

No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.
—Eleanor Roosevelt

Founder : Late Shri Ramgopal Maheshwari
Inspiration: Late Shri Prafulla Kumar Maheshwari

EDITORIAL

Political Equations in Kashmir

The Union Home Minister Mr. Rajnath Singh has said the Government was prepared to hold elections in the Jammu and Kashmir State and now it was for the Election Commission of India to take decision. Despite terror conditions in the Valley elections in the rural Panchayat and Urban Municipal bodies were held there.

There are indication that elections to the Jammu and Kashmir Vidhan Sabha might be held alongwith the Lok Sabha elections in the coming March-April 2019.

After the fall PDP of Mehbooba Mufti-BJP coalition Government the Governor's Rule was promulgated there and Vidhan Sabha kept under animated suspension. But there was no possibility of forming alternate Government the Governor Mr.Satya Pal Malik dissolved the Vidhan Sabha and recommended to the Central Government to hold elections in the State.

In view of elections the new political equations are taking plea in Kashmir. There are three state level political parties the National Conference (NC) of Farooq and Omer Abdullah, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) of Mahbooba Mufti and People Conference of Sajjad Ghani Lone are in field there. Both the national parties the Congress and the BJP are watching the situation. The regional parties had to align with any of the national parties.

The NC and PDP

1000 in place of 100

The Kamal Nath Government has taken an excellent decision to enhance the old age pension from Rs.100 to Rs.1000 per month, obviously these days the pension of Rs.100 is nothing but token only.

There are 40 lakh people in the State who are getting this meager payment. The Social Justice Ministry of the State Government is collecting district-wise data of these pensioners. Government wants to implement it before the Lok Sabha elections to be held in March-April

in Kashmir are dead set against each other. Mr.Sajid Ghani Lone had only two members in the Last Assembly. In the coming election the NC and the PDP may come into Congress camp. If there is triple party Congress-NC-PDP poll alliance it can secure majority in the House.

On the resolution on Kashmir to approve President's Rule there the NC leader Mr.Farooq Abdullah said the troubled state could be brought back to normalcy. It has become heaven to hell. They are not with militants. On many occasion in the past Mr.Farooq Abdullah suggested that on the basis of Line of Control the Kashmir be divided between India and Pakistan. But export of terrorism by the Pakistan are keeping the situation in the Kashmir unsettled. The Government has decided to liquidate entire terrorists in the military All Out Operation.

The Pakistan thinks it can separate the Kashmir from India as India has done in Bangla Desh by helping its revolt against Pakistan. But East Pakistan now Bangla Desh is whole nation of Bangla speaking Muslim majority. But Kashmir is not homogeneous but heterogeneous state. It north Ladakh is Buddhist majority region, mid Kashmir Valley is Muslim majority part and southern Jammu is Hindu dominated area. Pakistan is miscalculating it on Bangla Desh.

2019. The Kamal Nath Government is also working hectically to give Rs.4000 per month as unemployment allowance to such youth. Mr.Kamal Nath has announced that the electricity bills of the farmers would be reduced by half in the coming days soon.

When Congress was in Opposition many cases were filed against Congressmen on various agitations. The Law Minister of the State Mr.PC Sharma said that after scrutiny at all such political and agitational cases will be withdrawn.

Local leaders from Asia Pacific nations commit to #endTobacco and #beatNCDs

By Shobha Shukla and Bobby Ramakant, CNS

Earlier in December 2018, several local leaders from Asia Pacific nations unanimously adopted a strong Declaration to combat tobacco use and the epidemic of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Governor, Mayors, Vice Mayors and Vice-Governor, in the presence of several Members of Parliaments, national government representatives, and public health experts from over a dozen countries in Asia Pacific region, adopted this AP-CAT Declaration at the 3rd Summit of Asia Pacific Cities Alliance for Tobacco Control and Prevention of NCDs (AP-CAT) in Singapore.

Sub-national leaders from Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines, Myanmar, Malaysia, Timor-Leste, Laos, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Singapore were the key delegates at the AP-CAT. Over 100 participants from 30 cities in 12 countries of Asia Pacific region took part in 3rd Summit of AP-CAT. "Mayors and regional leaders can have a direct and positive impact on the lives of millions through good city-level governance. From our previous years efforts, it has been seen that, tobacco control policies introduced and well-enforced at this level can become a powerful force for national change. We believe that sub-national leaders can play a leading role to curb the rampant growth of smoking [and tobacco use in other forms] and in-turn, reducing rates of NCDs by ensuring public services are managed with protection of public health as a priority," said, Dr Bima Arya, Mayor of Bogor City, Indonesia and co-Chair of AP-CAT.

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GLOBAL PROMISES NEED LOCAL ACTIONS
International commitments for sustainable development "where no one is left behind" are indeed vital but these need to be plugged in the ground realities and translate into positive desired change. That is why such a strong declaration from local leaders of countries which are facing the brunt of tobacco use and NCDs is potentially game-changing. Political commitment is vital at every level and a major determinant of public health outcomes.

All local lead-actors need to unite to translate these global goals into effective action towards desired change. Well-coordinated local leadership is central to effective implementation of health and development policies. Khagaraj Adhikari, Member of Parliament from Nepal and former national Health and Population Minister, said (watch video interview, listen to podcast) that local actions are the fundamental building blocks to drive nations, regions and the world, towards sustainable development. "We have to make agenda at provincial level, central level and local level leadership is

key for implementation." With concerted efforts at all levels, "Asia Pacific region will become tobacco-free" in coming days, said Khagaraj Adhikari. **ENDING EPIDEMICS IS A POLITICAL CHOICE**
Dr Tara Singh Bam, Regional Director (Asia Pacific) of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) said that prevention and control of tobacco and NCDs are the political choices. He echoed what Dr Richard Horton, editor-in-chief of The Lancet had said earlier this year: "politics is, in many ways, the ultimate determinant of our health." Decisions made by politicians

precedent for other Asian nations to follow, Dr Bam said to CNS (Citizen News Service). Likewise, local leaders promised to support national governments to raise taxes on tobacco products.

TOBACCO INDUSTRY INTERFERENCE IS MAJOR DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

Tobacco industry interference in health policy is the biggest obstacle in implementing tobacco control. The World Health Organization (WHO) has repeatedly reinforced its commitment to stop all forms of tobacco industry interference in health policy. One of the strong promises this AP-

Edwin Tong, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Law, Singapore, said that Singapore government will be proposing amendments to the laws in early 2019 to introduce standardised packaging and enlarged health warning measures, for all tobacco products. The proposed amendments will ensure the registration status of tobacco-related trade marks and tobacco-related designs under the respective intellectual property laws will not be affected. Mr Tong also stated that Singapore has all along adopted a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach to tobacco control.

determine our well-being in so many ways, either way! For instance, strong tobacco control yields major public health, financial and development gains. Weakening tobacco control can threaten development. **PROMISE THIS DECLARATION UPHOLDS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH**

The Declaration commits the local leaders to implement the World Health Organization (WHO) best-buys for control and prevention of NCDs. These best-buys include:

- i) reduce tobacco use;
- ii) reduce harmful use of alcohol;
- iii) reduce unhealthy diet;
- iv) reduce physical inactivity;
- v) manage cardiovascular disease and diabetes;
- vi) manage cancer; and
- vii) manage chronic respiratory diseases.

Dr Tara Singh Bam who has worked closely with AP-CAT leadership since its inception, said that local leaders can implement tobacco control best-buys recommended by WHO, by creating a 100% smoke-free environment in public places, work places and public transport, and encourage family to create smokefree homes and social events. Ban on all forms of direct, indirect and surrogate tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship must be strictly enforced. Local leaders should support national governments to take scientific evidence into account and increase the size of pictorial health warnings with a provision for plain packaging. Thailand has become the first country in entire Asia to adopt plain packaging. It is a strong

CAT Declaration upholds is to stop tobacco industry interferences in people's health. Francis Anthony S Garcia, Mayor of Balanga city, Philippines, who is the co-Chair of AP-CAT, stressed that "We will work together to prevent tobacco industry interference in these life-saving policies."

ALLIANCES OF SUB-NATIONAL LEADERS IS A CORNERSTONE

Local leaders reiterated commitment to create tobacco-free generation which will herald the endgame for tobacco. AP-CAT Declaration envisages to establish and expand country-level alliance of subnational leaders, which is vital for the potential progress these nations will make towards becoming tobacco free eventually and stemming the tide of NCDs.

Barrister Shameem Haider Patwary, Member of Parliament from Bangladesh, said (watch video interview, listen to podcast) that "AP-CAT is really important to make our voices stronger for public health and development. For example when I go back home and I meet other ministers, MPs or even the PM, I will have this Declaration from AP-CAT" to make a stronger case for #endtobacco and #beatNCDs as "body like AP-CAT has already recommended it so we should implement it."

"WHOLE IS GREATER THAN SUM OF ITS PARTS"

Sharing of learnings and strategies to overcome challenges on the ground in tobacco

control and prevention of NCDs is a big benefit of forums such as AP-CAT. Alliances connecting local or sub-national leaders are stimulating progress in the region. "We can share the experiences of Mayor in Philippines, or other sub-national leaders" with people we work with, to improve programme outcomes in tobacco control as well as prevention of NCDs, said Barrister Shameem Haider Patwary, MP from Bangladesh.

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LOCAL LEADERS WALK THE TALK TO #BEATNCDs

On second day of the 3rd Summit of AP-CAT, several local leaders including Members of Parliament, Mayors, government officials and public health experts, woke up early in the morning to walk/ run and increase physical activity in the historic Botanical Garden in Singapore. This Botanical Garden is the first and only tropical botanical garden inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2015. Entire garden is a no smoking zone.

HUMAN LIVES BEHIND DATA AND STATISTICS

Jose Luis Castro, Executive Director of International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) and President of NCD Alliance board, said that NCDs kill over 40 million people every year. "We have to see human lives behind these statistics and data, as people dying untimely due to NCDs are part of families and communities." Jose Luis Castro reminded participants of 3rd Summit of AP-CAT that two important UN high level meetings (UNHLMs) to beat NCDs and end TB were held earlier this year alongside the UN General Assembly where heads of 193 countries were invited. He laid emphasis on pivotal role of political leadership and commitment at every level (sub-national, national, regional and global) to beat NCDs and avert untimely deaths and preventable epidemics.

"REMOTE-CONTROL" IS NATURAL

By Kajal Chatterjee

So from being sponsors of Ram Mandir to Gomata to Yoga and what not — BJP has "promoted" itself to promoters of films as well! Else, it would not have decided to publicise the upcoming movie "The Accidental Prime Minister" by uploading the official trailer of the film on its verified Twitter handle!

BJP believes what it likes to believe and tries to make people believe in its own biased line of thinking through shrill cheap bankrupt rhetoric.

Accusations against Narendra Modi (revolving Gujarat pogrom) or Amit Shah (Sohrabuddin Sheikh murder case) needs to be proved in Court! But if Sanjaya Baru (media advisor of Manmohan Singh during UPA-I regime) pinpoints Sonia Gandhi of meddling in UPA Government functioning or British-Pakistani terrorist David Coleman Headley says that Ishrat Jahan was indeed a Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist; those statements need to be instantly lapped up in delight as the "ultimate truth" without any approval of Court! Head I Win, Tail You Lose! Hypocrisy, thy name is BJP!

Though Narendra Modi was projected as Prime Ministerial candidate prior to 2014 General polls or Mamata Banerjee being the obvious Chief Ministerial candidate prior to last many Assembly elections in

West Bengal; yet the fact remains that basically/principally electorate vote for their respective favoured party right from Lok Sabha to Panchayat polls, not for any individual. And only after a particular outfit wins the race, the winning candidates and the concerned party organisation meet to pick up the leader who would act as the first among equals or executive head and lead the nation/state/city/village as Prime minister/Mayor/Pradhan.

Now why do people vote for their favoured outfit? Obviously by drawing inspiration from their professed philosophies policies or promises. Of course the Prime minister or Chief Minister remains in front as face of the Government or to face the people, but he/she is bound to be guided by the organisation behind the curtain as it is the latter who have appointed the former to implement the policy of the party concerned (unless it is a "single" man/woman party like many regional outfits with his/her word being the final or only say in every matter).

Seen from this perspective, there lies nothing to object if UPA-I/II Government indeed got "remote-controlled" by Sonia Gandhi as alleged by Sanjaya Baru in his book

"The Accidental Prime Minister". Sonia Gandhi was not a dictator. She was the full-fledged President of Congress (just like Amit Shah is of BJP) and Chairman of the UPA. So she is fully entitled to have her say in matters concerning the policies and decisions of the Government as it needs to be in tally with the publicised pre-election manifesto of the Congress and its allies. So only an insane or crude can tarnish this absolute natural step into "rule of a family" rendering the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to a mere "regent" appointed by Sonia till

Rahul Gandhi's attainment of "maturity"!

CPM Politburo barred the erstwhile West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu from accepting the post of Prime Minister which was offered to him on a platter by the Third Front partners in 1996. Now did it demean the stature and personality of Basu (who was ready to accept the offer) rendering him to a "weak" personality "remote-controlled by Politburo" as he had to ultimately refuse the post! In any true democratic set-up, mother organisation definitely play a major role in the policies executed by the Government run by it or take decision whether it would join/form any Government or not. As a matter of

fact officially CPM Politburo had refused green signal to Basu as being a minor player in the proposed ruling coalition, the party would not have succeeded in implementing its policies in the Third Front Government. Yes, dominance of organisation (through its policies) while running the Government is definitely the norm world-wide in any democratic set-up. So what's wrong if Sonia Gandhi, as Congress President/UPA Chairman, had indeed played a crucial role out of world view during the UPA regime?

And by which moral/democratic authority can the BJP continuously dare to insult the mindset of the Indian population by terming the successive Governments (UPA I and II) as the "reign of a family holding the country to ransom for 10 long years"! Just like the "Good Days" regime; the Governments run by Singh were also formed through the free will or mandate of the people through democratic election. What a grave assault on the essence of democracy, Constitution and electorate just to show the Gandhis Singh and Congress in poor light! Indeed no condemnation is enough for the self-declared conscience-keepers of the nation!

Opinion

Please send your letters and articles to
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