

Editorial

Wayward rules of law

Crimes against the weaker and most vulnerable sections of the society of whom children and women are the chief constituents are on the rise despite the innumerable discussions, debates, slogans, agitations and protests. This calls for a deeper look into the loopholes or other defects which is preventing the law and order system from being effectively utilized or implemented.

The dismal track record of conviction of crimes needs to be altered drastically for the legal system of the country to have any impact on the society. The present opportunity for the Government and the legal system to make that much needed image makeover should not be allowed to go scot free. However cruel it may sound, the criminals need to be dealt with according to the severity of the crime, as well as the degree of brutality of the act. The perpetrators clearly acted beyond humanly possible acts of perversion. Considerations of leniency on any moral or physiological ground do not merit mentioning, nor should it be a factor in awarding the sentence.

The State authorities who are concerned with safeguarding the rights and safety of the children and women, who at the moment, are apparently taking things too easy, should be infused with a sense of direction and purpose if we are to expect any sort of positive change from the present scenario. It would not be an exaggeration to point out that the disorganized and disconnected manner of implementation of schemes and other development projects has a lot to do in confusing and confounding the public.

Till now, the general public is in the dark as to the working or any other detail about special schemes such as the Integrated Child Development Schemes which is supposed to be running smoothly in the State. Making the general public aware of the means and system of protection and redressal along with a strict system of implementation will go a long way in mitigating the social evils, if not totally eliminate them. Hope new regime understand our points.

Hope looms large for the handloom sector

By: KV Venkatasubramanian (PIB)

A riot of colours, eye-riveting designs, scintillating hues and entrancing interlacing of warps and wefts give these fabrics a distinctive appeal. From the northeast and Kashmir to the southern tip, these fabrics have distinguishing features that impart a unique exotic appeal. Through centuries, handlooms have been associated with excellence in India's artistry in fabrics and providing a source of livelihood to millions of crafts persons in almost every state.

Despite sweeping changes, the art and craft traditions have been kept alive due to continuous efforts of generations of artists and craftsmen who wove their dreams and visions into exquisite handloom products and transferred their skills to their progenies.

From ancient times, Indian handloom products have been identified by their impeccable quality. These include muslin of Chanderi, silk brocades of Varanasi, the tie and dye products of Rajasthan and Orissa, the Chintas of Machhliapatna, the Himroos of Hyderabad, the Khes of Punjab, the prints of Farrukhabad, the Phenek and Tongam and bottle designs of Assam and Manipur, the Maheshwari sarees of Madhya Pradesh and the Patola sarees of Vadodara.

Furthermore, the skill involved in producing these special handloom products, such as the Kancheepuram and Benaras silks, the Kosa and Moga silk from Chhattisgarh and Assam respectively, or the Jamdani from Bengal, the Bhagalpur silk, the Chanderi from Madhya Pradesh and the Tussar and Ikat of Orissa, is part of a special cultural capital.

Though lighter, western clothing is preferred today, most of us still do not miss the most intricately woven traditional clothing on special occasions like weddings and festivals.

After Independence, the government introduced many safeguards to preserve the Gandhian legacy of valuing Khadi to protect handloom weavers and the cultural heritage of this industry from encroachment by the powerloom and mill sectors.

The Handlooms (Reservation of Articles for Production) Act, 1985, set aside 22 traditional cloth items such as sarees with borders, dhoti, lungi, among others, for exclusive handloom production and put them outside the purview of the powerloom sector. But, when this Act took effect after eight years in 1993, after a protracted litigation by the powerloom sector, the reserved list had only 11 items.

In the late nineties, production suffered due to a combination of factors such as customer's changing tastes, trade practices, and duty-free imports of Chinese crepe yarn. Weavers became labourers. Slowly, trends changed and traditional crafts persons found it difficult to sustain their livelihood. However, since 2015, the saree has revived people's interest in handlooms like never before.

The second biggest source of employment in rural India, next only to agriculture, the handloom sector provides employment to 4.33 million from diverse communities engaged in 2.38 million looms across the country. It contributes nearly 15 percent of the cloth production in the country and also to export earnings. About 95 percent of the world's handwoven fabric is from India.

Recognising the glorious history of the industry and its relevance to present times, the government is committed to resurgence of handwoven textiles and also weavers. In 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared August 7 as the National

Handloom Day to mark the day the Swadeshi Movement was launched in 1905 and dedicated the day to the weavers of the country, making good on his poll promise of the 5Fs: farm to fibre, fibre to fabric, fabric to fashion and fashion to foreign.

The prime minister also launched the "India Handloom" Brand (IHB) the same day, to endorse the quality of the products in terms of raw material, processing, weaving and other parameters besides social and environmental compliances for earning customers' trust.

The IHB soon made its presence on social media to connect with customers, especially youth, to promote high quality handloom products and help build customer awareness and carve a distinct identity for it.

Since assuming charge of the textiles ministry in July 2016, Union Minister Smriti Irani has led by example with her "I Wear Handloom" campaign on social media started last August.

The government has also initiated several steps to revive handlooms. It has laid stress on increasing weavers' earnings, which would in turn attract the younger generation to this profession. These include: Organising weavers in clusters and providing basic infrastructure by setting up Common Facility Centres. To boost handlooms, the textiles minister recently brought together leading designers in a unique public-private partnership. More than a dozen of them were assigned handloom clusters for product development and training weavers to upgrade their skills.

The other measures include—encouraging weavers to sell products through e-commerce; promoting educated youth from weavers' families as weaver entrepreneurs, who will get market information, produce and market cloth directly; linking handloom

with fashion and tourism, to expand the market and increase earnings; and involving the private sector in design development and marketing. The textiles ministry is making concerted efforts to pitch India as a global sourcing centre for all fabric, making handloom India's niche contribution to the international fashion industry.

Efforts are on to upgrade hand weaving technology in terms of weavers' comfort, productivity and quality. To ensure continuity of the hand weaving heritage, nine Indian Institutes of Handloom Technology located across India impart specialised training in handloom weaving to the Gen Next.

Responding to the changing consumer demand in the modern world, handloom weaving in India is evolving each day. Several characteristic innovations like heavy casement, recycled rugs and jacquard woven fabrics in thick cotton and silk fabrics are a popular choice today. Hand weavers offer a vast range of decorative and furnishing fabrics for homes in cotton and silk. More than 50 percent of hand-woven exports comprise home textile products. Celebrities and designers continue to make fashion statements around Indian handlooms, globally.

The decentralised nature of handloom production and its non-polluting effect on environment make it a preferred sector in the future. With a low capital-output ratio, this sector's strength lies in its uniqueness, a wealth of tradition, flexibility of small production, openness to innovation and adaptability to suppliers' needs.

**Author is an independent journalist and columnist, with four decades of experience in all media streams—print, online, radio and television. He writes on developmental issues. Views expressed in the article are author's personal.*

National and International News

Dialogue Is The Only Way To Resolve Conflicts: PM Narendra Modi

Courtesy: NDTV

New Delhi, Aug 5: Dialogue is the only way to cut through deep-rooted religious stereotypes and prejudices that divide communities across the world and sow seeds of conflict between nations and societies, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said today.

"As the inter-connected and inter-dependent world of 21st century battles a number of global challenges, from terrorism to climate change, I am confident that the solutions will be found through Asia's oldest traditions of dialogue and debate," he said.

PM Modi said he is a "product of the ancient Indian tradition that

firmly believes in dialogue on difficult issues."

He stated this in a video message to the 2nd edition of 'Samvad-Global Initiative on Conflict Avoidance and Environment Consciousness' being held in Yangon. The Prime Minister said the ancient Indian concept of "Tarka Shashtra" (debate) is founded on dialogue and debate as the model for exchange of views and avoidance of conflict. It is only natural that the search for answers be led by the humanity's longest traditions of thought, rooted in various religions, civilizations, and multiple streams of spirituality, he said.

Giving examples of Lord Rama, Lord

Krishna, Lord Buddha and Bhakta Prahlada, he said the purpose of each of their actions was to uphold 'dharma' (duty), which has sustained Indians from ancient to modern times.

Talking about the environment, he said man must relate to nature and revere it and not merely consider it a resource to be exploited.

If man does not nurture nature, then nature reacts in the form of climate change, he said.

Environmental laws and regulations, while essential in any modern society, afford only an inferior protection to nature, he added, calling for "harmonious environmental consciousness."

BJP, RSS behind murderous attack on Rahul: Cong

PTI

New Delhi, Aug 5: The Congress today accused the BJP and the RSS of being behind what it described as a "murderous attack" on Rahul Gandhi in Gujarat and claimed it was a "pre-planned" conspiracy. The Congress vice president said the attack on his convoy was carried out by the BJP and RSS workers and this was Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and the BJP's way of politics.

Gandhi yesterday faced protests in flood-hit Gujarat where a cement brick was hurled at his car allegedly by BJP supporters, breaking the window panes of his car.

"The attack on Rahul Gandhi was done by the BJP, RSS people under a pre-planned conspiracy. It is a murderous attack by the BJP and the RSS on the Congress vice president," Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad said.

Gandhi was also shown black flags, that forced him to cut short his address at a gathering in Dhanera town of Banaskantha district and had to leave in a huff.

Azad accused the BJP government led by Chief Minister Vijay Rupani in Gujarat of failing to provide security to Gandhi, who is a SPG protectee.

"In yesterday's incident, the BJP workers hit a big stone at me that hit my PSO. This is Modi ji, BJP's and RSS's way of politics. What else can we say," Gandhi said outside Parliament.

When asked that the prime minister and the BJP have not condemned the incident so far, Gandhi said, "When they themselves do such a thing, how will they condemn it. It is done by their people so why would they condemn it."

UN chief asks US to re-engage in 2015 Paris climate agreement

By Yoshita Singh(PTI)

United Nations, Aug 5: The UN chief today urged the US to re-engage with the 2015 Paris climate agreement even after America submitted its formal communication indicating its intention to withdraw from the historic pact as soon as possible.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has received a notification from the US expressing the country's intention to withdraw from the Paris Agreement on climate change, his spokesman said. The notification received yesterday was communicated by US Permanent Representative to the UN Nikki Haley.

"The Secretary-General received, in his capacity as Depositary of the Paris Agreement, a communication from the Permanent Representative of the US expressing the intention of the US to exercise its right to withdraw from the Paris Agreement,

as soon as it is eligible to do so under the Agreement, unless it identifies suitable terms for reengagement," UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

The Paris climate deal aims to prevent the Earth from heating up by 2C since the start of the industrial age. The spokesperson added that the secretary-general "welcomes any effort to reengage in the Paris Agreement by the United States". The notification came two months after President Donald Trump announced his intention to leave the accord.

Under article 28 of the Paris Agreement, a party may withdraw at any time after three years from the date on which the agreement has entered into force for that party, and such withdrawal takes effect upon expiry of one year from the date of receipt by the depositary of the notification of withdrawal. The US accepted the Paris

Agreement on September 3, 2016 and the agreement entered into force for the US on November 4, 2016. This means that the US must stay in the pact until at least 2019.

The note referred to the June statement by the secretary-general in which he had said that the decision by the United States to withdraw from the Paris Agreement is a "major disappointment" for global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote global security.

"It is crucial that the United States remains a leader on climate and sustainable development. Climate change is impacting now," Dujarric said, adding that the UN Chief looks forward to engaging with the American government and all other actors in the United States and around the world to build the sustainable future for our children and future generations.

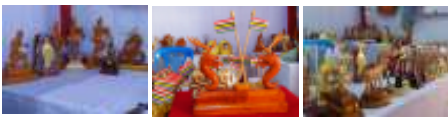
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