

Poetry section

Feeling

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I am alone; alone I sit on these solid feelings
My Loneliness completes me and my world;
I feel happy being alone, I float on my feelings
This feeling of joy and my intuition; I see no one
I cannot resist, I swim this worldly pleasure
Without difficulty; it's strong inside me
This feeling of joy and my intuition; I see no one

I feel every sense of mine, I conquer them;
I see things through my feelings;
I float on my feelings; I talk to my soul mate;
I go and sit next to him, I hold his hand
I smile pouring out love; cherish all my desires
I cannot resist, I swim this worldly pleasure
This feeling of joy and my intuition; I see no one

I feel his touch, the golden touch
I breathe his presence; I drink in his utmost care;
I fly around the tress, I sing of my love
I care for his holdings; I try treasuring all his emotions
I feel his sigh; withstanding against the distance
As I float on my feelings; I cannot resist
I swim this worldly pleasure;
This feeling of joy and my intuition; I see no one

I am alone; alone I sit on these solid feelings
My Loneliness completes me and my world;
I walk on bare feet upon green grass, I feel arouse
By the touch of flowers, and the kiss of this cold breeze;
I feel his whispering, I reckon my strength to stir Sensation;
This uproar feeling sensation of his, I do not want to loose
I cannot resist, I swim this worldly pleasure
Without difficulty; it's strong inside me
This feeling of joy and my intuition; I see no one

I sail in his sea of love, my joy know no boundary
As I float on my feelings, I cannot resist
I sense no danger; trembling no fear
I feel his weak sigh, oh! A sudden twitch;
I hold firmly, firmly on the brim
Palpitating my feeling, this feeling of my loneliness
I play upon my consciousness; this feeling of intuition and love
I cannot resist, I swim this worldly pleasure
Without difficulty; it's strong inside me
This feeling of joy and my intuition; I see no one



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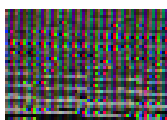
NOTICE
Imphal, the 21st Jan, 2017

No. B/3025/2015-RIMS: In continuation of this Notice of even number dt.31st Dec., 2016, the Personality/Aptitude Test for appointment of Multi Tasking Staff, RIMS, Imphal on regular basis scheduled to be held on 27th Jan., 2017 is hereby postponed until further notice

Sd/-

(Prof. Ch. Arun Kumar Singh)
Director,
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National Voters' Day: Reinforcing commitment to democracy

By : Priyadarshi Dutta

The 7th National Voters' Day will be observed on Wednesday, January 25. It was instituted in 2011 in remembrance of the foundation day of the Election Commission of India. It was on January 25, 1950 on the eve of the first Republic Day that the Election Commission had come into existence. But it was future course of action rather than history that determined the decision on National Voters' Day. Its declared objective was to increase the enrollment of eligible voters, especially those who had recently turned 18.

The Constitution (Sixty First Amendment) Act, 1988 had lowered the threshold voting age from 21 years to 18 years thus fulfilling a longstanding public demand. As a consequence, 35.7 million (or three and half crore) youths between the ages of 18 and 21 years could exercise their voting right in the 10th general elections held in November, 1989. But the mission was far from complete. The ensuing two decades did not produce exactly encouraging results. There was lukewarm response from the young eligible voters to get enrolled. In certain cases it could be as low as 20 to 25 percent only. Since enrollment and voting is voluntary, not compulsory, the Election Commission could only persuade. But the priority of the Commission had been to conduct free and fair elections. This in itself

is a protracted and challenging task. While voters tend to view the elections as an event, it is an elongated procedure for the Commission. From publishing of the notification to the declaration of the results, elections are a long drawn process. Conducting elections in a country as enormous and populous as India is a daunting task. Upon that the Commission had to battle the abuses of money and muscle power.

As regarding the electorate, generating a clean voters list (as per Sections 11 and 62 of the Representation of People Act, 1951) free from errors of duplication and disqualification remained the Commission's priority. Voter mobilization was left to the election campaign by the various political parties. Every political party naturally did its best to lure to voters to vote in its favour. But there was little institutional campaign to persuade the voters to vote out of one's civic duty and obligation towards democracy. Some feel that rising literacy rate automatically translates into higher voting. Such complacency should have no room. At the first general elections in India (1951-1952), the overall polling percentage was 51.15. It was considered as 'by no means unsatisfactory'. The general literacy rate in those days did not exceed 17 percent. However, the voting percentage has not significantly

appreciated with the sharp rise in literacy. In 2009 less than 60 percent of the enrolled voters cast their votes whereas the Census of India, 2011 revealed that literacy rate was 74 percent.

Thus in 2009, the Election Commission took up a messianic role to enhance voters' turnout. The Election Commission designed a comprehensive programme called SVEEP (or Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation). Two slogans, which the Commission subsequently coined, capture the spirit of SVEEP - 'Inclusive and Qualitative Participation' and 'No voter to be left behind'.

The SVEEP has, for the first time, put in place a structured voters' awareness programme that identifies all key stakeholders whether individuals or institutions. It documents gaps in registration and voting that retard voters' participation. These might be on the lines of gender, region, socio-economic status, health conditions, educational level, professional migration, language etc. The idea is to offer custom made solutions based on those findings. It replaces a conventional bureaucratic intervention with sociological intervention. SVEEP views every Indian citizen as a voter. Even an underage boy or girl is a future voter, who needs to be sensitized

from now. Therefore education institutions are tapped in.

The voters' turnout stagnating below 65 percent (of enrolled voters) may not be exceptional for India. Still, the political scientists would not view it as a healthy trend. A higher voting percentage signifies a vibrant democracy. A low voting percentage indicates a politically indifferent society. There is a potential danger of disruptive forces trying to exploit the situation to discredit democracy itself. Thus democracy cannot be left to the grand idea alone. It has to be continually reinforced in the ballots. In the 16th general elections in 2015, the voting percentage stood at a record high of 66.38 percent. Most commentators have attributed it to political factors. But some credit is definitely due to SVEEP awareness campaign. This is sure to be tested in the future elections. So next time we should attribute higher voting percentage not merely to political factors but also the SVEEP. Such an interpretation can itself act as a secondary awareness campaign. The National Voters' Day is a significant step amongst various initiatives taken by Election Commission of India to encourage the new voters to have their decisive say in the democratic process.

The writer is a columnist and independent researcher based in New Delhi.

The views expressed above are personal.

National & International News

Pakistan bomb blast kill 25, wounds at least 50

Peshawar, Jan. 22: A bomb exploded Saturday in a market in a northwest tribal region bordering Afghanistan, killing 25 people and wounding at least 50, officials said.

Dr. Sabir Hussain at the main hospital in Parachinar, the capital of Pakistan's Kurram tribal region, said two more wounded victims died in the hospital, increasing the death toll. Shahid Khan, an assistant tribal administrator, said the explosion took place when the market was crowded with retailers buying fruits and vegetables from a wholesale shop. He said the attack was being investigated. Lashker-e-Jhangvi, a banned sectarian militant group that has

attacked minority Shiites Muslims in the past, claimed responsibility for the attack. The bombing took place in a predominantly Shiite area of Kurram, which has seen attack by Sunni militants who have hideouts there. Shiites are a minority in Pakistan.

"That was our combined work with Shahryar group of Mahsud Taliban," Ali Sufyan, a spokesman for the banned group, wrote in a text message to an AP reporter.

Kurram has been the scene of increased militant activities in recent years and the Army carried out a massive operation against extremists in the region but they still have the capacity to strike. Khan said some of the wounded

were airlifted to hospitals in Peshawar, the capital of northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Hospitals in tribal regions and rural areas of Pakistan typically are not equipped to handle such emergencies.

Khan said the number of wounded increased but they include those who sustained minor injuries. He also said the death toll had increased to 25. Ashiq Hussain, who was lightly wounded, was being treated in Parachinar hospital. He said he was among the people purchasing fruits and vegetables loaded on a van when the explosion took place. "There was a big bang and I saw a dark cloud of smoke and dust before

passing out," he said.

Ashiq Hussain said he saw bleeding bodies and severed limbs and heard cries when he came back to his senses. "I was just bleeding from my leg," he said. "Thank God I am alive."

Initially, seven people were brought dead from the vegetable market blast site and more than 60 wounded, according to Dr. Hussain. Thirteen of the critically wounded died earlier while being treated, he said.

Shiite leader Faqir Hussain said all the bodies were brought to a Shiite mosque.

Iqbal Zafar Jhagra, the provincial governor, told local Geo television that the remnants of militant groups targeted by security forces were trying to show their existence by such attacks.

"Terrorists largely eliminated by our security forces and the remaining will soon meet their fate if we all together rise against them," he said.

Assam Rifles vehicle escorting tourists attacked, 2 jawans killed

PTI Guwahati, Jan. 22: Suspected militants attacked an Assam Rifles vehicle escorting tourists, killing two personnel and injuring several others near the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border.

Militants lobbed several grenades targeting the vehicle at Jagun 12th Mile Barabasti on NH-53 bordering Assam's Tinsukia district in the run up to Republic Day, a defence spokesman told PTI.

The security personnel retaliated and an encounter followed with sporadic firing still continuing. The Assam Rifles vehicle and three vehicles of tourists returning from the Pangsau festival have been damaged in grenade explosions, the spokesman said.

The entire area has been cordoned off with combing operations stepped up in the area and tourists are stranded along the highway. The Pangsau Festival is held along the Indo-Myanmar border in the area.

7.9 Earthquake Shakes Papua New Guinea, Tsunami Alert Rescinded

Sydney, Jan. 22: A major 7.9-magnitude earthquake struck Papua New Guinea on Sunday, the US Geological Survey said, but a tsunami alert initially issued for the Pacific island nation and its neighbours was later cancelled. The tremor struck 40 kilometres (25 miles) west of Panguna on Papua New Guinea's Bougainville Island at a depth of 153 kilometres at 3:30pm local time (0430 GMT), the US Geological Survey said.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center initially warned that waves of between 0.3 and one metre (1-3 feet) above tide level were possible for some coastal areas of Papua

New Guinea and the neighbouring Solomon Islands. Smaller waves were possible for other nearby countries, it added. Quakes of such magnitude are common in Papua New Guinea, which sits on the so-called Pacific "Ring of Fire", a hotspot for seismic activity due to friction between tectonic plates.

"Even though it is quite deep at 150 kilometres, because it is such a large earthquake, it will produce shaking on the surface," Geoscience Australia seismologist Spiro Spiopoulos told AFP. There were no reports of damage from the epicentre of the quake,

which is sparsely populated, officials said.

Australia and New Zealand both said they had assessed the threat and there was no danger to their coastlines.

A 7.9-magnitude quake struck off Papua New Guinea in mid-December as well, but no casualties were reported and an initial tsunami threat was later deemed to have passed. In 2013 the Solomon Islands were hit by a devastating tsunami after an 8.0-magnitude earthquake rattled the region. That tsunami left at least 100 people dead, destroyed hundreds of homes and left thousands of people homeless.

Demonetisation will widen tax base: Finance Ministry to panel

New Delhi: Demonetisation will lead to a wider tax base and lower interest rates, thus paving the way for "sustainable faster economic growth", the Finance Ministry has said.

In a written response to the Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC), the Revenue Department said that due to withdrawal of old high-value notes, the idle/hidden cash has come into the formal system which will be utilised for productive purposes.

"Targeted verification of suspect substantial deposits is likely to widen and deepen the tax base," it said. It is easier to track the cash which has returned to banking channels, thus making tax evasion "more difficult", it added.

Further, increased availability of funds with banks and "lowering of interest rates" are expected to enhance credit disbursal, promoting investments in productive economic activities and giving boost to growth. The Revenue Department's response

was on the impact of demonetisation on economic growth, sources said. Regarding other implications, it said that increasing use of non-cash modes of transactions will promote transparency and have a lasting positive impact on tax collections, both direct and indirect.

"Along with other measures for increasing transparency and strengthening enforcement, the demonetisation will pave the way for sustainable faster economic growth," it said.