

## Commandants' Annual Conference

The 2-day 11th State Level Annual Conference of the Commandants of JK Armed Police has just ended in Srinagar with Director General of Police, Ashok Prasad touching on various aspects of the role of JKAP force and complimenting the personnel for their discipline and professional competence. The conference was convened to discuss the role of State Armed Police in present disturbed situation and its future strategies and performance.

JKAP was called upon to play vital role in facing extraordinary law and order situation in the State ever since the rise of militancy in 1989. In meeting this formidable challenge with grit and determination and in exercising control of volatile situation that often surfaced in an atmosphere of militancy, the JKAP force has made many valuable sacrifices of jawans and officers. The nation will always remember these sacrifices and will take pride in the sacrifice of their fallen heroes. This is a professional force and the jawans go through rigorous training in their profession. The reason why the DGP and ADGP both have been effusive in showering praises on the personnel is that two decades of fighting insurgency, more often than not, brought them face to face with mass protest rallies and demonstrations besides actual gunfights with the militants. In such critical situations that exposed the masses of people to serious threats of being caught in the cross fire, the jawans of JKAP demonstrated highest quality of professionalism. The result was that minimum rather zero casualties took place in the course of any encounter. As the situation arose, new chapter in the training curricula of police force came to be studied and that is of mass handling tactics.

The second important reason that makes us express appreciation and gratitude to the JKAP is the way it took on militants in the State during past two decades of militancy. It is a proxy war that is being fought in J&K for last two decades or more. The militants moving in twos or threes and not more have been targeting the policemen at their respective posts and places. Often the militants either ambush them or strike at them just appearing from nowhere. There have been some casualties among the force, but by and large the agile force has kept the situation under control by coordinating their tactics with the input from civil society. Consequently, it gave rise to another phenomenon and that is fruitful and productive interaction between the Armed Police personnel and civil society. This point was sufficiently highlighted by both the DGP and the ADGP in the conference. Force rightly deserves compliments for creating cordial atmosphere for relationship between them and the members of civil society. This role has been appreciated by all who are concerned about the ground situation in the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

An important theme towards which top police echelons directed their attention and also the attention of the entire force was of maintaining close liaison among all ranks and files of the force. It was emphasized that officers should very often get into touch with the subordinates and hold durbars very frequently so as to be fully aware of the difficulties of jawans and find solution to these. The matter boils down to officer-subordinate relationship in JKAP. This is armed police force and in all kinds of assignments the jawans and the officers have to work in unison. They have to sink or swim together. Hence there arises the necessity of close interaction between the officers and the other ranks. The recent mass protest by the trainees in police training headquarter in Manigam, Lar in Kashmir is an example of lack of communication between the seniors and their juniors.

We hope that this year's annual conference of the Commandants of JKAP will go a long way in helping the organization produce professionally better trained personnel with new techniques and capabilities of facing new type of situations. It is also hoped that more amenities and facilities will be provided to the wards of the police jawans especially those who have laid down their lives in the service of the country. The nation owes a debt to them. The widows and the children of the fallen heroes have to be taken care of. The challenge has not come to an end and the JKAP, being in the forefront of meeting the challenge of terrorists and militants will have to keep its powder dry for a long time.

## PDD lacks vision

Day in and day out, PDD comes under public scanner. One or the other deficiency of the department comes to light. Yet despite exposing its blatant shortcomings, things don't seem to be getting any better. Much improvement could be made in power supply if the concerned at the helm of affairs in the Department made use of their vision for development. Take the case of Leh. Two years by the day, the NHPC built the 45 Mega Watt Nimoo Basgo hydroelectric project and provided three turbines for generating electricity. A requirement, which PDD should have completed much earlier than the project, was that of strengthening 11 KV transmission network. Nobody paid attention to it. Out of three, only one turbine is put to use and that also trips because of less load. The existing transmission line in Leh cannot bear the load which the turbines would generate. Why responsible officials did not simultaneous with the work on Nimoo Basgo project undertake strengthening of 11 KV transmission line? It shows lack of vision, responsibility and interest. Should not the defaulting officials be brought under Services Act and dealt with in accordance to its punitive punishment provisions? It also speaks of absence of coordination at higher levels of PDD because it knew that NHPC was working at the Nimoo-Basgo plant. How sad that the power project on which good deal of money has been spent is there in place, the turbines are there in place and the people are eagerly waiting supply of power, yet the PDD becomes the spoiler by neglecting its duty of providing the proper transmission line. How can our State develop with this sordid management of affairs? Will the competent authority in PDD come out with any explanation?

# Federal Front

Dipankar Bose

Social media is picking up with Indian politicians and many are now opting for Facebook or Twitter to post comments, express reactions. Trinamool Congress supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is a relative new entrant in this club, but has rapidly caught up.

On June 10, a post in her Facebook account said: "Time has come for all regional parties to come together and form a Federal Front in the coming Lok Sabha election. I appeal to all non-Congress, non-BJP regional parties to launch a united fight to free the country from misrule and anti-people decisions, and work together to build a better and brighter India. Let us stand together. Let us talk together. Let us decide a plan of action for the next Lok Sabha election."

Federal fronts are nothing new in the country. Fronts have come in many avatars since 1977, when the Janata Party Government came to power after the 1975-77 State of Emergency, with Morarji Desai as the Prime Minister. Desai was forced to resign and his successor Chaudhary Charan Singh also failed to sustain a Parliamentary majority.

Experiments didn't stop here with forming non-Congress alliances. The National Front government led by V P Singh and steered by N T Rama Rao in 1989-1990 and closely followed by Chandrasekar as the eighth Prime Minister to lead a rainbow alliance on November 10, 1990 only to resign on March 6, 1991, were the next two formations.

The other avatars were in between 1996 and 1998, when H D Devegowda and I K Gujral subsequently headed the United Front government at the Centre.

Subsequently, all regional parties either grouped under the

umbrella of the BJP-led NDA alliance or the Congress-led UPA alliance.

The last line of Mamata's Facebook post calls for a plan of action for the next general elections, but can she romp in the numbers?

So far, Mamata has claimed that three persons have responded to her call - Chief Ministers Nitish Kumar from Bihar and Naveen Patnaik from Odisha and former Jharkhand Chief Minister Babul Marandi. The grapevine is TDP leader N Chandrababu Naidu has shown some interest in Banerjee's idea. Back channel talks have also taken place with rebel Congress.

Nitish has already taken a calculated risk of severing his seventeen year alliance with BJP. He hopes to repeat what his predecessor Lalu Yadav did in Bihar in 1990.

The arrest of L K Advani by Lalu had catapulted him in Bihar's politics as the only leader, capable of securing Muslim minority interests, creating a new Muslim-Yadav (M-Y) equation in the state.

Around two decades later Nitish is trying the same arithmetic in Bihar. Walking out of the NDA and alienating himself from Narendra Modi, he hopes to secure the Kurmi-Kairi and Extremely Backward Class vote bank in his favour (which is around 30 per cent in Bihar), risking the loss of Thakur, Bhumihar and upper-class Brahmin votes.

But, in Bihar, BJP will also be backing its campaign in favour of Modi, who has an OBC background. In a three cornered contest, which is now inevitable in the state, between BJP, JD(U) and Lalu Prasad's RJD-Congress alliance, how much can Nitish increase his tally of 20 seats he won in the 2009 polls, will be a big question. Moreover, Nitish will always keep in mind the

JD(U)'s recent defeat in the Maharajanji bye-election.

Congress has literally taken a backseat in the politics of Odisha and Naveen Patnaik's Biju Janata Dal (BJD) seems to be the only alternative in the Maoist-violence ridden state. Patnaik can hope to retain his tally of 14 seats in the next general elections.

Trinamool is back to the drawing board of pre-2009, before it forged an alliance with Congress. In the last Lok Sabha polls, the combined anti-Left votes saw the alliance home with 25 seats (19-Trinamool and 6-Congress).

In the 2011 Assembly polls, the alliance successfully routed the Left Front from West Bengal for the first time in 34 years. But, much water went down the Hooghly and Mamata Banerjee has pulled out of the Congress-led UPA at the Centre.

So, very much like Bihar, the propagator of Federal Front will have to face the general elections in a triangular contest between the Congress, the Left Front and themselves (Trinamool Congress).

In two years since Banerjee's government has come to power, the eastern state has recorded maximum number of crimes against women among all states, according to statistics released by the National Crime Records Bureau on June 14.

The pre-2009 situation was never comfortable for Trinamool, which till then had only one member in the Lok Sabha. A litmus test for the party in the recently concluded Howrah bypoll has also not presented it with any remarkable figures.

Trinamool candidate Prasun Banerjee, a former footballer, defeated his nearest rival, Sridip Bhattacharjee of the CPI(M) by 26,965 votes. An interesting anecdote - BJP withdrew its candidate at the final moment,

which has about 50,000 votes in the constituency.

In fact, in the 2009 Lok Sabha election BJP got 37,703 votes, in an atmosphere charged in favour of the TMC. The united kitty of Trinamool Congress and Congress from the constituency posed a 37,655 vote victory margin against the CPI(M) that time. The bypoll results now show that if BJP was in the fray, the Trinamool would have been in big trouble.

A triangular contest in Bengal in the general elections has the potential to considerably dampen the spirits of Mamata Banerjee and along with that, her idea of a non-Congress, non-BJP Federal Front.

Between the three, the TMC, JD (U) and BJD now hold 53 Lok Sabha seats out of the total 103 across the three states of Bihar, West Bengal and Odisha. Even if Naveen Patnaik keeps his tally of 14 seats secured in the general elections, a combined kitty of around 50 seats can never be anywhere close to the 272 majority mark required to form a government at the Centre.

Some more allies might be lured into this front proposed by Banerjee, but again who will be the unanimously accepted face of the front?

Nitish Kumar, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Naveen Patnaik, Chandrababu Naidu, Jayalalitha (or for that reason M Karunanidhi) - the names just keep cropping up with no real front runner amid the monumental egos possessed by the leaders.

And the Left is also propagating a secular democratic alternative (albeit post-poll). The CPI(M) has already upped its ante against bête noire Mamata Banerjee criticising her for trying to float this Federal Front without any concrete minimum governance proposal or national policy.

# NDA crisis to accentuate

Harihar Swarup

BJP leaders may not believe it but Narendra Modi is fast losing his popular appeal. Look at Modi who had won Gujarat assembly election for third time in succession, routing the Congress and his opponents like Keshubhai Patel. His popularity at that time soared highest ever and now it is going down equally sharply. According to Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, "the Modi wave was just a bubble fuelled by corporate money".

Nitish told the assembly while replying to the debate on the Trust motion moved by him that the BJP was playing the OBC card these days. "You need sympathy and sensitivity to be a leader from the OBC. An OBC-born cannot be a leader after being trumped up on corporate goodwill. You have to work for the OBC before being deemed their leader. It is not a question of birth, but the work you do".

The CM said there was talk of a "Modi wave". "I don't know which wave they are talking about. If there is one, it has been kicked up by the corporate world. But this is the usual technique, to repeat rumours, to spread falsehood. Let us understand that this is a temporary phenomenon that cannot stand before the will of the people. The country will not be influenced by this propaganda".

The common man's refrain when Modi romped with a thumping majority was that the Gujarat Chief Minister has taken a new avatar as vote catcher for the BJP. Even staunch critics of BJP and of Modi believed people will overwhelmingly vote after his name because of the development work he has done in

Gujarat and also because of his charismatic personality, mass appeal and powerful oratory. BJP's leadership has also pinned high hopes on him. That is why at party's Goa conclave, they anointed him to head the BJP's campaign committee for the coming assembly elections and Lok Sabha election in 2014. It also looked apparent that he would be declared the BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate after assembly elections, scheduled in November, are over.

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Amid the soaring popularity of Modi, came L K Advani's revolt dubbing the BJP leaders, Gujarat Chief Minister in particular, of working for their personal aggrandizement and for fulfillment of their personal agenda, at the cost of the party's interest. The pitch of Advani's attack was so powerful that it hit at the roots of Modi's mass appeal. People were heard saying openly that a party, which is so faction-ridden, cannot give an effective administration. Even then the popular mood was in favour of Modi, the refrain being that in Advani, having reached peak of his career, should hang his

boots and act like elder statesman.

Then the 17-year-old BJP-JD(U) alliance splintered on the issue of pitch forking Modi as BJP's poll campaign head with firm indication that he would be declared the saffron party's Prime Ministerial candidate. This was too much for Nitish Kumar. He explained that it is why he took this extreme step and his explanation was clear. The Bihar Chief Minister, who decisively rebuffed the BJP on Modi

REGA as well." So far midway into his second term as chief minister, Nitish has deliberately balanced several strategies. He has accorded a new primacy to development in a state that has been denuded of governance and vision while, at the same time, finessing the politics of social alliances, and invoking "Bihari pride".

With the break up of JD(U)-BJP alliance, the NDA is dead for all practical purpose. The NDA is left with just two constituents - Akali Dal and the Shiv Sena. With exit of Nitish Kumar's party, which has 20 members in the Lok Sabha, it is the Shiv Sena with 11 seats is the largest constituent. Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray is little too junior to become the NDA convenor. Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal, therefore, emerges as a natural choice for the convenor's post.

The JD(U) President Sharan Yadav, on his part, ruled a rapprochement with the BJP, saying "we cannot go back now. Once an alliance breaks, it is nearly impossible to rebuild it. Our principles and identity were in danger". Also Vajpayee-Advani era, in which the NDA functioned as a cohesive force, is over.

In a related development RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat emphatically told L K Advani that Modi's elevation and subsequently his nomination as the BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate is irreversible. On his part Advani tried to convince the RSS chief that kicking up of Modi was not in the BJP's interest as the step has driven out the party's allies and potential allies. In his hour-long meeting with Bhagwat, Advani cited the recent split between BJP and JD(U) as the proof of Gujarat CM's unacceptability. (IPA)

# Perils of cheap electricity

Dr Bharat Jhunjhunwala

The immediate cause of the disaster in Uttarakhand is an ordinary atmospheric happening of cloudburst. However, hydropower projects being made below the Kedarnath Mountains has converted this ordinary happening into a disaster. The Phata-Byung and Singoli-Bhatwari on the Mandakini are each making an about 20 km long tunnel in the fragile mountains. Large amounts of explosives have been used for this purpose. The blasting has loosened the soil of the mountains and weakened the roots of the trees. Previously rainwater used to seep down into the hill aquifers taking support from the roots of the trees. Presently, the same rainwater has uprooted the trees and carried them along with the soil into the river. These projects had dumped large amounts of muck into the river to reduce their construction costs. This too has been carried by the river. Density of the river water became more. This heavy water and the flowing logs from the uprooted trees have hit the roads, bridges and houses and broken them leading to a huge disaster.

Manmohan Singh has had a major role in pushing these projects and bringing this disaster upon the hapless people of the country. He has formed special task forces in the PMO to fast track hydropower projects. He wants electricity to be generated at the lowest possible costs irrespective of the consequences on the economy and the people. He does not want to calculate the true cost of electricity after accounting for various environmental costs including such as that of the present disaster. The PMO has seen to it that the price of electricity is reckoned only on the basis of direct costs incurred by the producer such as depreciation, interest, labour charges and payments for coal. The environmental costs of generation are not taken into account. Truly speaking, the monetary value of the loss due to the present disaster should be added to the cost of electricity generated by the hydropower projects. These projects lead to lower economic growth by creating such disasters. People who have died will no longer contribute to the economy as they could have. The benefit from cheap electricity is nullified by the loss from disasters and environmental degradation.

Similar damage to the economy has been made by the downstream Srinagar project being made on the Alaknanda. Large amounts of muck were dumped by the GVK Group Company making this project on the riverbed. This muck was carried by the river and deposited in the houses of downstream Srinagar town. About 100 houses had to be abandoned and people rehabilitated. The National Highway 58 has been closed for the last two weeks at the time of writing because a layer of 8 feet thick slush has been deposited on it.

Professor Stephen Meyers of Massachusetts Institute of Technology had made a study of the impact of environmental regulation on economic growth. He ranked the 52 states of United States according to the depth of environmental regulation. Then he compared this with their growth rates. He found that states having stronger environmental regulation also had higher economic growth rates.

There is no gainsaying that stronger environmental regulation leads to higher costs of electricity, transport and other charges. This leads to an increase in direct costs of electricity and to a reduction in growth rates. But this is more than compensated by the savings in health costs, water supply and other environmental savings. Thus, although the consumer is put to loss due to increase in cost of electricity; this does not translate into a loss to the overall economy. The loss to the consumer is compensated by the gains from environmental protection.

Increase in price due to profiteering by generation and distribution companies stands on an altogether different footing. Arvind Kejriwal has rightly alleged that Discoms are obtaining undue increases in price by submitting cooked accounts. Such increase in price hits at growth. The consumer has to pay higher price which leads to lower production but there is no countervailing positive impact from environmental protection. For example, if the price of electricity generated from Singoli-Bhatwari project is increased then Lanco and Larsen and Toubro, which are making the projects, will make huge profits. But disasters will continue to take place and people who die will not contribute to the economy. The increase in price of electricity becomes beneficial only if the money is used for environmental protection.

Imposition of environmental tax is necessary from the standpoint of national security as well. Our consumption of electricity is increasing rapidly, in part, because it is cheap. Our domestic sources of coal are sufficient only for about 150 years. We do not have uranium. Hydropower hits at our river-worshipping culture. Thus we are becoming increasingly dependent on imported coal and uranium. This is putting our national security at peril. Our economy will come to its knees in a mere 15 days in the event West Asian countries stop supply of oil. We must reduce consumption of electricity and find ways of enhancing quality of life with less consumption of energy.

The cycle of making hydropower and inviting disasters is entirely harmful for the people and the economy. Not so for the Ministers and Government Servants though. They are doubly benefitted. They earn huge bribes in signing the Implementation Agreements with the hydropower companies. Knowledgeable sources tell me that the going rate is Rs one crore per megawatt. This is a huge amount considering the hydropower potential of 40k megawatt in Uttarakhand. Then disaster strikes and they get huge amounts for relief and reconstruction. The going rate of bribes here is 20 to 50 percent. Thus, Ministers are promoting this policy of hydropower and disaster.

We must take two steps towards proper management of the electricity sector. First, we must establish a priority for the use of electricity. The National Water Policy sets priority in use of water as follows: Drinking water, Irrigation, Hydropower, Industry and Navigation. There is a need to establish similar priority in the use of electricity. Possible priorities may be as follows: Essential services, services sector such as software, agriculture, industries and domestic consumption. Within domestic consumption sub-priorities may be established such as ceiling fans, desert coolers and air-conditioners. Electricity may be supplied for air-conditioners only after every citizen has been provided with electricity for running a fan.

Two, we must take up research on generation of electricity from thorium as a top national priority. Knowledgeable sources tell me that the Government is so enamoured with the Nuclear Treaty with the United States that it has put research on thorium-based generation on the backburner. I do not know for sure, but it is possible that foreign nuclear plant supplier's lobby is behind this. We have large sources of thorium but scarce uranium. Thorium-based generation will wholly liberate us from import dependence.

## Moral values

Sir, Democracy thrives on the pillars of honesty, integrity and loyalty, self-accountability is also one of the fundamental requisites that contributes in its flourishing. With resignation of two Cabinet Ministers in the Centre, namely, Pawan Bansal, Railway Minister and Ashwani Kumar, Law Minister on the alleged charges of corruption/malpractices, the back of our democracy stands shaken. If such sorry affairs prevail in high-echelons of our system what can be the condition and position of a man in a street. Unending series of scams and embezzlements surfaced in the preceding some years have excelled all records of corruption.

It is most disturbing factor in our social arena and jeopardises political and economical systems in the country. Faithlessness and ero-

sion in trust cause extreme hopelessness among the masses.

Expectation of justice from governing bodies appears a remote possibility. Arbitrariness and violation of rules and regulations for self interest has become an order of the day and this all is due to degradation in moral and ethical values. When a man in millions still longs for more and more and does such things not acceptable by the law and the society, indicates his natural dissatisfaction which can only be removed by inculcation of moral and ethical values. Therefore, cultivation of such values among our youngsters has become a dire need of the time. Even well execution of laws can't be practiced if morality is totally minused.

Yours etc.....  
Keshwa Nand Sharma  
Salehri (Sunderbani)

## Doctors' Day

Sir, The first of July each year has been earmarked as Doctors' Day in India. Each family wishes their child to become a medical doctor. But due to some longstanding communication gaps between the Medical Doctor and the community, the overall corrupt practices at the state and national levels, the status of medical doctors has declined. It is evident by the clashes that occur between the doctors and the patients and their relatives. The time is, therefore, ripe that they rebuild that confidence as existed as doctors are a classical example of a Karamayogi whose basic objective (Dharma) in life is to provide selfless service with no expectation towards its fruits. The medical doctors should attempt to gain their status of being a spiritual healer and not merely a physical healer.

It is a fact that there is so much dif-

ference in the earning structure of a medical person in the government sector and the commercial sector, and most of the doctors end up doing illegal private practice within and after their hospital hours making them indifferent towards their legitimate duties. This spreads a wrong message in the community. Therefore, doctors need to be well paid so that they do not even think of indulging in corrupt practices and are always available for patient care.

It is right that the doctors are required to care for the community but, in turn they need to live a comfortable, decent and respectable life. The way resident and junior doctors, are exploited in various hospitals is pathetic. They are made to work for 36 hours. Such long uninterrupted working hours make them irritable and short tempered. The result is further communication gap between them, the patients

## Readers Write

and their relatives. Taking a doctor to the court of Law under the Consumer Protection Act, to my mind, is not fair and just. There is a vast difference between "negligence" and "difference of opinion." Difference of opinion" is not a crime, but "negligence" is. One cannot put a judge behind bars because he happened to give death sentence to a person, which got revoked in a higher court in due course of time. Unfortunately the media always supports the emotionally charged relative of a patient. There is no reason why the public or the media should take the law in their hands and give a verdict even before the actual case is filed in the court of law.

I wish the medical doctors well on this day!  
Yours etc.....  
Preshuman K Joseph Dhar,  
Jammu