

The Tribune

ESTABLISHED IN 1881

Mayday!

Turbulence-hit Jet buffeted by lenders

ASILVER jubilee year for what was once the success story of Indian economic liberalisation drive has turned out to be a bleak one, as Jet Airways is buried under a mountain of debt and seeks relief from reluctant lenders. The Naresh Goyal-led airline had once set standards for superior service, but has suffered straight losses for the past 12 months. Even as the founder chairman seeks to palm off the losses on the macro-economic challenges — high fuel prices and a depreciating value of the rupee — that buffeted the aviation industry in the country, his own business decisions exacerbated the situation. Indeed, all Indian airlines lost money for some time, but others like SpiceJet and IndiGo, managed to recover soon.

These low-cost airlines, it could well be argued, have contributed significantly to eroding the bottom line of the full-service airline, which Jet is, and surely Goyal would be ruing the day, 15 years ago, when he dismissed the challenges of the then newly-launched airlines. They prospered, and Jet needs nearly Rs 8,500 crore to meet its funding gap. This is not the first time that the airline has required a bailout, only this time it is more serious. Emergency meetings between government officials, banks and other lenders, as well as Etihad, which is offering to sell its 24 per cent stake in Jet Airways to the State Bank of India and is willing to take a significant haircut, all signal Jet's precarious finances, as does the depletion of its fleet, and its failure to pay salaries to even key employees like pilots.

Naresh Goyal's grip on the airline is unmistakable, but the stakeholders and lenders are not moving in to take control. The question of whether they will be able to bail out the cash-strapped airline remains. The banks and public institutions should ensure that they don't throw good money after bad. The airline must be helped, but only after there is a clear plan leading to its recovery, and a strong management that can deliver. Seat-of-pants flying will not do any longer.

A fine deterrence

HC order to sell convicts' property just

GRUESOME and grisly crimes deserve stringent punishment. The penalty must be severe enough to serve the twin purpose of acting as a deterrent as also giving the victim a sense of compensation. Towards this end, while pronouncing the ruling in a case of heinous crime, the Punjab and Haryana High Court has said death sentence alone is inadequate; properties of the convicts should also be sold to recover the fine imposed on them. The court slapped a fine of Rs 50 lakh even as it upheld the death sentence awarded to the seven convicted of gangraping and killing a 27-year-old mentally challenged woman in Rohtak in 2015. Since the culprits together committed the ghastly act, they were jointly liable to pay the fine. The state and the victim's sister, with whom she was living at the time, would get 50 per cent each of the amount recovered by selling their properties. Given the shocking injuries inflicted on the woman by the perpetrators through brutal and predatory acts, the order serves justice to her and some balm to the sister's suffering.

This is the second time in six months that the High Court has passed a strong judgment with financial implications against barbaric criminals. In September last year, it awarded Rs 90 lakh compensation to a 15-year-old rape victim of Faridkot and her parents. The Deputy Commissioner was directed to sell the properties of the convict and his mother for their rowdy and cruel conduct. The relief came to the family six years after their life was turned into a nightmare by their landlord and his accomplices. The minor girl was forcibly taken away and ravaged after her father, mother and sister were assaulted with rods by the armed culprits.

With beastly sexual crimes against women continuing unabated in our society, more such verdicts would instill a fear of the stern penal provisions and curb criminal tendencies. No girl should have to suffer such torture, trauma and social stigma that adversely impacts her personality irreversibly. They have a right to a safe environment.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations; entangling alliances with none. — **Thomas Jefferson**

ON THIS DAY...100 YEARS AGO

The Tribune.

LAHORE, FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 1919

The Hindu Sabha and His Honour.

WE have two concrete cases in view. In the first place we learn that at a recent meeting of the Executive Committee of the Hindu Sabha it was resolved to present an address to His Honour. The first question that we want to ask is: Has the Hindu Sabha as a Sabha before given a farewell address to a Lieutenant-Governor? If not, why is a distinction going to be made in favour of Sir Michael O'Dwyer? Secondly, is it not a fact that a meeting of the Executive Committee requires a three days' notice and that on this occasion only twenty-four hours' notice was given and that, too, only to local members, moffussil members not being invited at all? Is it not a fact that the meeting was attended by only 8 persons, and that though no division was actually taken, it was understood that two or three out of the eight were not in favour of the proposal? Is it anything else than a mockery, is it respectful to the Lieutenant-Governor himself, to call a decision of the Hindu Sabha and an address presented by such a body an address on behalf of the Hindu Sabha or the Hindu community?

Satyagraha Volunteers.

IT is interesting to notice that the movement of passive resistance in Bombay includes the engagement of a permanent body of volunteers to instruct those desirous of taking the Satyagraha pledge in the great struggle, so that if may be carried on successfully and without any untoward incidents through anger or passion. In the first place they have to make the pledge takers understand the Rowlatt Bill provisions and decide for themselves whether it is harmful. Secondly, they must explain what civil disobedience in its legitimate application means. They must see that passive resisters do not break any moral laws.

'Looking west' with success

India has been able to seamlessly build on its ties with Gulf nations



G PARTHASARATHY
FORMER DIPLOMAT

EVER since Independence, India has sought to derive maximum strategic advantage by avoiding moves that could draw it into the vortex of global rivalries. The initial years were spent in seeking good relations with both the Soviet Union and the USA. There were, however, instances like the 1971 conflict, when relations with the US were strained with the emergence of a Sino-American quasi-alliance. This was also a period when the adoption of Soviet-style centralised economic planning led to India's declining role in global trade and economic affairs and a relatively slow rate of growth.

The near-collapse of the Indian economy in 1991 coincided with the disintegration of the Soviet Union. It was the vision of PM Narasimha Rao that led to the dismantling of our 'licence, permit, quota raj'. A new era of liberalisation and rapid growth enabled us to emerge as one of the fastest growing economies. It was during his tenure that we combined liberalisation with economic integration, adopting an imaginatively crafted 'Look East Policy'. It has been invaluable in promoting India's interaction with and access to trade, investment and technology from countries like Japan, China and South Korea.

What we appeared to lack in this period was a clearly enunciated policy beyond our western land and maritime frontiers, extending across the Indian Ocean to east Africa, and to the shores of the oil, gas and cash-rich Persian Gulf. The approach to our western neighbourhood was myopic and fixated on Pakistan. This only increased with the post 9/11 developments in Afghanistan. But,



BIG RETURNS: There are about 7.6 million Indian nationals in GCC countries, remitting back around \$40 billion annually.

The approach to our western neighbourhood was myopic and fixated on Pakistan, which is now changing.

our imaginative economic assistance in areas, ranging from hydroelectric and irrigation projects to electricity transmission and support for education and training in Afghanistan, received extensive international acclaim. This demonstrated the positive role India could play even in a country being torn apart by Pakistan-sponsored terrorism.

While the Islamic world is beset by sectarian (Shia-Sunni), religious, and civilisational (Persian-Arab-Turkish) rivalries, India has skilfully conducted its diplomacy, advocating reconciliation between contesting states. New Delhi has stayed away from rivalries that have led to civil wars and incredible human suffering in Yemen and Syria. India has also made efforts to not yield to US pressure and has continued oil imports from Iran.

Imaginative diplomacy enabled India to get the US to waive sanctions for the development of the Chabahar Port. Moreover, Iraq is now emerging as a significant energy partner. Its leadership needs to be carefully cultivated. The most crucial relationships

for India, however, pertain to its ties with the Gulf monarchies — all members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). They provide 42 per cent of India's oil requirements. There are an estimated 7.6 million Indian nationals in GCC states, remitting back around \$40 billion annually. Around 5.5 million Indians work in the UAE and Saudi Arabia. The annual trade with GCC countries is around \$104 billion.

The last decade has seen a remarkable transformation in our earlier myopic approach. Recent years have been marked by high-level visits by PM Modi to the UAE and Saudi Arabia. These two countries work closely on virtually all crucial regional issues. The Saudi-UAE relationship is marked by high dependence on the US, especially on issues of regional security. The US uses their substantial influence to promote its interests in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This was evident in the role of these countries in facilitating US dialogue with the Taliban, and even in recent tensions between India and Pakistan.

India's rise in high-tech sectors is

reflected in the increasingly senior positions of Indian experts in the Gulf, where Indians are engaged in huge numbers in the knowledge-based economic sectors, such as Dubai Internet City, Dubai Media City and Jebel Ali Free Zone. The India-UAE ties have evolved into a significant partnership in the economic and commercial sphere. India-UAE trade is around \$52 billion (2016-17), making India the largest trading partner of the UAE, while the UAE is India's third largest trading partner after China and the US. The UAE is the second largest export destination of India (over \$30 billion) for the year 2016-17. Modi's visit to the UAE was the first by an Indian PM after Indira Gandhi's 1981 visit. Modi paid a second visit to Abu Dhabi in 2018 after welcoming the UAE Crown Prince in New Delhi in 2016. The red carpet was similarly laid out for the Saudi Crown Prince last month.

Respecting New Delhi's sensitivities, the Crown Prince did not visit New Delhi immediately after his visit to Pakistan. Both Saudi Arabia and the UAE have been forthcoming in promptly deporting/extraditing Indian and foreign nationals wanted for serious crimes in India. There appears to be greater readiness in not only avoiding partisanship on issues like Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, but also in welcoming India as an 'honoured guest' to meetings like that of the OIC, while overruling Pakistani objections. The UAE and Saudi Arabia are poised to expand investments in India substantially. While much noise was made about the \$20 billion investments pledged when the Crown Prince visited Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have expressed readiness to invest \$44 billion in the Ratnagiri refinery and petrochemical project, which will add to our existing annual exports of \$40 billion of petrochemical products. The commercially wise Arabs know the difference between investing money and sharing profits in viable refineries on the one hand, and dishing out aid for a perpetually bankrupt recipient on the other.

Good old Shimla a thing of the past

COL MAHESH CHADHA (RETD)

WALKING for miles to school across Shimla dales, drinking water at a flowing spring; pelting stones at a young pear, apple, plum, fig tree and savouring the raw fruit; plucking a berry or some wild flower; admiring a farmer ploughing his terraced fields with a pair of oxen; giving a helping hand to a whistling shepherd to mentor his sheep and caressing his lamb are unconvincing stories for my grandchildren. It is no surprise, brought up as they are in modern cities, devoid of such heavenly benevolence. They go to school by car or bus, nor do they come across blossoming fruit trees.

For them, fruits and flowers are only purchased from vendors; milk from a machine or a carton.

They wonder at my confidence when I tell them that on the very first day of my school, in 1952, I walked back home to my mother's utter surprise as she failed to pick me up. Appreciating my initiative, she showed no signs of worry. Shimla was a peaceful, walker's paradise, then — no traffic hazards; people along the way knew us and children were considered safe everywhere. Today, children wear identity cards, carry mobiles and are collected from school by guardians as a ritual.

They do not believe that I used to venture out in severe winter, wear-

ing heavy woollens knit by my mother, to enjoy the soft snowflakes on my face; making a snowman and snowballs to hit friends and siblings with! For them, snow may be fun, but short-lived — only during holidays, that too if luck favours it.

They go to sleep while watching cartoons on TV, whereas for me it was the melodious ringing bells of the mules passing by our house or, at times, the deafening growl of a leopard or a barking deer not far away in the jungle. Sundays meant a picnic, walking to Glen, Annadale, Naldhera or Mashobra for juicy apples and peaches etc. The 'Big Ben', mall road, Ridge, 'Scandal Point', and Gaiety Theatre were where we would cross

path with dignitaries like Dr Rajendra Prasad and Marshal Tito. After a tiring walk, there would be a feast of *bhatta*, *doodh-jalebi* or *puri-bhaji* at Mehru and Nathu *halwai*. For the kids now, it is malls, pizzas and burgers.

The heart laments — *koi lautade mere beete hue din*, that often lure me to the now-flattened hills of my childhood — sans pristine beauty. All that one sees now is dying pines and deodars; drying *chashmas*, concrete jungles, noisy traffic, pollution, growing population and nobody shaking hands with a tourist.

Shimla is as bad as other cities where grandchildren live, rendering it worthy of their taunt and unworthiness of a melodious story anymore.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Can Lokpal deliver?

After all the din and hullabaloo, we finally have the beginnings of an operational Lokpal. It took a long time, but augurs well for our democratic institutions. It is a heavy cross that Justice Ghose will have to bear. He has the right credentials, but can there be any ducking of the question if the 'system' will enable him to deliver what he might seek to achieve?

DIYA, CHANDIGARH

Taking on corruption

Corruption and reservation are the two stumbling blocks which deprive deserving candidates of opportunity. We hope that Justice Ghose, as the first anti-corruption ombudsman, will use enormous powers to cleanse right from the gram panchayat to Parliament, to move India to new heights, and also set examples so that corrupt politicians become history. Let all scammers count the bricks of jail. Let it be a new beginning in the history of India.

ANJANI SHARMA, CHANDIGARH

R&D in Punjab

Reference to 'Punjab to float company for R&D in industry' (March 19); the state has poor industry yields and

whatever manufacturing is being done is rudimentary in technology. But these facts need to be examined in the larger context, as also what should be done for progress. Innovation and R&D in India has not evolved much to create an impact on the world map. Whatever IPRs that have been created have found little application in applied sciences. Track records of big R&D institutes like the DRDO or CSIR have been low if not abysmal. In emerging sectors of IT, pharma, etc., Punjab lost the race due to lack of global connectivity and quick ramping of urban infrastructure. Punjab needs to unshackle the global entrepreneurial spirit and supported by tax-friendly schemes.

KAMALJIT SINGH JASSAL, BY MAIL

Debate live on TV

In view of the forthcoming general election, it is desirable that the parties should debate all issues and their achievements live on TV. This is the cheapest media and also liked by the general public. All parties will spend colossal amounts of taxpayers' money for rallies and campaigning. The debate on TV will help save this money and the loss of thousands of man hours wasted on rallies.

COL JASPAL SINGH (RETD), LUDHIANA

Safety gear missing

Apropos the report 'Two die cleaning sewer at Rayya' (March 20); avoidable deaths of sewer workers are distressing. Such incidents are reported often from different parts of the country. In the modern era, sufficient technological equipment is available for cleaning sewers. But contractors do not provide safety equipment nor utilise mechanical devices for the purpose. Careless approach causes casualties.

SUBHASH VAID, NEW DELHI

Practice then preach

Apropos the news 'Cong wobbly in firming up alliances' (March 20), it is funny that Yashwant Sinha, who himself is a rebel against the current BJP leadership, is advising opposition parties to 'stop speaking against each other in public. Sort out your differences privately'. He is asking others to do what he himself ought to have done. This is the limit of hypocrisy.

ASHOK KUMAR, JALANDHAR

Need credible advisers

With regard to the article 'Horses for courses lesson for Pakistan' (March 20), the contour of the bor-

der between the two countries really becomes offensive and restrictive under such circumstances. There is no denying the fact that the Balakot strikes will be in vain if the gains do not lead to the stabilisation of the tempestuous scenario in Kashmir. It was a double whammy for internal security policy makers because they are liable to enunciate the whole situation. The 'credible' advisers in the MHA and the office of the NSA are the need of the hour. We need strong diplomacy and capable military to achieve a geopolitical solution for the long run.

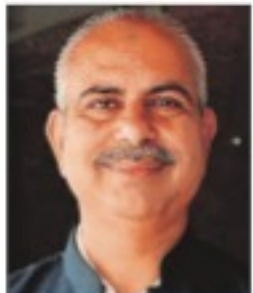
KIRANPAL SINGH, BY MAIL

Don't field celebrities

Reference to the middle 'Need real leaders, not celebrities' (March 19); it is right to say that a professional politician is more responding to people than a celebrity. A party supremo should not project any celebrity, but a ground leader for a constituency. A professional leader can better understand the needs and problems of the people of that area. The high command should desist from projecting celebrities. If it does, it is injustice to people.

SATYA PARKASH GUPTA, GURUGRAM

Cong challenges satraps with 'difficult' seats



RASHEED KIDWAI
SENIOR JOURNALIST & AUTHOR



BADA BHAI-CHHOTA BHAI: Digvijaya Singh and Kamal Nath are considered as equals in the power corridors of Madhya Pradesh.

MP has several seats such as Bhopal, Indore, Vidisha, Damoh and Bhind that have remained with the BJP for decades. Kamal Nath wants to win these seats to make a strong political statement that the state Assembly poll victory of December 2018 was not a fluke.

Bhopal can be a tricky turf for Digvijaya. On the positive side, he can count on the bulk of over three lakh Muslim votes and the presence of his son as state urban development minister. Digvijaya's support base supposedly cuts across caste lines and his oratory skills are an asset. He has a huge network of party workers, religious leaders, bureaucrats and other influential members of society who reside in Bhopal.

But on the flip side, Digvijaya's candidature can lead to religious polarisation. In recent years, some of Digvijaya's utterances have been against "saffron terror." He had publicly expressed doubts over the Batla

House encounter and the death of anti-terror squad chief Hemant Karkare during the 26/11 Mumbai attack. These remarks were used by the RSS and Sangh Parivar to dub the former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister as "anti-Hindu."

Interestingly, Digvijaya has been getting some free advice from the opponents. Former state BJP Chief Minister Babulal Gaur has gone on record dissuading Digvijaya from opting for Bhopal. Gaur, who holds a record of sorts, winning the Govindpura assembly seat 10 times, has cautioned Digvijaya against contesting from Bhopal. Speaking in Hindi, Gaur addressed

Digvijaya through the local media and said, "Bhool kar bhi aaisi galti na karna" (do not commit the folly even by mistake).

Sources close to Digvijaya said he would wait for party chief Rahul Gandhi's nod or insistence to contest from Bhopal. Outgoing BJP MP Alok Sanjar has not been a popular figure, so there is a likelihood of some BJP bigwig, like union minister Narendra Singh Tomar, contesting from the Madhya Pradesh capital. Tomar is currently the MP from Gwalior.

The options before Scindia are few. Given his preoccupation with Uttar Pradesh, Scindia supporters want him to field wife Priyadarshani from Guna or Gwalior and focus on battleground Uttar Pradesh. But Scindia has remained non-committal, pointing that he would go by Rahul Gandhi's decision.

Nath's interest in Digvijaya and Scindia's seats has generated a lot of attention in the Congress circles both within and outside Madhya Pradesh. One way of looking at it is a sign of measuring the electoral strength of Digvijaya and Scindia, who never tire of projecting themselves as regional satraps. There are over a dozen ministers in the Nath cabinet who flaunt their allegiance to either Digvijaya or Scindia. A poor performance by either of them would weaken their hold in state politics and indirectly strengthen Nath, while electoral conquests would increase the Congress tally.

MADHYA Pradesh is witnessing a protracted battle among three key players - Digvijaya Singh, Jyotiraditya Scindia and Kamal Nath - over the ensuing Lok Sabha polls.

Nath, Chief Minister of the state, set the ball rolling when he recently went public, asking Digvijaya and Scindia to contest from "difficult seats" and wrest parliamentary seats like Bhopal and Gwalior from the BJP. Scindia, AICC general secretary in charge of western Uttar Pradesh, is currently the Lok Sabha MP from Guna while Digvijaya, two-time former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, is a Rajya Sabha MP.

While Scindia kept mum, refusing to be drawn by Nath's challenge, Digvijaya took the Twitter route to respond to the Congress Chief Minister. He first talked about his bond with Rajgarh which had elected him as the Lok Sabha MP in 1977 and then wrote again, thanking Kamal Nath for considering him worthy of contesting from a seat which the party has not won since 1989.

Diggy Raja, as he popularly called, has been two-time Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh during 1993-2003. In the Madhya Pradesh political circles, the former Raja of Raghogarh is considered as an equal to Chief Minister Kamal Nath and enjoys a "Bada bhai-Chhota bhai" (Nath being elder) relationship with the new Chief Minister. In fact, it is a bit of role reversal between Nath and Digvijaya as during the 1993-2003 Congress rule, Nath's wishes were treated as command and Digvijaya used to publicly acknowledge Nath as the real power behind the throne.

Nath's son Nakul is in the fray from Chhindwara, a parliamentary constituency that has elected Kamal Nath nine times since 1980.

Madhya Pradesh has several seats such as Bhopal, Indore, Vidisha, Damoh and Bhind that have remained with the BJP for decades. Nath wants to win these seats in order to make a strong political statement that the state Assembly poll victory of December 2018 was not a fluke. Nath has reportedly promised 20 out of 29 parliamentary seats to his party chief Rahul Gandhi. The task of winning 20 seats is rather insurmountable in the wake of the Balakot airstrikes resulting in hypernationalism. But sources close to Nath are still confident of netting 14-15 Lok Sabha seats. In 2014, the Congress had won two out of the 29 Lok Sabha seats that were earned by Nath and Scindia.

How to make our water use sustainable



AMARJIT SINGH
FORMER UNION SECRETARY, WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION

ACCORDING to a report by the NITI Aayog (CWMI, 2018), 600 million people in India face high-to-extreme water stress. Critical Ground Water (GW) resources, accounting for 40 per cent of the total water supply, are being depleted at an unsustainable pace. Three-fourths of the households in the country do not have drinking water at their premises. As much as 70 per cent of our water is contaminated; India is ranked 120th amongst 122 countries in the water quality index. The poor water quality causes around two lakh deaths every year. The added morbidity, due to contaminated water, takes a huge toll on the earning capacity of the population as well as their quality of life.

The food security that our country has enjoyed thus far appears to have been at the cost of water insecurity. By 2030, our water demand is projected to be twice the available supply. This would mean severe water scarcity for 40 per cent of the population. The metropolitan areas of New Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai and Hyderabad are likely to be severely affected. The water crunch is likely to cost India 6 per cent of the GDP. There is, therefore, a need to deepen our understanding of our water resources and usage and to put in place interventions that make our water use efficient and sustainable.

More 'crop per drop' needed

Agricultural productivity appears to be a fundamental part of the solution. Agriculture today consumes around 80 per cent of the water resources of the country. Our consumption for domestic use and industry is abysmally low. In the days to come, 400 million additional people are likely to live in the urban areas. This would mean an

added requirement of water for domestic and industrial use. As a result, there would be lesser and lesser water for agriculture in the face of spiraling demand for water for food, feed and fiber.

India, would therefore, have to focus on enhanced agricultural productivity, where there are huge variations within the country. Punjab produces 48.48 quintals of wheat per hectare, vis-à-vis 24.05 quintals in MP. Similar is the case with rice; MP produces only 14.38 quintals per hectare of rice as against 39.52 quintals in Punjab. These gaps will have to be plugged. More "crop per drop" could come through a mix of improved efficiency of water application and the net water gains through crop yield enhancement. These include drip and sprinkler irrigation; no-till farming and improved drainage, utilisation of the best available seeds, optimising fertiliser use, and innovative crop protection technologies.

MP shows way forward

The Madhya Pradesh irrigation reform model of accelerated irrigation expansion (PMKSY), through effective canal management by restoring irrigation management protocols; last mile investments; reducing deferred maintenance; constant monitoring and benchmarking of the districts; animating irrigation bureaucracy to ensure accountability to farmers and revitalisation of the Water Users Associations shows the way forward. More so, for the states like Maharashtra, which have the largest number of major dams in the country but the least percentage of area irrigated!

In addition, there is a real possibility of shifting India's rice and wheat cultivation eastwards. Punjab,



WATER INSECURITY: By 2030, India's water demand is projected to be twice the available supply.

Haryana and Andhra Pradesh today export 56 BCM of virtual water; water-rich states of Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha ironically import 29 BCM of

virtual water! There is a real possibility of a second green revolution if the wheat and rice economy can be shifted to the east through apposite procurement policies, solarisation, and appropriate support to the farmers. This would be a game changer in the 95 irrigation deprived districts, where fortunately ground water is available. A well thought-out policy on solarisation could generate 10,000 MW of power, energise 2.7 million pumps, and irrigate 18 to 20 MHA, in the irrigation deprived districts.

Gujarat's reforms

In the GW sector, the way Gujarat has tackled the water-energy nexus through its Jyotir Gram Yojna is illustrative. It has ensured rationing of energy for agricultural use through separate feeders, metered supply and time of use charge. This has been complemented by greater vigilance to prevent power thefts. Though highly political and challenging to implement, the benefits of these reforms have far outweighed the effort in addressing feeder-level chaos, reducing power thefts, as well as subsidy on free and unmetered energy supply.

This, along with other initiatives of the Government of Gujarat such as rain water harvesting, check dams (bori bandhs) and micro-irrigation have helped Gujarat arrest the decline in ground water.

Ground water development, which was 75.3 per cent in 2002 and in the semi-critical category, came down to 67.92 per cent in the safe category in 2013. The Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) assessment shows that the number of safe blocks increased from 105 to 177 and over-exploited blocks came down from 30 to 23 during the same period.

Fix leakages

The other possible interventions to supplement these efforts are fixing leakages in the municipal areas, and optimising the use of water in industries and thermal power plants, as per international norms.

Our country generates 42 billion litres of waste water per day. Currently, it pollutes our rivers. There is a real possibility of recycling this for con-joint use in agriculture and industry. Above all, we have to ensure that there is an economic return on water. The low-priced water for various sectors is actually wasteful and expensive.

Audit water use

The effective operationalisation of the above agenda would only be possible if we have the ability to audit our water on quality, area and sector-wise use, over-exploited and underserved sectors, consumption trends, and tradeoffs between economic and social benefits.

We also need greater research to assess the impact of water policies on our consumption trends to optimise the use of water. This would require appropriate governance reforms in the Water Resources Ministry as well as the key professional bodies in the sector: the Central Water Commission and the CGWB.

The experience of Israel shows the key role of public awareness and advocacy in ensuring sustainable use of water. Amongst other things, one way of doing it would be to present a water budget in our Parliament and the state legislatures, especially during the lean period. May be, this would force our elected representatives to think deeply about this issue and come out with well thought out plans for sustainable use of water.

On the eve of World Water Day, let us address why critical ground water resources are being depleted at an unsustainable pace in our country; three-fourths of the households do not have drinking water at their premises; 70 per cent of the water is contaminated; and poor water quality causes around two lakh deaths every year.

QUICK CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8					9	
10	11		12			
14			13		15	
17				16		18
21			22			23
24				25		

ACROSS
1 A fever (7)
5 To chatter (5)
8 Wearisome routine (9)
9 Useful hint (3)
10 Pile (4)
12 Standards for judging (8)
14 A French brandy (6)
15 Lay waste (6)
17 Supplier (8)
18 To lash (4)
21 Be indebted for (3)
22 Advance indication (9)
24 Of the sun (5)
25 Fast (7)

DOWN
1 Be equal to (5)
2 Be situated (3)
3 Primitive (4)
4 Large cage for birds (6)
5 Spacious and splendid (8)
6 Consequence (9)
7 Atone for (7)
11 Show good prospects (5,4)
13 Believed to be (5,3)
14 Abundant (7)
16 Intense repugnance (6)
19 Devoutness (5)
20 Stage in a process (4)
23 Sorrowful (3)

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION
Across: 1 Sociable, 5 Pass, 9 Slant, 10 Satiated, 11 Single-minded, 13 Rating, 14 Astral, 17 Marksanship, 20 Sibling, 21 Gnome, 22 Sulk, 23 Leathery.
Down: 1 So-so, 2 Chariot, 3 Antagonistic, 4 Lessen, 6 Award, 7 Steadily, 8 At first sight, 12 Premises, 15 Rhizome, 16 Haggle, 18 Rebel, 19 Rely.

SU DO KU

		3			6	1		
		9		5				6 2
				2	4	3	8	5
8	4			5	2			
1		7				2		5
				8	6			9 7
		1	3	4	7	8		
5	8					9		3
		6	1					4

V. EASY

CALENDAR

MARCH 21, 2019, THURSDAY

- Vikrami Samvat 2075
- Shaka Samvat 1940
- Phalgun Shaka 30
- Chaitra Parvishite 8
- Hijari 1440
- Shukla Paksh Tithi 15, up to 7:13 am
- Krishan Paksh Tithi 1, up to 3:53 am
- Gand Yoga up to 9:07 am
- Vridhi Yoga up to 5:14 am
- Uttaraphalguni Nakshatra up to 1:34 pm
- Moon in Virgo sign

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

8	3	5	7	4	9	1	2	6
6	7	1	2	8	3	5	9	4
4	9	2	6	5	1	7	3	8
2	6	9	4	3	5	8	1	7
7	5	3	1	6	8	2	4	9
1	8	4	9	2	7	3	6	5
9	1	8	3	7	4	6	5	2
3	2	7	5	9	6	4	8	1
5	4	6	8	1	2	9	7	3

FORECAST

SUNSET: THURSDAY 18:34 HRS
SUNRISE: FRIDAY 06:24 HRS

Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy	Rainy	Foggy
CITY	MAX	MIN		
Chandigarh	29	15		
New Delhi	30	14		
PUNJAB				
Amritsar	27	12		
Bathinda	29	13		
Jalandhar	28	13		
Ludhiana	29	14		
HARYANA				
Bhiwani	32	15		
Hisar	32	15		
Sirsa	30	14		
HIMACHAL PRADESH				
Dharamsala	18	10		
Manali	14	03		
Shimla	17	08		
JAMMU & KASHMIR				
Jammu	25	12		
Leh	10	-05		
Srinagar	12	02		
UTTARAKHAND				
Dehradun	29	13		
Mussoorie	17	07		

TEMPERATURE IN °C