like a new year for a sadhak (seeker). It is considered as an auspicious day for spiritual growth and material attainment.

The night on this day, when the constellations are in some particular position, is very auspicious for meditation. And so it is very useful for people to keep awake and meditate on Shivaratri.

In ancient times, people used to say, 'Okay, if you cannot do it every day, at least one day in a year, on Shivaratri day, do meditation and keep awake'.

Wake the Divinity that is deep within you - this is the message. The Divinity is within you, let it wake up!

A Day for Fasting

Many devotees, in order to bring a balance between the three Gunas, i.e., Rajas, Tamas, and Sattva observe fast on the day of Shivaratri. Not



Ajay Kumar

Recent announcement and the inking of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), GoI and the State of Jammu and Kashmir on exchange program for students of Jammu Kashmir is an important step towards integrating and accommodating the students of Jammu and Kashmir especially in the wake of recent attacks on these students studying in other states.

This exchange program for students of Jammu and Kashmir must be applauded and welcomed by the student community as well as the civil society cutting across the states. In line with the reaffirmation of "healing touch policy" of present NDA led Govt. at centre, announcement of such an educational exchange program would strengthen the confidence among the students of Jammu and Kashmir aspiring to study in other parts of the country such as IISER's, IIT's, IISc's or other Institutes of national repute.

The exchange program seeks to instill a feeling of fraternity, integrity among the students of J&K and would aim to

Exchange program for students of valley

acquaint them with culture, traditions, values, and language and development stories of different parts of the country. This would not only be a one way traffic but, would also give a chance to the denizens of other states to openly interact with the students hailing from J&K. This would enable forgo the apprehensions that people from other states hold and the negative narratives created about the northern most Himalayan state of India.

The initiative will promote exchange of cultures, traditions, languages et al. among different states, the students from valley will spread their culture and in return would be imbibed with the practices, traditions et al. from other states. Since the program is a two way exchange, this would also provide a platform for students visiting from other states to know the vast diversity, beauty and scenery of the state.

In long run, this program will enable breaking isolations and resolving differences, clarifying doubts regarding the state of affairs of Jammu and Kashmir.

People across different states especially those who have never met Kashmiris or have never visited Kashmir mostly generalize Jammu and Kashmir based on the mainstream media and the political narratives created in the air. And they judge people of Jammu and Kashmir as anti national or separatists simply through a narrow prism on the media reports.

Such programs become all the more important at a time when the people of Jammu and Kashmir are against the tinkering of article 370 or 35A of the Constitution. Since the special provisions of the article 35A prohibits people from other states from purchasing property in J&K, many of the students of the state are not much exposed to the outside world, even the prohibitory provisions in the Article 35 for the people of other states from taking jobs in J&K also makes the state completely isolated. Cultural amalgamation of societies among different states, understanding each other, knowing the language of a different state as envisioned in the Bharat

Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB) program of the MHRD will also strengthen the idea of one India and integrated India. As per the initial reports, since this exchange program would be a part of EBSB, it would provide a platform for students of Jammu and Kashmir to celebrate the Unity in Diversity of our Nation, promote the spirit of national integration through a deep and structured engagement with other Indian States and Union Territories, showcase the rich heritage and culture, customs and traditions of Jammu and Kashmir for enabling people to understand and appreciate the diversity, establish long-term engagements and create an environment which promotes learning between J&K and other states by sharing best practices and experiences. All these objectives are a part of EBSB, but equally hold true for this particular exchange program as well.

Exchange of humans would not only have implications on the personal growth of the students, human exchange also lead to diffusion of cultures, values, languages

and traditions across the states. This would further act as a step in promotion of communal harmony, tolerance and fraternity among the people of different regions. The conclusion of a "Maitreyi Yatra", Jammu & Kashmir Student Exchange programme on 18th February 2018 is an initiation towards right direction in connecting people of J&K with the mainstream India. This program provided opportunity for the 500 students of J&K. Such programs along with Indian Army's Sadbhavana and other programs such as EBSB would really help students of Jammu and Kashmir to come to mainstream, this would also make people of other states more accommodative and more welcoming towards the students of vale.

There is a beauty in differences but there is more beauty in appreciating differences. This program would also enable students learn differences and commonalities and appreciate each of them.

(The author is an Assistant Professor, Department of Plant Science, Central University of Kerala and Ph.D. Scholar, School of Life Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.)

feedbackexcelsior@gmail.com

Prof A N Sadhu

The last two years of BJP rule has come under scrutiny and critical assessment. In a five year term, it is normal for people to grant time to the new Government to entrench itself into the governance and identify the areas of concern and start working on that. It is after over three decades that a Government was elected with an absolute majority of its own and almost two-thirds majority with its allies and other supporters. The people of the country took a conscious decision to vote for a new political arrangement with full strength to witness a Government with change and wished it opens new vistas of growth and development. The earlier Governments, primarily coalition arrangements with congress in the lead role has definitely not been able to maintain the rhyme and rhythm for forward movement because of one or the other reason. The people attributed much of this disorder to the UPA Prime Minister, who they thought was weak for several reasons even when it is an acknowledged fact that he is graceful, honest and fine human being. The people would wish and wait for a plausible explanation from him regarding his position in the UPA of which he remained the PM for full two terms.. Enough time to make an impact as a leader and also a leading world economist. People, therefore, welcomed the new arrangement and hoped that it will deliver as per the statements made during election campaign. The PM often used the expression "Minimum Government and Maximum governance" which aroused enthusiasm as also the expectation of the common masses who looked forward to get a reprieve from the hardships witnessed earlier owing to rampant corruption and administrative apathy.

It is almost four years now that the BJP Government is in office and people have started feeling restive not to witness anything new on ground except listening to high sounding lectures painting a bright picture without showing any perceptible results on ground. Statistics is a very tricky subject and sounds differently with

different ways of interpreting it. In the budget speech the FM cleverly used absolute figures rather than relative figures because it sounded high. Ten crore is less than ten percent considering our present population but then ten crore is a big figure capable of creating a better impression among the masses. So far the people have been enthused with figures only and nothing substantial on ground when only a year is left out if the political calculations do not warrant an early poll.

Unemployment is a serious problem in the country and the NDA had promised that it will create substantial job avenues in its rule and seek to realise demographic dividend to the advantage of the country. Almost in every speech, directly or indirectly, the PM refers to 130 crore population of which 65% are below the age of 35 years and the rich demographic dividend that it is capable of yielding to the nation. It is easy to understand in simple economics that such a large employable manpower will become a demographic burden if jobs commensurate with their number are not created in the country. Make-in-India sounds sweet but what is its progress? No substantial investment has come to the country so far. For the first time, global economic scenario is looking up-beat and the developed countries of the world are witnessing higher rates of growth which will tempt their investors to enhance investment in their domestic productive channels and from the rising tide of global growth. Even if some investment comes to our country it will produce for domestic market only and hardly expand the export domain of the country. Start-ups and other productive initiatives are skill specific and we are lagging behind on competitive edge and one should not generate high excitement on this front. The prospect of realising the demographic dividend is very dim unless both agricultural and industrial sectors are robust. There is an enhanced chance for the country's skilled manpower

to gain access to service sector jobs abroad in the wake of revival of growth and its sustainability, on the global front but the demand for jobs from the unskilled and semi-skilled youth will rise further in the country. It is timely that the FM has laid greater emphasis on agricultural growth and its diversification which will enhance job prospects for rural youth and reduce urban ward movement to save our cities from further overcrowding.

Watchful over the last four years, the youth of the country is showing the signs of restiveness from the present dispensation on account of sub-optimal performances on the promises made to them. The country also needs to initiate a serious debate on whether to go whole-hog towards a capitalist model, keeping in view the history as also the socio-economic structure of the country. Can the country afford to build the islands of affluence without simultaneously providing the safeguards against a storm likely to occur in the ocean of deprivations? An effective tickle-down mechanism which will neither impede the growth nor the justice, will have to be worked out for ensuring the percolation of gains of growth at the grass-root level. In fact this should be the corner stone of inclusive growth.

The countrymen sustained the hope and optimism for the first two years but soon after the demontisation, the restive murmurings started manifesting and people looked at the Government with probing eyes. Nobody doubted the intentions but in many quarters it was felt that such a step was taken in a hurry to camouflage the Government's failure to unearth the black money in the economy and get back the huge amounts of black money locked in foreign banks. The Government did not have any plausible explanation except that it will check fake currency and terror finance. Not much is known about its success but people did face difficulties, petty businesses did suffer and so did the farmers besides a cash crunch

which dipped the GDP. The corruption is there, the black money is there and so is there the fake currency as well. The country is eagerly waiting for the Government to realise success in their confide intentions of giving the people a neat, clean and responsive administration. The GST was primarily introduced to integrate 29 states into a single market and eliminate multiplicity of taxes across the country and curb tax evasion. Has it served the purpose is yet to be seen.

There are irritants caused by law and order situation in different parts of the country. The communal stances and killings are heart-breaking and so is the martyrdom of our young army and other security personnel along the LOC in the state of Jammu & Kashmir. The loss of innocent lives is equally painful. There are many pitfalls on other fronts as well. People have started asking if all these ailments can be buried under the debris of previous years misrule. No, not at all. Have any new strategies been evolved to tackle multiple problems faced by the people? Things may have gone wrong in the past but have new paths been found to reach the desired solutions. The simmering restiveness needs to be addressed immediately. Suppressed anguish bears the potential of explosion. There are lessons to be learned from recent elections. The excitement as it existed in 2014 is waning and restive murmuring in the country, as of now, may not be viewed as an outright criticism but certainly as anguish, for the peoples expectations have not been met and their aspirations for revival of the grandeur of "Bharat" are not in sight, although the PM has done a commendable job in raising the nation's esteem in the world. In the emerging global order, he has successfully campaigned the strengths of the country, on the one hand and on the other, explained its resolve to work for the peace and prosperity of the world

nations. As such it should not be a surprise when the world recognises "Bharat" as an architect of a harmonious global order. World, definitely understands the niceties and the glory if Indian culture much better than earlier and accords it a respectable recognition. However, this achievement on the global level warrants a strong back-up on the national level as well.

On the ideological front, there are always several debating points. The constitution of the country is an exhaustive document as also a permanent document to define the contours of national ideology to which the country's political system has to adhere. Political parties, at best, can differ in approach to reach to reach the national goals already defined in the constitution. That the Government led by a political party will deviate from its basic premises is extremely difficult. Subjective interpretations to a particular political stance may emanate from vested political interest or from a political conspiracy or even from a genuine concern to put country's onward march on right course. This needs a healthy debate by the nation's intellectuals and politicians of statesman calibre so that the interests of the posterity are not compromised. Perhaps the preparations for the next parliamentary elections should promote such a debate to enlighten the country men about the vision of New India. The restive masses would welcome such a discussion on a mass scale to facilitate their making a right choice for a strong and vibrant national framework capable of yielding the rich demographic dividend the country.

In the history of democratic nations, for democracy to survive, the political stability is vital. Democracy in India has not only survived but it has also deepened its roots in Indian psyche. Insulating the country's political and economic fundamentals against the disruptive activities engineered by aliens and anti-national elements, needs a careful handling so that our social and secular fabric is not jeopardised.

feedbackexcelsior@gmail.com

Statehood for Jammu

Sir,
After bearing seventy years of subjugation and second rate existence in this State, if someone suggests to gear up for Regional councils as an answer to whatever is perennially rotten and sickening for we, Jammu people, well you can only pray and hope that this suggestion will also evaporate in thin air like so many such proposals which appeared on the scene since 1949. Regional autonomy to Jammu was part of 1952 Delhi Agreement which was finally shot down by RSS as it believed in undivided India. After 1952 till today, Regional councils have been the toast of many flavours and after creating a little storm, the proposals do a disappearing act. Kashmir centric political parties would like to see a divided Jammu in many subregional councils on communal lines and that will seal the fate of Jammu region and

Jammu Dogras. Kashmir valley of today is a homogenous society and only one kind can exist there. Jammu has been made heterogenous and multiple kinds exist here and we have to make this heterogeneity our strength and convert it into one single unit outside the clutches and ambit of sick minds who take on us in every field because we represent inclusivity, acceptance and broad mindedness and we were ready, till now, to sacrifice all our interests at the altar of keeping Kashmir and Kashmiri's as an integral part of India. Not anymore. It is time for the cry 'Sadda Haq Ithe Rakh'. And it is nothing short of Statehood. Will Kashmiri political class armed with likes of Article 370 and 35A ever permit regional councils based on article 371 of Indian Constitution for Jammu. It is a common refrain of their political leadership that their loosening of vice like grip of Jam-

mu and Ladakh is linked to resolution of Kashmir problem vis a vis India. 29th amendment of J&K constitution is a stark example where constitution has been used to ensure legislative inequality and subjugation of Jammu region and people and, if needed, they will do it again. It is their hatred for what Jammu stands for, which drives them against giving equitable share to us in various fields. One can go on and on about how we have been treated in this state both at the hands of Centre as well as Kashmiri political class. And if after seventy years, one has to go for the kill, it should be Statehood and not inconsequential crumbs like councils. It is time to show some spine. Council proposal is nothing more than old wine in new bottle.

Yours etc...
Anil Sharma
On e-mail

Sir,

It is said that teachers /masters /lecturers attached in schools on the basis of life consuming diseases and other matters who become surplus due to issue of faulty transfer orders by the authority do not get their pay dues for months together for no fault on their part although they fall within the sanctioned strength of the Deptt and their pay under rules can be easily drawn by DDOs concerned against the grant demanded /released by the authorities without any hitch.

For example refer Director School Education Jammu Order No DSEJ /GAZ/NG/36510-20 dt 14/10/2017 which was for August 17 to Nov 17 and after that concerned officials are without pay. Here the question is as to why the authorities do not allow the DDOs to draw the pay of the concerned regularly for which only necessary grant is required to be released and it is not understood as to why there is hesita-

tion in doing so and as such hope that some good sense shall prevail upon the authorities to issue necessary order to all concerned DDOs to do the needful as there is no such problem in any other Deptt and for kind information of the authorities refer Himachal Pradesh High Court directions regarding disbursement of salaries / emoluments in time and if not done so it is lack of governance, violation of the rights of livelihood of an employee and in case it is not done on schedule except in the event of emoluments being withheld as per law, the State Govt or instrumentality of the State shall be liable to compensate the employees concerned by paying statutory interest or the existing rate for saving bank deposit provided by the State Bank of India, whichever is higher.

Yours etc...
Bansi Lal Balwal
11 LIG Housing Colony
Udhampur

Readers Write

Drawal of teacher community pay