

## Editorial

### Good governance perspectives

Man, having the ability to judge and to arrange for alternatives, have taken the shortest road to development and progress. The unique gift of mental superiority over every living creature on the planet is what enables him to dominate and distinguish himself from every other creature in spite of the frailties and physical shortcomings.

We take pride, and rightly so, in the fact that we can, and are still pushing ourselves to overcome the physical and mental restraints and limits. Yet ever so often, there comes a time when the collective conscience of a society seems to stop working, taken over by the wave of opinions and mob behavior. One such instance is the period running up to elections for choosing our representatives to the government.

In fact, at present, the state is witnessing an increasing undeclared war of words with various political bigwigs starting to warm up with insinuations and counter blames for the state of affairs of the society, while highlighting their trumped up ideologies and deceptively believable assurances of progress and development. It seems unlikely that most of these old players remember being in the driving seat once, but with the absence of the foresight and impetus to carry out the promises they are doling out now.

Given the fact that there is a constraint of resources, both financial and infrastructure with the state government, it is of great concern when the people in power are still hell-bent on pilfering these limited resources for themselves without the least consideration or remorse, leading the public to start questioning the motive and the seemingly earnest efforts of the government to develop the state which is evidently enjoying certain perks and assistances from the central Government due to its underdeveloped status. The state is yet to see a radical change in the system of governance with emphasis on transparency and efficiency.

The various promises and agendas which were pushed on the face of the public during the election campaigns have been shelved for good, until the next one. On the other hand, a majority of us have cheapened ourselves by offering up our suffrage to the highest bidder. To cover up its shortcomings and deficiencies behind the excuse of a less than perfect world is nothing short of shirking its responsibility and a ploy to steal the riches and benefits meant for the public. What the public wants is a government that has the gumption to take calculated risks and pave new ways to initiate development and accelerate progress, one which can translate the aspirations of the people into concrete works and utilize the available resources efficiently.

A Government more accessible to the common man which can expedite its development activities and which can effectively control and motivate its employees will surely win favors from the public. The present Government should realize that the increasingly informed public is getting restive for change and growth, and only those who have shown to deliver on their promises will endure. "To follow imperfect, uncertain, or corrupted traditions, in order to avoid erring in our own judgment, is but to exchange one danger for another". Richard Whately, English rhetorician, logician, economist, and theologian.

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## Fake videos: checks channels can do

As the Kanhaiya video controversy continues, the BBC's Social Media Editor explains how to handle videos.

Webby award-winning journalist Mark Frankel says that a strong editorial policy coupled with a professional team that follows a strict standard operating procedure, can ensure that doctored or fake videos do not get aired.

In an interview with The Hoot from London, Frankel said that the BBC has an entire team dedicated to checking for fake videos on a 24x7 news cycle basis. "We take it very seriously and it is at the centre of our newsworld. What is real? What is fake? That is the team I manage." "The BBC has an entire team dedicated to checking for fake videos on a 24x7 news cycle basis." The BBC ensures that the videos they use have not been tampered with in any way through several measures. "A number of checks can be done routinely to ensure that the footage is not fake. The videos will often be thumbnail images. In fake videos, people scrape that image and it reveals it. You can easily detect that it is associated with another video," Frankel said.

Other than its own homegrown footage, the BBC has a relationship with various global news organisations to source footage.

"We take footage from Reuters, AP, European agencies etc. Some of them are also amateur videos but accompanying them must be done sheets and we are bound to run checks on them to establish their authenticity."

According to Frankel, things become critical when there is a developing news story. "Suddenly the Internet explodes with video and some of that will work its way to us. What we then do is what is called a 'reverse image' search. We look at the video frame by frame, we look at the date encrypted on where the video was taken, when it was taken and how real it is. We look at when the video was first posted. We look at the location and timing. We look online at the weather in that place at the time when the video claims it was shot and check whether it was really taken where it was supposed to have been taken."

"Lots of things can be done to check whether a video is fake or genuine." "There are other cross checks too. For example, suppose a video claims it has been shot in Egypt, but in the background we can hear lots of people talking in Italian, then obviously there is a problem. So lots of things can

be done to check whether a video is fake or genuine."

Frankel says that a reverse search on the Internet, on another social media platform, is a good way to detect fake videos. "For example, during the Paris attacks, huge numbers of people were posting on YouTube. When we started the search, we found that many of the videos had come from Instagram, that is, the original video was on Instagram. We then found the original and discovered that the first time it was posted was on an entirely different platform and not on YouTube," he said.

On the doctored of sound in a video (as has allegedly happened in the case of the JNU video), Frankel said: "That is a very easy thing to do and it is known as the 'classical' distortion. It is also very easy to detect, each date can be traced, we can track when the picture was uploaded and when the sound was uploaded. There is something called the 'unique code' and it will contain that date. Once you see this data, you can quickly detect whether the sound track is in sync with the picture or has been added from another place. All you need to do is look for something

called 'ExisData' - it has the properties of an image, the shape of an image, the picture quality and the time it was uploaded. If someone posted it later, you can detect that when you analyse this data," he explained.

Are these processes difficult? "Not at all. It involves asking some very basic questions and cross checking the facts. If you do these things, you will not end up using doctored videos," he said.

Asked if he remembered any major instances where doctored videos had got past editorial scrutiny, Frankel said he had seen it happen only in still photography. "The obvious ones have been those related to the weather. We have noticed instances when during an impending tornado or tsunami, you will get a picture of an event like that posted. It will be an old image, not a current one, so you can't really describe it as fake, but it is not associated with the current weather pattern and hence is false," he said.

The basic message from the BBC's Social Media Editor is check, cross-check, check, cross-check... constantly. Are Indian TV channels listening? (Courtesy The Hoot)

## National and International News

### PM Modi inaugurates 'missile man' APJ Kalam's memorial on his 2nd death anniversary

**PIT** New Delhi, July 27: Prime Minister Narendra Modi today inaugurated a memorial dedicated to former president APJ Abdul Kalam at Peikarumbu near Rameswaram on his second death anniversary.

He opened the memorial built in the hometown of the former president at a location where the mortal remains of the "missile man" are buried.

Modi, who also unveiled a statue of Kalam playing a 'veena', a

musical instrument, was accompanied by Tamil Nadu Governor Ch Vidyasagar Rao, Chief Minister K Palaniswami, Union ministers Pon Radhakrishnan and NDA's vice presidential nominee M Venkaiah Naidu.

The Prime Minister unfurled the national flag at the entrance of the memorial, built by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) with which Kalam was associated for decades as a key scientist.

Later, Modi interacted with the family members of Kalam.

He was seen holding affectionately the hands of Kalam's elder brother APJ Mohamed Muthumeeran Maraikayar while speaking to him. With 'unity in diversity' as its theme, the memorial features quotes of Kalam and his pictures as a scientist and as the president of the country. Resembling the arch of the India Gate, the memorial has on display replica of rockets and missiles on which Kalam had worked.

While the first phase of the memorial was inaugurated today, its second phase was scheduled to be completed in another 18 months. It would then house a library, planetarium and auditorium.

Earlier, Rao and Palaniswami received Modi at the Madurai airport from where he arrived here by an helicopter.

A three-tier tight security ring was put in place in and around Rameswaram for the Prime Minister's visit.

### Donald Trump to ban transgenders from US military despite vow to fight for LGBT community

**Courtesy India Today**

New York, July 27: US President Donald Trump said on Wednesday he would ban transgender people from the US military, a move appealing to some in his conservative political base but creating uncertainty about the fate of thousands of transgender service members.

The surprise announcement by Trump, who as a presidential candidate last year vowed to fight for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people, came in a series of morning Twitter posts. It drew condemnation from rights groups and some lawmakers in both parties as politically motivated discrimination but was praised by conservative activists and some Republicans. The administration has not determined whether transgender individuals already serving in the military would be immediately thrown out, a point the White House and Pentagon have yet to decide. Trump spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said.

A transgender ban would reverse Democratic former President Barack Obama's policy and halts years of efforts to eliminate barriers to military service based on sexual orientation or gender identity. "After consultation with my Generals and military experts, please be advised that the

United States Government will not accept or allow transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the US Military," Trump tweeted, without naming any of the generals or experts.

"Our military must be focused on decisive and overwhelming victory and cannot be burdened with the tremendous medical costs and disruption that transgender in the military would entail," he said.

Sanders said Trump had "extensive discussions with his national security team", and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis was informed after the president made the decision on Tuesday. "This was about military readiness," Sanders told a briefing. "This was about unit cohesion. This was about our resources within the military, and nothing more."

The Pentagon earlier referred questions about Trump's decision to the White House. Critics said the health costs of caring for transgender service members were a tiny portion of the military's healthcare budget and Trump's policy change was based on prejudice. His action unleashed a torrent of legal threats from civil liberties advocates seeking plaintiffs willing to challenge the ban in court and sparked a protest by hundreds who rallied outside an armed forces recruiting station in Manhattan's Times Square. "We are in a crisis. This is a dark

day for everyone," Brad Hoylman, New York's sole openly gay state senator, said as he addressed the crowd, which carried "Resist" signs amid chants of: "Hey-hey, ho-ho, Donald Trump has got to go."

#### AMATTER OF TIMING

Trump's tweet caught some White House officials by surprise.

A senior administration official said Trump had been determined to act for a while but the question was the timing, with advisers split on whether to conduct reviews before announcing the move.

The announcement at least temporarily changed the subject in Washington, where Trump's administration faces investigations into his presidential campaign's contacts with Russia and has struggled to win major legislative victories. It was not the first time Trump has targeted transgender people since taking office in January. In February, he rescinded protections for transgender students put in place by Obama that had let them use bathrooms corresponding with their gender identity.

Senate Armed Forces Committee Chairman John McCain - the most prominent military veteran in Congress, who was a Navy pilot and prisoner of war during the Vietnam War - called Trump's announcement unclear and inappropriate until a Pentagon

study on the issue is completed and reviewed by Mattis, the military leadership and lawmakers.

Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council advocacy group, was among those praising Trump, saying, "Our troops shouldn't be forced to endure hours of transgender 'sensitivity' classes and politically correct distractions." Under Obama, the Pentagon last year announced it was ending its ban on transgender people serving openly, calling the prohibition outdated.

The Defense Department had been expected to begin formally allowing transgender people to enlist this year. But Mattis on June 30 approved a six-month delay in that step.

Transgender service members already number about 2,500 active-duty personnel, with about 1,500 more in the military reserves, according to a RAND Corporation think tank study cited last year by Obama's defense secretary, Ash Carter.

"To choose service members from other grounds than military qualifications is social policy and has no place in our military," Carter said on Wednesday, noting the existing ranks of transgender individuals serving "capably and honorably." Advocacy groups said Trump's policy was open to legal challenge under the US Constitution's guarantee of equal protection under the law.