

Nepal Destabilized Gen Z Leads the Uprising

Justice Sushila Karki Appointed Interim PM

DR. MAHESH KAUL

Nepal is at the crossroads as it has been engulfed by street violence. Numerous youngsters have hit the roads damaging the public property and symbols of government. The magnitude of violence and arson was such that officially 72 people have died so far with reports saying that 2113 people were injured in the two days of violence. The violence that has erupted in the

streets of Nepal is attributed to the rampant corruption and nepotism being unleashed by the Nepalese political class that includes almost all the political parties. The protestors who are on the rampage are led by a group called Gen Z, comprising the Nepalese youth who are disgruntled by the misgovernance of the K.P. Sharma Oli government.

It is pertinent to mention that the violence that has gripped Nepal in September was not an overnight

outburst but a long overdue expression of the simmering that was dormant in among the youth and students who are feeling alienated and betrayed in their own nation. There has been a considerable expression of dissent in the social media groups for quite some time and it got traction with the convergence of the youth from across Nepal. Social media acted as the glue that allowed the youth to cover and give shape to their expressions against

the incumbent government and the Nepalese political class, accusing them of destabilizing their nation with opportunism and nepotism blended with uncontrolled corruption. This movement emerged and got a sustainable outlook as it struck the chord with common people. A significant feature of this movement has been that there is no visible leader or political formation that can be termed to be leading the disgruntled masses, primarily the

Nepalese youth. This protest movement that originated on the social media platforms reflected upon the issues concerning governance, political accountability, breach of public trust by the political parties of Nepal.

It was on 4th September, 2025 that the Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli led Nepalese Government imposed a blanket ban on the 26 social media platforms that included Facebook,

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FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

X, YouTube, LinkedIn and many more prominent platforms. Citing the reason for not being registered under the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology. With the government defending its decision to ban these platforms to enable the enforcement of the new Digital Services Tax to generate revenue. But this has just turned out to be a ruse to stop the social media trend being orchestrated by the youth of Nepal under the tagline of Gen Z to bring in the public domain the privileges enjoyed by the children of the Nepalese political elite due to nepotism. Thus, the 4th September ban on social media by the Nepalese government is a measure to strangle the public opinion. It backfired. The youth who were connected across Nepal through intangible social media were forced to converge on the tangible streets and vent out their anger.

Nepotism has gained much currency in the contemporary Nepal in social media as “Nepo Kids” and “Nepo Babies” referring to the children of the elite who grabbed the opportunities of the genuine Nepalese youth, making the corruption of all hues rampant in the public sphere and the institutions having a tremendous impact on the employment and job opportunities. It must be noted that in Nepal the average age of the population in Nepal is 25 making it the nation of the youth in the contemporary era. And this demographic profile has given currency to the term Gen Z that is spearheading the movement to free the nation from all forms of institutionalized corruption and nepotism that has eaten the vitals of the erstwhile Himalayan kingdom. That acceptability of this discourse has gained currency in the national idiom of Nepal and can be well understood by the kind of language and slogans used by the protestors on the street fighting corruption. The pictures that are viral on the social media and newspapers across the world after the Gen Z protests and violence read “No More Nepo Babies-We Demand Fair Opportunities!” Demographic dividend has given voice to the dissent in Nepal. In spite of the varied geographical terrain, social media has the highest reach in South-Asia.

Employment deficit has led to a dismal economy and has had a tremendous impact on Nepal's GDP. Nearly 33% of Nepal is due to the foreign remittances. This has led to fiscal uncertainty causing economic destabilization. It is pertinent to mention that the term "Neпо Kids" gained currency in 2017 in India when the Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut used this term to describe filmmaker Karan Johar on a television show, calling him a "Flagbearer of Nepotism." As the actress accused him of being dismissive of outsiders in the film industry.

The analysts across the globe are comparing the unrest in Nepal with the Arab Spring that triggered an instantaneous mass uprising leading to the dethronement of President Hosni Mubarak in Egypt. This mass revolution started in 2010 and extended beyond 2011 as political social tremors were visible in Tunisia. Progressive forces were relegated to the background as regression had taken root causing severe economic crisis and an all-time highest increase in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) debt causing the dismantling of the public sector to the great extent and encouraging the private sector patronized by Hosni Mubarak's son Gamal Mubarak. Same resemblance can be seen in Nepal where the political class of Nepal has given benefits to their children and relatives. As per the World Bank statistics, every day approximately 2000 Nepalese youth leave the country to seek employment in the Middle East and SouthEast Asia. This has led to the employment opportunities lowering down to 20 % till last year.

The Gen Z has torn apart the subversion and nepotism in the Nepalese society patronized by the political dispensation. The international press while reporting on the destabilization in the erstwhile Himalayan kingdom has underlined that the social media posts tagged #nepokids, showing politicians children enjoying the overseas luxury trips and wearing designer clothes. What ignited the spark when the youth living below the poverty line erupted while seeing this disparity compared their living standard with those of the “Neпо Kids”.

The magnitude of violence due to disenchantment with the political class and establishment is such that the dead bodies of the victims are being recovered from the rubble and the death toll is rising. This has been said by the Nepal's Health Ministry Spokesperson Prakash Budathoki. It must be noted that during the violence



IS THIS NEPAL'S ARAB SPRING?

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government buildings that include the Supreme Court, Police Posts, Business Establishments besides the residential houses of the incumbent President Ramachandra Paudel and the dethroned Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli were set on fire by the angry mobs.

What is encouraging amid this destabilization is that amid the political vacuum created by the nationwide protests led by the Gen Z youth groups, the political logjam has ended with the appointment of Justice Sushila Karki as the interim Prime Minister of Nepal. She was administered the oath of office by the Nepalese President Ramchandra Paudel after the dissolving the House of Representatives. The interim government has been asked to hold the elections within the six months to bring political stability in Nepal. Before accepting the responsibility of holding the office Justice Sushila Karki

had made it abundantly clear in a meeting with President Paudel that she will accept the responsibility if she is allowed to perform her duties without any interference as she cannot bring peace and stability in Nepal if he hands and legs are tied to make her immobile. She has also said that she will open the cases of nepotism and corruption in which the political class of Nepal is involved. The leaders of the major political parties that were part of the negotiations with the President for the formation of the interim government had raised an objection for conducting a probe on unprecedented corruption by Justice Sushila Karki. She has set holding the probe as the precondition before holding the office of the interim Prime Minister. The leaders who raised objections include K.P. Sharma Oli of CPN(UML), Sher Bahadur Deuba of the Nepali Congress and Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" of the Maoist Centre. But the pressure from the Gen Z Groups made these leaders eat a humble pie.

Justice Sushila Karki has served as the first woman Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Nepal. Her tenure was not a smooth one as an impeachment motion was brought against her as she passed a judgement against the appointments made by the government. She was temporarily suspended in 2017 as the lawmakers from the CPN (Maoist Centre) and the Nepali Congress accused her of a biased judgement. But the public pressure prevailed. Known for her integrity and uprightness Justice Sushila Karki emerged as the natural choice to lead the government in Nepal as the people and youth on the streets have posed faith in her honesty and personal integrity.

Prime Minister Justice Sushila Karki has India connections as she is an alumnus of the prestigious Banaras Hindu University (BHU) as she has obtained her M.A. Political Science degree from BHU in 1975. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has extended his best wishes to Justice Karki for taking over as the interim Prime Minister of Nepal and said that India is committed to the peace, progress and prosperity of the people of Nepal. Prime Minister Modi while addressing a rally in Imphal said, "India and Nepal have been close friends bound by shared history, faith and cultural ties and India would always stand firmly with the people of the neighbouring country during its transitional phase. "Terming the appointment of Justice Sushila

Karki an example of women's empowerment, he said, "Today, from this land of Manipur, I will also talk to my colleagues in Nepal. Nepal is a friend of India, a close friend. I am confident that she (Karki) will pave the way for peace, stability and prosperity in Nepal. Sushila Ji's taking oath as the first woman prime minister of Nepal is a very good example of women's empowerment. I also want to congratulate the people of Nepal who, despite such turbulent times, have kept democratic values supreme..... Over the past few days, young men and women in Nepal have been seen working hard, cleaning and painting the roads. I have also seen their pictures on social media. Their positive thinking and constructive actions are not only inspiring, but also a clear sign of the advent of a new dawn in Nepal. I wish Nepal all the best for its bright future."

Justice Sushila Karki who is the first woman to hold the Prime Minister's office in Nepal and known for integrity has made her expectations clear with respect to India. In a recent interview she said, "First, I will say namaskar to Modi ji. I have a good impression about Modi ji." At the same time, she said that government to government relations are a different thing but at the same time she said, "India has helped Nepal at all times... (But) there is a saying (in Hindi): 'When there are utensils kept together in the kitchen, they do make some sound.' It happens!..... But there is such a good relationship between the people of Nepal and the people of India. Many, many of our relatives, many of our acquaintances... We have so much goodwill, love, we have not been in touch with India for many days. We will talk about it. When it is an international matter, between two countries, some people sit together and make a policy. "Without mincing words, she has said that she is much impressed with the Indian leaders and we in Nepal consider them as our brothers and sisters.

Remembering her student days at BHU where she got her M.A. Political Science degree in 1975, Justice Karki said, "I still remember my teachers, friends, I still remember the river Ganga. Beside the Ganga, there was a hostel. And at night in the summer, we would sleep on the (terrace)." She underlined that her hometown Birat Nagar is adjacent to the India -Nepal border, approximately 25 miles.

The first woman Prime Minister of Nepal Justice Sushila Karki indeed is well acquainted with the close civilisational and cultural ties between India and Nepal. This can be gauged from her recent interview that is in the public domain. This is indeed a welcome sign to bring the India -Nepal ties on track as there has been in the intrusion of the China factor and the use of Nepal's soil for carrying anti-India activities by our neighbours like Pakistan. This has to be brought under review and the age-old relations restored.

It is pertinent to mention that the destabilisation in Nepal is in succession to the violence and genocidal attrition against the minorities in Bangladesh after the dethronement of the elected Sheikh Hasina government. This violence did not stop but reached the worst level with the establishment of the interim government led by Muhammad Yunus who indulged in open vitriolic positioning against India making the bilateral relations worse. Not only that Bangladesh openly joined hands with the Pakistani military establishment and took anti-India posturing. It completely forgot that it was the military junta and political elite of Pakistan that led to the genocide of Bengalis of East Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh that was given moral and humanitarian support by India. Instead it orchestrated the genocide of the Hindu minorities and the vandalization of their temples and religious places. There is a resemblance between the uprisings in Bangladesh and Nepal. In both the cases there has been the involvement of the youth and students in these protests. Even the protestors in Nepal have alleged the intrusion of the subversive forces during the protests leading to the differences and groupism. And the youth who indulged in violence in Bangladesh turned brazenly anti-India and anti-minorities. India must keep its fingers crossed while observing the moves of the Gen Z who have hit the streets. Regime change is one thing in Nepal but that should not lead to anti-India posturing as has happened in Bangladesh. Over the decades there is a convergence of anti-India forces that are acting in pincer in the Himalayas to destabilise India and weaken the Northern Frontiers. New Delhi must not lower its guard and devise a comprehensive policy to deal with its neighbours in and around the Himalayas.

(Author is Editorial Director, The Chancellor)



PANUN KASHMIR observes Balidan Diwas with Installation of Amar Jyoti



THE CHANCELLOR DESK JAMMU

Panun Kashmir observed Balidan Diwas (Martyr's Day, 14th September) with a solemn yet resolute programme dedicated to the martyrs of the Kashmiri Hindu community and the security forces at Manhas Sabha Ground, Paloura, Jammu. The event carried profound spiritual and historical significance with the introduction and installation of the Veer Jyoti, a flame consecrated to the memory of the martyrs of seven centuries of genocide.

The programme was moderated by Pyare Lal Raina who invoked the collective memory of the community and prepared the ground for the deliberations. Dr. Ajay Chrungoo, Chairman Panun Kashmir, in his address dwelt upon the meaning of the Veer Jyoti and explained the sacred shloka inscribed on it, which is recognized in Sanskrit philosophical circles as the spiritual definition of veerta. He stressed how Sanskrit formulations and sacred concepts have historically acted as vital instruments for preserving the religious ethnicity and cultural distinctiveness of Kashmiri Hindus against all assaults. He emphasized that the Veer Jyoti is not merely a flame of memory but a pledge of identity, continuity, and resistance until

the community achieves justice and its rightful homeland.

The atmosphere was further elevated with enthralling musical tributes by Kanwal Peshin, Lavanya Koul, Pranav Pandita, and Nitish, who performed in deep reverence, with the audience too joining spontaneously, turning the segment into a collective act of devotion and resilience. Following mantra chanting, senior leaders of Panun Kashmir including Dr. Ajay Chrungoo, Dayji Kaul, Nancy Koul, Prof. Tito Ganju, Kuldeep Raina, P L Koul, Raj Nath Raina and Behari Lal Kaul lit the Veer Jyoti and dedicated it to the martyrs of the Kashmiri Hindu genocide as well as to the martyrs of the security forces who laid down their lives for the nation.

On behalf of Jammu and Kashmir Police and the entire security establishment, Shiv Kumar Sharma, IPS, DIG Jammu, paid floral tributes at the Veer Jyoti. His presence symbolized the collective homage of the security forces who have stood shoulder to shoulder with the community, sacrificing their lives in the fight against terrorism. In his tribute, he underscored that the valor and supreme sacrifices of the security personnel and the Kashmiri Hindu martyrs are part of a shared history of resistance, and the Amar Jyoti would serve as a unifying flame of remembrance for both.

In a carcade accompanied by hundreds of activists, the Veer Jyoti was then taken to the sacred Bhadrakali Temple, Thalwal, where it was installed as the Amar Jyoti. Amid spirited chants and slogans, the leadership of Panun Kashmir declared that the Amar Jyoti shall remain lit till the creation of the homeland, after which it will take its final place in the permanent memorial to be raised at the temple site.

The event witnessed the participation of a huge number of community members, many of whom were attending such a large collective commemoration after a long time. The overwhelming and emotional response to the programme reflected the depth of attachment and reverence the community holds for its martyrs. For countless attendees, the day marked not only remembrance but also a renewed commitment to the collective cause, making the occasion a truly historical milestone in the community's journey of resilience and return.

On this solemn occasion, Panun Kashmir expressed its heartfelt gratitude to the many organizations and individuals whose solidarity has strengthened the community's resolve. First and foremost, deep gratitude was extended to Swami Ram Shaiv Ashram, Paloura, for its enduring spiritual guidance and steadfast support. Panun Kashmir

also warmly acknowledged Jai Krishen Khar Ji and Sanjay Raina Ji along with their management team for their dedicated role in empowering this collective journey of memory.

Special thanks were extended to the Kashmiri Hindu Foundation (KHF) USA, with particular acknowledgment of the inspiration of Shri Deepak Ganju, the youthful commitment of Ankit Monga, and the steadfast support of all KHF members who, even while residing abroad, have kept alive the memory of this day of sacrifice. Panun Kashmir also expressed appreciation to Shri Aalakh Sahiba Trust, to Ravi Dhar Ji and its management, whose spiritual strength and cooperation have continuously nourished the struggle.

Acknowledgment was also made to the Rainawari Action Committee, with special remembrance of Jalali Sahib, Rakesh Hangloo, Dr. Mahesh Kaul, and every member of the committee, who kept the flame of hope alive even in the ashes of displacement. Panun Kashmir extended its thanks to the Kashmir Pandit Sabha, Mumbai, whose consistent cooperation has lent strength to the movement in every circumstance. Above all, the Bhadrakali Temple management was offered special gratitude for providing sacred space and support for the installation of

the Amar Jyoti, which elevated the day's commemoration with sanctity and dignity.

In addition, Panun Kashmir conveyed heartfelt gratitude to Kashmiri Lal Bhat, Advocate and Patron of the Prem Nath Bhat Memorial Trust, whose unwavering dedication has fortified the collective memory of martyrdom and justice. The leadership also acknowledged the lifelong contributions of Pyare Lal Kaul Badgami, the commitment of Rajnath Raina, and the steadfast leadership of Nancy Kaul, President of Daughters of Vitasta, who continues to inspire the younger generation to hold firm to their heritage and responsibilities.

As Panun Kashmir leaders declared, September 14 is not merely a day of remembrance but a day of pledge. It is a historic moment when the community bows before its martyrs through the Amar Jyoti. This flame will continue to guide the struggle until the homeland is established. Balidan Diwas is not simply commemoration; it is a source of energy, a call to the community not to allow injustice to history, and an affirmation to preserve identity with unshakable resolve. The collective voice of the gathering proclaimed: we are indomitable, we are steadfast, and we shall return to our Homeland, our Panun Kashmir.

Cartoonist Manoj Chopra honoured

THE CHANCELLOR DESK JAMMU

It is a moment of pride for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir as Shri Manoj Chopra, senior cartoonist of Punjab Kesari from Jammu, has been conferred with the prestigious Cartoon Watch Lifetime Achievement Award at the Cartoon Festival 2025 held in Raipur, Chhattisgarh on September 12, 2025. He is the only cartoonist from the UT of J&K to receive this national honour.

The award was presented by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, Shri Vishnu Deo Sai, in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Shri Vijay Sharma, MP Shri Brijmohan Agrawal, senior journalist Dr. Himanshu Dwivedi, and noted dignitaries from art, literature, and



media.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Shri Sai said that cartoons are not only a medium of entertainment but also serve as a mirror of society, highlighting serious issues through humour and satire. He applauded Shri Manoj Chopra for his decades-long contribution to the art of cartooning and his role in spreading awareness on social and national issues.

It must be mentioned here that the award instituted by Cartoon Watch, has previously been given to legendary cartoonists including Bal Thackeray, R.K. Laxman, Pran, and Abid Surti.

Shri Manoj Chopra, who began his career in 1996 with The Northlines and later State Times, has been associated with Punjab Kesari since 2008. Over his career, he has pub-

lished more than 22,000 cartoons in national and international platforms. His works have received appreciation in India and abroad, with exhibitions across more than 30 countries.

He has been the recipient of several awards, including the Maya Kamath Memorial Award for Political Cartooning, the Academy Award by J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, international honours in China, Iran, Poland, Brazil, and Romania, and has represented India in multiple global cartoon contests. His illustrations were also featured in the film The Accidental Prime Minister.

This recognition is seen as a matter of immense pride for Jammu & Kashmir, as Shri Chopra becomes the first and only cartoonist from the UT to be honoured with this national Lifetime Achievement Award.

NDA's Radhakrishnan elected 15th VP of India

Likely to take oath as Sept 12

THE CHANCELLOR NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

In a significant political development, BJP veteran and former Maharashtra Governor Chandrapuram Ponnusamy Radhakrishnan was elected as the 15th Vice President of India, comfortably defeating Opposition-backed candidate Justice (Retd.) B. Sudershan Reddy. Radhakrishnan secured 452 votes out of 752 valid ballots, while Reddy managed 300, with 15 votes invalidated during counting.

The outcome, though expected to favour the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), surprised political observers due to the larger-than-anticipated margin, indicating possible cross-voting from within the Opposition bloc. The NDA, which had an estimated 427 MPs in its corner, had also secured the support of parties like the YSR Congress and a few independents. Yet, the final tally of 452 votes suggested that more than a dozen Opposition MPs may have voted for the NDA nominee or had their ballots rejected due to errors.

The Opposition INDIA bloc had projected a united front during polling, with senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh claiming that all 315 MPs from the alliance were present and had cast their votes. However, Reddy's total of 300 valid votes, 15 short of the bloc's claimed strength, quickly led to internal murmurs of dissent and mismanagement, though a senior leader sought to deflect blame by stating that invalid votes did not necessarily equate to cross-voting.

Radhakrishnan, a seasoned leader with deep roots in the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Bharatiya Janata Party, brings with him more than four decades of political and administrative experience. Known for his quiet, non-confronta-



tional style, the 67-year-old leader is widely respected across party lines in Tamil Nadu. Born on October 20, 1957, in Tiruppur, Radhakrishnan began his political journey as an RSS swayamsevak in his teens. By the mid-1970s, he was already active in the Jan Sangh, which would later evolve into the BJP.

He represented Coimbatore in the Lok Sabha for two terms during the Atal Bihari Vajpayee era and served as Tamil Nadu BJP president between 2004 and 2007. His long political journey includes significant organisational responsibilities, including serving as chairman of the Coir Board and leading the BJP's efforts in Kerala. In 2004, he led a 93-day, 19,000-km 'Rath Yatra' across India to highlight key issues such as national river-linking, terrorism, the Uniform Civil Code, and the eradication of untouchability.

Most recently, Radhakrishnan

held constitutional positions as Governor of Jharkhand, with additional charges in Telangana and Puducherry, before being appointed Governor of Maharashtra in July 2024. He resigned from that post after being nominated as the NDA's vice presidential candidate.

Radhakrishnan becomes the first OBC leader from South India and the third person from Tamil Nadu to occupy the post of Vice President. His elevation is being viewed as a strategic move by the BJP to strengthen its foothold in the South, particularly among backward communities. Hailing from the politically and economically influential Kongu Vellalar Gounder community, he has long enjoyed grassroots support in western Tamil Nadu.

A graduate in Business Administration, Radhakrishnan is also known for his sporting interests,

PM, HM congratulate Radhakrishnan on winning VP election

NEW DELHI

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi today congratulated Thiru CP Radhakrishnan on winning the 2025 Vice Presidential election.

In a post on X, he wrote: "Congratulations to Thiru CP Radhakrishnan Ji on winning the 2025 Vice Presidential election. His life has always been devoted to serving society and empowering the poor and marginalised. I am confident that he will be an outstanding VP, who will strengthen our Constitutional values and enhance Parliamentary discourse."

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday congratulated C P Radhakrishnan for winning the vice-presidential polls and said his sagacity as a leader and profound administrative knowledge will help in bringing out the best in India's parliamentary democracy.

"Congratulations to C P Radhakrishnan Ji on being elected as the Vice-President of India," Shah wrote on X. The home minister said he firmly believes that Radhakrishnan's sagacity as a leader who has risen from the grassroots of society and profound knowledge about administration will help the country in bringing out the best in its parliamentary democracy to serve the marginalised.

"I extend my warmest wishes to you for your journey as the custodian of the sanctity of the Upper House," Shah added.

having been a table tennis champion in college and an enthusiast of long-distance running, cricket, and volleyball. Despite his long tenure in public life, he is regarded as an untainted and principled leader, traits that reportedly played a key role in his unanimous selection within the NDA.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised Radhakrishnan's appointment, describing him as an experienced, knowledgeable, and people-centric leader. "His parliamentary interventions were always incisive. During his gubernatorial tenures, he focused on addressing challenges faced by common citizens. His vast knowledge of legislative and constitutional matters will make him an inspiring Vice President," the Prime Minister said.

With his election, Radhakrishnan succeeds Jagdeep Dhankhar, who resigned from the post in July 2025, triggering the early election. As Vice President, Radhakrishnan will

also serve as the ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, a role that will demand both constitutional finesse and political neutrality amid a deeply divided upper house.

The Opposition, meanwhile, faces uncomfortable questions about internal coordination and loyalty, particularly in light of the unexplained gap between claimed and actual votes. While the official narrative attempts to attribute the shortfall to technicalities or invalid votes, the result has unmistakably underlined growing cracks in the alliance.

Radhakrishnan is expected to assume office later this month and will preside over the monsoon session of Parliament in his new capacity. His election marks not just a personal triumph, but also a consolidation of the BJP's expanding influence in constitutional institutions.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission certified the election of C P Radhakrishnan as the 15th Vice President of India.

PM Modi conducts aerial survey of flood-hit Punjab

• Announces Rs 1,600 Cr relief package, visits Gurdaspur for review meet • Assures full central support for rehab & rebuilding

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
GURDASPUR/NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday undertook an aerial survey of flood-affected areas in Punjab and conducted a high-level review meeting in Gurdaspur to assess the damage caused by heavy rainfall, cloudbursts, and subsequent flooding across the state.

Following the survey and briefing by officials and elected representatives, the Prime Minister announced a financial assistance package of Rs 1,600 crore for Punjab, in addition to the Rs 12,000 crore already allocated under various central schemes.

The PM emphasised a multi-pronged approach to support the recovery and rehabilitation process, with focused interventions in housing, infrastructure, agriculture, education, and child welfare.

PM Modi commended the swift action by personnel of the NDRF, SDRF, Army, and Aapda Mitra volunteers, praising their dedication in providing immediate relief. He also met with affected families, offered condolences, and assured them of the Centre's unwavering support.



The Union Government has already dispatched Inter-Ministerial Central Teams to assess the ground reality. Further assistance

will be determined based on their findings and the State Government's formal memorandum. "The Centre stands firmly with Punjab

in this time of crisis. All necessary help for relief, rehabilitation, and rebuilding will be provided," said PM Modi.

Key Announcements:

Ex-Gratia Relief:
Rs 2 lakh for families of the deceased; Rs 50,000 for the injured.

PM CARES for Children:
Full support for children orphaned by floods/landslides.

Housing & Infrastructure:
Rural homes to be rebuilt under PMAY-Gramin; highways and public infrastructure to be restored.

Support for Farmers:
Aid for farmers without power; bores to be refurbished under RKVY; Solar pump promotion via MNRE; micro-irrigation under Per Drop More Crop.

Education Aid:
Flood-hit govt. schools to receive funding under Samagra Shiksha.

Water Conservation:
Repair and construction of rain-water harvesting structures under Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari.

India united in tackling global challenges: Piyush Goyal

Says Swadeshi & self-reliance key to India's economic future

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
JAMMU

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, reaffirmed India's resilience and unity in the face of global challenges while addressing the 56th EEPC India National Awards. Emphasising the need to build a self-reliant economy, the Minister urged businesses to focus on Swadeshi products and Atmanirbhar Bharat, stressing that domestic manufacturing is key to securing India's economic future.

"No matter how big the global crisis, India stands united. We have the strength to overcome any challenge," said Goyal.

In a statement issued by PIB, he noted the growing risk of export restrictions from other countries and

underlined the importance of reducing import dependency. Citing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call on 15th August, Goyal reiterated the need to focus on innovation, indigenous production, and the 'Made in India' movement.

The President of India, Droupadi Murmu, graced the event as Chief Guest. In her address, she highlighted the evolution of India's engineering exports and their role in strengthening the national economy and global reputation.

Goyal emphasized the transformation of India's economy under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership:

"India has risen from being part of the fragile five economies to now ranking among the top five globally. For four consecutive years, we have been the fastest-growing major econ-



omy," he stated.

In the last quarter, India recorded 7.8% GDP growth, which Goyal described as a "world record".

Highlighting India's global standing as a trusted trade partner, Goyal said: "With our focus on 'Zero Defect, Zero Effect' products, India is committed to high quality and low environmental impact."

He added that India has consistently ranked among the top three nations globally in sustainability performance, meeting its NDC commitments under COP21 and prioritising environmental responsibility.

Goyal credited the government's GST rate cuts and simplification for boosting domestic demand and consumer confidence:

"These reforms are creating new job opportunities, increasing

incomes, and building a strong economic base that no global power can shake."

He stressed that the benefits of GST cuts must be fully passed on to consumers, ensuring inclusive and equitable growth.

Reflecting on EEPC India's journey, the Minister noted the dramatic growth of India's engineering exports, from USD 10 million in 1955 to USD 116 billion today. He expressed confidence that the sector would continue to set higher benchmarks with innovation and resilience.

"When India works together like one big family, supporting each other across sectors, inclusive growth will naturally follow," concluded Goyal.

"India is on course to become a global role model for sustainable and inclusive development."

India & Israel sign landmark bilateral investment agreement in New Delhi

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
JAMMU

Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman and Finance Minister of Israel Bezael Smotrich today signed a landmark Bilateral Investment Agreement (BIA) in New Delhi, strengthening economic ties between the two nations.

The agreement aims to provide greater certainty and protection for investors, promoting the growth of trade and mutual investments by ensuring a minimum standard of treatment and an independent dispute resolution mechanism through arbitration. It includes provisions to safeguard investments against expropriation, ensure transparency, and facilitate smooth transfers and



compensation for losses.

The BIA carefully balances investor protections with the sovereign right of each state to regulate, preserving essential policy space for

governance.

The signing ceremony was attended by senior officials from both the Indian and Israeli governments, marking a historic milestone in bilateral relations.

Currently, bilateral investments between India and Israel total approximately USD 800 million. The agreement is expected to catalyze further investment flows, benefiting businesses and economies on both sides.

Speaking at the event, Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman highlighted India's decade-long reforms that have positioned the country as the world's fastest-growing major economy, fostering an investment-friendly environment.

She also expressed condolences over the loss of innocent lives in a terrorist attack in Israel earlier today, emphasizing the shared civilizational values of the two nations and their common commitment to peace and security. Both ministers

acknowledged the threat of terrorism and expressed solidarity.

Finance Minister Smotrich spoke about the strong economic growth both countries have achieved despite security challenges and underscored the importance of deeper collaboration in cybersecurity, defense, innovation, and high technology sectors.

Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to advancing cooperation in fintech innovation, infrastructure development, financial regulation, and digital payment connectivity. They agreed to promote and protect investments on a reciprocal basis and enhance economic and financial ties.

The Israeli Finance Minister extended an invitation to Union Minister Sitharaman to visit Israel, further strengthening diplomatic and economic relations.

GST rate on drones slashed to 5% to boost India's drone ecosystem

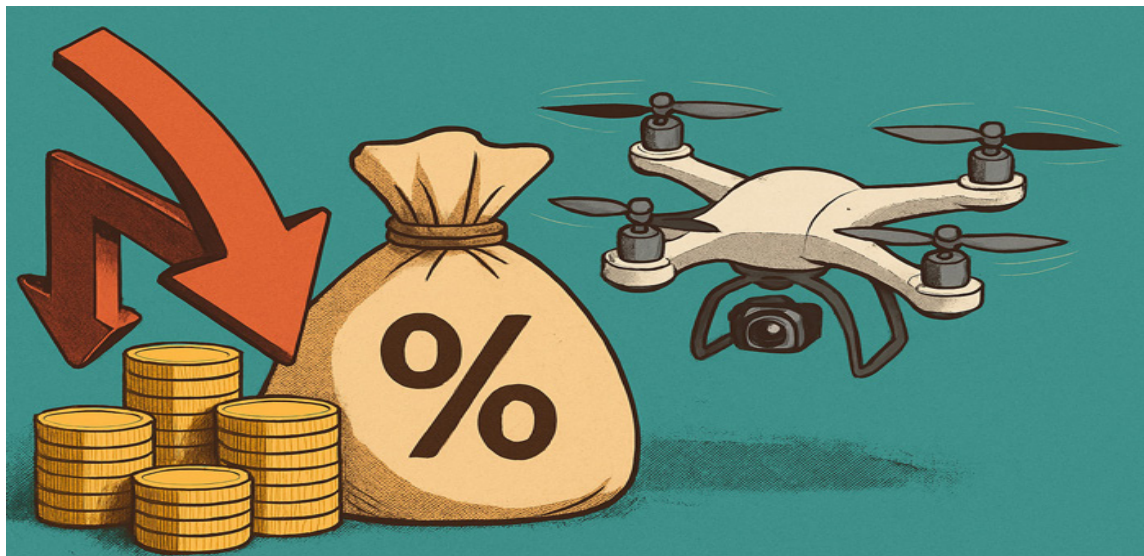
Civil Aviation Minister hails move as a game-changer for transformative technologies & training

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
NEW DELHI

In a landmark decision aimed at fostering innovation and growth, the 56th GST Council Meeting has approved a significant reduction in the GST rate on drones, bringing it down to a uniform 5% across all categories. This move is expected to position India as a global leader in drone technology, supporting a wide range of industries from agriculture to defense.

Previously, drones with integrated cameras were taxed at 18%, while personal-use drones attracted a 28% GST. The new reform standardizes the rate to 5% for all drones, whether for commercial or personal use, and regardless of camera integration. This change is aligned with the Government of India's vision to nurture a robust and internationally competitive drone ecosystem.

Civil Aviation Minister Shri Ram Mohan Naidu welcomed the reform, stating, "The GST rationalization with a simplified two-slab structure of 5% and 18% is the biggest reform in India's indirect taxation ever. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, this will pave the way for a Viksit Bharat 2047 founded on



Atmanirbhar Bharat. The reduction will enhance ease of living, compliance, and doing business, benefiting consumers and Indian manufacturers alike." He added that this important step will enable India to emerge as a leader in transformative technologies such as drones. A uniform 5% GST eliminates classification disputes and provides policy certainty.

Furthermore, GST exemption on flight simulators and motion simulators will bolster the country's pilot training ecosystem, helping reduce training costs for airlines and academies.

The rate cut is expected to accelerate drone adoption in multiple sectors, including agriculture, where drones are used for crop monitoring

and pesticide spraying; petroleum and mining for pipeline and asset inspection; infrastructure for surveying and mapping; logistics for last-mile delivery; and defense and security for surveillance and rapid response. Affordable drones will further India's Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat initiatives, driving efficiency across industries

Key Announcements:

- GST on all drones cut to 5% from 18% and 28%.
- Flight and motion simulators exempted from GST.
- Simplified GST slabs: 5% and 18% for easier compliance.
- Boost to drone use in farming, infrastructure, logistics, defense, and mining.
- Supports Make in India & Atmanirbhar Bharat goals.
- Expected to create jobs in manufacturing and tech sectors.

and public services.

Moreover, the simplified GST regime is projected to generate new employment opportunities in drone manufacturing, assembly, software development, data analytics, and field operations. This GST reform marks a significant shift towards growth-oriented taxation for aviation and emerging technologies, recognizing drones as both an economic opportunity and a strategic priority for India's future.

Political crisis deepens in Nepal: Nepal PM Oli resigns amid Gen Z protests

20 protestors killed in police action; Demonstrations continue, protesters torch govt buildings, attack politicians

KATHMANDU

Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli resigned, deepening Nepal's political crisis after violent "Gen Z protests" erupted across the country following police action that killed 20 youths the day before.

Defying curfew orders, protesters stormed government buildings including Parliament, the President's office, and the Supreme Court, setting several structures and political leaders' residences ablaze. Among the targets were the homes of President Ram Chandra Poudel, Oli himself, and former Prime Ministers. Violent clashes and demonstrations were reported in Kathmandu and other regions.

In a tragic incident in Kathmandu's Dallu neighborhood, a mob set fire to former Prime Minister Jhala Nath Khanal's residence. His wife, Rajyalaxmi Chitrakar, suffered severe burns and later died in hospital.

The unrest forced the closure of Tribhuvan International Airport as smoke from nearby fires threatened aviation safety, according to the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal.

Following the surge of violence, Oli submitted his resignation to the President, who accepted it and appointed him to lead a caretaker government until a new administration is formed. However, with both President Poudel and Oli reportedly in hiding, Nepal faces unprecedented chaos and uncertainty.

An aide to the President told



Reuters that efforts to appoint a new prime minister are underway and calls for dialogue with protest leaders have begun.

In a rare public appeal, Nepal Army Chief General Ashok Raj Sigdel urged protesters to cease violence, prevent further loss of life and property, and engage in dialogue. Later in the evening, the Army assumed control of the Kathmandu airport and the government's main secretariat building. A statement from the Army warned that it would mobilize

all security forces to quell ongoing unrest and appealed for public cooperation against destructive acts.

Meanwhile, protest group 'Next Gen Nepal', a key player in the demonstrations, urged calm and discipline, emphasizing their readiness for talks contingent on the dissolution of Parliament. "Our generation is ready to take responsibility for the future," the group said, stressing that property damage undermines their cause and calling for restraint.

In his resignation letter, Oli cited

the “adverse situation” in the country and expressed hope that stepping down would help resolve the crisis politically in accordance with the Constitution. Television footage showed protesters ransacking and setting fire to his private residence. Oli, 73, who began his fourth term last July, is Nepal’s 14th Prime Minister since 2008.

Homes of other political leaders, including former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Pra-

chanda), were also targeted. Deuba and his wife, Foreign Minister Arzu Deuba Rana, were assaulted in separate incidents. Protesters set fire to ministers' quarters and stormed a central jail in Nakkhu, freeing former Deputy Prime Minister Rabi Lamichhane, jailed on corruption charges.

The protests were sparked by the government's recent ban on over two dozen social media platforms, revoked only hours before Oli's resignation. The ban was widely seen as an attack on free speech. Demonstrators have also voiced grievances over "rampant corruption" and demanded government accountability.

Oli's resignation came after his calls for dialogue were ignored and his coalition partner, the Nepali Congress, moved to withdraw support. Former King Gyanendra Shah expressed condolences for the victims and appealed for a peaceful resolution.

The Nepal Army reiterated its commitment to safeguarding national sovereignty and called on all citizens, especially the youth, to maintain calm and unity. Senior government and security officials jointly appealed for restraint, emphasizing that dialogue is the only path to restore order.

As Nepal grapples with escalating violence and political instability, the nation awaits the formation of a new government amid widespread demands for accountability and reform.

Courtesy: (KATHMANDU NEWS-PAPERS)

India rolls out first AI-driven forecasting for farmers across 13 States

First-of-its-kind program empowers Kharif planning with early, tailored weather updates

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
NEW DELHI

In a pioneering step to revolutionise agricultural planning, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (MoAFW) has rolled out an AI-based monsoon forecasting initiative, directly benefiting nearly 3.8 crore farmers across 13 states.

The forecasts, sent via SMS through the government's m-Kisan platform, mark the first targeted large-scale dissemination of AI-driven weather updates to farmers globally.

This breakthrough comes at a critical time, as millions of Indian farmers continue to rely heavily on monsoon rains for Kharif farming, their primary agricultural season and livelihood source. The AI-generated forecasts were issued up to four weeks in advance, offering farmers crucial lead time to make informed decisions about crop selection, sowing, and input management.

This year's monsoon season saw an early onset but experienced an unexpected 20-day stall in its northward progression. The AI-based models correctly predicted this pause. Updated advisories were issued weekly to keep farmers informed until consistent rainfall resumed in their regions.

“This program harnesses the AI revolution in weather forecasting



to empower farmers with timely, location-specific insights,” said Dr. Pramod Kumar Meherda, Additional Secretary, MoAFW, during a review meeting at Krishi Bhavan on September 8. He added, “We look forward to

improving this effort in future years to further support risk management in farming.”

The meeting was attended by Nobel Laureate and University of Chicago Professor Michael Kremer,

who hailed the initiative as a model for people-centered AI deployment. "This is a major achievement by the Ministry. It puts India at the forefront of applying AI to meet the real needs of millions of farmers," he said.

The forecasts leveraged two advanced open-access AI models: Google's Neural Global Climate Model (Neural GCM) and the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts' Artificial Intelligence Forecasting System (AIFS). Independent evaluations confirmed that these models outperformed traditional forecasting tools in predicting the onset of the monsoon at local levels.

Professor Ramesh Chand, Member of NITI Aayog, emphasized the importance of tailoring forecasts to end-users: “This initiative is tremendously valuable because it centers on farmers’ needs. The forecasts are delivered in simple, actionable language, empowering farmers to make timely and informed decisions.”

The program was developed in collaboration with Development Innovation Lab – India and Precision Development, who worked directly with farmers to ensure that the SMS messages were easy to understand and acted upon.

Joint Secretary Sanjay Kumar Agarwal highlighted the program's role in climate adaptation. "As climate change increases weather unpredictability, early and accurate forecasts become vital tools to help farmers adapt, reduce losses, and maintain productivity," he said.

Union Minister Bambhaniya assesses damage, meets victims, launches scientific survey



India's growth story needs media's voice: Dr Jitendra Singh

Emphasises media's role in promoting govt initiatives

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
JAMMU

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh today said that the media serves as an effective bridge between the government and the public, playing a pivotal role in spreading awareness about various welfare schemes and development initiatives.

Speaking as the Chief Guest at 'Vartala', a media workshop organised by the Press Information Bureau (PIB), Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, in Jammu, Dr Singh stressed the importance of timely and accurate dissemination of information in ensuring transparency, accountability, and active public participation in governance.

"The success of any welfare scheme depends on how effectively information reaches the last mile. The media not only informs but also inspires," the Minister said.

Citing the example of the Aroma Mission, popularly known as the Purple Revolution in Jammu & Kashmir, Dr Singh said the media has played a vital role in shifting mindsets from government job dependency to entrepreneurship. He added that by highlighting success stories, media motivates citizens to avail the benefits of government initiatives.

Referring to young Indian space scientist Shubanshu Shukla, Dr Singh remarked: "Who will tell the people what Shubanshu Shukla did in space? It is the media that can



convey his achievements to society and highlight the role of our scientists in nation-building."

Dr Singh noted that while Indian media has made significant strides in outreach and adoption of technology, there remains immense potential for developing domain-specific journalism, which, he said, "ensures well-informed, authentic, and nuanced reporting on critical issues."

He also touched upon the exponential growth of India's startup ecosystem, which has expanded from just 350 startups in 2014 to over 1.5 lakh in 2025, making India the third-largest startup ecosystem globally. The media, he said, has a transformative role in shaping this innovation landscape by creating awareness and spotlighting success stories.

Highlighting the success of the CSIR-Aroma Mission, Dr Singh said

that more than 3,000 lavender-based startups have emerged across rural India, especially in Jammu & Kashmir. These ventures are not only enhancing rural incomes but also generating employment.

"The media must tell these stories. When farmers and young entrepreneurs see such examples, they feel encouraged to adopt new crops and launch agri-based startups," Dr Singh asserted.

Neha Jalali, Director, PIB Jammu, reiterated the bureau's commitment to strengthening media's role as a conduit between the government and the people.

"PIB will continue to support media professionals in accessing authentic information, so that the benefits of government schemes reach the grassroots," she said.

The workshop also featured insights from subject matter experts. Dr Suphala Gupta, Principal Scientist, CSIR-IIM Jammu, said the ongoing Phase-III of the Aroma Mission is playing a catalytic role in rural empowerment through cultivation, processing, and marketing of aromatic plant.

Dr Ashutosh Gupta, Principal, GMC Jammu, highlighted improvements in healthcare infrastructure and services in J&K.

Sansar Chand Sharma, Senior Meteorologist, IMD Jammu, spoke on the critical role of the India Meteorological Department in disaster risk management through timely and accurate weather forecasts.

Zakir Nazir, Media & Communication Officer, PIB Jammu, delivered the vote of thanks, acknowledging the participation of around 100 media professionals and the valuable contributions of speakers.

The workshop concluded with an interactive Q&A session focused on flagship government programmes, including the Aroma Mission and India's rapidly expanding startup ecosystem.

RKPAC appeals the Kashmiri Pandits to join Balidan Diwas(Martyr's Day) Rally

JAMMU

Rainawari Kashmiri Pandit Action Committee(RKPAC), the apex body of the Rainawari Kashmiri Pandits has given a call to the community to join the "Balidan Diwas" at the Manhas Maha Sabha Ground, Paloura, Near Jaggi Darbar, Paloura, Jammu on 14th September, Sunday at 10:30 am to pay rich tributes to the Kashmiri Pandits martyrs who were subjected to the cold blooded murder by the terrorists in Kashmir and forced the entire community to genocide by making them live as refugees in their own nation. 14th September is observed as the day of remembrance by the entire Kashmiri Pandit community every year right from 1990 to uphold the memory of genocide inflicted on the community. This year on the Balidan Diwas (Martyr's Day) an eternal flame in the form of a Mashal(torch) will be taken in a solemn procession to Mata Bhadrakali Temple located in Thalwal, Jammu and installed as a symbol of resistance and remembrance.

In his appeal to the community, B.L.Jalali, President,RKPAC said, "Balidan Diwas(Martyr's Day) is the day of resistance that makes it clear to the persecutor that no compromise will be made with intolerance

and injustice. And it makes clear in unequivocal terms that the Genocide of the Kashmiri Pandit community has to be addressed and reversed by giving them rightful place in Kashmir with complete rights of Indian citizens in their homeland by securing their temples, lands and cremation grounds that have been vandalized, encroached and usurped by the persecutor. RKPAC extends full support to the installation of the eternal flame of martyrs as the insignia of resistance against our continued genocide at the Mata Badra Kali temple, Thalwal, Jammu and all its cadres will be available for making the Martyr's Day a grand success to reaffirm our pledge to reclaim our homeland in Kashmir. All the important constituent units of the RKPAC that include Jogishwari Mandir Trust(JMT),Gokul Mandir Trust(GMT) and other temple committees will join the Martyr's Day remembrance to express solidarity with the cause of the community. On the eve of this somber moment RKPAC also appeals to the policy makers to implement the Margdarshan Resolution -1991 in letter and spirit and enact the Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Bill-2020 to reverse the Kashmiri Pandit genocide."



Second phase of 'Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan' to begin from Sept 15

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
NEW DELHI

Following the resounding success of the first phase of the 'Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan', the second phase of the campaign is set to begin under the leadership of Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare & Rural Development, Shivraj Singh Chouhan. While the first phase focused on Kharif crops, this upcoming campaign will center around Rabi crops.

As part of the campaign, agricultural scientists from across the country will visit villages, interact directly with farmers, share crucial agricultural knowledge, understand local issues, and contribute to fulfilling Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's 'Lab to Land' vision.

In preparation, a two-day 'National Agricultural Conference - Rabi Abhiyan 2025' will be held at the Pusa Campus, New Delhi, on September 15 and 16. This platform will bring together agricultural experts, scientists, policymakers, and senior officials from state governments to deliberate on strategies, production targets, and preparations for the Rabi 2025-26 sowing season.

Chaired by Union Agriculture Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, the conference will also see participation from Agriculture Ministers of various states, the Union

Secretary of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, the Director General of ICAR, and other key officials from central and state departments.

For the first time, under the Union Minister's direction, the Rabi Conference is being organized over two full days. The extended format aims to address critical issues in a detailed manner, ensuring maximum benefit for farmers.

On the first day, officials from central and state governments will engage in detailed discussions on major issues concerning Rabi crops. On September 16, a joint session involving all State Agriculture Ministers, Union Ministers, and Ministers of State will be held. The agenda includes in-depth reviews and planning on how to effectively deliver new technologies, high-quality seeds, and services to farmers.

For the first time, scientists from Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) have also been invited to share regional insights and challenges, helping to shape the roadmap for future strategies.

The programme includes parallel technical sessions, where experts and state representatives will make presentations. Open discussions will aim at formulating practical and implementable solutions.

State-wise best practices and success stories will also be showcased to encourage adoption across

other regions. Discussions will also cover weather forecasting, fertilizer management, research updates, and technological advancements.

This national-level conference is expected to chart out a clear and actionable plan for the Rabi 2025-26 season, contributing to increased farmer income, sustainable farming practices, and national food security.

The Central Government remains steadfast in its commitment to farmer welfare and prosperity. The 'Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan', launched during the Kharif season, had seen Union Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan personally visiting states and interacting with farmers from May 29 to June 12, 2025. During that phase, 2,170 teams of scientists visited villages nationwide, fostering direct engagement and knowledge sharing with farmers.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has described the campaign as a historic step toward bridging the gap between research institutions and rural farmlands.

With the upcoming Rabi campaign, similar enthusiasm is visible among farmers. Once again, the initiative aims not just to remain a policy effort on paper but to fulfill practical objectives on the ground, ensuring large-scale outreach and impact.

Bhupen Da gave voice to India's unity, inspired generations: PM Modi

■ Addresses 100th birth anniv celebrations of Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhupen Hazarika in Guwahati

■ Says Bhupen Da's life embodied the spirit of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat'

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
GUWAHATI

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on Saturday paid rich tributes to legendary singer, composer and cultural icon Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhupen Hazarika during the centenary birth anniversary celebrations held in Guwahati, Assam. Addressing a packed gathering, the Prime Minister described Bhupen Da as a symbol of India's cultural unity, whose music not only transcended geographical boundaries but also stirred the soul of a nation.

"Bhupen Da's voice reflected the emotions of a united India. His life was a living embodiment of Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat," said the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister said the Bharat Ratna conferred upon Bhupen Hazarika was not just an honour to an individual, but a recognition of the spirit of the Northeast, and a symbol of the government's deep commitment to the region's progress and pride.

Describing Hazarika as "Shudha Kantho"—the pure voice—PM Modi said his songs continue to inspire generations, keeping alive the dreams and struggles of common people.

"He gave voice to the pain and hope of India. His compositions continue to energize our national journey," he said.

The Prime Minister quoted several lines from Hazarika's iconic songs during the address, reflecting on their enduring relevance and emotional depth.

He also released a biography of Bhupen Hazarika, reiterating that the government would take his life,



legacy, and message to every Indian household, especially to the youth.

Reflecting on Hazarika's life journey, the Prime Minister spoke about how he drew musical inspiration from the Brahmaputra in Assam and went on to hone his art in Kashi (Varanasi) and later the United States. Despite global exposure, Hazarika remained deeply connected to the soil of Assam.

"From the Brahmaputra to the Ganga, and from Assam to the world stage, Bhupen Da carried India in his voice," the PM said.

He recalled Hazarika's role in uniting a culturally diverse India during times when the Northeast was facing neglect and separatism, stating that his music remained an instrument of unity.

The Prime Minister emphasized

Dr. Bhupen Hazarika (1926–2011), singer, poet, composer, and filmmaker, is revered as one of India's greatest cultural icons. His music, steeped in themes of humanity, social justice, and national integration, remains a powerful force in the cultural consciousness of India. He was conferred the Bharat Ratna posthumously in 2019.

that cultural connectivity is as essential as physical infrastructure in building national unity.

"When we talk of connectivity, we must also think beyond roads, railways and airports—cultural connectivity binds the soul of India," he said.

He noted the government's continuous efforts in highlighting the cultural legacy of the Northeast—from celebrating Veer Lachit Borphukan at the national level to organizing events like Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav and commemorating the contributions of lesser-known freedom fight-

ers of the region.

Switching to current affairs, the Prime Minister reiterated that New India will never compromise on its security or dignity.

"India has shown through Operation Sindoor that no threat will go unanswered. We will protect every inch of our sovereignty," he declared.

He also highlighted "Vocal for Local" as a key national mission and urged the people of Assam to become brand ambassadors for indigenous products, citing Assam's gamocha as a globally recognized cultural symbol.

"Let us take pride in our Swadeshi products. This is the way to realize Bhupen Da's dream of a self-reliant, proud India," the PM urged.

Recalling that Bhupen Hazarika wrote his first song at the age of 13, PM Modi noted that the artist had dreamt of a new India where every deprived Indian would find dignity.

"That spark of a 13-year-old is today a national resolve. The dream Bhupen Da saw then is now the vision we carry for Viksit Bharat by 2047," he said.

The Prime Minister concluded by extending greetings to the people of Assam and the nation, urging all citizens to draw inspiration from Bhupen Hazarika's life and legacy.

"Let the melodies of Bhupen Da guide us as we build a stronger, united, and developed India."

The event was attended by Governor of Assam Lakshman Prasad Acharya, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, and several prominent cultural personalities.

CBC promotes sustainable living & legal awareness in Leh

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
LEH

The Central Bureau of Communication (CBC), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, conducted an Integrated Communication and Outreach Programme (ICOP) at the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) in Leh on Saturday.

The day-long event aimed to educate youth on the themes of Mission LiFE and Swachhata Hi Seva, encouraging sustainable living and pro-environment lifestyles. Experts from various departments highlighted the urgent environmental challenges facing the Himalayan region and the critical role of youth in fostering clean, sustainable communities.

Shri Namgial Tashi, Range Officer (Forests), and Shri Mipham Jigmet from Zero Waste Ladakh delivered insightful lectures on regional conservation efforts, sustainable business practices, and eco-tourism.

A seminar on the New Criminal Laws introduced by the government was also held. Sub Inspector Stanzin



Zangpo of Ladakh Police provided an overview of the Bharatiya Nyay

Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and

Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA). He explained how these laws,

reflecting the vision of New India, emphasize justice, transparency, and leverage technology for speedy justice delivery.

The programme was presided over by Ghulam Abbas, Director, CBC Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, who emphasised CBC's role in bridging the communication gap between government schemes and beneficiaries through integrated outreach.

Shahid Mohammad Lone, Field Publicity Officer, CBC, spoke on CBC's mandate to foster an informed citizenry, essential for accountability and effective governance.

Khursheed Yousuf, Head of News, Akashvani and Doordarshan, Ladakh, urged participants to champion Mission LiFE and Swachhata Hi Seva in their communities, highlighting youth participation as key to a "Viksit Bharat."

Other dignitaries included Mirza Mehdi, Principal DIET; Ms. Padma Deachen, Zonal Education Officer; and Devraj, Coordinator, SAM-KALP.

The event concluded with a themed quiz competition for students, with winners receiving prizes and certificates.

India's Concern in Nepal

With Nepal undergoing violence on the streets, one thing is clear that South Asia is undergoing an unprecedented socio-political crisis that must concern India keeping in view the pattern of destabilization in the neighborhood. Earlier it was Bangladesh, where the violence led by the students and the youth led to the dethronement of the elected Sheikh Hasina government bringing the governance to a halt and causing bloodshed. This political violence was led by the religious radicals that came to the fore once the plot unfolded, plunging Bangladesh into darkness that eclipsed the lives of the Hindu minorities. As there was open targeting of the minorities not even sparing the women who were subjected to rape and molestation. Temples were vandalized and genocidal attrition was inflicted on the adherents of the Hindu faith. Thus violating the purpose for which Bangladesh was carved out when the Bengalis of East Pakistan were subjected to genocide by the military dictatorship and feudal political class of Pakistan who rendered as third class citizens for opting to tie their destiny with Pakistan after the partition of India. But it seems that persecuted Bangladeshis want to embrace their persecutor and have converted Bangladesh again into East Pakistan where genocide is the name of the game.They have again embraced the inhuman values of Pakistan and embraced the genocidal state. What happened on 4th September in Nepal on the streets has a resemblance with Bangladesh as the violent groups were led by the students and youth under the banner of Gen Z who accused the ruling dispensation and political class of nepotism and corruption in the highest public places. They catalyzed and converged on the streets when the social media sites were subjected to the blanket ban by the K.P.Sharma Oli government. The mobs indulged in arson and subjected the Parliament and other offices of public importance to fire. They did not spare the political leaders who have and are holding the high government offices. Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli was dethroned. Though these protests did not have anti-India element but over the years there has been a policy of antagonism being unleashed by the Government of Nepal and that started with the end of the Kingship and the take over of the Nepalese governance by the Left and Marxist forces who have put their weight on China centric policies. This has been meant to sever civilizational ties with India. Moreover, the Nepalese soil has been used by the anti-India operatives to pose a challenge to Indian security. Chinese and Pakistani subversive operations from Nepal against India from quite some time is an open secret. That was decoded by the security agencies in Jammu and Kashmir when terrorists were handled from Nepal by the anti-India forces. Not only that, the Naxalite corridor that has posed a severe threat to India's national security has sympathizers in the Left and Marxist forces of Nepal. There is an international design to destabilize the Himalayas so that it has a direct bearing on the territorial integrity of India. The Chinese policy of the string of pearls to strangle India's sphere of influence is well known. It has extended its tentacles down to the seas to pose a challenge in the marine waters.And to add to these challenges the American posturing is absolutely unpredictable.It may have a competition with China but it has not been able to prove as friendly as it poses.The tariff war has exposed its hypocrisy.Both China and the United States have not shied away from making troubles in the Indian neighbourhood.Both Bangladesh and Nepal incidents must alarm India.Now that Justice Sushila Karki has taken over the reins of power as the interim Prime Minister of Nepal, who has an understanding of India-Nepal civilizational ties. She has been an alumnus of the Banaras Hindu University (BHU). Having studied in India gives her an advantage to deal with India and devise a friendly policy towards India and start a new era of normalization. She is known for her integrity and honesty. This gives a silver lining. But as a whole, India must exercise caution while dealing with its turbulent neighbours. There is every reason to believe that the pattern of violence in Nepal and Bangladesh suggest that there is an international conspiracy to destabilize the Himalayas and pose a challenge to the Indian sphere of influence.

Commemorating Swami Vivekananda's Speech at the World's Parliament of Religions, Chicago,11 September 1893

Swami Vivekananda: India's Spiritual Anchor

DR.MAHESH KAUL

The national spirit of the inhabitants has always emerged from the cultural spiritual core. This core has been the nucleus of this ancient civilization. What holds the nation together inspite of the invasions and vandalisation from outsiders and the colonizers? What has kept the land of Bharata alive when every external thrust was designed to subjugate the masses and crush the nation in every possible sphere? Swami Vivekananda, the wandering monk who ignited the flame of Indian nationalism through the Universal religion of Vedanta, answered all these questions and chalked out the plan of action for the future of the Indian nation.

He provided solutions to the problems of modern India in an introductory article written for the Bengali fortnightly Udbodhana, which was published on 14th of January, 1889 . He wrote with pride that Of that ancient Indian race upon , which the rays of civilization first dawned deep thoughtfulness first revealed itself in full glory, there are still found hundreds of thousands of its children, born of its mind-the inheritors of its thoughts and sentiments -ready to claim them.”

Swami Vivekananda revealed the power of Indian thought that still flows in the soul and the mind of its people, acting as glue binding the Indian nation with the cohesive force of spiritualism. And he was not bothered whether it flowed in the veins of the nation in ‘a distinct or in some subtle way’. This flow of Indian thought, he credited to universal ancient inheritance.

Elaborating on the predominant power structure and the political situation Swami Vivekananda ponders over the inherent structure of the Indian national life and says: “Once in far remote antiquity, Indian philosophy, coming in contact with Greek energy, led to the rise of the Persian, The Roman, and other great nations.

After the invasion of Alexander the Great, these two great waterfalls colliding with each other, deluged nearly half of the globe with spiritual tides, such as Christianity. Again, a similar commingling, resulting in the improvement and prosperity of Arabia, laid the foundation of the modern European civilization. And perhaps in our own day, such a time for the conjunction of these two gigantic forces has presented itself again. This time their centre is India”. Further explaining the nature of the Indian consciousness and its uniqueness, he said “The air of India pre-eminently conduces to quietness, the nature of the Yavana is the constant expression of power; profound meditation characterizes the one, the indomitable spirit of dexterous activity, the other; one's motto is “renunciation”, the other's



“enjoyment”. One's whole energy is directed inwards, the other's outwards; one's whole learning consists of knowledge of the Self or the Subject, the other's, in the knowledge of the not-self or the object (perishable creation); one loves Moksha (spiritual freedom), the other loves political independence; one is unmindful of gaining prosperity in this world, the other sets his whole heart on making a heaven of this world; one, aspiring after eternal bliss, is indifferent to all the ephemeral pleasures of this life, and the other doubting the existence of eternal bliss, or knowing it to be far away, directs his whole energy to the attainment of earthly pleasures as much as possible.” Swami Vivekananda's analysis of the Indian existence, consciousness and the spiritual core enables one to understand the foundation of the Indian nation. With the conviction of the Vedantist he boldly asks to assimilate spiritual calmness of the practical yogis to hold firm the roots of Indian civilization amid all external turbulence, which is infact all illusion and not the reality.The reality being the inner sense of introspection of the Vedantist. Reflecting on the wrong interpretations on the caste system in India, he says have great implications on the Indian national life in terms of religion and politics. He was quick to give his perspective for the future and well being of

modern India. He said “what should we have is what we have not, perhaps what our forefathers even had not – that which the Yavanas had; that, impelled by the life- vibration of which, is issuing forth in rapid succession from the great dynamo Europe, the electric flow of that tremendous power vivifying the whole world. We want that energy, that love of independence, that spirit of self reliance , that immovable fortitude, that dexterity in action , that bond of unity of purpose , that thirst for improvement... , we want that expansive vision infinitely projected forward ;and we want -that intense spirit of activity(Rajas) which will flow through our every vein from head to toe.”

This was his immediate remedy to the degeneration being caused to the national life. But he thought beyond the present scenario. He was concerned about the future of modern India- its development in all spheres-religious, social, political and economic. Swami Vivekananda said,”the quality of rajas is apt to die down as soon as it comes up ,like a fire of palm leave.The presence of Sattva and the Nitya or eternal reality is almost in a state of juxtaposition- Sattva is nearly Nitya. Whereas the nation in which the quality of Rajas predominates is not so long lived , a nation with a preponderance of Sattva is immortal. History is a

witness to this fact.”

To be specific about India he said, “In India, the quality of Rajas is almost absent; the same is the case with Sattva in the West. It is certain, therefore, that the real life of the Western world depends upon the influx, from India, of the current of Sattva or transcendentalism; and it is also certain that unless we empower and submerge our Tamas by the opposite tide of Rajas ,we shall never gain any worldly good or welfare in this life; and it is also equally certain that we shall meet many formidable obstacles in the path of realisation of those noble aspirations and ideals connected with our after-life.”

To sum up, it is appropriate to quote from the Swami Vivekananda's poem ‘To the Awakened India’, the wandering monk says “And tell the world-awake, arise, and dream no more! This is the land of dreams, where Karma Weaves unthreaded garlands with our thoughts Of flowers sweet or noxious, and none Has root or stem, being born in naught, which The softest breath of Truth drives back to Primal nothingness. Be bold, and face The truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease, Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams, Which are External Love and Service Free.”

(Author is Editorial Director,The Chancellor)

A Tribute to Bhupen Da

Bhupen Hazarika's life teaches us the power of empathy, of listening to people and of staying rooted

NARENDRA MODI

Today, 8th September, is a very special day for all those who are passionate about Indian culture and music. It is particularly more special for my sisters and brothers of Assam. After all, it is the birth anniversary of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, one of the most extraordinary voices India has ever known. As you are all aware, this year marks the beginning of his birth centenary celebrations. It is an occasion to revisit his monumental contributions to Indian artistic expression and public consciousness.

What Bhupen Da gave us extends far beyond music. His works embodied emotions that transcended melody. More than just a voice, he was the heartbeat of the people. Generations have grown up listening to his songs, each word resonating with themes of kindness, social justice, unity and deep-rooted belonging.

From Assam emerged a voice that flowed like a timeless river, crossing borders and cultures, carrying with it the spirit of humanity. Bhupen Da travelled the globe, rubbed shoulders with the who's who across all spectrums of society, but he remained deeply connected to his roots in Assam. The rich oral traditions, folk melodies and community storytelling practices of Assam deeply shaped his early childhood. These experiences formed the bedrock of his artistic vocabulary. He always carried the spirit of Assam's indigenous identity and the ethos of its people.

Brilliance came to Bhupen Da at a very young age. At the age of just five, he sang at a public event and quickly caught the attention of none other than Lakshminath Bezbaruah, the pioneering figure of Assamese literature. By the time he was a teenager, he had recorded his first song. But music was only one part of his personality. Bhupen Da was as much an intellectual at heart...curious, articulate and driven by an insatiable desire to understand the world.

Cultural legends like Jyoti Prasad Agarwala and Bishnu Prasad Rabha left a deep impression on his mind and also deepened his spirit of enquiry. It was also this desire to learn that made him excel at Cotton College, Banaras Hindu University and took him to the United States, where he interacted with leading academics, thinkers and musicians of those times. He met Paul Robeson, the legendary artist and civil rights leader. Robeson's song "Ol' Man River" became the inspiration for Bhupen Da's iconic composition 'Bistirno Parore.' The much-admired former American First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, awarded him a Gold Medal for his performances of Indian folk music.

Bhupen Da had the option of remaining in the US, but he returned to India and immersed himself in music. From radio to theatre, films to educational documentaries, he was well-versed in each of these media. Wherever he went, he emphasised supporting young talent. His works combined lyrical flair and also gave social messages, touching upon justice for the poor, rural development, strength of common citizens, to name a few.

Through his music, he gave voice to the aspirations of boatmen, tea garden workers, women, farmers, etc. In addition to being nostalgic, Bhupen Da's works also became a powerful lens to view modernity. A lot of people, especially from the socially



backward classes like him, derived strength and hope from his music.

The spirit of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat' found powerful expression in Bhupen Hazarika's life journey. His works transcended linguistic and regional boundaries to unite people across the country. He composed for films in Assamese, Bengali and Hindi. He made Assam visible and audible to the rest of India. It is no exaggeration to say that he helped shape the cultural identity of modern

Assam, both for those within the state and for the Assamese diaspora across the globe.

Bhupen Da, although not really a political person, did remain connected to the world of public service as well. In 1967, he was elected as an independent MLA from Naubhoicha constituency in Assam, demonstrating how deeply his public persona was rooted in the people's trust. Though he never became a career politician, his passion for serving others was

highly impactful.

The people and Government of India have recognised his enormous contributions over the years. He was conferred with several awards, including the Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan, Dadasaheb Phalke Award and more. In 2019, it was an honour for me personally and for the NDA government that the Bharat Ratna was conferred upon him during our tenure.

People from across the world,

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especially those from Assam and the Northeast, expressed joy that this honour was conferred upon him. This honour celebrated the principles that Bhupen Da held dear to his heart - that music, when grounded in truth, can transcend all barriers. That a song can carry the weight of a people's dreams and move hearts across the world.

I remember the time Bhupen Da passed away in 2011. I had seen on television how lakhs of people attended his funeral. Every eye was moist that time. Even in death, like in his illustrious life, he brought people together. It was thus fitting that he was cremated at the Jalukbari hillock overlooking the Brahmaputra, the very river that had been the lifeline of his music, metaphors and memories. It is gladdening that the Assam Government has supported the work of the Bhupen Hazarika Cultural Trust, which is working to popularise his life journey among youngsters.

Bhupen Hazarika's life teaches us the power of empathy, of listening to people and of staying rooted. His songs continue to be sung by young and old alike. His music teaches us to be compassionate and courageous. It asks us to remember our rivers, our labourers, our tea workers, our Nari Shakti and our Yuva Shakti. It encourages us to believe in unity in diversity.

Bharat is blessed to have Bhupen Hazarika. As we celebrate the beginning of his centenary year, let us reiterate our commitment to spreading his message far and wide. May it also inspire us to keep working to support music, art and culture, to encourage young talent and make India a nurturing ground for creativity and artistic excellence.

It is only fitting that one of India's most significant infrastructure projects, the bridge connecting Dhola and Sadiya, bears the name of Bhupen Hazarika. Just as his songs connected hearts across regions, this bridge connects lands and people.

(The Author is Prime Minister of India. Courtesy: PIB)



Brij Narayan Chakbast: The Patriotic Voice of Urdu

DR. MADHULIKA SINGH

Brij Narayan Chakbast was a distinguished Urdu poet, lawyer and nationalist whose literary contribution played a significant role in India's freedom struggle. His literary works became a tool for national consciousness.

Chakbast was born on 19th January, 1882 in Faizabad in a Kashmiri Pandit family who had migrated from Kashmir valley to Uttar Pradesh around 15th century. His father Pandit Udit Narayan Chakbast was a Deputy Collector there and died at a young age of 44 years. He received his early education in Faizabad but after the death of his father in 1887, Brij Narayan's family shifted from Faizabad to Kashmiri Mohalla in Luhnnow. Thereafter, he was brought up by his maternal uncle Alta Prasad. From Lucknow he completed his remaining education. He studied in Canning College, Lucknow and passed B.A, LLB in 1905 and 1907 respectively.

He was associated with a prominent lawyer named Bishan Narayan Dar who was a prominent congress leader and a litterateur who channelized his passion further and provided technical guidance.

Chakbast was a prolific writer who had also made a thorough study of Urdu poetry and has written nazms, gazals, mathnavi (extensive poem) and also a play. His famous works include Khak-e-Hind, Ramayanka ek scene, musaddas, Nala-e-Dard, etc. Kulliyat-e Chakbast and Maqalat-e-Chakbast is the complete anthology of Chakbast's works in poetry and prose.

Brij Narayan Chakbast was a truly secular poet who maintained his cultural identity with equal respect for all religions and faiths as for him; religion was a matter of individual belief and affair. He introduced Hindu culture in Urdu poetry by writing on the themes of coveted Krishna. He was known as a nationalist poet who set the tradition of patriotism in Urdu literature. Intense love for the nation, selflessness and patriotism was the central theme reflected in most of his works.

Chakbast's poetry emanated from the nation-



alist ideologies of the time. He had great reverence and honour for the nationalist leaders and has praised Tilak, Gokhale, Gandhi and Ranade in his works. In 1901, he wrote an elegy in musadas form at the death of Mahadev Govind Ranade, a great social reformer. Chakbast was deeply conscious of the socio-political conditions of the time. In 1903, he founded Kashmiri Young Men Association and remained actively associated with this association for a long time, joining a host of their activities and issues. His anti-imperialist ideology was reflected in one of his poems composed in 1904, which was invective on Lord Curzon who made derogatory remark about the culture of India in the convocation address at Calcutta University. He also published articles in praise of Dada Bhai Naoroji in 1907.

Chakbast wrote whole heartedly for the spread of education and praised Madan Mohan

Malviya's efforts in the establishment of BHU and Sir Syed Ahmed Kahan's Aligarh movement. He also remained associated with Madan Mohan Malviya in his mission for the establishment of Benaras Hindu University and recited poems at the public meetings where Malviya and other leaders made appeal for donation for the BHU. Chakbast had been a nationalist at heart since the early stage of his life but his active association with the freedom struggle started after 1913. Chakbast was actively involved in social and political affairs of the time and was a strong proponent of the Home Rule. In 1914, when Annie Besant started Home Rule Movement, he joined it as an active supporter and became the front-rank nationalist in this year.

He was a bold and brave hearted writer. His poems were composed in a style that was symbolic of the nationalistic spirit of those times and at the same time ameliorative in purpose. Subh-e-Umeed was a political magazine edited by Chakbast in 1914. He was warned by his elders not to indulge in fiery writings but he refused to pay any heed. Through his poems, he also tried to highlight the plight of Indians living in south Africa and published it as a pamphlet and in prominent Urdu magazine Zamana. He also wrote a touching poem to bid farewell to the Indian soldiers going abroad to participate in the First World War. In another elegy, Chakbast has mourned the demise of Gopal Krishna Gokhle in 1916 and projected his death as a great loss to the nation. In March 1921 issue of his magazine Subh-e-Umeed, he commented on the central budget and criticized the increase of medical expenditure, opposed the increase in railway fares and import duty on sugar which was likely to hit the poor.

Chakbast was a great protagonist of social reform who wrote poems wherein he raised his voice against the prevailing social evils of the time. As a social reformer, he had deep sympathy for women. He used to participate regularly in the conventions of Kashmiri Brahmins and organized clubs for young men and women called as Kashmiri Clubs. He also

composed didactic poems with moral instructions for the girls of his community. He was a crusader of widow remarriage and female education and denounced social evils like the purdah system and child marriage in his magazine. As a prominent leader of the bar, he also extended full support to a bill for legal recognition of inter caste marriage and justified his statement by emphatically writing that "to oppose these bills is to justify the social operation perpetrated for centuries". He not only worked for his community but for the development of nation and of humanity.

Brij Narayan Chakbast was an ardent nationalist. Though he praised Annie Besant and opposed her detention but bitterly critiqued her when she attacked on the Servants of India Society. In 1920, through his editions of Subh-e-Umeed, he opposed Gandhi's action during the Non-cooperation Movement. He bitterly opposed the idea of students boycotting their schools during Non-cooperation movement and welcomed Malviya's decision in not letting the BHU students to give up their education while participating in the nationalist movement.

He had high word of praise for Tilak and wrote on Tilak's death, "Though we do not follow Tilak's political line in toto but nationalist life is adorned by the courageous action of his political career".

Subh-e-Watan, his collection of poems published posthumously in 1926 comprised of his poems on patriotic, nationalistic, religious, reformative and political themes. In most of his works, Chakbast has made an effective use of the power of his pen to create a resentful shout to awaken the rulers from deep slumber. His works were marked by simplicity as well as spontaneity that find an appeal to the readers. He had the characteristics of a nationalist poet. Qualitatively, the patriotic poetry of Chakbast is much superior to that of the other poets. He left for heavenly abode at a very young age of 44 years on 12th February in 1926

(Author is an Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Jammu)

RITUALS

Mulberry Twings and Kashmiri Pandit Rituals

CHANDER M BHAT

Among Kashmiri Pandits, ritual practice is a living continuity of Vedic injunctions interwoven with local adaptations. While the Srauta and Grhya Sutras prescribe cotton, wool, darbha grass, and other materials for the Yagnopavit (sacred thread) and yagna offerings, Kashmir evolved its own distinct tradition. Here, the mulberry tree (*Morus alba*) emerged as a sacred substitute, its twigs, wood, and fibres carrying both scriptural resonance and regional sanctity.

The Yagnopavit marks a boy's initiation into the life of dharma, study, and responsibility. Classical texts such as the Parasara Sm ti and Grhya Sutras emphasise that the sacred thread must be snigdha, smooth, pure, and auspicious. In Kashmir, mulberry twigs became central to this rite.

Mekhal Da a (Sacred Staff): In the Kashmiri Pandit upanayana or Yagnopavit ceremony, the girdle and staff used are fashioned from mulberry twigs. This signifies strength, endurance, and continuity, with the mulberry symbolising rootedness in dharma.



Purity of Fibre: The mulberry's soft, white fibre embodies sattva, purity, clarity, and spiritual luminosity, making it an ideal material for sacred use.

Symbolic Continuity: Just as the mulberry nourishes silkworms to spin thread, it symbolises the nurturing of a boy into the thread of dharma, weaving him into the larger fabric of society and spiritual tradition.

The Yajurveda, particularly the Taittiriya Sa hita, lists specific woods for sacrificial fuel, palasa, bilva, and udumbara, among others. Over centuries, Kashmiri Pandits localised these prescriptions under the influence of Tantric ritualism and the Nilamata Pura a. Mulberry became the chosen wood for yagna for several reasons:

Steady Flame: Mulberry burns

slowly and evenly, producing a calm, steady flame, called shanti agni by practitioners. This ensured that prayers carried upward without interruption.

Medicinal Value: In Ayurveda, mulberry is valued for purifying blood and improving eyesight. Its inclusion in the yagna linked ritual fire with health, healing, and longevity.

Auspicious Associations: Mulberry is tied to fertility, prosperity, and continuity of life, qualities deeply cherished in rituals for both ancestors and deities.

Thus, mulberry wood became Kashmir's equivalent of the Vedic samidhas, sustaining the sacred fire in both domestic and community rituals.

The Nilamata Purana, Kashmir's cultural scripture, sanctifies native flora and highlights mulberry among trees of ritual importance. While bilva and chinara are also praised, mulberry holds a unique place in rites of initiation, fertility, and family continuity. Its constant presence in sacred ceremonies links Vedic prescriptions to Kashmiri soil and custom.

1. Continuity of Dharma: Mulberry

sustains silkworms, which spin the very threads used in sacred cloth. This natural imagery parallels the weaving of dharma into human life.

2. Purity and Longevity: Its white sap and pliant twigs stand for clarity, health, and endurance.

3. Regional Adaptation: By embracing mulberry, Kashmiri Pandits harmonised universal Vedic ideals with local ecology, embodying the principle of dharma as both eternal and adaptive.

The Kashmiri use of mulberry branches in Yagnopavit and Yagna is more than a regional peculiarity; it is a profound example of how timeless Vedic traditions adapt to local landscapes without losing their spiritual essence. In the sacred thread ceremony, mulberry twigs embody purity and endurance; in Hawan, they sustain the peaceful flame that carries prayers heavenward. Thus, the mulberry tree stands as a living bridge between scripture, culture, and the enduring spiritual life of the Kashmiri Pandits.

(Author has contributed immensely on the temple history of Kashmir with his primary research and has a number of books to his credit)

The Magnet of the Heart.. Living for others in a yogic way

S.K.KHUSHU

There is a magnet in every heart. Not the cold metal magnet of science, but a divine spiritual force that silently attracts true friends, noble souls, and even divine grace itself. Paramahansa Yogananda, the great master who brought yoga and meditation to the modern world, expressed this truth with great simplicity:

“There is a magnet in your heart that will attract true friends. The magnet is unselfishness—thinking of others first. When you learn to live for others, they will live for you.”

This profound statement opens a doorway to an entire philosophy of living. It is a call to shift from the narrow world of self-centeredness to the expansive life of the soul. To understand it deeply, one must enter into the yogic vision of the heart, the ego, and the universal Self.

The Yogic Meaning of the Heart

In yoga, the heart is not seen merely as a physical organ but as a subtle center of consciousness, a spiritual “lotus” that holds the power of compassion, love, and unity. When the heart is clouded by selfishness, its natural magnetism becomes weak. But when the heart radiates kindness and concern for others, it becomes a powerful spiritual magnet, drawing harmony and true companionship.

Selfishness is a narrowing of the heart’s power. It binds us to a small circle of “me and mine,” whereas unselfishness expands that circle to include family, community, humanity, and eventually, all living beings. In yogic philosophy, such expansion is not merely moral virtue—it is the recognition of a deeper truth: we are one in Spirit.

The Ego and the Soul: The Inner Battle

Why do we struggle to be unselfish? The yogic answer lies in the constant pull between ego and soul. The ego identifies itself with the body, possessions, status, and desires. It whispers, “I am separate, I must grasp, I must guard.” The soul, however, knows a higher truth: “I am eternal, I am one with all, I need nothing to complete me.”

Selfishness is the voice of the ego; selflessness is the voice of the soul. Meditation, introspection, and yoga practice gradually weaken the ego’s grip and allow the radiance of the soul to shine. When the soul shines through, unselfishness becomes natural, not forced. And with it comes the magnetism that Yogananda spoke of—the quiet ability to attract true friends, harmony, and opportunities aligned with our higher nature.

The Magnetism of Love and Friendship

Human relationships are not accidents. They are drawn by the invisible law of magnetic attraction. Just as a magnet pulls iron filings, the heart draws people of similar vibration. A selfish heart attracts companions who are selfish in turn, often leading to disappointment and conflict. But a heart trained in kindness and unselfishness attracts noble souls who respond in kind.

Yogananda taught that the truest friendship is based not on material exchange or convenience but on soul-recognition. When two hearts meet in sincerity, unselfishness, and loyalty, the bond is lasting, even beyond death. Such friendships are treasures on the spiritual path, for they remind us of the divine Friend—the eternal Beloved present in all beings.

The Bhagavad Gita and the Friend of All

In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna describes the yogi as one who sees the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self. Such a yogi becomes the “friend of all,” free from enmity and filled with compassion. This universal friendship is the highest expression of the magnet of the heart.

When the yogi looks upon another person, animal, or even an enemy, he sees not a stranger but a reflection of the same divine Self. Such a vision transforms relationships. Hatred melts, compassion flows, and love becomes the natural state of being.

Living for Others Without Losing Oneself



Yogananda often said: “The wave realizes it is the sea.” A wave that thinks only of itself lives in fear of crashing on the shore. But when it realizes it is part of the vast ocean, its fear dissolves. Similarly, when we live for others, we do not lose—we gain the vastness of the oceanic Self.

Some may wonder: does living for others mean neglecting oneself? The yogic answer is subtle. True unselfishness is not self-denial born of weakness, but self-expansion born of strength. When we think of others, we do not erase our own worth; rather, we discover that our real self is larger than we imagined.

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The Practice of Expanding the Heart

How, then, can we strengthen this magnet of unselfishness? The yogic path offers practical steps:

1. Meditation: Daily stillness connects us with the soul, the source of unconditional love.
2. Selfless Service (Seva): Acts of kindness—whether helping a neighbour, caring for the needy, or offering a listening ear—polish the magnet of the heart.
3. Gratitude: Remembering the gifts we receive from life dissolves selfish pride and awakens humility.
4. Forgiveness: Releasing grudges cleanses the heart and restores its natural radiance.
5. Expansion of Identity: Each day, expand your sense of belonging—from self, to family, to community, to nation, to all humanity, to all creation.

By such practices, the heart becomes like a well-tuned instrument, resonating with love and harmony.

Why the World Needs This Message Today

We live in a time when individualism is often celebrated to excess. Success is measured by personal gain, not collective welfare. Relationships sometimes bend under the weight of ego, expectation, and competition. In such an age, Yogananda’s simple teaching shines like a guiding star.

The world today does not suffer from lack of technology or resources; it suffers from a lack of unselfish love. Wars, divisions, and conflicts spring not from scarcity but from hearts turned inward in selfishness. If humanity could rediscover the magnet of unselfishness, nations would live for each other, communities would thrive together, and individuals would find the joy of true friendship.

The Magnet That Never Fails

Ultimately, unselfishness is not merely a moral choice but a spiritual law. Just as gravity pulls objects to the earth, so too does selflessness attract harmony and true companionship. When we live for others, the universe itself responds. Help appears when needed, friendships blossom naturally, and divine grace quietly supports our journey.

Paramahansa Yogananda’s assurance is timeless: when you learn to live for others, they will live for you. The magnet of the heart, once awakened, never fails to attract the best that life and Spirit have to offer.

Conclusion: Becoming Living Magnets of Love

The great yogis remind us that every human being carries within the seed of divine love. The magnet of the heart is not given to a chosen few—it is present in each of us, waiting to be awakened through unselfishness.

To live for others is, in truth, to live for our larger Self. And in doing so, we discover the secret of friendship, peace, and fulfillment. May we, in the spirit of Yogananda’s teaching, strive each day to polish the magnet of our hearts, so that we may draw to ourselves not only true friends but also the eternal Friend, God Himself, who dwells in every heart.

**Author is Editorial Advisor,
The Chancellor**

Swami Anand Ji Maharaj of Villagam

Swami Anand Ji Maharaj has proved to be a magnificent guru among the gurus as defined in Kularnava Tantra

J.L.NEHRU

"MANY are the Gurus who are proficient to the utmost in Vedas and Shastras; but rare is the Guru who has attained to the Supreme Truth; many are the Gurus on earth who give what is other than self; but rare is the Guru who brings to light the Atman; and rare is the Guru who removes the disciple's afflictions. Again, rare is the Guru who is devoid of all volition to find. He is the Guru by whose very contact there flows the Supreme."

Paying obeisance to God Ganesh and to my esteemed Guru Swami Anand Ji Maharaj I have mustered courage in a difficult situation to portrait a small fraction of His life and work after seeking permission of Pt. Shambo Nath Dhar, Gund Gushi Distt. Kupwara Swami Ji's blessed disciple presently putting up at Jammu after migration. The permission was necessarily to be sought as Swami Ji had never allowed any publicity. He was not a believer of ostentatious popularity. His disciples offer prayers in a small "Ashram" in Jammu and perform daily Puja. He would advise his disciples to elude anger, arrogance and wicked persons. Although the living generations happen to know Him in perfect Guru "Swaroop" but to keep him living in the hearts of the generations to come which He is always; in-depth desire was felt to portrait some aspects of this great saint. Swami Ji was called with affection Bab Sahib. The life of Bab Sahib as wide and deep as the infinite ocean in which we can dive deep so as to take precious gems of Bhakti. The stories are wonderful and give peace and happiness to those who are afflicted with distress and heavy miseries of this material world. His teachings and His divine facial impression shall remain carved ever in our hearts. Although physically weak but always with a smiling and divine radiant face. Bab Sahib was always calm, serene and throughout unostentatious. He was always free from anger, and very soft-spoken. Almost all people who came into touch with Bab Sahib got deeply influenced by his spiritual attainments.

Early Life

Bab Sahib's birth anniversary falls on-Asun Krishan Paksha Dwadashi and death anniversary on Saptami of Ashad Shukla Paksha. Bab Sahib's father Pt. Raghav Ram Bhat, literate in Persian and Urdu originated from Vaskura Sumbal, Kashmir and had migrated later to Villagam, Distt. Handwara, Kashmir in search of his livelihood where he started his career as a teacher. He got married to Pt. Savram's daughter who was graced by Deity Nandkishore of Sumbal Asthapan. Deity Nandkishore came in dream to Pt. Raghav Ram which turned true. The Deity directed that He would come to Villagam to avoid their frequent coming to Sumbal Holy place. Pt. Raghav Ram Bhat had six sons and two daughters Bab Sahib was his fourth child and remained a bachelor. Bab Sahib's mother would draw her hair open and get into ecstasy number of times obviously the Deity entering her body. She would thus speak differently. Deity Nandkishore appeared on the willow tree branch in Villagam situated on the river bank. It was "Chetra" Purnima idols of Deity Nandkishore and Shivalingam were installed. A Yagna was performed on this day. Bab Sahib con-



structed a temple there and after a few days a spring oozed to everybody's surprise. This spring has green waters Bab Sahib started performing annual yagna thereafter.

Shifting to Srinagar (Kashmir)

The exact year is not known when Bab Sahib came to Srinagar with the aim of seeking employment and got engaged in Pt. Dina Nath Dullu's

house at Karan Nagar, Srinagar. Pt. Dina Nath Dullu was working in the forest department. Years passed by. Bab Sahib had dedicated himself to spiritual activity not known to anyone in the house though being so close to everyone. He had been travelling on wooden Khadaon (Kashmiri wooden sleeper) in the mid-night to "Vichar Naag" nearly 10 kms. away

for twelve long years and would be seen in his room in the early morning hours before dawn. Once Pt. Dullu Sahib felt thirsty in the mid- night and requested his wife to bring water from kitchen. As the right time had approached now Mrs. Dullu while drawing near to the kitchen where Swami Ji's room fell on the other side got horrified to find that violent

fire had engulfed Bab Sahib's room. Immediately crying for help she went to her husband's room and her husband got up quickly and rushed towards Swami Ji's room. He found to his surprise an immense dazzling divine light in Swami Ji's room. Next morning in the early hours Pt. Dullu Sahib fell on the feet of Bab Sahib and made obeisance. Bab Sahib to avert the exposure of the truth accused Mr. Dullu that he had perhaps fallen prey to some evil spirit which had made him to speak irrelevant. He asked Mr. Dullu that he should approach some learned Brahmin who would treat him by reciting some Mantra. How could Pt. Dullu believe it who had to his amazement seen divine radiant light. Bab Sahib's divinity got spread in the family circles and around.

Bab Sahib performed Yagna at Vichar Naag and invited Dullu's family as well. Dullu's family came to know that day that Bab Sahib had been going to Vichar Naag for twelve long years which was kept secret.

Pt. Shambo Nath's Contact

Pt. Shambo Nath Ji Gushi, Kupwara, Bab Sahib's close disciple came into his contact in the year 1957. Pt. Shambo Nath working as Senior Laboratory Assistant in the A.S. College, Srinagar attached to Prof. Kilam was residing with him in the "Stone House" at Karan Nagar. He had lost his wife sometime back and he would normally weep bitterly also start playing with iron "chimta" to the extent that once Prof. Kilam's daughter had termed him as a partly insane man. In fact, Pt. Shambo Nath Ji was in search of Guru to lead him to the path of spirituality. Once walking through Char Chinari near the National High School building in Karan Nagar we saw to his surprise an idol of Lord Vishnu seated on the window of the Bab Sahib's room. When Pt. Shambo Nath went towards Dullu's house and entered Bab Sahib's room, he did not find any such idol there. Pt. Shambo Nath fell on the feet of Bab Sahib and wept bitterly. He asked him whether he would like to remarry to which he replied in negative Bab Sahib advised him to have some daily rituals and recite some Mantras.

Shifting to Khir Bhawani

Bab Sahib nearly spent 40 years in Dullu's family including 10 to 12 years after the spiritual exposure. He then shifted to Khir Bhawani an exotic holy place nearly 25 kms. from Srinagar in the year 1967. There he started putting up in the first floor of Shri Gwash Ram's small house, rather a shopping complex type facing the Goddess "Raginya" and the spring temple. On every Ashtami and Purnima Bab Sahib would perform Puja on a grand scale with various offerings in the Holy Spring like Milk, Flowers and Kheer etc. Many of his disciples have observed that at the time of offerings an image of "Devi Chakra" would get formed and start swinging obviously Devi's blessings. A good number of pilgrims and other people who would through the Khir Bhawani Shrine would have meals at the Bab Sahib's abode. This "NAVEED" would give bliss the Bakhtas.

Miracles and Telepathic Powers Death of Elder Brother Shri Parmanand Ji

Once a message got spread that Bab Sahib's oldest brother Shri Parmanand Ji

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manand had expired but miraculously had revived to life as a surprise. When Pt. Parmanand Ji regained consciousness he started speaking in a different language not understood by common people and would never stop. Bab Sahib although being younger to his brother, reprimanded him to put a halt to these mutterings. However, Pt Parmanand narrated that when his astral body was taken to Lord Yama's abode, he found Bab Sahib as well sitting in one of the judgement seats with bowing head apart from "Chitra Gupta". Pt. Parmanand Ji made a sort of complaint about his younger brother that He behaved in a manner as if He had no relation whatsoever with him. Bab Sahib reacted and uttered that only good "Karmas" are viewed and not the relations there.

Rescuing Aeroplane Piloted by Rajiv Gandhi

Prof. Kilam Sahib's wife was travelling in an aeroplane from Srinagar to Jammu piloted by Late Rajiv Gandhi. All of a sudden, some technical snag obstructed the aeroplane and the situation had come to obvious crashing. Bab Sahib appeared in the aeroplane and sat adjacent to Mrs. Kilam's seat, the technical snag miraculously got rectified and the aeroplane had safe landing at Jammu. The crew later came to know as late Rajiv Gandhi had observed that the aeroplane got saved from crashing because of this lady virtually due to the blessings of Swami Ji. Swami Ji was nowhere seen at Jammu in the aeroplane. Here in Srinagar, He had asked repeatedly to the C.I.D. Commissioner one of the disciples to enquire whether Mrs. Kilam had safe landing at Jammu. Some days later Prof. Sahib got a letter from his wife narrating the whole incident and the miraculous saving of the aeroplane.

It was in December, 1970, when one of the close devotees who was putting up as a tenant in my house at Habba Kadal in Srinagar narrated some facets of Bab Sahib's miracles, divine elevation and spiritual vibrations. I was totally moved as if some inner telepathy started working on me instantly I became virtually restless to see this spiritual face. Bab Sahib was this time putting up in in Tulla Mulla. It was a wintry day but happened to be not too cold. As I entered the hut of the shopkeeper Shri Gwash Ram Ji, I was told that Bab Sahib was on the 1st floor. I entered the room and found him seated in a corner facing Goddess Ragniya's Spring. I paid obeisance and he kept his benevolent hand on my head and blessed me. I got immediately emotional. He of His own said whether I came from Habba Kadal. He untied the knot of one handkerchief and blessed me again by applying a little "Vibhuti" on my forehead and gave me "Naveed" for my family and my parents. The objective in my mind for which I had gone to Bab Sahib got fulfilled to my surprise.

Endless Naveed

One devotee narrated that on one occasion, after offering the last "Ahuti" in Yagna, "Khir" Naveed prepared in one brass pot (Deegcha) began to be distributed among hundreds of devotees who had come to attend the Yagna. No one could assess how the small quantity just prepared in one "Deegcha didn't finish even after having been distributed among hundreds of devotees. Bab Sahib enquired whether all had taken this "Khir Naveed" and the lady distributing it said only one person was yet to take it. Naveed was as such kept in a small Taku (small earthen plate) and the Deegcha got emptied.

I have myself witnessed Bab Sahib after coming out of Samadhi while in Khir Bhawani, having expressed the vivid presence of the Goddess



Ragniya. Bab Sahib while blessing all his devotees would always utter let Almighty bloom fortune.

In October, 1973, my father took seriously ill and I went immediately to seek my Guru's blessings to know the state my father was going to face and whether he would come out of the trauma. On reaching Khir Bhawani, I was asked by Bab Sahib to perform Puja first in the temple. During Puja, the Dhoop and Diya partly extinguished and I did not take it as a bad omen. When I reached Bab Sahib's room again and with Namaskar prostrated myself under his feet, He, in the first impression, asked what did the Goddess convey and immediately diverted my attention so that my morale does not break. My father expired after some days thereafter, which was a clear indication of Bab Sahib's Divine attainment.

In mid-1996 Bab Sahib came to me in dream twice when I was in extreme trauma due to the ailment of my wife. He untied the knot of his handker-

chief and gave me Naveed. He had a divine smile on his face. The doctors had given maximum survival period of three months to my wife but that she survived for seventeen months was a miracle Prior to her expiry in August '97. He came again and this time He showed the sign of her end which also came true. It is, therefore, evident that Bab Sahib is keeping an eye over the troubles of his devotees.

Last Darshan

It was year 1983 Swami Ji felt indisposed and had developed kidney trouble. The disciples called Dr. Radha Krishan Kachroo to Kilam's house at Shivpora but He was later shifted to Dr. Peshin's Hospital at Karan Nagar in Srinagar. Dr. Peshin had observed the failure of kidney and had tried his best. Normally Bab Sahib's condition never appeared grim even to suspect something serious. He had a smile on His face and appeared in usual trim condition. At around 3.50 p.m. on 17th July, 1983, He left mortal body. He was



shifted to Shivalaya Temple premises in Karan Nagar, Srinagar where thousands of devotees had thronged after hearing the news of His attaining Moksha on A.I.R. Kashmir station. The last rites were performed

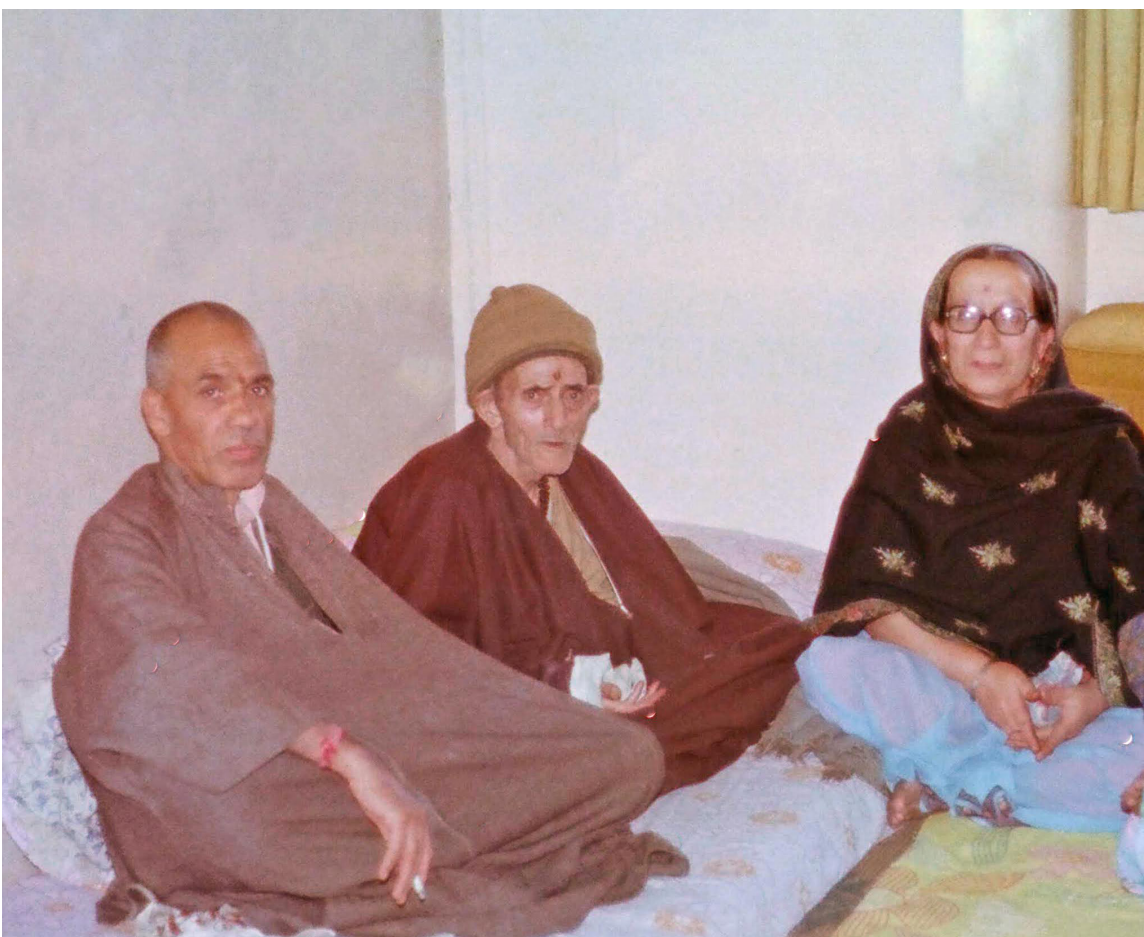
with full Shraddha. When the pyre was lit, single Jyoti rose high to the sky like a shooting star. There was a little drizzling as well thus having been accepted by Heavenly Spiritual Power. In Shivalaya where thousands of devotees were reciting Bhajans, "Brahma Vidhya" was recited by one person whereas five sounds vibrated concurrently to everybody's surprise.

Immersion of Ashes

Before leaving mortal body Bab Sahib had desired a week earlier that He would like to sit under cool breeze of Chinar Tree in specific referring to the place Gushi Kupwara or Khir Bhawani. When preparations were made to take the Ashes to Sangam at Shadipur Sangam for immersion, the vehicle in which these were being carried somehow mystically led the driver to divert towards Khir Bhawani road instead of Shadipur Sangam direct. Here Pt Shambhu Nath Ji got reminded of Bab Sahib's desire to have a cool breeze under a Chinar Tree. The disciples decided to immerse some ashes in the Khir Bhawani Sangam River. The team after immersing some ashes here left for Shadipur Sangam and immersed the ashes there. Surprisingly again after immersion Devi Chakra got formed on the Sangam waters.

[The author, an ex-Assistant Director-General, Ministry of Communications, is planning to write a detailed biography of this great saint. The readers who have some material other than the above episodes are kindly requested to send it to his address E-1/8/4, Sector 15, Rohini, Delhi-85 to help in the completion of this spiritual work.]

(Courtesy: Koshur Samachar, April 1999)



Tourism, Heritage & Marketing: A Holistic View-II

DR. MAHESH KAUL

It cannot be denied that economic prosperity is the main thrust of the heritage tourism activity. As development of heritage sites is not a stagnant issue. A monument once restored to certain time frame in terms of its glory needs sustainability and ways and means to bear the costs of its maintenance. The heritage management agencies are the facilitators and tourism professionals the marketers who bring the tourist gaze to the asset. It is the involvement of the local community that is the main stakeholder. As it is part of their continuity, they are direct inheritors and descendants of this heritage in terms of being the primary stakeholders. The involvement of the locals in heritage tourism serves two primary purposes.

One they act as the ambassadors and interpreters of the living heritage and two, they are the direct beneficiaries of the economic benefits in terms of employability. Moreover, UNESCO has devised the strategy to uphold the economic rights of the people and at the same time made it the inherent tool to preserve the intangible heritage for posterity as the living tradition. It has designated it as traditional, contemporary and living at the same time. It has given it an inclusive paradigm having the elements of representative community-based identity. It encourages the artisans and makes them confident to pursue the traditions as the lucrative modes of earning and at the same time being proud of continuing the tradition that has given them identity. So, preservation of heritage is implemented by keeping it in continuity with community involvement and technical support based on international guidelines. Younger generation becomes the predominant representative of the heritage in this case as they gain employment and at the same time carry forward the legacy that has shaped their community goals and moorings as the people having their identity among the multitude of other identities. It has the element of economic self-sufficiency and entrepreneurship inherent in its mechanism.

This strategy has acted as a blessing in restoring the community traditions of the indigenous communities having unique heritage. This strategy enhances the interaction of the community and its heritage with the diverse people in terms of heritage tourism; who spread the good word of mouth about the heritage when they move in other social spaces. It is a soft tool to preserve the cultural heritage by interaction and awareness. The issue that emerges from this discussion is that there is a need to use a substantial income acquired from heritage tourism activities for safeguarding the heritage at various levels of conservation and restoration. That is why the critical issue of division of labour and hence division of profit from the economic activity of heritage tourism has emerged as a bone of contention at many times while pursuing heritage tourism. The reason being that in this business not only the locals but the outside industries are also involved at various levels. Tourism cannot thrive in isolation; it involves the services of various service providers like hotels, transport, railways, airways and many others. The stakes of the government at the state level are an important factor.



Thus, division of revenue from the business between local and state level has posed many challenges among the stakeholders. Community involvement has many facets in tourism, especially the heritage tourism as the involvement of the communities as the stakeholders in terms of their involvement at the destination area as the artisans raises issues that rake controversies. Distribution of the revenues and the management issues have rendered it difficult to draw physical boundaries between

the work area of various stakeholders. No doubt the significant chunk of the revenue from heritage tourism lies with the locals, still there arises dispute over the equitability on the issue of money allocation. This issue mainly arises in case of the intangible heritage; the reason being that ownership is fragile. The conflict arises when the community feels that intangible heritage is the ownership of the group and as such any economic benefit should go to the community. This challenge has raked many issues

but the international guidelines have addressed this contingency.

Globalization imposes new responsibilities and this needs complete synergy between local and national governments and take complete advantage of the technical innovations. Thrust should be laid on the positive outcomes and finding ways to minimize the less desirable effects. Large range of studies establish heritage tourism as the community-based concept and area that needs the attention of the tourism developers at all levels.

The success of this activity lies in community involvement and making it contemporary rather than caging it in the prison of the past. Role of women has been given primacy in the studies and policy making. Craft Links projects are the center of attraction of the fairs and festivals and have regular access to the market. It enhances the skills and generates livelihood opportunities. It integrates the society and sheds gender bias that has been traditionally the impediment in the economic objectives and their achievement. UNESCO has attained success in safeguarding intangible heritage in the South-East Asia by community involvement. Government agencies have shown concern to promote cultural artifacts and historical monuments besides many non-governmental agencies have organized people and artisans under one banner and helped them to reach the international and national markets. The multi-cultural character of Sarawak that has more than 25 groups has become an attractive part of its tourism promotion. The Silk success story that has brought weaving in the traditional way to the center stage has added to the cultural aspect of heritage tourism. It acts as an example for others to follow as a success story. The divergence from mass tourism and emergence of the new tourism is an opportunity and heritage tourism is in the forefront of this international crusade.

Concluded
(Author is Editorial Director, The Chancellor)



Harnag's Eternal Light

The Spiritual Journey of Nidhan Saab in Haarpur Village

CHANDER M BHAT

In November 1846, Maharaja Gulab Singh embarked on a pivotal journey through the Pir Panjal route, passing through the village of Rohmuh in the Kashmir Valley. Concerned about the strong resistance from the last Sikh Governor, he sought spiritual guidance to strengthen his ambitions of becoming the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir. As fate would have it, his horse suddenly stopped near Rohmuh, refusing to move forward, hinting at the presence of a revered figure nearby. Upon inquiry, he learned that Nidhan Saab, a sage known for his profound spiritual wisdom, lived in the nearby village of Haarpur. Intrigued and hopeful, Maharaja Gulab Singh eagerly set out to meet the saint, seeking his blessings to support his quest for sovereignty.

Accompanied by his retinue, Maharaja Gulab Singh arrived at Haarpur, where he humbly shed his royal attire. Despite the outward change, Nidhan Saab, attuned to spiritual insights, recognised the Maharaja as the potential saviour of the long suffering Kashmiri populace, who endured decades of hardship under Pathan and Sikh rule. With profound foresight, Nidhan Saab bestowed his divine blessings upon the Maharaja, instilling within him the assurance of victory over the entrenched Sikh Governor. Departing from the sanctified abode of Nidhan Saab, Maharaja Gulab Singh carried forth a renewed sense of purpose, fortified by the spiritual confidence that he would indeed emerge triumphant in his noble endeavor to liberate and uplift the beleaguered people of Kashmir.

Born in Rainawari, Srinagar, Nidhan Saab's spiritual journey commenced in his childhood under the guidance of a local sage, delving deep into the realms of yoga. His path led him to the present day village of Murran in Pulwama district, where he settled, likely between the years 1836 to 1887. Seeking sustenance, he found employment in the affluent household of Pandit Paramanand Bhat. By day, he diligently attended to his mundane chores, yet under the veil of night, he retreated to the sanctity of the "Thakur-Kuth," engaging fervently in meditation and spiritual practices unbeknownst to his household. Despite his proximity to others, Nidhan Saab remained veiled in his spiritual pursuits, dedicated solely to his inner quest for enlightenment.

In a remarkable incident, Smt. Poshmal, wife of Pandit Paramanand Bhat, was startled one midnight by a raging fire seemingly consuming the Puja room, only to discover Nidhan Saab, deeply engrossed in meditation, emitting an ethereal radiance. Alarmed, she relayed the occurrence to her husband, who, upon investigation, was astounded to find Nidhan Saab amidst divine illumination. The following dawn, Pandit Paramanand Bhat and his wife, deeply reverent, prostrated before Nidhan Saab, acknowledging his spiritual prowess. To evade undue attention, Nidhan Saab retreated to Haarpur, shrouding himself in solitude amidst thorny thickets, where he continued his spiritual practices with unwavering dedication. Shunning publicity and adorned with tranquility, he remained celibate, exuding a gentle demeanor devoid of anger, embodying the epitome of serenity and humility throughout his life.

Nidhan Saab's spiritual haven



in Haarpur village nestled beside a sacred spring, honoring the divine presence of Hara Bhairava. Amidst the rugged landscape adorned with untamed foliage, he erected his humble abode on the spring's serene banks. Within his cottage, a pit, concealed from the world's gaze, served as his sanctuary for deep meditative immersion lasting days on end. Surrounded by the symphony of nature's whispers, Nidhan Saab communed with the cosmos, transcending earthly confines in pursuit of spiritual enlightenment.

In a testament to his profound mastery of yogic practices, Nidhan Saab entrusted his disciple, Pandit Ram Krishen, with the solemn duty of overseeing his spiritual endeavors. In the auspicious year of 1885, during the sacred month of Magha, Nidhan Saab embarked on a pilgrimage to Hardwar, imparting to his disciple the precise moment of his anticipated return to his earthly vessel within the shrine. However, on the appointed day of Magh Dashmi, Nidhan Saab failed to reoccupy his corporeal form, leaving his disciple in a state of profound anticipation. With each passing moment, it became evident that Nidhan Saab's journey had transcended mortal bounds. In reverence to his revered Guru, Pandit Ram Krishen resolved to bid farewell to his physical form, choosing the solemn occasion of Bhimen Ekadashi to perform the final rites in front of Nidhan Saab's humble abode, marking the culmination of a spiritual journey that transcended the confines of mortality.

As the funeral pyre of Nidhan Saab was ignited, a solitary flame ascended heavenward, resembling a shooting star piercing the night sky, symbolizing the luminous transcendence of his spirit. Amidst the solemnity, a poignant moment unfolded as a half-burnt stick from his pyre was reverently planted upside down at the site of his cremation. Miraculously,

this humble offering burgeoned into a towering Elm tree, a living testament to the enduring legacy of Nidhan Saab's spiritual journey. In awe and wonder, witnesses marveled at the profound transformation, recognizing it as a tangible manifestation of his eternal presence, rooted deep within the fabric of nature.

Legend has it that Maharaja Gulab Singh harbored a sense of disappointment towards Pandit Ram Krishen for failing to relay news of the revered saint's departure. This rift notwithstanding, the Maharaja's profound reverence for Nidhan Saab endured, prompting him to abdicate the throne in 1856, passing away two years later in 1858. Prior to his demise, Maharaja Gulab Singh extended his benevolence towards Haarpur by resettling several Kashmiri Pandit families bearing the surname 'Babu' in the village. Additionally, he bestowed a generous tract of land upon the shrine, entrusted to the stewardship of the Babu family, thus perpetuating the legacy of spiritual devotion and community welfare initiated by Nidhan Saab.

Among the myriad miracles attributed to Nidhan Saab, one particularly poignant tale revolves around Maharaja Hari Singh's prolonged struggle with infertility following his marriage. In a moment of divine intervention, a member of the Babu family was visited by a dream where Nidhan Saab beckoned him to pluck a flower blooming on the banks of Har Nag and present it to the Maharaja. Upon awakening, the Babu discovered a crimson blossom adorning the shores of Har Nag, a sign of celestial favour. Reverently, he gathered the flower, imbuing it with the sanctity of Nidhan Saab's message, and dispatched it to the Maharaja's palace in Srinagar. Miraculously, in the ensuing months, Maharaja Hari Singh and his consort were blessed with the birth of Karan Singh, thus fulfilling the prophecy foretold in the ethereal

realm.

In May 1973, Dr. Gopi Nath Barbuz, a renowned physician hailing from Habba Kadal, Srinagar, and posted in Murran, orchestrated a grand Yagna at Haarpur, demonstrating his profound devotion to Nidhan Saab. Dr. Barbuz, who had undertaken the restoration of Nidhan Saab's humble abode following the tumultuous events of 1947, extended a special invitation to Dr. Karan Singh for the auspicious occasion. Upon stepping foot into the sacred shrine, Dr. Karan Singh was enveloped by an overwhelming sense of euphoria, his soul stirred by mystical inspiration as he proclaimed the omnipresent essence of Nidhan Saab's supreme spirit permeating every corner of the shrine complex. This divine encounter served as a poignant affirmation of Nidhan Saab's enduring influence and spiritual resonance, transcending temporal boundaries to touch the hearts and souls of all who gathered in reverence.

Following the forced exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley in 1990, a few families elected to remain in village Murran, taking on the responsibility of safeguarding the revered shrine of Nidhan Saab.

In 1996, Pandit Badri Nath Bhat, a resident of village Murran, took a proactive step to safeguard the precious relics of Nidhan Saab and his disciple, Pandit Ram Krishen. Concerned about the potential for damage to these revered artifacts, Pandit Badri Nath Bhat carefully removed the walnut wood sandals, known as "Khadaw" in Kashmiri, from the hut of Nidhan Saab. Recognizing their sacred significance, he placed them in the sanctified confines of his own Puja room, where he commenced regular worship. Among the pair of sandals, it was evident that the larger, longer, and older set belonged to Nidhan Saab himself, reflecting the enduring legacy and spiritual stature of the revered saint and his disciple.

Through this act of reverence and preservation, Pandit Badri Nath Bhat ensured that the cherished relics continued to be venerated with the utmost devotion, honoring the profound spiritual connection to Nidhan Saab and his spiritual lineage.

Throughout the tumultuous years of peak terrorism, the shrine bore the brunt of conflict induced damage. However, the steadfast commitment of Pandit Badri Nath Bhat, Pandit Janki Nath Bhat, Pandit Bansi Lal Bhat, and Pandit Rattan Lal Koul, who chose to remain in the village, manifested in the painstaking restoration of the shrine and Nidhan Saab's humble abode in May 2007. Undeterred by the challenges, these devoted caretakers not only reconstructed the shrine to its former glory but also erected a graceful fencing around its precincts, symbolizing their unwavering dedication to preserving the sanctity and legacy of Nidhan Saab amidst the trials of modern times.

Spanning an expanse of 4 Kanal, the sacred shrine of Nidhan Saab is adorned with a diverse array of fruit and wild trees, their boughs whispering ancient tales amidst the tranquil surroundings. Nestled near the humble abode of Nidhan Saab lies the Har Nag spring, its crystalline waters flowing with a gentle murmur, its diameter spanning approximately 7 feet. As devotees step into the hallowed precincts of the shrine, a palpable sense of mysticism envelops them, suffusing every corner with an ethereal presence. It is as if the very essence of Har Nag, infused with the spiritual aura of Nidhan Saab, permeates the sacred space, inviting seekers to immerse themselves in its divine embrace and partake in the timeless communion between nature and the transcendent.

(Author has contributed immensely on the temple history of Kashmir with his primary research and has a number of books to his credit)

देहस्थदेवताचक्रस्तोत्रम्

TRANSLATION AND EXPLANATION

A.K.RAZDAN

विदधाति भैरवाचारं दक्षिणदलगा
विकल्पकसुमैर्या (विशेयकुस्मैर्या)।

नित्यं मनस्वरूपां कौमारीं हामहं वन्दे॥८॥
 “I bow to कौमारी, ever of the form
 of मनस् (mind), who, seated on the
 southern petal, offers the worship
 of भैरव with the flowers of विकल्प
 (thought conceptions).”

Mind (मनस्) here is not denigrated but personified as कौमारी: youthful, nimble, capable of devotion. The term दक्षिण-दल-गा ("southern-petal-abiding") comes from the imagery of the lotus-like yogic cakra in the subtle body. The "flowers of विकल्प or चिन्त्य suggests that even conceptual formations, when consciously offered, serve the inner alchemy - the mind's imaginative capacity becomes a sacramental medium. Trika tradition works with this: rather than suppressing thought, the adept consecrates it, letting thoughts bow to the central awareness.

भाव/ Faculty : मनस् / विकल्प/ विषय
(mind / discursive thought turned
to worship)

नैऋतदलगा भैरवमर्चयते शब्दकुसुमैर्या।
प्रणमामि शब्दरूपा नित्यं तां वैष्णवीं
शक्तिम् ॥६॥

“I bow to वैष्णवी शक्ति, whose form is शब्द (sound), who, seated on the नैर्ऋत (south west) petal, worships भैरव with the flowers of sound.”

Sound power (शब्द) is central in tantric practice (नाद / mantra). That शब्दरूपा is worshipping Bhairava indicates the primacy of interior sound and mantra as vehicles of recognition. The technical placement - the नैर्ऋतदल is part of the sacred petal map Abhinavagupta draws: different petals correspond to directions and to particular sense powers. Here, वैष्णवी as sound shakti points to the preserving / harmonising aspect of sabda in the inner liturgy.

भाव/ Faculty : शब्द / वाच, शक्ति
(sound / speech power)

पश्चिमदिद् गलसंस्था हृदयहरैः
स्पर्शकुसुमैर्या।
ताषयति भैरवं तां त्वग्रू पधरां नमामि
वाराहीम् ॥१०॥

“I salute वाराही, who, established on the western petal, is of the form त्वक (touch/skin), who delights भैरव with flowers of touch — I bow to that holder of the form of त्वक.”

Touch (स्पर्श) as divine त्वक् रूपा signals the sanctification of contact — every tactile encounter can be worship when suffused with awareness. वाराही here is the fierce earth force who transfigures contact into benediction. In meditative practice, the body's tactile field becomes a liturgical surface: touch can awaken devotion rather than merely stir attachment.

भाव/ Faculty : स्पर्श / त्वक (touch / skin aspect)

वरतररूपविशेषैर्मरुतदिद् गलनिषण्ण—दे
गा या।

पूजयति भैरवं तामिन्द्राणीं दृक्तनुं
वन्दे॥११॥

“How to इन्द्राणी, of the form of दृष्टि (sight), who, seated on the marut/directional petal, worships भैरव with the choicest forms and appearances.”

इन्द्राणी personifies sight (दृष्टि) and the power of artistic/optic revelation (वरतर रूपविशेषैः excellent forms). The reference to “marut/directions” (मारुत—दिग्गल) indicates the mapping of optical faculties onto specific petals — again showing Abhi-

[illegible]

navagupta's sophisticated inner cartography: sight is a devotional power when it beholds the world as siva form. For the Trika yogin, vision becomes recognition of the divine image in every form.

भाव/ Faculty : दृष्टि / रूप दर्शन (sight / form perception)

धनपतिकिसलयनिलया या नित्यं विविध
 षड्रसाहारैः।

पूजयति भैरवं तां जिह्वाभिख्यां नमामि
चामुण्डाम् ॥१२॥

“I bow to चामुण्डा, called जिह्वा (the tongue), dwelling in the bud/seat of धनपति किसलय, who constantly worships भैरव by offerings of foods of the six tastes.”

Taste and tongue (जिह्वा) are sanctified here — the goddess चामुण्डा, though fierce, is the consecrating force who turns elementary pleasure

नृउमन्तगठव भजयउसु कृष्णमद ॥
 नृमभिमिभुडिउय निहमउं वधु व सक्तिम ॥७॥
 पञ्चिममिभुलभंभु कृष्णयउः भुजउय
 भद ॥ उययडिठवउं कृष्णयउं नृमभिम
 वरकम ॥००॥ वरउउय विमथ मृकउं मिभुल
 निधनमकय पुरायडिठवउं मिभुल
 मृकउं वर ॥००॥ पनथडि किमलय निभुल
 यनिहं विविपथमृमकः पुरायडिठव
 उं मृकठिउं नृमभिमभुमृम ॥०३॥
 उंसमन्तभु ठव भजयउ थरिभंल चिमिउद
 नृमभिमभचमउं पुरायडिठव मृकल
 कृ ॥०३॥ धरुमनेध पुरा धडिउउउभ
 निउम मृकठिउं मउउं कृष्णयडिं मिभुल
 नृम ॥०४॥ मंभुमृमउवभुं मचउः
 मउउं मंनिडिउम नृमभिम मिउमिउ निर
 मकग मवउ मरुम ॥०५॥
 उडिमिउमृमवउ मरुमृमउमठिउवपु
 धमउम ॥०॥॥

(षड्, रस) into devotion. The strange compound धनपतिःकसलयाःनिलया suggests a link to plentitude / Kubera folds (the location of nourishment) — the text celebrates the tongue as an offering organ. In Trika praxis, ingestion and speech (both lingual functions) can be internalised as offerings to the inner Lord.

भाव/ Faculty : जिह्वा / रस (tongue / taste)

ॐ चित्तशक्त्यै नमः॥

to be continued
(Author is a Sadak „keen
researcher of Kashmir Shaiva
Darshan,an authority on the
Sharda Scriptures of Kashmir)





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