

Poetry section

Sleep

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I travel far and alone,
Like a lone ranger;
Thinking only of my journey's end;
Passing through the woods fearing,
No harm could venture;
Volunteering all my strengths to travel happily,
I fear no worries, no insecurities;
Amidst the thorny buses, comfortably and energetically;
As I travel far and alone.

I see no move, I wander aimlessly;
Ramble and rambling,
I hesitate to hear distant cackle;
I condemn my pleasure,
I bear no burden,
I smell of earth,
And I breathe ravish;
As I travel far and alone.

How obscure I am, bothering not
Where to ends my journey;
I start in the middle of nowhere;
Dark and lonely into the woods;
I see no one, still mystery
No backwards, No side wards
Nor I step forwards;
Puzzling and unfathomable,
As I travel far and lonely.

I baffle to hear sounds lingering,
I baffle to see stream flowing by;
Nagging and gnawing,
As I struggle to march forward,
I move not a single pace;
Enduring an ingrain texture,
As I travel far and lonely.

I am curious to know, how deep I travel
Into the dark and lonely woods;
Nagging and gnawing,
Amidst the thorny buses;
Abiding by my immeasurably thirst,
That I hardly wear its durability;
I try to move and daze,
This huge indestructible stun;
As I travel far and alone.

I learn not physically, my unfeeling
Yes, I am carried away far and very far;
Into this dark and lonely wood,
Nagging and gnawing, as I try
Oh! My numbness, bewildering to feel my own sense;
This unfeeling perennial death of mine;
I Frighten coming out,
Amidst the thorny buses,
As I travel far and lonely.

I realize this truth, the strength all I need
As I carried away far and dark deep into nowhere,
It's just a trance, a fantasy of my will
Reliably well grounded;
My perception and creativity I do always have,
Penetrating through, as I travel far and alone
Carving hard all about my urge, strongly
Nagging and gnawing,
Amidst the thorny buses;
It's just about my one sleepless night,
That fancies my reverie,
As I travel far and alone.

Are Indian elections free and fair?

By: Coolest Chirag Goyal

Elections in India have lost the carnival spirit because no processions, no bunting, no bands and no posters are allowed by the Election Commission. But this has not decreased the expenses. UP, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa which went to polls have totaled the highest amount ever spent in state elections. The rough guess is around Rs.2,000 crore. Proportionately, Punjab was at the top of the ladder.

The Election Commission can do little because the money is distributed at unknown places, generally in the hush of night. No Lokpal can detect this because the purchase of vote is at the individual level. And each constituency has hundreds of hands employed by political parties in the name of *bandobast*. They have to search their heart if the illegal money which they spend bothers them in any way. But then they are driven by the mania of power.

In our times, a volunteer would sling a *thaila* (bag), carry grams for sustenance and go on foot. This was canvassing at the grassroots. Today, even a party worker would ask for a jeep for travel and expect four meals, starting from breakfast. The communists and the RSS *pracharaks* are the only ones who remain motivated. But even among them that type of dedication is lessening.

The Election Commission has confiscated nearly Rs.50 crore and some trucks carrying liquor. Instances of "paid news" have also been spotted for action. But all this does not amount to even one per cent of money the candidates and

political parties have spent. Yet the credit of making the polling without violence goes to the Election Commission or, for that matter, Chief Election Commissioner S.Y. Qureshi. He stretched the polling over six weeks so that the central security forces were available in all the five states. It is a sad reflection on the state police but the force is so much at the beck and call of chief minister that no fair election is possible if it is left to the state. Even local police used to help and acted independently till the mid-seventies when morality was ousted from politics.

One thing which stands out in elections is the enforcement of model conduct code, agreed upon by all political parties some 20 years ago. The ruling Congress is the only party to join issue with the Commission on this point and has threatened to make the code statutory so that the violation is dragged to law courts instead of the Election Commission where the action is immediate and the complaint is attended to forthwith. The government's thinking is understandable because the Congress has been the biggest sinner. Starting from Law Minister Salman Khurshid to the crown prince, Rahul Gandhi, the party has paid scant attention to model conduct code. It has even played the religious card by announcing that the party, if returned to power, would allocate 9% of reservation to Muslims in education and employment from the overall 27% reservation for the backward classes. (According to the Sachar Committee report the plight of Muslims in India is worse than that

of Dalits and that the 80% Muslims are backward).

When the Election Commission took the law minister to task for announcing a sub-quota during electioneering, he first hummed and hawed but subsequently sent a written apology. The matter would have ended then and there if another central minister Beni Prasad had not repeated the sub-quota for Muslims. He has even challenged the Election Commission in a law court. Nobody objects to reservations for the backward Muslims. The objection is to the reservation on religious grounds — the point which the Constitution of India prohibits.

Rahul Gandhi has been batting on a different pitch. He has been indulging in such antics which do not befit a person who may be India's prime minister. He tears the manifesto of an opposition party and makes remarks which even street urchins would hesitate to. A case has been registered against him at Kanpur where he had a road show violating the understanding on the timing and the route he gave. Had he apologised, the issue would have been sorted out. But he has persisted with it.

In fact, UP saw the entire Gandhi family, including the husband of Priyanka, Sonia Gandhi's daughter. The dynasty somehow has come to believe that it alone strings India together and all political parties are petty and parochial except the Congress. Therefore, the dynasty gathered in UP to pull out the party from a quagmire of non-existence it had been stuck for years. Regrettably, the party should introduce religion as an appeal

which the dynasty's head, Jawaharlal Nehru, denounced throughout his life. Muslims constitute about 19% of the electorate and the Congress has jettisoned its secular credentials to placate them.

The BJP is expected to communalise the atmosphere but it is no use blaming it when the Congress throws the first stone. The BJP did not have to get chief minister Narendra Modi of Gujarat pogrom to UP because Uma Bharti had poured enough venom against Muslims. That a party which considers itself an alternative at the centre should have the building of temple at the site where the Babri masjid stood once indicates the policies the BJP would follow if it is ever returned to power.

Unfortunately, the use of caste or, more so, the sub-caste has increased in every segment of activity even in urban areas. This malady has spread even among Muslims who are prohibited from putting their faith in the caste system. In fact, many Hindus have embraced Islam to escape the tyranny of discrimination. But they find the Muslim society as hierarchical as the Hindus'.

Elections have been free and fair and the Election Commission deserves all the kudos. But when money, caste and religion come into play and make a mockery of polls, can they be called free and fair? This is one question which all political parties have to answer, not the Election Commission which has been awaiting for months the government's permission not to allow such candidates who have been charged with big crime like murders, rapes or dacoities. (Courtesy: www.quora.com)

National & International News

Narendra Modi to address rally in Aligarh at 2 PM ahead of Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections 2017

Uttar Pradesh, Feb. 5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will today address another mega rally in Uttar Pradesh's Aligarh as part of the BJP's campaign before the first phase of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections 2017. The rally will be held at 2 PM at Aligarh's Numaish ground. This will be the Narendra Modi's first visit to the city since assuming Prime Ministership.

All seven candidates of the Bharatiya Janata Party candidates from Aligarh will be in attendance at today's rally. The rally is part a 12 rally series of the BJP that are

set to woo voters before the critical polls. Today's rally along with Saturday's rally in Meerut are the only two rallies that will happen before the first phase of the polls on February 11th. Addressing a mega rally at Meerut yesterday, the Prime Minister spoke on several issues that are plaguing the state, including crime, corruption and the plight of the farmers. In his address, the Prime Minister also made it a point to criticise the Congress-Samajwadi Party alliance for the upcoming polls. Criticising his Opponents Modi said that the BJP

was fighting SCAM, an acronym coined especially for them. He said yesterday, "This election is BJP's fight against corruption. This is BJP's fight against S-C-A-M said the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister coins the acronym to mean Samajwadi-Congress-Akhilesh-Mayawati. The BJP is fighting this SCAM. Till the date this SCAM is not relieved from Uttar Pradesh, the state will not see progress."

He also added, "What happened overnight that the Congress and Samajwadi Party that have tried finishing each other every day, are

now embracing each other. Those who cannot save themselves won't be able to save Uttar Pradesh"

The Prime Minister is expected to touch upon the same issues of corruption, scams, poverty, lack of development and crimes in the state, while highlighting the Union government's initiatives to tackle the same. The seven phase **Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections** will conclude on March 8. The Election Commission has announced that the counting of votes and the subsequent results will be announced on March 11, 2017.

Air Force Declines RTI Seeking Details Of Rafale Deal, Says It's Confidential

PTI New Delhi, Feb. 05: Details of the agreement signed between Indian and French authorities regarding the supply of 36 Rafale aircraft cannot be disclosed as they are confidential in nature, the Air Force has said. An Inter-Governmental Agreement was signed between the governments of India and France on September 23, 2016 for supply of the

Rafale aircraft, initial consignment of weapons, long-term maintenance support through performance-based logistics, simulators with annual maintenance and associated equipment.

Replying to an RTI query, the Air Force said the details are held by it "in fiduciary capacity."

The information sought is confidential in nature and public

revelation of the same may lead to its subsequent availability to our adversaries, it said.

"Further, the information sought is also held in fiduciary capacity and no larger public interest is served by disclosure of such information. Hence, the same is denied," the Air Force said in reply to the application filed by PTI.

The Defence Ministry was asked to

provide copies of the agreement and price of the Rafale deal. The query was then forwarded to the Air Force for providing the reply.

The delivery of 36 Rafale aircraft, weapons and associated equipment to India will commence from September 2019. The deliveries are spread over two and half years, with the last aircraft delivery scheduled in April 2022.

Bengaluru cop confirms attacker's arrest, sends special team to Andhra

Bengaluru, Feb. 05: After three-year wait the Bengaluru Police finally heaved a sigh of relief on Saturday when Madhukar Reddy, the man who brutally attacked Jyothi Uday inside the ATM kiosk in November 2013, was held in Andhra Pradesh. A relieved Bengaluru police commissioner, Praveen Sood, confirmed that the man arrested in Madanapalli, Andhra Pradesh, was Reddy.

"Chittoor SP G Srinivasan confirmed on Saturday evening that the man arrested by them is a habitual offender and confessed to have attacked the bank employee inside the ATM kiosk in Bengaluru in 2013. We have sent a special team headed by a senior officer to Madanapalli to interrogate the man held. We shall then take him in custody and bring

him here for further investigation," Sood told STOI.

The investigating officers have been told to submit the details of the case to the city top cops including DG-IGP, police sources said.

Wished Bengaluru cops had nabbed him, says Jyothi's husband Jyothi's husband Uday Kumar told STOI on Saturday that they would have been happy had the Bengaluru police succeeded in nabbing the attacker.

"What happened to my wife should not happen to anyone. She is lucky that she recuperated and is living a normal life now. What bothers us is the question how many more such crimes the attacker might have been involved in? How many have been his victims?" Uday said.

Asked whether Jyothi was aware of the progress in the case, Kumar said she was, adding it was something they don't want to remember but it's also something that cannot be easily forgotten.

36 injured in Jallikattu event at Avanipuram

Madurai, Feb 5: Thirty-six people were injured, one of them seriously, in a Jallikattu event held at Avanipuram in the district amid high security today in which more than 900 bulls were used, police said.

All the injured were being treated at the medical camp put up near the venue, police said. More than 700 bull-tamers participated in the events, which were witnessed by thousands of spectators. The bull-taming sport was formally

"I was told by a friend that vernacular TV channels are flashing the news of police nabbing the attacker. Jyothi was also alerted by her colleagues. We are waiting for the confirmation," he said.

inaugurated by Revenue Minister R B Udhayakumar and District Collector Veeraraghava Rao.

Top officials of the district and police administrations, including Superintendent of Police, were also present at the venue.

Police said all precautionary measures, including mandatory medical tests for bulls and participants as laid down by the state government, were taken before the conduct of the traditional rural sport.

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