

Internet services activated at Siachen Glacier

We are fully acquainted with the strategic importance of Siachen Glacier in the eastern Karakoram range in the Himalayan mountains forming a part of the Union Territory of Ladakh with temperatures falling below 86 degree C during winters and where Indian Army is deployed. It is such a strategic area where from both the belligerent neighbours- China and Pakistan - there remain chances of playing of mischief by them hence constant watch and guard by the Indian Army. However, moving about and living in such conditions at levels above over 20500 feet is just not an ordinary thing which would in the ordinary course stun anyone just on the very thought of it but since the Indian Army is known for braving and accepting the most difficult challenges, they man and protect an area stretched over 125 Kms of this world famous Glacier and the world's highest battlefield where only snow, all frozen, is seen everywhere.

It is, therefore, likely that the country could go to any extent in providing all support, facilities and wherewithal to the young lion hearted Indian soldiers posted there. In this connection, in the ordinary course, even thinking about providing internet services, more so, satellite based services which mean wireless internet beamed down from satellites orbiting the earth, and laying the requisite infrastructure for that, would have appeared to be just an utopian idea or an effort likely to be ending up in a fiasco. However, Bharat Broadband Network Limited which is a Government of India Undertaking and provider of broadband infrastructure, further more the Indian Army collaborating with it has resulted in causing satellite based internet services to be activated on this Glacier. That was definitely going to boost the already high morale of our soldiers and even add into the facilities provided to adventurous tourists for whom it is opened up to a specified height for tourism.

It is, however, definitely a momentous occasion for the Army having been instrumental in activating satellite internet services at Siachen Glacier and that too at a height of 19500 feet.. It was very much required and procuring the necessary infrastructure as also the requisite equipment looking to the change of the pattern of modern day warfare where full preparedness of all types to fight future challenges is required beyond any scope of doubt. With the fast change and development taking place globally in technology, India has to keep it updated and acquiring /developing new state-of-the-art technology. Moreover, since the country is committed to fight future wars with indigenous solutions and also by attaining self reliance in critical areas of our defence requirements, constant efforts are needed to be made which in fact are being made. Communications and that too on fast speed basis are an inalienable part of such national commitment.

However, the other important part of the matter is that it amply proves India's advancing technological developments too. It is fairly known that the Indian Army is scheduled to get its own dedicated communication satellite in the very near future to further boost its communication capabilities and operational preparedness as proposal for acquiring of necessary equipment / new version of the communication satellite is stated to have been agreed to by Union Defence Ministry. Otherwise to what extent this country has succeeded in developing communication capabilities and skills, and that too indigenously, the world fairly knows about that and keeping our soldiers "up-dated" and abreast of the latest in order to keep them fully all in preparedness in safeguarding the country's borders is the firm national mission.

China does it again, stalling of blacklisting terrorist

In respect of what was recently decided in the Samarkand summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in which China as one of the main founding members participated in "jointly" fighting terrorism in all forms and manifestations, virtually within hours on the contrary, it demonstrated to what extent its non reliability and unpredictability like ingrained characteristics can go as it stalled the joint move of the US and India in getting declared one of the top Pakistani based LeT terrorist Sajid Mir as a global terrorist. Such a "pro-terrorist" stand openly exhibited by China is the third one in a span of just four months. The latest despicable move of China is despite the fact that it knows that the said terrorist Sajid was not only behind but the main handler of 2008 Mumbai attacks.

China also knows that looking to his deep involvement in terror activities, he was jailed for over 15 years in Pakistan. It has thus not only violated the 1267 Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee of the UN Security Council but openly encouraged terrorist violence when it concerns or is against India. This may just appear to be not that serious but its larger implications cannot be taken any lightly and need to be gauged by China's consistent hostile approach and policy adopted towards India which needs our very firm policy towards that country as well in the shape of keeping our defence preparedness at the top most of our national priorities.

Indian Economy needs fresh push

Harihar Swarup

The Indian economy was expected to collapse due to pandemic. But its recovery has been better than most countries. Appropriate counter - cyclical policy enabled this but it worked because reforms had reached a threshold of adequacy. In the recent past growth suffered because of an excessive focus on structural reforms while neglecting the smoothening of shocks. Current policy has responded to the latter. But talk of necessity of reforms is again in the air. So what reforms are required?

A major objective of international institutions such as the IMF-WB is to ensure advantages to other countries from India's growth, in particular to the main financiers who are the large capital exporting countries. It follows that they want to ensure freer markets and fewer restrictions on all types of capital flows. Much of this is in India's interest since we need more capital and better integrating with the world markets. But a democracy cannot ignore the concern of its own citizens. The IMF-WB holy trinity of structural land, labour and other market openings reforms harms many domestic citizens and, beyond a point, runs into severe resistance that imposes large political costs.

Liberalization has reached a point of diminishing returns. Whatever is feasible in the above is surely in motion by now. Further organic reforms will take place as the states compete. Improving the supply side has many other aspects. In choosing

from the reform menu, the centre must be guided by feasible and pragmatism and ensure that benefits accrue to a majority.

The focus should be on leveraging the special circumstances that currently favour India. These include the impetus Covid-19 has given to digital aspect, where India has a comparative advantage, the possibility of supply chain diversification

structure, reducing logistics and other business costs through better centre-state coordination, and enhancing the quality of governance and counter cyclical regulation with good incentive. Much can be done to improve data and privacy functioning of courts and police. Instead of wasting political capital on reforms that encounter large resistance and shock the system, reforms should enhance

tax payers' money is based on the experience of the last decades. In the 2000s, they were doing better than private banks and withstood the global financial crisis better. NPAs rose because they were pushed into lending to infrastructure where there are inherent asset liability mismatches for commercial banks. Moreover, it was the first time that the lending was to private companies. Therefore, a full resolution had to wait the setting regulatory framework for bankruptcy. Improvements in PSB governance and risk based lending profiles have resulted in falling NPA ratios and strong capital adequacy even under the Pandemic shocks. Social schemes that were a drain on PSB resources are now largely financed through direct subsidies by the government.

Diversity in institutions and approaches makes for a more stable financial sector. PSBs are trusted by many savers. They have garnered Rs. 1.7 trillion in their Jan Dhan accounts, while private banks have hardly any. PSBs can leverage their advantages in low costs deposits through co-lending opportunities and partnerships. The economy has suffered very low credit growth through last decades and is ready for a turn around. Private banks alone could not increase credit adequately -- when lending from PSBs had slowed. This is not the time to disrupt the recovery in credit growth. PSBs should be allowed to compete and raise resources on their own. Only those who can not do so, or have other serious weakness should be allowed exit through privatisation or merger route. The strong will prosper. (IPA)



away from China, moving into a net zero economy and harnessing green initiative as a source of investment and invocation. Attention should be given to developing skills and capabilities, improving employability, augmentation infra-

favourable trends. Privatization of Banks is one of the reforms agenda. There is a recommendation to privatize most public sector banks, starting with those doing well. But the argument that BCBS are a drain on

B L Saraf

After a gap of 32 years movie goers in Kashmir will, now, have a place for a weekend chill out and a source of psychological cum physical rejuvenation, enabling them to confront upcoming week's challenges that exist both on the domestic and professional fronts. They would be the routine in good old days. On 20th September, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha sounded a note of truth while inaugurating Kashmir's first Multiplex Cinema in Srinagar. He said "There used to be a time when people in large numbers would come to watch movies along with friends and families. Cinemas would provide them opportunities to think big and dream big besides entertaining them." LG announced that in Pulwam and Shopian districts two multipurpose cinema halls are coming up shortly and that Government is planning to have such halls across Kashmir.

Earlier, in 1996 CM Farooq Abdullah did manage to reopen Broadway and Neelam cinema houses but due to the lack of patronage both put shutters down, soon. Then, in 1999 attempt to bring Regal cinema to the life failed as the terrorists put a scare down the spine of potential cinema goers.

At the time of inauguration the LG recalled movie "Janwar", a Shammil Kapoor starrer - the first film to be screened in Broadway cinema Hall (predecessor to the now inaugurated INOX Multiplex) and revealed an interesting anecdote about Kapoor's love for Kashmir "Such was the love of Kapoor for Kashmir that he had asked his family members to perform his last rites in Dal lake." It could be so: because, it were the films shot on locations in the Kashmir Valley- such as "Jungle", "Janwar" and "Kashmir Ki Kali" that brought fame and a roaring success at the Box Office to him. In fact Kashmir is the place where quite a number of female

Cinema Returns to the Valley A trigger to the positivity

artistes like Saira Bano, Rajshree and Sharmila Tagore, who worked opposite to Shammil Kapoor in these films, were successfully launched to the stardom.

We may recall that in year 2017, Sharmila Tagore was in Kashmir. She met Governor at Raj Bhawan and reminisced about the good old days of her

Kapoor and Pran to Shopian for filming a very important song and dance sequence, atop a nearby hillock. The roads that wound around the hillock had the honour of having immortalized movie Kashmir Ki Kali. Alas! Later on these roads saw blood spilled all over thanks to the bloody games

despair, gloom and sorrow. We pray the 20th September event brings back hope and cheer. If the LG feels that the films screened in Srinagar should "provide Kashmiris an opportunity to think big and dream big" then more than setting up movie halls requires to be done. What adds to the Kashmir tragedy



cinematic work she did in Kashmir that brought laurels to her. Her visit regenerated memories of that beautiful Kashmir spring, in year 1962, when she had come to Kashmir, for the first time, for shooting of film, Kashmir Ki Kali - her debut movie in Hindi language. That brought her, Shami

terrorists played with the innocent human lives, besmirching the pride they had in carrying Bollywood to the great heights.

Till yesterday, Kashmir defined itself in a very positive manner. Unfortunately, the positivity in its definition has vanished, only to be replaced by a

is the complete vacuum in civilized politics. Mainstream politics is absent- if at times it shows up it is only to give a fragmented look. Non-state actors have a field day. Fundamental changes are required. Finding a way out in bits and pieces put together won't work. Security forces foot print has to be reduced in

size across the State. Local dialogue must begin; Government has to do the job of governance.

One has to keep in mind that the Cinema will give momentary relief to the tense nerves. In Kashmir we need a durable balm to heal the bruised psyche and ruffled emotions which theater alone can't provide. A deeper diagnosis is required to cure the malaise caused by the three decades old turbulence. Cosmetic treatment won't do. Local sensitivities have to be taken care of.

The opening of Cinema Halls may bring Bollywood to the Valley. Remember, both have undergone a tectonic change since they have had the last interaction with each other. In olden days both had a pronounced syncretic look and a demeanor: both have suffered on that front.

Kashmir has become a one dimensional society with very little room for the 'other'. Bollywood, on the other side, is divided into "My heroes My script" and "Your heroes Your script" dependent on the ideology the artistes espouse just to suit the ruling regime of the period. They carried loads of soft power. May the anticipated frequent to and fro travel may help them regain the olden grace and poise which defined them and made both known across borders.

The civil society- if there is one in Kashmir - will have to act to ensure that no innocent life is snuffed out. And when we talk of a local dialogue the Government, apart from reigning in its forces, must take this civil society on board for the restoration of semblance of peace and order in the turbulent area. Every one must put weight behind the civil society and help our home place regain the past. Kashmir must invoke its inherent defining qualities. Cinema will then become truly enjoyable and serve the purpose the LG has visualized for the local audience - "of thinking big and dreaming high."

(The author is former Principal District & Sessions Judge)

Dhurjati Mukherjee

Prisons are a requisite unit of the criminal justice system of the country and require serious attention. Over decades while the conditions prevailing in jails and the treatment meted out to prisoners has improved, it is not good enough, rather alarming in some States.

It is encouraging to learn the Government is contemplating rehabilitating 90 percent of prisoners in the country, as mentioned recently by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. At the 6th All India Prisoners Duty Meet at Ahmedabad, he said: 90 percent of those sentenced are prisoners whose societal rehabilitation is very important, not only from the human point of view but also from the point of view of law and order.

"View with which jails are seen in society needs to be changed. Not every person jailed is criminal by nature, sometimes it's circumstances which force their involvement. But it is a necessary process to keep society functional." Stating the 'process of punishment is very important', he opined that "it is also the responsibility of the jail administration that if a person is not a criminal by nature or habit, then they should be the medium to put back such prisoners into society."

Those well-versed with the conditions in jails would put the most common problems ailing these as overcrowding, poor health and sanitation facilities, lack of hygienic food, discrimination and inequalities among prisoners based on their religion and financial status, among others. In fact, the States need to think over the issue of overcrowding in prisons, as until overcrowding is not reduced, jail administration

State of Prisons Societal Rehabilitation vital

cannot be improved.

Overcrowding needs to be tackled given there is a rise in crime rate and that the trial and disposal of cases in courts is tardy. Quite often, even without being convicted for the alleged offence during the pendency of

lack of space are perhaps the biggest impediments to make this a reality. If prisoners can be categorised with emphasis added to the rehabilitation of women and children, the government can plan such centres over a five year plan. Plus,

employees looking after prison reforms.

Delving deeper into the problem, the decline in morality and rise of hatred, violence and jealousy may be attributed to the rise in criminal and other related types of cases. The

Court needs to pass directions to start the recruitment process against vacancies in courts.

Though various organisations have studied the problems of prisons and recommended laws to improve jail conditions, there is little follow up. In many

old style cells, there are rooms with beds, neat toilets, kitchen, televisions, etc. Prisoners go for long walks, tend the garden, and more importantly they are paid reasonably for their work. The advantage is that it makes detainees better prepared to return to society. The management cost of such prisons is 33 per cent lower than the traditional prisons.

In India, some States have studied the concept. Hoshangabad in Madhya Pradesh has one such open prison built on 17 acres of land, where convicts during the last few years of their sentence are transferred from other prisons in the State to make them familiar with reformed environs. It is such type of prisons that need to be set up in each State.

It would also be prudent if the Government framed a national policy on prisons and formed a National Commission on Prisons. As mentioned, the policy should outline ways and means of sensitising the staff about the need to treat prisoners as humanely as possible, ensure the holistic development of prisoners like stress management, yoga, etc... The State and judiciary must ensure that prisoners are not deprived of their liberty and shouldn't be exposed to any form of medical deprivation, unhygienic conditions, bad or inadequate food and the State must fix accountability upon those who fail to ensure the prisoners' safety and dignity in incarceration.

At the same time, from the societal perspective it's important that a prisoner should come out as a reformed person, preferably with familiarity of some skilled work and capable to carry out his livelihood through that form of activity. The effect of prison life should pave the way for his future. (INFA)

the trial, the prisoner lives crucial years of his/her life behind bars under mental agony and emotional distress. Even if there is an acquittal, the years spent in jail will never be back and as is said 'justice delayed is justice denied.'

In fact, States should provide video conferencing facility with the court in every district jail, to deal with this. And along with modernising them, it is very important to equip them with technology, to make them safe from the point of view of security and to have good living conditions for prisoners.

Importantly, the 'modern' concept of prisons has already given way to these being called 'rehabilitation centres.' But such centres need to be setup in all States. Financial crunch and

every effort must be made to keep the undertrials, the most affected, in separate jails as they suffer wretched years while on trial in a court of law and awaiting justice.

States need to relook at the model jail manual brought in 2016 replacing the old jail manual. The Home Ministry says that many remedial points have been incorporated in this manual with emphasis for bringing in basic uniformity in human rights, reform and rehabilitation, rules and regulations for prisoners through computerisation. There are special provisions for rights of women prisoners along with after care facilities, good scientific manuals for prison inspection, rights of prisoners sentenced to death and provisions for

reduction in such cases calls for education and awareness generation at all levels so that the incidence of crime goes down. Simultaneously, the government has to allocate resources towards improvement in the condition of prisons, jointly with the respective State governments.

In 2018, the Supreme Court-appointed Justice Amitava Roy panel on prison reforms. The committee submitted its report in February 2020 with major recommendations which included that special fast-track courts be set up to deal with petty offences to reduce overcrowding and every new prisoner be allowed a free phone call a day to his family members to see him through his first week in jail. Perhaps, the Supreme

cases, prisoners come out of jails as hardened criminals more than as reformed wrong doers willing to join the mainstream social processes. The emphasis on correctional aspect needs to be strengthened through counselling programmes by experts. The mindset of the prison staff has to undergo a fundamental change and the management of prisons must be marked by discipline and due regard to the human rights of prisoners. Prison reform is not just about prison buildings, but what goes on inside them that need to be changed.

One is inclined to refer here to open prisons, which are quite common in the Western world. In such prisons, there are no bars or no uniforms. Instead of