

NEWS ALERT

APRIL 8-15, 2019



LIBRARY

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

NEW DELHI

News Alert is a weekly service offered by the Library, Indian Institute of Public Administration. It contains news items on topical aspects pertaining to Public Administration and allied areas of governance. The service is meant for the IIPA faculty and members only.

COMPILED BY
HEMANT KHARE



Indian Institute of Public Administration
I.P. Estate, Ring Road, New Delhi-110002

LIST OF NEWSPAPERS COVERED

BUSINESS LINE

DECCAN HERALD

ECONOMIC TIMES

HINDU

HINDUSTAN TIMES

INDIAN EXPRESS

PIONEER

STATESMAN

TELEGRAPH

TIMES OF INDIA

TRIBUNE

CONTENTS

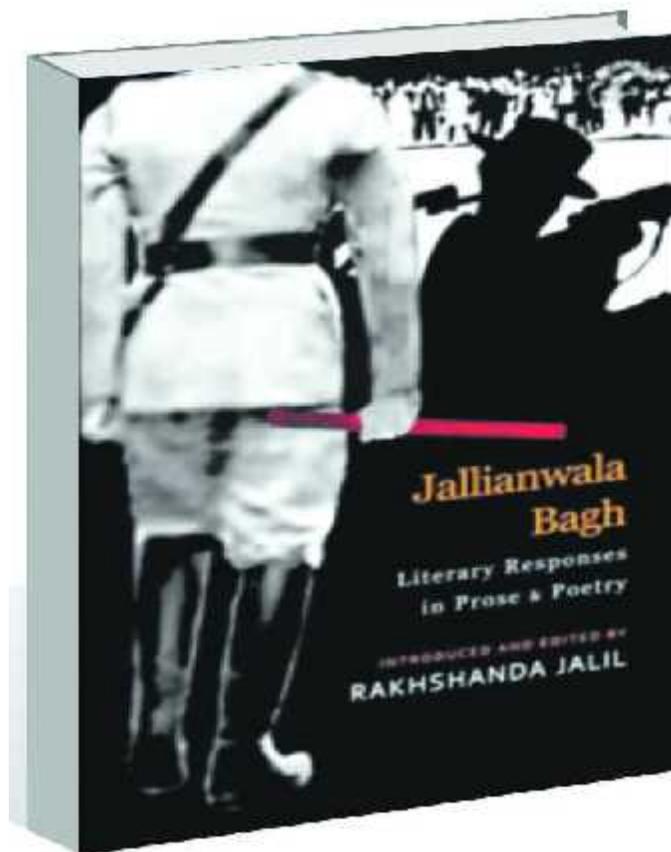
BOOK REVIEW	6-9
DEFENCE	10-11
HIGHER EDUCATION	12
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	13
INTERNATIONAL TRADE	14-17
JUDICIARY	18-19
MASS MEDIA	20-23
NAXALISM	24-27
POLICE	28-30

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT - BRITAIN	31-33
POLITICS & GOVERNMENT – J.& K.	34-37
POLLUTION	38-40
TAXATION	41-43
WOMEN	44

BOOK REVIEW

TRIBUNE, APR 13, 2019

Literature of angst and loss



Jallianwala Bagh: Literary Responses in Prose and Poetry Introduced and edited by Rakshanda Jalil. Niyogi. Pages 227. Rs 495

Saadat Hasan Manto, Ghulam Abbas, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, Mulk Raj Anand, Bhisham Sahni, Stanley Wolpert, Sarojini Naidu, Muhammad Iqbal, Sohan Singh Misha, Giani Hira Singh Dard and Josh Malihabadi, to name some authors and poets, come together in this anthology of narratives about the crime against humanity by an empire that was Jallianwala Bagh.

A hundred years have passed since the horrific incident. But the bloody event when an empire marched against a peaceful group of unarmed citizens, mercilessly gunning them down, evokes as much dismay today as it did then. The historical and political perspectives have been covered time and time again. However, the massacre also inspired writers of the time — and thereafter — to write how the carnage impacted and disrupted personal lives, as well as the life of a nation.

Jalil says in her introduction: “I was curious to see how an incident that stirred the conscience of millions, one that had far-reaching implications for the national freedom struggle, that made British colonial interests in India morally untenable, found its way through pen and paper to reach the nooks and crannies of popular imagination filtered through the mind of the creative writer.”

The works that Jalil has chosen are classics. The first story in the book is by Saadat Hasan Manto, titled, *An Incident in 1919*. It is about the bravery of Thaila Kanjar, ‘born from the womb of a prostitute’. A drunkard and a gambler, Thaila has two sisters (“prettiest prostitutes of their time”). He joins the revolt against the Rowlett Act and is shot, but not before killing a soldier with his bare hands. Soon after the event,

however, his sisters, summoned by the British to dance, “defiled the name of their martyred brother”.

There’s an extract from Mulk Raj Anand’s seminal work, *Morning Face* (1968) for which he won the Sahitya Akademi Award. Anand’s young protagonist wonders what would happen to the souls of people who were killed at the massacre and his mother tells him that “they would be wandering about, angry ghosts on earth, because they had died such cruel deaths that they would haunt the streets they came from.”

The compilation also contains an extract from the *Crown and the Loincloth*, the first novel of Chaman Nahal's *The Quartet*, a Gandhian saga that deals with major incidents of the freedom struggle. The protagonist, Sunil, is captured by General Dyer and is beaten to death by him. Although the excerpt does not cover Sunil's death, but it details the hatred and vengeance that Dyer had for the Indian people.

Those Who Crawled by Ghulam Abbas, views General Dyer's humiliating 'crawling order' through the eyes of children. The order decreed that those who wished to cross the lane in which Miss Sherwood had been assaulted, would have to crawl on their bellies. Abbas’s story tells of two children who watched two athletic, insouciant young men undertake a ‘crawling race’ at the notorious spot. When the angry Sergeant threatens to shoot them, they stop. One youth reproachfully tells him: “Saaib bahadur, you have needlessly made me lose five rupees or else.... I would have won the bet.”

An excerpt from Bhisham Sahni’s play, *Colour My Robe Saffron* finds place in the anthology. The poetry section has poems such as *Vasant* in

Jallianwala Bagh by Subhadra Kumari Chauhan, Punjab 1919 by Sarojini Naidu, The Bullet Marks by Sohan Singh Misha, The Blood of Hindu and Muslim by Babu Firoz Din Sharaf and Bloody Baisakhi by Nanak Singh. In addition to Jalil herself, the list of translators has eminent names such as Raza Naeem and Hina Nandrajog.

Author-critic-historian, Jalil has compiled works by the finest literary minds on the carnage. The works also show that far from being intimidated by the atrocity, it only hardened the resolve of the Indians to achieve their independence from an unjust ruler. Jallianwala Bagh, thus, marks the beginning of the end of the British empire in India.

DEFENCE

PIONEER, APR 13, 2019

Army conference stresses on need to push modernisation

In the backdrop of ongoing tension with Pakistan on the border post-Pulwama incident in February in which 44 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) men died in a suicide attack and growing military might of China, the ongoing Army commanders' conference here has stressed on the need to ensure optimum force readiness. The meet, which started on Monday and ends on Saturday, also decided to sustain the pace of modernisation with maximum utilisation of resources with the existing Budget.

The conference, an apex level biannual event, which formulates important policy decisions, comprehensively deliberated all aspects of extant security dynamics, emerging security scenarios, enhancing operational capability in near and long term and enhancement of combat edge over potential adversaries, Army officials said here on Friday.

They said it was emphasised in the conference that Indian Army is committed to peaceful security environment and shall holistically address emerging threats, challenges and ensure no room for terror. Reviews during the Conference included readiness, tri-services synergy,

military diplomacy, joint exercises that have created capacity and environment and supporting operational plans that have evolved.

The deliberations in the conference validated the current course set by the military hierarchy, as merited by the dynamics of emerging security and operational events and the key highlights include optimum force readiness to be ensured, re-prioritising the existing requirements to ensure that the resources allocated for force modernisation and capacity building be ensured by optimising allotted Budget. The commanders also pitched for increasing the content of indigenisation in force modernisation.

Reviewing the state of existing infrastructure along Northern Borders facing China, the top echelon of the Army decided to pursue these projects on higher priority. Ensure speedy move and all weather connectivity to Northern Borders are the focus areas, officials said.

HIGHER EDUCATION

PIONEER, APR 11, 2019

HRD Ministry appoints three V-Cs

The HRD Ministry on Thursday appointed vice chancellors to three universities after the Election Commission gave its nod as the Model Code of Conduct is in place due to the Lok Sabha elections. The three universities are Jamia Millia Islamia, Mahatma Gandhi Central University in Motihari and Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya in Wardha.

“Najma Akhtar has been appointed as the VC of Jamia while names of Sanjiv Sharma and Rajaneesh Kumar Shukla have been approved for the top post at Motihari Central university and Wardha’s Mahatma Gandhi varsity,” a senior HRD ministry official said.

While no appointments are allowed during this period, the HRD Ministry had approached the Election Commission seeking its nod arguing that the selection process was complete before the model code came into place.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

PIONEER, APR 15, 2019

Need for an objective narrative about Pak in India: Pak envoy

Pakistan is hoping for “re-engagement” with India after the Lok Sabha polls as structured dialogue will help the two countries understand mutual concerns, resolve disputes and build the edifice of durable peace and security, Pakistani High Commissioner Sohail Mahmood has said.

Mahmood, who has been appointed Pakistan’s next Foreign Secretary, also said there was a need for an “objective” narrative about Pakistan in India which could facilitate peaceful, cooperative and good neighbourly ties. “We hope for re-engagement after the elections in India. Diplomacy and dialogue are indispensable,” he said.

The comments came nearly six weeks after India’s military planes struck a terrorist training camp in Pakistan’s Balakot and Pakistan’s subsequent counter-offensive. The flare up triggered fears of a war and countries like the US and China played a role in de-escalating tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbours.

Mahmood said diplomacy and dialogue are indispensable to improve ties between the two neighbours and that engagement was the only option to understand mutual concerns and ensure peace, prosperity and security in the region.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

HINDUSTAN TIMES, APR 15, 2019

Exports outpace imports at 11% in March

Trade deficit narrows to \$10.89 bn; best growth rate for exports since Oct. 2018

India's exports rose to a five-month high of 11% in March on account of higher growth mainly in pharma, chemicals and engineering sectors, marking the outbound shipments at \$331 billion for FY 2018-19, official data showed Monday.

Merchandise exports in March stood at \$32.55 billion as against \$29.32 billion in the same month last year.

This is the best growth rate for exports since October 2018, when shipments grew by 17.86%. Imports rose by 1.44% to \$43.44 billion in March 2019. However, trade deficit — the difference between exports and imports — narrowed to \$10.89 billion during the month under review as compared to \$13.51 billion in March 2018.

Oil, gold imports

Oil and gold imports rose by 5.55% and 31.22% to \$11.75 billion and \$3.27 billion, respectively in March 2019.

For the full fiscal (2018-19), imports rose by 8.99% to \$507.44 billion, widening the trade deficit to \$176.42 billion as against \$162 billion in

2017-18. “Through secular growth over the last three financial years, following the major downturn in the face of the global slowdown, merchandise exports for 2018-19 are estimated at \$331.02 billion, the highest ever, surpassing the earlier peak of \$314.4 billion achieved in 2013-14. This has been achieved in a challenging global environment,” the commerce ministry said in a statement. During the full fiscal, the sectors which recorded healthy growth include petroleum (28%), plastic (25.6%), chemicals (22%), pharmaceuticals (11%) and engineering (6.36%).

Data showed that oil imports in April-March 2018-19 grew by 29.27% to \$140.47 billion, while non-oil imports were up by 2.82% to \$366.97 billion during that fiscal.



PIONEER, APR 15, 2019

We want balanced trade with India: Chinese envoy



Consul general of China in Kolkata, Zha Liyou said on Tuesday that his country is keen on balanced trade with India as it is always beneficial and inclusive.

There is greater need for boosting trade and investment between the two countries, he said on economic ties between the two countries.

"We do not want to have trade deficit with India. We want a bilateral balanced trade as it is always mutually inclusive", he told the Bharat Chamber of Commerce here

Liyou said that Yunan Provincial Investment Infrastructure would come to West Bengal after the Lok Sabha election to discuss possible investment avenues between Kunming and Kolkata, the sister cities.

Besides, there is great need for creating a good environment through more people to people contact.

Talking about the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) proposed by China, Liyou said it is directed by a mutually constructed and shared vision and China is a great supporter for multilateralism.

"Our country is open today. In a few days time, China is going to hold the BRI convention where delegates from 40 countries and various business leaders would be present", he said.

The Chinese envoy invited India to participate in the Import-Export event in China during the later part of the year.

He said a six-member delegation from Yunan had come to Kolkata to attend the Bengal Global Business Summit.

"A similar event will be held in Yunan on June 10 and 11 which will be big event", he said.

The Consular General's office in Kolkata is in charge of the five states of West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chattisgarh and Bihar.

JUDICIARY

PIONEER, APR 11, 2019

Top court Collegium recommends names of 5 judges as CJs of HCs

The Supreme Court Collegium has recommended names of five judges for appointment as Chief Justices in Rajasthan, Kerala, Meghalaya, Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh High Courts.

The five names are — Delhi High Court Judge Justice S Ravindra Bhat, Kerala

High Court Judge Justice PR Ramachandra Menon, Punjab and Haryana High Court Judge Justice A K Mittal, Allahabad High Court Judge Justice Vikram Nath and Bombay High Court Judge Justice AS Oka.

The Collegium recommended the appointment of Justice Bhat after noting that the office of the Chief

Justice of the Rajasthan High Court has fallen vacant after the recent transfer of Justice Pradeep Nandrajog to Bombay High Court.

“Therefore, appointment to that office is required to be made. Justice S Ravindra Bhat is the senior-most Judge from Delhi High Court and is functioning in that High Court since his elevation.

Having regard to all relevant factors, the Collegium finds Justice S Ravindra Bhat suitable in all respects for being appointed as Chief

Justice of the Rajasthan High Court. The Collegium resolves to recommend accordingly.

“While making the above recommendation, the Collegium is conscious of the fact that consequent upon the proposed appointment, there will be three Chief Justices from Delhi High Court, which has the special distinction of being the High Court for the national capital,” the Collegium said.

It also recommended appointment of Justice Menon noting that the office of the Chief Justice of the Chhattisgarh High Court has fallen vacant recently after resignation of Justice A K Tripathi, Chief Justice of the High Court.

MASS MEDIA

PIONEER, APR 11, 2019

Publication of documents by The Hindu in tune with freedom of speech, says SC

The Supreme Court on Wednesday held that the publication of three documents by 'The Hindu' on the Rafale jet deal, on which the Centre had raised preliminary objections claiming "privilege" over them, were in consonance with the constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech.

The SC further said that the publication of the documents in the newspaper reminded it of its various judgments upholding the freedom of the press which have also been echoed by the US Supreme Court from time to time.

In the famous case of New York Times Company vs United States relating to the publication of the "Pentagon Papers", which contained information about the political and military involvement of the federal government in the Vietnam War, the US Supreme Court had refused to recognise a right in the executive government to seek a restraint order or publication of the papers.

The judgment penned by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, on behalf of himself and Justice S K Kaul who were part of the three judge-bench delivering the verdict, said the apex court of the United States had refused to recognise the right of the Government to restrain publication

primarily on the ground that the First Amendment guaranteed freedom of the press and the US Code did not contemplate any restriction on publication of items or material specified in the Code.

“By a majority of 6:3, the US Supreme Court had declined to pass prohibitory orders on publication of the “Pentagon Papers” on the ground that the Congress itself not having vested any such power in the executive, which it could have so done, the courts cannot carve out such a jurisdiction as the same may amount to unauthorized judicial law making thereby violating the sacred doctrine of separation of powers,” the CJI said.

The top court said the principle of law depicted in the “Pentagon Papers” case would apply to the facts of the Rafale case.

“There is no provision in the Official Secrets Act and no such provision in any other statute has been brought to our notice by which Parliament has vested any power in the executive arm of the government either to restrain publication of documents marked as secret or from placing such documents before a court of law which may have been called upon to adjudicate a legal issue concerning the parties,” the CJI said.

The court said no law enacted by the Parliament specifically barring or prohibiting the publication of such documents on any of the grounds mentioned in Article 19(2) of the Constitution has been brought to the court’s notice.

“The fact that the three documents had been published in The Hindu and were thus available in the public domain has not been seriously disputed or contested by the respondents.

“No question has been raised and, in our considered opinion, very rightly, with regard to the publication of the documents in ‘The Hindu’ newspaper. The right of such publication would seem to be in consonance with the constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech,” Justice Gogoi said.

PIONEER, APR 14, 2019

NaMo TV cannot air political content: EC

NaMo TV cannot air any political content without getting approval by the media certification and monitoring committee (MCMC), Election Commission has told the Delhi chief electoral officer under whom the MCMC functions.

In a letter to the Delhi Chief Electoral Officer, the Election Commission said any political publicity material on electronic media without certification should be removed immediately as the Model Code of Conduct is in place.

“As NaMo TV/Content TV is sponsored by a political party, all recorded programmes of political contents displayed on the channel/platform would be covered under the purview of the Commission’s Order...” the Election Commission’s letter reads.

“Any political publicity materials/contents, being displayed on electronic media without the requisite certification from competent

authority (MCMC in this case) should be removed immediately and any political content shall only be permitted strictly in accordance with the EC instructions in this regard,” the letter adds.

The Delhi Chief Electoral Officer had approved the logo of NaMo TV, which the BJP said is part of the NaMo App that it owns, but did not “certify” the content as it contained the old speeches of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

As per EC instructions dated April 15, 2004, issued following SC order dated April 13, 2004 in Secretary, I&B Vs M/sGemini TV, all political advertisements and political advertisements are mandatorily required to be pre-certified by MCMC before telecasting/displaying. EC has asked Delhi CEO to ensure implementation of the commission’s above instructions and send a compliance report immediately.

NAXALISM

PIONEER, APR 11, 2019

Naxal attacks fail to dampen voters' zeal

The Naxal attack in Dantewada, a couple of days ago, failed to deter the voters who were enthusiastic to cast their ballot as they came out in droves to register an impressive 77 per cent turn out at the Shyamgiri polling station in the first phase of Lok Sabha polling on April 11. But north eastern States unexpectedly recorded a lower turn out this time around.

While Bihar witnessed an unenthusiastic response from the voters with just about 50 per cent of them coming to exercise their franchise, West Bengal recorded 81 per cent turnout. 4 seats in Bihar and 2 in Bengal went to polls in the first phase. Interestingly, 7-8 polling stations in Odisha went with zero polling due to naxal fear.

According to Election Commissioner, Umesh Sinha, about 56 per cent turnout was recorded in Chhattisgarh's Bastar Lok Sabha seat with the Shyamgiri polling booth where the Maoist attack two days ago had left a BJP MLA dead.

In 2014, the turnout had been 59 per cent. Barring a few minor incidents, the overall polling in the Maoist-affected area was peaceful, the poll panel said. "Long queues of voters were seen outside the polling stations in several Maoist-affected areas," he added. "Of the 28 Assembly

constituencies that went to polls in Odisha, 20 were in Maoist-affected areas of the State. Except 7-8 polling booths in Chitrakonda block' which recorded zero per cent voting because of naxal fear, people came out in large numbers in the Maoist belts to exercise their franchise," the EC said.

An improvised explosive device (IED) blast was reported in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district as voting was underway in the Maoist-affected district. No one was injured in the incident. A similar blast was triggered by Maoists in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district in Bastar Lok Sabha constituency in the wee hours of Thursday but no injury or casualty took place due to special security measures as there was deployment of 80,000 security personnel, it said.

As the voter turnout was 69%, 60% and 78% in Sikkim, Mizoram and Nagaland respectively, the highest turnout among the North Eastern States was in Tripura with 81.80% of voters exercising their voting rights for choosing their representative for the 17th Lok Sabha. The voter turnout was 78.20%, 68%, 66% and 67.16% in Manipur, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya respectively.

Altogether 56 per cent voters exercised their franchise in the first phase of polling in seven Lok Sabha constituencies in Maharashtra. According to EC, Naxal-hit Gadchiroli-Chimur Lok Sabha seat witnessed an impressive 61.33 per cent voter turn-out, while 60.50 per cent electorate exercised the franchise in Bhandara-Gondiya. Chandrapur recorded 55.97 per cent polling, followed by 55.36 per cent in Wardha, 53.97 per cent in Yavatmal- Washim, 53.13 per cent in Nagpur and 51.72 per cent in Ramtek (SC) seat.

According to EC, there have been some incidents where EVMs have been damaged. 6 incidents in Andhra Pradesh, five in Arunachal Pradesh, one in Bihar, two in Manipur and one in West Bengal.

An estimated 69 per cent of the voters in Sikkim have exercised their franchise till 5 pm to elect a 32-member State Legislative Assembly as well as the lone Lok Sabha member from the State. In 2014, voter turnout was 83.65 per cent. Chamling, who is seeking an eighth successive term as an MLA, is contesting from two Assembly seats — Poklok-Kamrang and Namchi-Singhithang. Former Indian football captain Bhaichung Bhutia, the working president of the Hamro Sikkim party (HSP) has entered into fray from two Assembly seats as well, including the Gangtok Assembly constituency, reserved for the indigenous Bhutia-Lepcha communities.

Voting for two Lok Sabha constituencies and 60 Assembly seats in Arunachal Pradesh witnessed 66 per cent voter turnout this time as compared to 80 per cent in 2014.

As per EC, Odisha witnessed 68 per cent voter turnout which is lower than 73 per cent of 2014. BJD chief, Naveen Patnaik, is seeking fifth term in the State. As per the trend observed over the last general elections, higher turnout in Odisha cannot be categorised as anti-incumbency or pro-incumbency, but a certain inference could easily be drawn out. Higher turnout in Odisha gives a decisive mandate to a party.

Of the 70 lakh people, around 50 per cent voted by the end of the day in the Maoist-affected districts of Gaya, Nawada and Jamui in the first phase of Lok Sabha elections in Bihar.

According to EC, an overall 56 per cent of the votes were cast in Jammu & Kashmir's Jammu and Baramulla Lok Sabha constituencies. Voter turnout in Jammu is recorded 72.16 per cent and 35.01 per cent in Baramulla.

Over 57 per cent of the electorate in Uttarakhand cast their vote on Thursday to seal the fates of 52 candidates as polling was held in the first phase of the general elections to its five Lok Sabha seats.

The turnout recorded at 5 pm across the five seats was 57.85 per cent, Chief Electoral Officer Soujanya said.

POLICE

PIONEER, APR 9, 2019

SC asks ex-Kolkata top cop to respond to CBI's plea for his arrest

The Supreme Court on Monday sought the response of former Kolkata Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar on CBI's plea seeking his arrest in the multi-crore rupee Saradha chit fund scam.

The apex court, on February 5, granted protection from arrest to Kumar while directing him to appear before the CBI and "faithfully" cooperating into the investigation of cases arising out of the scam.

The Central probe agency has sought vacation of the order so that it can arrest and interrogate Kumar.

"This is the interim application (IA) of the CBI seeking custodial interrogation of Rajeev Kumar. Issue notice. Let the matter be listed for hearing on April 15," said a Bench of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna.

The Bench also allowed CBI to file a fresh affidavit regarding its allegations that telecom operators — Vodafone and Airtel — were not cooperating with it in the probe.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Vodafone, said it has provided the details, including the Call Data Records (CDRs) to the CBI

and sought the hearing after three weeks. The Bench has now posted this aspect after two weeks.

At the outset, senior advocate AM Singhvi, appearing for the former Kolkata police chief, said that CBI's plea in this case must be settled or approved by the CBI Director as he has no faith in M Nageswara Rao, former interim CBI Director, whose wife is being probed by the West Bengal police in a 2017 case.

“Let us not digress from the real issue. You are taking excuses. The CBI is seeking your arrest. Don't go here and there,” the Bench said.

Singhvi then said he was not aware of listing of CBI's plea, seeking arrest of Kumar, on Monday. “This (CBI's IA) is very much there. It is listed today. If you do not know this, what can I do,” the bench said and it prompted Singhvi to tender an apology.

In its plea to the apex court, the agency has said the recall of the order granting Kumar an interim protection from the arrest was necessary “to unravel the entire gamut of the larger conspiracy in the ponzi scam cases”.

The CBI also sought the court's directions to the West Bengal authorities to comply with the court's earlier orders “in letter and spirit” and not to create any hurdle in the CBI probe or try to “intimidate, harass and scare the agency officials” probing the cases.

“Recall the interim protection granted to Rajeev Kumar for no coercive steps, including arrest, granted by this court by order dated February 5, 2019, to enable the CBI to subject him to interrogation in accordance

with the law to unravel the entire gamut of larger conspiracy in these ponzi scam cases and its subsequent investigation,” the CBI’s application said.

The agency said it needs to examine Kumar and other police officials to recover the material evidence and to investigate into the acts of omission and commission on the part of Bidhan Nagar police commissionerate and SIT officials in causing concealment of the evidence collected by them during investigation.

The CBI also sought directions to West Bengal authorities to comply with the court’s earlier orders “in letter and spirit” and not to create any hurdle in the agency probe or try to “intimidate, harass and scare agency officials” probing the cases.

Earlier, the apex court had termed as “very very serious” the revelations made by CBI in its status report relating to the recent interrogation of the then Kolkata Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar in connection with the Saradha chit fund scam case.

It had asked the CBI to file an appropriate application seeking reliefs against Kumar.

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT –BRITAIN

TIMES OF INDIA, APR 14, 2019

Jallianwala: Regret isn't enough. An honest appraisal of the Raj can do so much more

Printed from Born in Britain, of proud Punjabi heritage, I have learned to live with a degree of cognitive dissonance. At school, my classmates knew Bananarama and I knew Bhosle. Holiday picnics involved sand-peppered choley and bhature; white friends had sandwiches. In a Proustian way, an English seaside will always smell of vinegary chips and channa masaala to me. I loved history at school and was good at it. I could still bore you to death with the details of a Roman hypocaust system. Yet at my desk, in what was once the epicentre of the British Empire, what I learned of the Raj was misty, slight and sepia-tinted. Robert Clive and Henry Hardinge wafted past on drifts of nostalgia. The contribution of Indian soldiers during World War I and II was mentioned in passing, no context offered. Film and television merely thickened the fog. The Raj was all about polo matches, pith helmets, and sundowners with Maharajas. British sahibs were striding and valiant. They stopped railway lines being blown up by snarling 'natives', shot man-eating tigers and generally gleamed against the poverty and brutality of India, a mere background to their dramas. The way history was and continues to be taught in Britain does a disservice to all, no matter what they pack in

their seaside picnic. The ignorance has been thrown into sharp relief by the centenary anniversary of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

Having written a book about the massacre and the revenge taken for it by Udham Singh, I have been on something of a publicity treadmill. I cannot tell you how many times interviewers have said the words: “I had no idea” both on and off the air. There has been genuine shock and revulsion at the thought of the “crawling order” issued after the massacre, where Indians were forced to squirm on their bellies in the dirt. I have seen people, good people, struggle with the notion that British war planes strafed Indian civilians from the sky, or that schoolboys were torn from their classes and whipped, not for any offence committed, but to serve as an example to any who might defy the Sirkar. “This cannot be who we were. This cannot be what we did...” I recognise cognitive dissonance when I see it. At times, the examples become too much for the interviewer; sometimes they become too much for me. I have found myself uncharacteristically moved to tears relating eyewitness testimony of those trapped in the Bagh by the long night of curfew, listening to the wails of their countrymen turn to whimpers and then to silence. A grandfather I would never know left Jallianwala Bagh as my inheritance. I grew up with the story of the quirk of fate that saved him and us. Then a lanky teenager from Kala Bagh, visiting Amritsar for Baisakhi, my grandfather was late for an errand that day. He left the Amritsar garden minutes before Brigadier General Dyer and his soldiers entered and opened fire. His friends, with whom he had been sharing a picnic by the perimeter wall, were killed. Lala-ji struggled to make sense of his survival. When he went blind later, he would tell any who came to sympathise: “Do not pity me, God gave me

my life that day, it is only right he take the light from my eyes.” There has been much talk of an apology here in Britain, and an impassioned debate in Westminster Hall in the Houses of Parliament. I was struck by the response of minister Mark Field, spokesman for the government at the debate. He praised the diaspora in the UK, and talked of generous visa allowances, but then came the rub: “At the back of one’s mind, there is always a sense — not just when one looks at the figures on trade and investment, although that is an aspect of it — that something is holding us back from fulfilling the full potential and a flourishing relationship. In all honesty, I would take a more orthodox and different view of our colonial past, but I accept that the Jallianwala Bagh massacre grates particularly strongly in the relationship between India and the UK”. In other words, ‘I think the Raj was generally a good thing but if saying sorry or something like it makes trade easier in a postBrexit world, we bally well ought to do something.’ In the end, there was no Willy Brandt moment, falling to his knees at the gates of the Warsaw ghetto. Instead, Theresa May talked of a “shameful scar” and expressed “regret”. People will argue the toss between regret and remorse for years, not that this makes any difference to my grandfather or his friends, all long dead now. An honest appraisal of colonial history will, however, make all the difference in the world to my children and theirs. If there is any legacy from the centenary of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, please let it be that. It just has to be that.

(Anita Anand is a BBC journalist based in London and the author of ‘The Patient Assassin, a story of Massacre, Raj and Revenge’)

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT –JAMMU & KASHMIR

PIONEER, APR 9, 2019

Don't play with fire, Mehbooba warns BJP

The BJP should not play with fire when it comes to the special status of Jammu & Kashmir, PDP president Mehbooba Mufti said on Monday and warned that abrogating Article 370 would lead to freedom for the state from India.

"If you free Jammu & Kashmir from Article 370, you will free the state from country as well. I have said many times that Article 370 links J&K with the country. When you break this bridge, India loses its legitimacy over the state. It becomes an occupational force," Mufti said.

The former Chief Minister was reacting to the Bharatiya Janata Party's manifesto, in which the party has reiterated its commitment to abrogate Article 370 and annul Article 35A of the Constitution.

"The BJP has failed on fronts, be it unemployment, farmer issues or it price rise. Now they are looking for issues which they can use to garner votes," Mufti said.

The Peoples Democratic Party leader warned that the BJP should desist from playing with fire, saying any change in the special status of the state could endanger the entire South-Asian region.

"J&K is already on a heap of explosives and we saw a glimpse of it in Pulwama. If the BJP does not stop making such statements and give up such intentions (about Article 370), it will not only burn J&K but the entire region.

"So my warning to the BJP is to stop playing with fire. There is explosives in Jammu & Kashmir. If you will light a spark, everything will go up in flames... There will be no Jammu & Kashmir or India left," she added.

Earlier, Mufti said the Indian constitution would not be applicable to the State if Article 370 was abrogated.

"Why waste time in court. Wait for BJP to scrap Article 370. It will automatically debar us from fighting elections since Indian constitution won't be applicable to J&K anymore," she said in a tweet.

Mufti was responding to reports that a PIL has been filed in the Delhi High Court, seeking a ban on the PDP president and National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah from contesting the Lok Sabha election.

While Mehbooba is contesting from Anantnag, Abdullah is the candidate from Srinagar constituency.

Mehbooba, in her tweet, quoted a famous couplet of Urdu poet Allama Iqbal which reads: "'Na samjho gay tou mit jaouge aye Hindustan walo. Tumhari dastaan tak bhi na hogi dastaano main' (O you people of Hindustan, if you don't understand, you will perish, your story will be erased from history)".

PIONEER, APR 9, 2019

No option but to repeal Art 370, 35A: Rajnath

Adding teeth to the BJP's aggressive campaign in Jammu, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday said there will be no option with the Government but to abolish Articles 370 and 35A related to special status to Jammu & Kashmir in the Constitution if "someone" talks about having a separate Prime Minister for the terrorism-affected State.

Addressing an election rally in the border area of Suchetgarh in RS Pura sector late on Monday evening, Rajanath Singh said, "Those who occupied the chair of Chief Minister in the State are now talking about having a separate Prime Minister for Jammu & Kashmir." He said, "If someone talks like that, we will have no option other than abolishing Article 370 and Article 35A."

On the occasion, Rajnath asked the Congress and leaders of all other parties to come clean and clarify their stand whether or not they support such demands.

Earlier in the day, BJP reiterated its old demand to abrogate Article 370 of the Constitution while releasing party's 'Sankalp Patra' in New Delhi.

The BJP manifesto also promised to annul Article 35A "as the provision is discriminatory against non-permanent residents and women of Jammu & Kashmir".

Addressing an election rally in support of BJP candidate, Jugal Kishore Sharma, ahead of the last day of the campaigning for the first phase of polls on April 11, Singh said, "as Union Home Minister, I visited Kashmir valley on number of occasions and invited all the stakeholders to join the dialogue process".

He said, I even invited separatists, who claim to be 'messiah' of Kashmiri people to join the dialogue process with open arms. He said, "I had even requested the Chief Minister of the State to extend an invitation on her behalf to come on the dialogue table. He said, they refused. They were not ready to hold parleys.

Referring to the dastardly Pulwama terror attack, Singh said, "Jammu & Kashmir is hogging the headlines these days. 40 CRPF jawans were martyred in a terror attack in Pulwama. After that attack, we gave a befitting reply to Pakistan."

He said the country is now in the "strong hands" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

POLLUTION

PIONEER, APR 13, 2019

Vehicles pollution caused asthma in 3,50,000 Indian kids: Study

Toxic fumes emitted by vehicles on the roads are taking a toll on the kids across the world including India where at least 3,50,000 children fell to chronic respiratory disease, asthma. India is second only to China, as per a Lancet study that analysed 194 countries and 125 major cities worldwide.

Worldwide four million kids get asthma every year as a result of inhaling air pollution, said the study conducted by researchers at the George Washington University Milken Institute of Public Health. And an estimated 64 per cent of these new asthma cases occur in urban areas. The study based on the data between 2010 and 2015 is published in The Lancet Planetary Health journal.

The estimates suggested that there are 170 new cases of traffic pollution-related asthma per 100,000 children every year, while 13 per cent of childhood asthma cases diagnosed each year are linked to traffic pollution. India ranked second to China where the largest burdens related to air pollution was at 7,60,000 cases of asthma per year, while the United States had 2,40,000 kids falling to the chronic disease.

Asthma is a chronic, inflammatory condition of the lungs and airways — basically, when asthma is triggered, the symptoms make it difficult to breathe, which can be extremely dangerous and even lead to death if attacks are severe enough and go untreated.

With 92 per cent of cases developing in areas that have traffic pollution levels below the World Health Organisation (WHO) guideline level, the researcher suggest that this limit may need to be reviewed.

“Nitrogen dioxide pollution appears to be a substantial risk factor for childhood asthma incidence in both developed and developing countries, especially in urban areas,” said senior author of the study, Susan C. Anenberg from George Washington University, US.

“Our findings suggest that the World Health Organization guideline for annual average NO₂ concentrations might need to be revisited, and that traffic emissions should be a target to mitigate exposure,” Anenberg said in a statement.

“Improving access to cleaner forms of transportation, like electric public transport and active commuting by cycling and walking, would not only bring down NO₂ levels, but would also reduce asthma, enhance physical fitness, and cut greenhouse gas emissions,” added Anenberg.

Our study indicates that policy initiatives to alleviate traffic-related air pollution can lead to improvements in children’s health and also reduce greenhouse gas emissions, said lead author Ploy Achakulwisut from George Washington University.

The researchers used NO₂ as a surrogate for the traffic pollution mixture to focus specifically on the effects of traffic pollution on childhood asthma development.

As per the World Health Organisation (WHO), 350 million people around the world suffer from asthma of which ten per cent are in India. The number is set to rise in view of rapid urbanization, changing life style and poor air-quality.

TAXATION

PIONEER, APR 10, 2019

50% tax on unhealthy items to be win-win situation for nation

Levying taxes on unhealthy products particularly tobacco, alcohol and sugary beverages by 50 per cent over the next five decades will be a win-win situation for the nations as not only over 50 million premature deaths due to soaring non-communicable diseases (NCDs) could be prevented, the impact of these taxes is projected to yield over \$20 trillion in revenue, according to a global report released recently.

The recommendations of the report ‘Health Taxes to Save Lives’ holds important for India as the world given that tobacco use, obesity and risky alcohol consumption have become three leading risk factors for the development of NCDs, killing 40 million people each year and representing 70 per cent of all annual deaths.

The report ‘Health Taxes to Save Lives’ is prepared by task force on fiscal policy for health — co-chaired by Mike Bloomberg and economist Larry Summers, former Secretary of the US Treasury and former Director of the National Economic Council.

Asserting that the Finance Ministry controls a powerful tool i.e. tax policy to reduce the harmful use of these products, the task force members recommended that taxes on tobacco, alcohol, and sugary

beverages should be set high enough, and raised quickly enough, to reduce consumption and improve health.

Also, “Countries should design their health taxes to be easy to administer, hard to manipulate, and difficult to game. This generally means applying simple uniform specific taxes, which have many advantages over ad valorem excises and over complex and multi-tiered taxes. These taxes should be regularly adjusted for inflation and income growth to make sure that products become less affordable over time,” as per the report.

Larry Summers was of the opinion that “if we want to improve global health, we need to tax the things that are killing us. Taxing things that are bad for your health, like tobacco, over things like savings and income is as close to a free lunch as you can get in economics. The economic rationale for taxing these products is strong if we want to save lives and make a better, healthier world.”

Echoing similar views, Mike Bloomberg said, “Countries can save millions of lives if they take action. Despite the clear and growing body of evidence, industry opposition to smart health policies will continue to mislead the public about the harmful effects of their products. That makes it all the more important for the international community to support countries in adopting effective, evidence-based health taxes that will save lives.”

While obesity has many causes, one significant factor is the growth of consumption of highly processed foods and sugary beverages worldwide, similarly, more than 1 billion people in the world smoke

while about 3.3 million people die each year from alcohol use, approximately 5 per cent of all deaths worldwide

The task force members including Masood Ahmed, president, Center for Global Development, Kaushik Basu, professor of economics, Cornell University, Helen Clark, former UNDP Administrator, former Prime Minister of New Zealand, Margaret Chan, former director general, WHO, Bent Høie, Minister of health and care services, Norway pointed out that policies to discourage consumption of these three key risk factors — tobacco, alcohol and sugar-sweetened beverages — are central to achieving the SDG Goals that call for a one-third reduction in premature mortality from NCDs by 2030.

Stating that the report makes sense, Dr Arun Gupta, Central Coordinator BPNI, also called for the need to end marketing of harmful food which have high sugar and are ultra processed.

WOMEN

PIONEER, APR 10, 2019

‘Driven out of home, women can file case from anywhere’

Women can file matrimonial cases, including criminal matters pertaining to cruelty, from the place where they have taken shelter after leaving or being driven out of their matrimonial home, the Supreme Court said on Tuesday.

The apex court's verdict came on an appeal filed by Rupali Devi against the Allahabad High Court which dismissed her plea to file a dowry harassment case from her parents' house.

The high court order held that cruelty punishable under Section 498A of the IPC is not a continuing offence, and thus cannot be investigated or punished in a jurisdiction outside the one in which the matrimonial house of the complainant is situated.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi said the impact on the mental health of the wife by "overt acts" by the husband or his relatives, mental stress and trauma of being driven away from the matrimonial home cannot be ignored while understanding the meaning of "cruelty" in Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code.

For Limited Circulation
