

LOOK WITHIN, SHARIF

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is a straight forward leader and never plays to the galleries. So, she said in clear terms that Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif should look within and take care of his people that to show sympathy for the 'Kashmiris'. Sharif's own people and country are faced with extreme problems of terrorism, rising cost of living and political turmoil. He could well be seen taking care of his people and refrain from commending on people with who he has no connection. Ironically, Sharif's common on "exploitation of Kashmiri" comes at a time when the PoJK is reeling under unrest and violence unleashed by the state forces. All that the people of PoJK are seeking is subsidized wheat, their staple and abrogation of seats reserved in POJK Assembly as these are misused. Instead of taking cognizance of their grievances, the Pakistani leaders are indulging in issues that they don't even understand.

NO TURNING BACK OF CLOCK

Politicians can keep the dead issues alive but those who have no stakes and locus standi in J&K have no business to raise emotions on such issues because they like to stay relevant. This is about former J&K interlocutor Radha Kumar, who tried to raise the issue of abrogation of Article 370 saying it remains "a very, very sore point". She further termed the removal of article 370 as "unconstitutional". Besides Kumar being nobody today, she must realise that country's apex court has endorsed the Parliament's action of August 5, 2019. People like Kumar use issues of the past to get mileage and feel relevant without either owing responsibility of consequences or even sounding logical. She is among those who are yet to reconcile to the changed situation in J&K – zero terrorism and recruitment of local youth in terrorist organization, equality before law and civil rights of all people restored.

Handloom weaving the future of Viksit Bharat

Giriraj Singh

The making of a developed nation is not defined by technology alone. It is shaped by the ability to transform enduring strengths into engines of future growth. As India advances towards Viksit Bharat 2047, we are investing in frontier technologies, strengthening manufacturing and building globally competitive industries. Yet one of our greatest strengths has been with us all along—our handloom tradition. On August 7, as India marks the 12th National Handloom Day, it is time to view handloom as a strategic sector for a world that values sustainability, authenticity and resilient supply chains.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 is built on prosperity, self-reliance, inclusivity and cultural confidence. Handloom embodies this vision by bringing together heritage and innovation, while driving women-led development, rural entrepreneurship, livelihoods and global competitiveness.

In the Vijay Rath discourse, Lord Rama teaches that lasting victory is built not on power, but on values. Those very values have sustained India's handloom tradition for centuries. Every handwoven fabric reflects the courage to preserve tradition, the patience to perfect every thread, the integrity of honest craftsmanship and the wisdom passed down through generations. That is why handloom is not merely a craft, but one of India's greatest civilisational strengths. From the Indus Valley Civilisation, where cotton was first cultivated and woven, to the eighteenth century when Indian textiles dominated global trade, India set global benchmarks in textile excellence. Bengal's legendary muslin, so fine that a 25-metre length could pass through a ring, along with Banarasi silk, Kanchipuram weaves, Pochampally Ikat and countless regional traditions, earned India worldwide admiration. Today, as the world turns towards authentic, sustainable and handcrafted products, we have a historic opportunity to reclaim that leadership. Our next hand-



loom revolution must export not just textiles, but craftsmanship, heritage, innovation and trust, making every handwoven product an ambassador of Brand India.

Handloom is India's largest cottage industry, supporting the livelihoods of more than 35 lakh weavers and allied workers, nearly 72 per cent of whom are women. Over the past decade, the Government has strengthened the sector through the Raw Material Supply Scheme, 797 handloom clusters, over 1.24 lakh improved looms, skill upgradation for nearly 97,000 artisans, and initiatives such as Producer Companies, GI-tagged products, the Handloom Mark, India Handmade certification, Urban Haats and Design Resource Centres. Today, 29 Weavers' Service Centres provide end-to-end support through training, upskilling, design development, raw material assistance and market linkages, while the 11 Indian Institutes of Handloom Technology are being strengthened to expand advanced training and develop niche, high-value handloom products. These initiatives mark a shift from supporting handloom as a welfare activity to building it as a globally competitive creative industry. The forthcoming National Handloom and Handicraft Programme

will strengthen 1,800 clusters across 500 districts, benefit 65 lakh weavers and artisans, and establish Handmade in India as a globally recognised brand. The forthcoming National Handloom and Handicraft Programme will accelerate this transformation by strengthening 1,800 clusters across more than 500 districts, benefiting 65 lakh weavers and artisans and establishing Handmade in India as a globally recognised brand. IndiaNews Portal

Innovation has always been part of India's handloom journey. Mahatma Gandhi's Ambar Charkha made spinning easier, faster and more efficient, advancing the vision of self-reliance. More recently, Assam's Maina Loom and the Chitraranjan Handloom developed in Sivasagar have shown how better loom design can make weaving easier and more productive. Building on this legacy, the Centre of Excellence for Handloom Technology, established with the Indian Institutes of Technology, is developing lighter, stronger and easier-to-use looms that reduce physical effort and improve productivity, including for persons with disabilities. Under the Centre, the Handloom 4.0 initiative uses digital tools and Artificial Intelligence to monitor productivity, quality and mainte-

nance, and is being piloted on 100 looms before expanding across the States.

Technology should empower the artisan, not replace the artisan. Platforms such as VisionNXT can help forecast demand, identify design trends, authenticate genuine handloom products and connect weavers directly with global markets. At the same time, product diversification into premium silk, natural fibres, sustainable fibres and innovative blends can create high-value products and unlock new markets. Combined with better branding, value addition and direct market access, these innovations can significantly enhance weavers' incomes. Our vision is to enable every weaver to earn a dignified and aspirational income, with the ambition of Rs 50,000 per month in the years ahead.

The future of handloom depends as much on mindset as on markets. Our weavers are not merely a workforce. They are entrepreneurs, innovators and creators of value. By enabling them to build brands, move up the value chain and reach global markets, we can transform handloom into one of India's most dynamic creative industries. This is also a call to India's youth to bring together heritage and technology, creativity and enterprise, to shape the next chapter of handloom.

On this National Handloom Day, let us celebrate our weavers not only as custodians of our heritage, but as architects of India's progress. And let us make handloom a part of our everyday lives. Every handloom product we buy and wear strengthens a weaver's livelihood, preserves a timeless tradition and carries India's story to the world. By choosing handloom, we do not just wear our heritage—we help weave the future of Viksit Bharat.

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The writer is the Union Minister of Textiles; Views presented are personal.

THE ATTITUDE THAT SHAPES SOCIETY

Rajyogi Brahma Kumar Nikunjji

Attitude and behavior are woven into the fabric of daily life. Research has shown that individuals register an immediate and automatic reaction of good or bad towards everything they encounter in less than a second, even before they are aware of having formed an attitude. Most of the people hold complex relationships between attitudes and behavior that are further complicated by the social factors influencing both. This explains why two people placed in the same situation often respond very differently. The present state of the world, in which we live, is what it is because of certain systems viz. social, political, economic, religious and others, all these woven together into a complex structure, called society. These systems, in turn, are built on certain attitudes and values which various nations, communities or groups of people have come to acquire over a period of time. When these attitudes remain unquestioned for long, they slowly turn into rigid beliefs. These attitudes, in their turn, are based on the ideas, ideologies or beliefs which people have ac-



quired, over a period of time, from others or have learnt by first-hand experience. Newspapers

Many of these beliefs were relevant in a different era, but in a rapidly changing world, they now need re-examination. So, if we want to build a better world order, there is no way to it except through attitudinal change or the shift in values and that change or shift, as has been pointed out earlier, cannot take place unless certain age-old beliefs are changed. Let us, therefore, not forget that the improve-

ment in the self, betterment of our relationships and the spirit of service of others would not be possible without Attitudinal Change, and in order to bring about the attitudinal change, we have to give to the society a new, convincing and inspiring ideal and also the ideology necessary to achieve that ideal.

Most of our attitudes are built up in our family and hence the deterioration first starts in the family and then it penetrates into the society. So, in order to bring about a better world, we must inspire people to

make a better family. Today, the family is disintegrating and so we find that there is a tendency of separatism and fragmentation all over the world, as a result of which a country like India that is known for its rich cultural heritage and family values is now witnessing more and more nuclear families as compared to joint families, which acted as a strong support system for every member.

The criteria of every relationship today is "Give & Take". And when relationships become transactions, trust slowly erodes.

We must remember a fact that a man who is dissatisfied at home, would spread dissatisfaction and tension outside as well. So, before this erosion of values devastates us, we should seriously think about changing our attitudes and start building better families, for, better families would make a better world. So, don't wait too long, adjust your attitude right now. You'd be surprised how much you really can change the world just by changing your attitude.

The writer is a spiritual teacher and a columnist; Views presented are personal.

Beyond ritual: Sawan as a catalyst for environmental responsibility

Gaurav Kumar Sharma

Shiva represents.

When the first monsoon clouds gather over the Himalayas and the fragrance of rain rises from the earth, something stirs deep within India's collective memory. Sawan does not merely announce the arrival of a new season; it awakens an ancient relationship between faith and nature. Rivers begin to swell, forests regain their emerald hues, and the land breathes again after months of scorching heat. It is no coincidence that this sacred month is dedicated to Lord Shiva, who bears the Ganga in His matted locks, dwells amidst the Himalayas, and embodies the eternal harmony between humanity and the natural world. To worship Lord Shiva has always been to honour the rivers, mountains, forests, and every form of life that surrounds Him. Perhaps that is Sawan's deepest message—that devotion reaches its highest expression when it inspires responsibility towards the very creation Lord

This spirit comes alive in the Kanwar Yatra. Millions of devotees undertake the pilgrimage carrying the sacred Ganga Jal, transforming individual faith into a remarkable expression of discipline, equality, and collective service. Along the route, citizens, voluntary organisations, and temples establish bhandaras, medical camps, and resting facilities, while local administrations ensure sanitation, healthcare, traffic management, and public safety. Together, they create one of the world's largest examples of community participation inspired by faith. The Bhagavad Gita captures the essence of this spirit through Lord Krishna's timeless teaching-Karmanya vad-hikaraste ma phaleshu kadachana—that duty performed without expectation of reward is itself an act of worship. Offering water to a weary pilgrim, keeping the pilgrimage route clean, protecting a river, or planting a tree are not separate from devotion; they are devotion in ac-

tion.

India's environmental consciousness is deeply rooted in its civilisational heritage. The Vedas revere rivers as mothers and forests as sacred spaces of learning.

The concept of the Panchamahabhuta—earth, water, fire, air, and space—reflects an ancient understanding that humanity and nature are inseparable. The Ramayana portrays forests as landscapes of wisdom and coexistence, while the Mahabharata reminds us that dharma sustains the balance of the world. Long before sustainability entered global discourse, Indian thought had already recognised that human well-being depends upon ecological harmony.

Today, this timeless wisdom finds contemporary expression in Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), which encourages environmentally conscious choices through everyday behaviour.

Sawan offers an ideal opportunity to translate that philosophy into

practice. An inspiring example already exists in Lucknow's Green Bada Mangal initiative, which has shown how a deeply rooted religious tradition can embrace eco-friendly practices by reducing single-use plastics, promoting biodegradable alternatives, ensuring effective waste management, and encouraging community participation.

The Kanwar Yatra has the scale to take this spirit even further. Refill water stations instead of disposable plastic bottles, reusable steel utensils in bhandaras wherever feasible, biodegradable alternatives where necessary, and responsible waste segregation can together make the pilgrimage an inspiring model of sustainable public participation. These practices do not change tradition; they strengthen it by reflecting the timeless Indian ethos of living in harmony with nature, and they complement other national initiatives such as the Swachh Bharat Mission and Namami Gange, which have reinforced cleanliness, responsible

waste management, and river conservation through active public participation. Their lasting success lies in the partnership between government, communities, and citizens, demonstrating that sustainability becomes truly transformative when it evolves into a people's movement.

One of Sawan's greatest strengths is its scale. A reusable bottle instead of a disposable one, a cloth bag replacing plastic, a sapling planted along a pilgrimage route, or a wrapper picked up instead of ignored may appear small.

Yet, multiplied by millions of devotees, these simple acts reduce waste, protect biodiversity, and preserve the sanctity of pilgrimage routes. Environmental conservation succeeds best when it becomes part of culture rather than compulsion, and Sawan provides precisely that opportunity.

As another Sawan unfolds, it offers an opportunity to every stakeholder—devotees, Kanwariyas, temple committees, volunteers, community or-

ganisations, local administrations, and governments—to make one of the world's largest annual pilgrimages one of its most sustainable as well. Cleaner pilgrimage routes, environmentally responsible bhandaras, plastic-free public spaces, and active citizen participation are not departures from tradition; they are a reaffirmation of the values that have always defined it. This Sawan, let every prayer be accompanied by a conscious act of conservation, every bhandara become an example of sustainable seva, and every Kanwariya an ambassador for nature. Among the finest offerings we can make to Lord Shiva is the resolve to leave behind cleaner rivers, healthier forests, and a greener India for generations to come. In serving nature, we honour Lord Shiva—not only in faith, but in action.

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