

## Monitoring arms licenses

There is fresh move at the level of State Home Ministry to bring about reformation in issuing arms license to applicants in the State. The matter had been under the consideration of authorities but now the Government seems to be seriously attending the matter. Earlier, the Home Secretary had twice issued directions to District Magistrates about adopting proper system and making desired entries in records about issuance and monitoring of arms licenses. But the Magistrates failed to comply with instructions. This has led to the Home Secretary deciding to bring complete transparency in the system by introducing on line arms license processing and monitoring mechanism

License for keeping arms is a matter of great responsibility. Generally license is issued to private individuals either with the purpose of self-defence or for petty game. There are very strict rules which have to be observed for keeping private licensed arms. The most important concern about issuing of arms license is that the arms could be misused and could be turned into a source of threat to public. Therefore the District Magistrates, who are authorized to issue arms license have a heavy responsibility towards the civil society.

The practice of issuing license for keeping arms has come down from the days of the British Raj. Rules and regulations covering the issuance are also those that were framed during the Raj. But situation on the ground has changed and a totally different social scenario has emerged in the country. Violence and intimidation are spreading among both rural and urban population. Economic and property interests are deep rooted and often become the cause of eruption of violence and mayhem. Imagine out of 28,690 applications for license were made in the State this year out of which over 27,000 applications have been cleared for issuance of licenses. We have a break up of applications from different districts of the State. This is no small a number for a peace loving state like ours. It should not be forgotten that J&K State has been fighting externally sponsored and internally supported terrorism for last two decades and more. Very often, violence has erupted among the militants and their sympathizers leading to gun battles. In such a situation, the Government should have put a ban on issuing of licenses for some years till situation returned to complete normalcy. We must also take into account the sensitive social dynamics of our state where we have people of different faiths, cultures, languages and life styles living in traditional harmony. Possession of arms even with licenses would become an irritant unless arms are issued to meet the challenges of militants.

Way back in 2010, the Union Home Ministry had issued instructions to all states to maintain comprehensive database of all the arms licenses issued. However, relevant functionaries in our state took the notification lightly. On line processing and monitoring of arms licenses was not implemented. Now the Home Secretary is very much involved in streamlining both services viz. issuing license and of monitoring the use of arms. Under instructions from the Home Ministry, Magistrates are required to implement the web based centralized system designed and developed by National Informatics Centre for issuance, renewal and recommendation of extending the jurisdiction to the Home Department within one month positively. The District Magistrates are also required to upload the information relating to licenses issued earlier from their district in the software. In short all this exercise is being done to ensure that the weapons do not fall in wrong hands and secondly that these are not misused. Home Secretary has been holding frequent meetings with the District Magistrates in this connection and is personally monitoring the online maintenance of the record.

## Bleak future of water sector

Water crisis is a very big threat which our country is likely to face. 200 million people in the country do not have access to safe drinking water and nearly 1.5 million children under five die each year due to water-borne diseases. Glaciers are melting fast, underground water depletion is increasing and water bodies are drying up for various reasons. There is inter-state dispute on rivers and there is a broad scenario of dispute among the farmers for water for irrigation purpose. Fresh water is becoming a rarity and less and less people are having access to it. Less than one percent of fresh water on earth is available to human beings for consumption. Owing to urbanization and growing population, global water consumption increased six fold between 1990 and 1995—more than double the rate of population growth, and continues to grow rapidly as agricultural, industrial and domestic demand increase. In some areas, water withdrawals are so high relative to supply that surface water supplies are literally shrinking and ground water reserves are being depleted faster than they can be replenished by precipitation. Due to overexploitation of ground water, water tables are dropping and some rivers often become dry before they reach the sea.

This is an urgent matter towards which we in the State should pay attention. It is true that our State has snow clad mountains which are the source of supply of fresh water. But it has to be remembered that glaciers are melting and rivers and streams are getting polluted. Water bodies are depleting and virtually drying up. Population is increasing and that put pressure on demand for fresh water. Therefore conservation of fresh water resources is of great priority with the Government and the people of the State.

By V K Singh

When a State seeks to project itself as a theocracy by adding a religious adjective to its name, unwittingly, it creates a new power centre. Ordinarily, a State interacts with the rest of the world like two football teams facing each other with the goal-posts well defined in the political sense. However, with the emergence of a non-secular State, its goal gets split into two with each sub-goal being placed along the flanks rather than on the rear. The sub-goal changes the dynamics of the game altogether. Internally, whereas the political goal sought to establish the 'rule of law', the theocratic goal seeks to establish the 'rule of religious law'. Seemingly, it is of a minor consequence but actually it ends up challenging the central issue of power. Why?

Carl Schmitt in his famous treatise initiated the concept of the 'Political' as being about 'friends' and 'enemies'. Hence, in the above situation the friends and enemies of the political sub-goal get reversed in role-play when viewed from the theocratic sub-goal becoming enemies and friends respectively. Thus emerges a theocratic State as one so surcharged with tension that the original game between that State and the rest ends up as a secondary game while the internal one becomes the primary one.

The power of a State reaches its full potential when it is consolidated as a circle with one centre. A circle is an ellipse with one centre and no

# Like a circle, power cannot have two centres

eccentricity. A marriage reaches its full potential when the affair is a circle with the spouse at its centre. The moment an extra-marital affair commences, another centre is introduced and the circle adopts the shape of an ellipse adding to the situation the burden of eccentricity. Just as an extramarital affair is bound to end in pain for all the parties concerned, likewise, such a State operates at odds with itself.

A State that adopts a theocratic centre in addition to the political centre transforms the circle of power to an ellipse and the power is reduced on account of the burden of eccentricity. The two centres tend to have a logic of their own in defining friends and enemies which work at cross purposes. The burden of eccentricity diminishes the power, authority and legitimacy of the State by multiplying the authority of each actor by a fraction. The success of the one centre is at the cost of the failure of the other and thus emerges a State that needs no external enemy.

How the burden of eccentricity impacts on the State? While the secular laws seek to implement the rule of law the religious laws tend to inhibit attitude, behavior and culture to a conservative lifestyle. Justice, therefore, tends to implement the mindset of another era. On the contrary, society, commerce and economy tend to transform in accor-

dance with the changes that science and technology tend to usher in. Hence, we have films, fashion, television, internet, mobile phones, automobiles etc ushering in the romance of modernity only to face a head on conflict with honor killings. Secular education tends to throw up the concept of gender equality which then challenges the religious

best of oxymoron's 'honor killing'. Not just toil, tears and sweat, the burden of eccentricity leaves in its wake a trail of blood as well. Thus, a theocratic State is akin to an extra-marital affair that has reached the stage of fatal attraction.

A theocratic State becomes an accomplice of sorts in perpetuating the ill-treatment of

the first place, then it becomes, by vicarious liability, an accomplice. Similarly, the fair treatment of minorities is only possible when the theocratic State adopts a neutral and secular posture. With the majority in the theocratic State being inclined to a particular sect of the predominant religion, the victimization of the various minorities is always a lurking possibility to which the State's adjudication machinery would invite a question mark as regards neutrality and fair play.

The incidents on the LoC of targeting Indian soldiers has to be seen in this context of Pakistan's politico-religious eccentricity. The State has two sub-plots unfolding: the political and the religious and both seeking to attain power at the expense of the other. This has been a phenomenon on the rise since the 1970s. The number of lives being lost within to this clash is far greater than the lives across. In fact, the loss that occurs across borders is very negligible as compared to the dynamics happening within. Not just the loss of lives within, but at stake is the total erosion of the power, authority and legitimacy of the State. Seeking to be relevant, the radical groups step in to hijack the agenda of the State by targeting Indian soldiers in J&K to put back the K-issue centre stage. If they have the undemocratic mandate to use violence within and across the borders then it speaks volumes

of the collapsed democratic architecture of the State and its legitimate institutions. With what authority will the institutions conduct their business if they have no control whatsoever? The armed forces and the law enforcement are meant to be the coercive instruments of the State but it seems that they have voluntarily outsourced their agenda for the ostensible reason of 'plausible deniability'. The compulsions of the USA to launch drone attacks on their territory and conduct covert operations like 'zero-dark-thirty' are an indicator of the extent to which the legitimate institutions have shrunk to pygmy-level from their constitutional status as giants.

Thus the clash of the political State with the theocratic groups is inevitable once the State seeks to reassert its individuality vis-à-vis the impersonator to its authority. The political State that has the mandate cannot remain a lackey to the impersonator and expect to achieve its stated goals of delivering to the public the ideals enshrined in the constitution. This schizophrenia cannot last. What we are witnessing across borders are only the bloody splashes of the conflict unfolding within its borders which is reaching a boiling point. Handling skirmishes at the tactical level is a sufficient strategy as of now.

*(The author is Additional Director General of Police, Security, J&K)*

Raju Vernekar

As we move into the 67th year of independence, the rise of India as an emerging global power is certainly an inspiring story and despite political upheavals we have always unified as one nation in times of crises.

While Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh will unfurl the tricolor from the ramparts of the historical Red Fort, 21-gun shots will be fired in honor of the solemn occasion. President Pranab Mukherjee will be the chief guest.

PM will address the nation and his speech will be followed by march past by divisions of the Indian Army and paramilitary forces, and parades and pageants showcasing events from struggle for independence as well as cultural traditions of the country

Similar events will take place throughout the country. The Indian Diaspora too will celebrate the Independence Day in various parts of the world. In several cities in the United States, 15 August has received the nomenclature "India Day" among the Diaspora as well as the local populace.

India has out paced Asian peers in several aspects and has attracted the highest amount of overseas investment this year, leaving behind markets like South Korea and Indonesia by a wide margin. We are progressing fast, yet appraisal of many issues is essential in view of the growing population and constant ups and downs which the coalition government at the centre is facing.

**Indo-Pak**

The issue of cross border militancy remains unresolved as evident from the recent attack by Pakistani team on Indian soldiers in Poonch sector in which 5 Indian soldiers were killed. This is certainly a set back to bilateral peace talks between the two countries. Whether there will be a meaningful discussion on this issue during the meeting of Dr Manmohan Singh with Pakistani Premier Nawaz Sharif on the margins of the US General Assembly at New York next month, is yet to be seen.

## India..an emerging global power

**Indo-China**

Despite Defence Minister AK Antony's recent visit to China, the flare-ups along the 4,057km-long disputed Indo-China border have not been stopped and a face off between two armies continues. In a rare diplomatic tango Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and A K Antony had recently attended a Beijing meet and it was expected that the meet would set off a new phase of cordial ties. But the incursions by Chinese troops in Ladakh's Chumar sector have continued to erupt.

**PM US visit**

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is scheduled to visit US between September 25 to 30 to participate in the UN General Assembly, but the highlight of his visit is expected to be bilateral engagement with President Barack Obama in Washington, DC. India and the US are looking forward to finalize a commercial agreement between NPCIL and Westinghouse for a nuclear reactor in Gujarat. If the two countries can get over India's contentious nuclear liability law and conclude negotiations, it would be the main take-away from Singh's meeting with Obama.

**Uttarakhand**

The recent devastating floods and landslides in Uttarakhand which claimed thousands of lives and dishoused several people has shaken the country and it will take long time by the time the "Dev Bhoomi" is totally rehabilitated.

**FDI booster**

In the backdrop of falling Indian rupee, the recent decision to open the foreign direct investment (FDI) gates in 13 sectors is expected to be the requisite panacea.

Sectors for which norms have been relaxed include petrol and natural gas, insurance, defence production and basic and cellular services. This is expected to serve as a booster.

**Rupee**  
The rupee is hovering

around 60 against US dollar while it is close to Rs 77 (Euro) and Rs 89 (Pound). The RBI has hiked short term rates and has announced measures like capping the amount banks can borrow from the market. This is an attempt to curb the rupee's decline by tightening liquidity. Since the consumption of gold has been costing nation USD 50 billion in foreign exchange the tax on the gold imports has also been raised to 8 per cent. Yet the demand for gold continues to grow.

**Growth rate**  
Country's growth rate is also

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the cause of concern. While the government has forecast a growth of 6.1 to 6.7 per cent for the year 2013-14, the RBI expects it to be at 5.7 per cent. In fact GDP which had grown by an astounding 9.3 per cent in 2010-11, nearly halved in last three years.

**Inflation**  
At the same time the inflation rate is hovering around 4.70 percent which was average 8.02 per cent from 1969 till 2012. It was an all time high at 34.68 Percent in September of 1974 and a record low at 11.31 Percent in May of 1976.

**Deficit**  
Due to huge amount spent on subsidies for fertilizers, food and oil, the country has been facing heavy pressure from the deficit side - both fiscal and current account. At present the fiscal deficit is 4.9 per cent, lower than the target of 5.1 per cent envisaged in the budget.

**Population**  
At the time of

Independence, India's population was a mere 35 crore. Today it has swelled to 127 crore (Male 65.58 crore, Female 61.43 crore). We are next to China which is on the top with over 136 crore. However by 2030, we are expected to emerge numero uno with predictable population of 153 crore.

At the same time nearly 42.5 per cent children suffer from malnutrition. In Madhya Pradesh this rate is highest at 55 per cent. This indicates that we are unable to get over the scarcity of pure water and lack

of sanitation facilities and our public health programs like Polio Eradication have failed.

**Poverty**

The Government has claimed that the poverty levels have fallen to 21.9 per cent in 2011-2012 from earlier level of 37.2 per cent. The National Food Security Bill slated to be implemented within next 6 months is expected to give 82 crore people, the right to cooked nutritious food. The project is expected to cost rupees Rs 1.3 lakh crore.. The bill also seeks to give legal rights to 67 per cent of the population over subsidized grains every month.

**Unemployment**

The Commission for Agriculture Costs and Prices (CACPC) has agreed that the funds earmarked for welfare schemes are siphoned off and common men gets little benefit. This is proved by the fact that hardly one per cent of the total

jobs are added in the country under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), although over 30,000 crore are being spent. MGNREGA is expected to guarantee 100 days of wage-employment in a financial year to a rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

**Literacy**

Present literacy rate is pegged at 74.04 per cent (male 82.14, female 65.46 per cent). Kerala has the highest literacy rate at 93.9 per cent followed by Lakshadweep (92.3 per cent) and Mizoram (91.6 per cent). Bihar with 63.08 per cent literacy rate is the last in terms of literacy rate in India. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE) has been passed, yet 8.1 million children (age group 6-14) remain out of school and there is a shortage of 5.08 lakh teachers, 2 lakh schools and 1,500 universities and colleges country wide.

**Houses**

The country is facing shortage of over 26 million houses and the urban India is expected to require nearly 600 million houses in the next 15 years. Over \$1.2 trillion investment would be required to meet the demand for urban housing alone. RBI has allowed the external commercial borrowings (ECBs) up to \$1 billion in real estate sector to promote affordable housing

Besides the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Bill has been approved to regulate the highly unregulated and unorganized real estate sector and to ensure availability of houses at cheaper rates. But this bill should not add yet another layer to bureaucracy.

**Power**

Despite 64.5 per cent electrification rate, 35.5 per cent of the country's population has no access to electricity. India currently suffers from a major shortage of electricity generation, although it is the world's fourth largest energy consumer after US, China and Russia.

According to International Energy Agency an investment of \$135 billion is required to provide universal access of electricity to Indian population. Going by limitations on hydro and thermal electricity generation, nuclear energy generation seems to be viable option, but opposition to nuke energy continues-the recent example being that of Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant in the Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu.

**Defence**

While our defence preparedness is above the mark, our war preparedness suffers due to the delay in procurement of equipments. The army has not inducted a new gun since the Bofors scandal of the mid-1980s. It is planning to buy a mix of new-generation artillery gun systems like 155mm(39/45/52 calibre). The deadline for the projected artillery profile is 2027 but it is unlikely that it will be met. The indigenous version of the Bofors, is also expected to take another 3 years before induction.

The Indian Navy which relies on its fleet of Sea King helicopters inducted in eighties, plans to acquire over 120 multi role choppers for carrying out anti-submarine warfare.

The test fire of indigenously developed 'Pinaka' rocket from a multi-barrel rocket launcher (MBRL) from an armament establishment base at Chandipur (Odisha) is a shot in arm for the army. 'Pinaka' is an area weapon system useful in a low-intensity conflict situation.

**Mangalayan**

Meanwhile India, is set to launch a new satellite - its first - to Mars, at the initiative of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). With this India will be part of the geopolitical, and cosmo-political, agenda followed by the Russians, Americans and the Europeans and off course by Japanese and Chinese.

All sad and done India should become a "Scam-free" nation and should become self-reliant with every reform traveling from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. Then only we can boast of unity in diversity and have an all round progress.

## Let peace prevail

Sir,

The past few days' communal clashes in Kishtwar have saddened the hearts of all right thinking people. Who else except those who hope to gain politically from such unfortunate strife can rest contented and not feels guilty of betrayal of public welfare. No one desires that the peace be disturbed, work is struck and curfew clamped. This is what has happened throughout Jammu region as an aftermath of the violence in Kishtwar.

What the State and Central governments might have wanted to avoid has in fact taken place. General elections 2014 are just around the corner. Has the Opposition made any gains by Arun Jaitley - R P Singh's attempt to reach Kishtwar? It seems they have.

What would have happened if the twosome were allowed to proceed to Kishtwar? One guess is that neither the majority nor the minority would have listened to them. Yet these are the ways Governments act.

Demand has been made for Governor's rule in the state. But that presently is not the solution as it might increase Official intervention in the public life. More over major part of the state has remained peaceful although as precaution curfew has been clamped in parts of Jammu region.

Curfew has remained in force in eight districts of Jammu; it may remain that way till the Independence Day is celebrated on 15th August. Life for a common man has gone out of gear. Still they are cooperating because no one wants the violence to break out once again. Peace is a pre-condition for a healthy growth of trade and commerce, education and social activities. Let us hope that the hot tempers of over enthusiastic elements shall subside now and normality restored.

Yours etc.....  
O P Modi  
on e-mail

## Purified water for passangers

Sir,

Refer news item 'Passenger coaches to have water purifiers' DE Aug 12.

The decision of the Indian Railways to install water-purifiers in coaches will go a long in providing improved passenger amenities to railway travellers in the country. At present, people buy bottled water from vendors and hawkers at exorbitant rates while travelling. The passengers are made to do so because there is no drinking water available in trains. The water is available only at the Stations only that too not in sufficient quantity. Besides, one does not know whether this water is fit for human consump-

tion though the words 'Drinking Water' are written on the water outlet. Most of the passengers hesitate to use it as drinking water and instead prefer to buy bottled water. The people have been pressing for improving cleanliness standard in the trains, but indifference on the part of concerned department has not made any difference so far.

Now when the Railways has launched its ambitious programme of providing purified water, let us hope that it proves successful.

Yours etc.....  
Sumit Sharma  
Hiranagar Kathua

*Readers Write*