

FAROOQ ABDULLAH'S BRAZEN REMARKS

Former J&K Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah needs to keep quiet than add insult to the injury of people who had to flee their homes and hearth during his tenure as Chief Minister. He doesn't want to see Kashmiri Pandits putting up in the Valley in security zones while working as employees under the PM's scheme, as humans. He thinks they are a prop to be tossed around as and when he wishes to. The octogenarian NC leader had the temerity to say that recent threat letters to the KPs employees under the PM's package are a conspiracy to delay the restoration of the statehood. He also called it fear mongering and he questioned why Hindu high ranking officers do not face such risks. The government of India is under no pressure to restore the Statehood on anyone's appeal; it will be done in the due course as promised. BJP government is not like the previous government that lived off on empty promises. IT should be credited with changing Kashmir by dismantling of terrorism infrastructure and eye-system and ushering in rapid development and peace in Kashmir. Not that terrorism has ended completely because the embedded terrorists are still lurking around as radicals and OWGs. The work to identify and punish them under the law of the land is a job in progress.

Here are a few questions for Dr Farooq Abdullah. Have there been no killings of Kashmiri Pandits by terrorists in Kashmir before? How can he be so sure that terrorists are not trying to scare away the KP employees or planning to target some of them while the security agencies are saying the threats are linked to groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba which operates under a couple of pseudonyms in Kashmir. Dr Abdullah should than his stars that so far the government has not ordered probe into his government's actions that led to sudden spurt in terrorism and exodus of minorities in 1990.

Laldenga: From insurgency to peace

Ashok K Mehta

On August 22, Zoramthanga, a three-term (ending 2023) former Chief Minister of Mizoram and long-time President of the Mizo National Front, received his BA degree from Gauhati University, 60 years after graduating from Dhanamanjuri College, Imphal, then affiliated with Gauhati University. On June 26, the Indian Express carried in its column "40 years ago" its front-page lead as "Laldenga would be new CM of Mizoram in an MNF-Congress I coalition government", replacing the incumbent Chief Minister Lalthanhawla, who would be his deputy CM. The Mizoram Peace Accord is one of India's most successful internal peace processes, negotiated with Laldenga by four Indian governments, culminating in PM Rajiv Gandhi's pointed efforts — this after Congress I had signed peace accords in J&K, Punjab, Assam, Nagaland and Tripura.

The story From Guerrilla Fighter to Chief Minister is told by Zoramthanga Chhangte, a Mizo who graduated from Laldenga's PA and became his most trusted aide and Vice President of the MNF. He is an eternal believer in Jesus Christ, the Lord God of his life and its turbulent trajectory. The book has 80 short chapters covering the movement in graphic detail.

A former Havildar in the Indian Army, Laldenga was fluent in English and Hindi and taught English at a local school for Rs 5. The insurgency and bid for secession began on 1 March 1966 with the declaration of a Unilateral Declaration of Independence and the launch of Op Jericho, which simultaneously targeted Aizawl (capital of Mizoram), Lunglei and Champhai, along with scattered posts in Mizoram. The Army was not deployed in Mizoram at the time; only the Assam Rifles and paramilitary forces were present. Military operations were meticulously planned, combining deception, surprise and siege tactics, though the Mizo National Army (MNA) had very few weapons to start the insurgency.



The Aizawl attack had to be abandoned due to the loss of surprise, but rebels later ambushed and killed four Assam Rifles soldiers. The Aizawl Assam Rifles headquarters fell under siege, with water pipelines destroyed. MNA asked Assam Rifles to surrender as Army helicopters attempted to drop water and evacuate casualties but were unable to land. Zoramthanga writes that Gen Sam Manekshaw, then Eastern Army Commander, was wounded while flying in one of the helicopters, which is incorrect. Meanwhile, police outposts, the Aizawl jail and treasury were captured. Assam Rifles declared SOS. On March 5, for the first time in India's counter-insurgency history, IAF jets strafed the MNA, and Aizawl was left pulverised and ablaze. The siege was lifted, and MNA withdrew into the jungles to fight another day.

The attacks against Lunglei and Champhai towns were successful and resulted in surrender. From 1 to 15 March 1966, barring Aizawl, major portions of Mizoram were under the administrative control of MNF, with the capture of nearly 700 weapons, colossal ammunition and Rs 2 million from the Treasury.

MNA rightly did not resist the advance of the Indian Army, which entered Mizoram from Silchar, advancing to Aizawl, which Zoramthanga equated with a

scorched-earth operation. While Laldenga crossed into East Pakistan, MNA volunteers stayed back to protect civilians and continue the insurgency.

MNF was not welcome in East Pakistan during Gen Ayub Khan's time. Over time, MNA contingents moved to China for training and weapons. The 1971 war forced MNF/MNA to shift to Burma's Arakan hills. Ironically, MNA fought against the Indian Army

along with Pakistan's SSG in the Chit-tagong Hills. Laldenga and his party were keen to start peace talks with India and remained in Pakistan from 1971 to 1975, during which time Laldenga and Zoramthanga met President Zulfikar Bhutto. Secret talks were held in Kabul, Bangkok, Geneva, Hyderabad and finally Delhi. Ajit Doval, then Assistant Director, IB, Aizawl, monitored the peace talks.

After Mujib ur Rehman's assassination, MNF moved back into Bangladesh from Burma. The 1976 peace talks resulted in MNF accepting a ceasefire and a solution within the Indian Constitution but refusing to surrender their weapons. For the Delhi talks, Laldenga was parked at 34 Gulmohar Park, a safe house, while "negotiating with one Om Mehta as Doval was doing what he is best at — divide MNF and MNA", with partial success. The Delhi talks failed, forcing Laldenga and Zoramthanga to escape from the safe house in 1978, but Laldenga was arrested and sent to Tihar Jail. Advocate Swaraj Kaushal (married to Sushma Swaraj of the BJP) got Laldenga released (in 1990, Kaushal became Governor of Mizoram, where I met him).

On July 31, 1980, the second formal ceasefire was announced, but talks failed again and Laldenga flew off to London. Brig T Sailo, whom I knew, had retired

from the Indian Army and was CM of Mizoram; his son was underground. As counter-insurgency against the MNA intensified, the MNF was declared an unlawful organisation. The third 'Quit Mizoram' notice was given to non-tribals and Gorkhas. In April 1984, Congress won the state elections; Sailo was defeated with the help of MNF, Lalthanhawla became Chief Minister, and Laldenga returned from London. Another ceasefire was declared in December 1984 following the most intense round of talks between Congress and MNF, with the latter agreeing to lay down arms. On 30 June 1986, 20 years after MNF took up arms, Laldenga was appointed interim CM following an interim accord between Congress and MNF. It was a compromise between the central government and rebels-turned-democrats who were mainstreamed with a safe landing. History

The provisions of the accord were: MNA to surrender arms, sever ties with other banned groups, MNF to accept the Indian Constitution, grant of statehood with Special Category status and Legislative Assembly, continuation of Inner Line Permit, choice of state language, grant of state university and High Court, compensation for those killed in the 1966 uprising, rehabilitation of cadres and a lot more. Zoramthanga's book is guided by faith through conflict towards a destiny of peace guided by Jesus Christ. It is dedicated to Mizoram's martyrs. The narrative is through a Mizo lens; the account of the insurgency is scant and scattered, as Zoramthanga was focused on the peace process accompanying Laldenga. Op Jericho is a revealer. While Pakistan hosting L and Z in Rawalpindi after Dacca is a mystery, China providing training and a substantial quantity of weapons is not.

The peace process is a saga of failed talks which eventually led to a unique peace accord in which Rajiv Gandhi was heavily invested. The sound accord has led to durable peace and good governance, largely due to Mizos' love for and fear of God—a must-read book.

WHAT KIND OF WORLD DOES OUR NEWS CREATE?

Rajyogi Brahma Kumar Nikunj Ji

Peaceful world has been the main aim of humanity since time immemorial and one can say this without any doubt whatsoever that media being not only the mirror of the society but also as the leader, guide and somewhat moulder of the society can play this important role to re-establish peace in the world.

Today if we take any morning newspaper in hand and have a look at its columns, we would see that most of the news covered are about events of deviant human behavior, bride burning, oppression of lower caste people by higher cast, railway accidents, floods and fires, scandals, political defections, dacoities, hostility between religious communities and warfare between countries. Is it RIGHT? Englishnews paper

Again, presenting news in a tart, saucy, and sensational fashion is another common feature. In reality, it amounts to making people addicted to sensational, hot, nerve-rattling and blood-curdling news as one makes a person addicted to over-spicy curries and excessively hot tea or very strong and lip-burning coffee.

The result is that when there is no news of



a big scandal, a horrible murder, a terrific railway accident or a major racket or a calamity in a paper, readers say: "Oh Man! There is no news today; today's paper is totally tasteless." This trend has become so common that, in journalism, it has become a saying that bad news is good news.

After reading such news day after day, the average reader becomes discouraged

to see that justice, goodwill, and honesty are conspicuously absent and feels persuaded to adopt the ways of the worship. The need for value-based journalism is thus being felt and propagated, particularly in the Asian Continent. At its recent conference, the South Asian Journalists Association stressed and advocated self-regulation to uphold values in the media.

These values guide us to distinguish between right and wrong, between do's and don'ts.

We must first realise that the root cause of all kinds of misery and crime lies mainly in unethical thoughts, words, and acts of man. Incidents like robberies, dacoities, embezzlement, adulteration or manufacture of new destructive weapons by some countries, all these spring from what may well be called 'impurity of thought' or, in other words, from violence, hate, greed, etc. in the minds of men. These evils can be reduced or, even up-rooted, by tackling the root-cause itself, viz., pollution of thought, or in other words, by inculcating in people what goes today by the name of moral values, humanism or purity in the mind of man.

Hence, such news, articles and features help to solve problems of the individual and the society through purity in thought, word and deed and it will do so by bringing Supreme and soul also in the world of news and views since the world has now become too materialistic and man has moved far away from his beloved Creator. Therefore, every media person should realise that a world full of peace and happiness will not arrive without a positive and constructive role for the media.

The body remembers: Rethinking the hidden stress of childhood

Pardeep Nanglu

We like to imagine childhood as years of play and freedom from worry. Look closer at an average child's week — schoolwork, parental expectations, friction at home, social comparison, bullying, loneliness, a phone that never switches off — and a different picture emerges: children carrying more psychological weight than we credit them with, minus the emotional toolkit adults spent decades building. Not all stress is harmful—some teaches adaptation and builds resilience. What matters is the difference between stress that's brief and manageable, and stress that turns prolonged and overwhelming. Harvard's Centre on the Developing Child calls the second kind "toxic stress": excessive or repeated activation of the body's stress-response systems, especially when a child lacks stable relationships that help them recover.

Left unaddressed, it can shape a developing brain and other biological systems in lasting ways. Adults also underestimate how large a small problem can feel to a child. Because emotional regulation, perspective-taking

and impulse control are still developing, something that looks minor from outside — a friendship fallout, a bad exam, a sharp scolding — can register internally as closer to a crisis. Modern neuroscience keeps confirming what ancient traditions long assumed: mind and body aren't separate systems. When a child perceives a threat, the brain signals the autonomic nervous and endocrine systems together — heart rate climbs, muscles tighten, breathing shifts, cortisol enters the bloodstream. If safety returns, the body settles back towards baseline. The trouble starts when a child's nervous system keeps receiving one message: you are not safe. Researchers call this accumulated cost "allostatic load", and a growing body of research traces how early adversity becomes biologically embedded through interconnected neural, immune, metabolic and hormonal pathways.

This is why a stomachache, headache, disrupted sleep, withdrawal, aggression or slipping grades deserve curiosity rather than judgement. They aren't always simple "bad behaviour" — they can be the body's vocabulary for a feeling the child has no words for yet. The CDC notes that

ordinary fears and sadness are normal parts of growing up, but persistent or extreme symptoms are worth a professional look. The more useful question for parents and teachers isn't "how do I stop this behaviour" but "what has changed?" Has a sociable child gone quiet? A once-confident one turned fearful? Is perfectionism creeping in? Has sleep or appetite shifted? Are aches appearing with no obvious cause? Is the child avoiding school, friends or activities they used to enjoy? These shifts are information, not defiance.

A child rarely announces distress in clinical language. It shows up instead as "I don't want to go to school", a slammed door, a long silence, or an unexplained stomachache.

How the adult responds matters enormously: a calm parent signals safety. At the same time, a reactive one can unintentionally deepen the child's fear — part of why an adult's own emotional regulation is itself a form of child mental-health care. It also means resisting the urge to fix, correct or lecture. A struggling child often needs an attentive adult, phone down, asking "what happened?" instead of "why did you do that?" — and validating the

feeling while holding a boundary on the behaviour: I understand you're angry, but hitting isn't okay. That distinction, honouring emotion without excusing harm, is foundational to healthy development.

India's contemplative traditions — yoga, meditation, pranayama, Ayurveda — have explored the links between breath, awareness and well-being for millennia. They aren't a replacement for evidence-based care, but when combined thoughtfully with it, they add real value: teaching a child to notice a thought or feeling without instantly reacting—a few conscious breaths, a mindful walk, a moment of gratitude, quiet attention to nature—builds genuine self-regulation.

Research increasingly supports this. A 2024 meta-analysis of mindfulness-based interventions in children aged 6 to 12 examined outcomes including attention, cognitive flexibility, emotional and behavioural regulation, distress, social competence and physical health — part of a wider case for cautious optimism. The goal isn't permanently placid children; it's helping them notice what they feel clearly enough to respond, rather than react.

Psychological care that ignores the

body is incomplete. Is the child sleeping, moving and eating enough, spending time outdoors, connecting meaningfully with others? The WHO recommends children and adolescents aged 5 to 17 get an average of at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous activity daily, with vigorous, muscle- and bone-strengthening activity built in regularly—movement that supports fitness, cognition, and mental health together. Sleep matters as much: a chronically exhausted brain cannot regulate emotion well. Then there's the digital world every child now carries in their pocket — an endless stream of comparison and stimulation. The American Academy of Paediatrics notes that digital media can disrupt sleep, activity, and emotional regulation, even as it also offers learning, creativity, and connection. The answer isn't a blanket ban but thoughtful, family-level boundaries on when and how it's used.

One way to hold this together: regulate — breathing, emotional awareness, movement, steady routines; relate — secure relationships where a child feels seen and safe; restore — sleep, play, nature, nutrition, creativity, genuine rest. Schools have a role too,

teaching emotional vocabulary, conflict resolution and self-compassion as basic life skills, not just crisis response. None of this works alone — parents, teachers, counsellors, paediatricians and communities all shape the environment a child's nervous system keeps learning from

The real question isn't how to make children perform better. It's how to raise human beings capable of moving through difficulty without losing themselves. A child is not a problem to be solved but a developing consciousness growing inside a family, a culture, a society. India's old instinct - observe before reacting, bring awareness before judgement — sits remarkably close to what modern stress biology now confirms. So perhaps the better question isn't "how do we make this child behave", but "what is this behaviour trying to tell us?" Asked with patience, that question turns childhood stress from a problem to be eliminated into an invitation — to build calmer homes, kinder schools, and a culture where children are allowed not just to succeed, but to feel safe enough to grow. The writer is a US-based psychologist, holistic mental health and mindfulness educator; Views presented are personal.