



# Ambedkar Times

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## Remembering Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji on his 87th Birth Anniversary

Prem K. Chumber Editor-In-Chief: Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba

Babu Kanshi Ram ((15 March 1934 – 9 October 2006), venerated by his followers and admirers as 'Sahib' and 'Manyavar' continued the legacy of great Dalit struggle that began with the advent of Buddhism in India in the 6th century BCE and slowly graduated through the strenuous efforts first of Jyotirao Phule (11 April 1827 – 28 November 1890) then of Boddhisatva Bharat Ratan Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (4 April 1891 – 6 December 1956). He brought into the vast public domain of Indian democracy a new form of leadership that instantly made a long-lasting place in the imaginations of millions of lowest of the low and the underprivileged artisans/service class people of India – constitutionally designated as Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs). His sterling contribution lies in organizing the educated youth and varied SC and OBCs employees and inculcating within their hearts missionary spirit for the social transformation of the Indian society as a whole by emancipating and empowering them to rule the country. To achieve this mega goal – "Change the System" – Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram founded the All India Backward and Minority Communities Employees' Federation (BAMCEF) in 1971 and Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti (DS-4) in 1981 that eventually culminated into a larger political formation what came to be known by the name of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in 1984.

Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram did not confine the strings of his newly launched socio-political process of empowering the lower castes to himself only. He, rather, let it loose to spread among his people who hitherto fore were prevented from entering the corridors of political powers by varied Machiavellian machinations. He based his political strategy to prepare the way for his people to enter the parliament on the basis of the famous slogan of Dr. Ambedkar: "Educate, Agitate, Organise", and chiselled his innovative '85 vs 15' formula of 'Master Key' to unlock the portal of political power. He taught his people that they should prepare themselves to attain political power on the basis of 'bargaining and not begging'. He cycled day and night for months together to reach the lowest of the low to apprise them of their hidden numerical power that can win for them political power in the state and national democratic electoral processes. His dexterously prepared second line of young leadership belied the centuries old indoctrinated belief that Dalits are born only to serve! He proved the world that they have now come up to take over the reign of the rule into their own hands and became capable of writing their own destiny. The BSP under his pupil Mayawati ruled Uttar Pradesh, one of the most politically powerful states in India, for four terms as Chief Minister. Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram taught millions of SCs and OBCs of this vast democracy how to convert their numerical strength into a potent electoral force to defeat those who thrived by dividing them in the name of caste, religion and false electoral promises.

The forum of "Ambedkar Times" and "Desh Doaba" take immense pride in congratulating our contributors, readers and well-wishers on the 88th birth anniversary of Manyavar Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji. We are also feeling proud to humbly state that Ambedkartimes.com, dedicated to teachings and life-works of Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia and Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram, has successfully completed its 13 years of regular publication. We seek your support and encouragement and good wishes to continue with our small effort in your service.

## Begampura: A Vision of Non-hierarchical & Egalitarian Social Order

Guru Ravidass, one of the most famous untouchable Sages of the 15th-16th century, is known as a leading star of the Bhakti movement, especially the *nirguna sampradaya* or *santparampara* (sect or tradition of devotees of a formless God) of the later medieval centuries in Northern India. He was a cobbler, sage, philosopher and social reformer, all rolled into one, who adopted Bhakti (devotion of non-anthropomorphic God) as a method of social protest against the centuries old oppressive system of social hierarchies and inhuman practice of untouchability. He did not discard the religion he was born into, nor did he abandon his 'polluted' occupation of leather-work to move

up the social hierarchy, as in the case of two widely accepted and cited models of upward social mobility – conversion and *sanskritization* (cultural assimilation) – in India and elsewhere. Instead, he chose Bhakti of nirakar (formless) God while earning livelihood through his hereditary leather-work as a middle path to protest against the rotten caste-based evil of social exclusion and oppression. This unique middle path – free from religious rituals and sectarian formalities – was novel and daring given the rampant religious bigotry of his time.

Guru Ravidass laid emphasis on devotion to a formless God, self-respect, dignity of labour, fearlessness, and compassion for all. It reflected the democratic and egalitarian traits of his social philosophy and deep faith in the just order of God. His fearlessness is evident from the fact that he adopted the forbidden iconography of upper castes as a symbol of social protest. He challenged the tyranny of Brahmins and defied their hegemony by wearing *dhoti* (cloth wrapped around the waist), *Janeue* (sacred thread) and putting *Tilak* (sacred red mark on forehead) – prohibited for the untouchables. Despite adopting the prohibited dress code, Guru Ravidass continued with his hereditary occupation of making and mending shoes. He did not discard/hide his caste at all. Rather, he became very vocal as well as proud of it and raised his voice against the oppression perpetrated in its name on lower castes. In presenting himself in such an innovative manner, Guru Ravidass probably tried to demonstrate how lower castes could achieve upward social mobility without sacrificing or compromising their distinct Dalit identity on the one hand, and resorting to violent agitations on the other. In his widely appreciated sacred scriptures, one can easily find ample references to his caste. He also underscored on the importance of being peaceful and cultivating compassion for all, including ones' opponents. This is what made him the principal prophet of Dalit consciousness in North India and distinguished him as the originator of a 'middle

path' towards social transformation based as it was on democratic means and peaceful ways. His middle path approach liberated Dalits from what Schuetz called the dilemma of 'a man without a history'. Spiritually and socially oriented revolutionary teachings of Guru Ravidass provided new vistas for upward Dalit social mobility. It facilitated the lowest



Ronki Ram

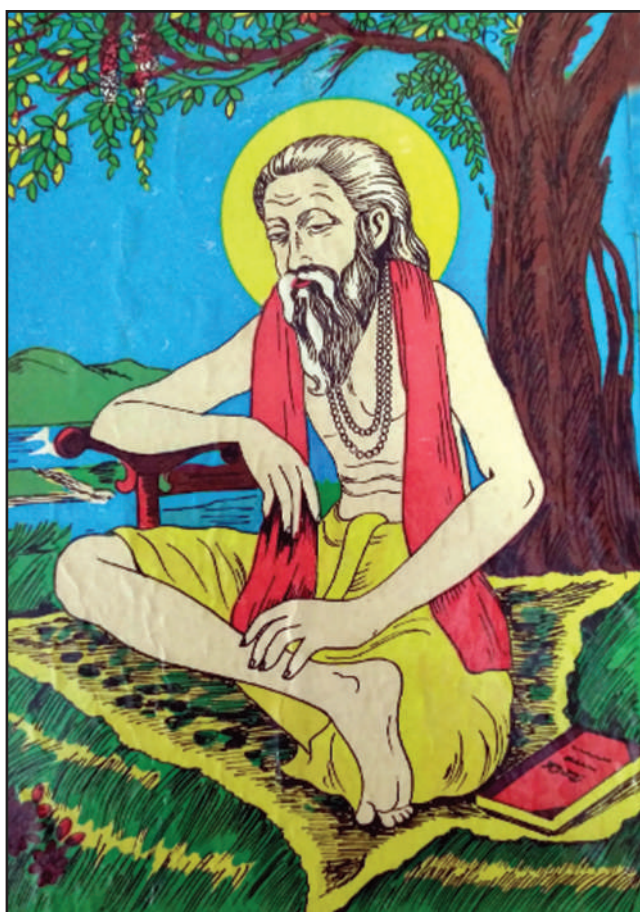
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of the low to rise up against the perennial injustices heaped upon them, and to reclaim their lost indigenous socio-cultural and religious heritage.

However, what made Guru Ravidass the most venerable among his fellow community folks was his steadfast determination to proudly exhibit his otherwise degraded caste identity and to challenge the dominant structures of social oppression. Though he used to attire himself like a priest, he did not hide his caste. By attiring like that he did not intend to convey the superiority of the profession of priesthood at all. Nor he pretended to show any pride in the dress of the priestly Brahmin caste *per se*. His only

motive to dress like priests, it seems however, was to challenge the hegemony of the high-caste people. He did not feel any shame in earning his livelihood by his 'polluted' hereditary occupation of leather-work. He boldly wrote about his caste and its related occupation of carrying away the carcass and skinning the dead cattle. He earned his livelihood by the sweat of his brow and refused help from all quarters. That made him self-reliant and free from any bondage of upper castes obligations. "He was probably the only saint in Kashi," as articulated by Chandra Bhan Prasad, "who neither sought nor accepted patronage from kings; that's the reason Ravidass continued with his business his entire life. He enjoyed financial freedom and did not live on alms" (*The Print*, April 12, 2018). To quote him further, Guru Ravidass "could travel more widely than any of his contemporaries – Kabir for instance – because he generated revenue from his business." That means Dalits need to have their own business too if they want to liberate themselves from the cobwebs of social exclusion and economic exploitation that they have been suffering for generation after generation. On the whole, this has become more meaningful given the large scale shrinking of the public sector domain.

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# Begampura: A Vision of Non-hierarchical & Egalitarian Social Order

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In the popular calendar culture of Punjab, Guru Ravidass is often presented in the above-mentioned dress code which was (and for many still is) anathema, especially for the upper castes. His non-violent social defiance method of social transformation has effectively worked as a suitable pedagogic tool to convey the message of self-respect and the dignity of labour to the downtrodden who were not only debarred from entering into the spiritual sphere of the Hindu society, monopolized by the priestly class of Brahmins, but were also treated worse than animals for no other reason except for their so-called low caste birth and the allegedly polluted nature of their hereditary occupation. It is in this context that his emphasis on devotion to God and adoption of a unique iconography, together produced a new text of peaceful social protest for lower-castes. Many of his lower caste followers in Punjab take pride in publicly exhibiting their caste titles – *Ravidassia/putt chamaran de* (sons of Chamars)/SC Boys! This unique phenomenon of articulation of caste-based social identity among the larger section of the SC population of Punjab can also be witnessed in mushrooming Dalit pop songs in Punjab.

Guru Ravidass became prominent because he unleashed a frontal attack on the long tradition of social oppression and untouchability in Hindu society. Though born and brought up in the Uttar Pradesh province of North India, Guru Ravidass came to command large followings among the lower castes of Punjab, which he was believed to have visited during his journeys to Rajasthan. Another factor that made him further popular in Punjab is the inclusion of his Bani (spiritual poetry 40 hymns and one Shloka) in Sri Guru Granth Sahib - the sacred scripture of the Sikh faith. His stature grew still further when the Ad Dharm movement made him its patron Sant and a political rallying point. The Ad Dharm movement which came into existence in 1920s used his pictures as its emblem, hymns as its sacred text and legends about him as illustration of lower caste pride and power. The fact that Guru Ravidass came from one of the lowest castes, acted as a catalyst in the emergence of Dalit consciousness in Punjab. His fellow low caste followers, who consider him their Guru, dedicated to him temples, memorial halls, educational institutions/chairs, cultural organizations, and hospitals. They founded several missions to accurately establish facts about his life and works, and to disseminate his message of compassion, equality, and brotherhood in India and abroad. In fact, his lustrous image played an instrumental role in mobilizing the outcastes, especially the Chamars (leather workers) who also joined the Ad Dharm movement in large numbers. Consequently, the Chamars of Punjab and Punjabi Chamar diasporas organized themselves into various Guru Ravidass Sabhas (societies) and established a large number of Ravidass shrines popularly known as Ravidass Deras within the state

and abroad.

The sacred *bani* of Guru Ravidass eventually emerged as a vehicle of social protest during the early decades of 20th century colonial rule in India. His *bani*, written in the vernacular of common man, is full of radical fervour. It provides what Gail Omvedt hailed as "hope for a better world and a fight against exploiters, power-holders and oppression going on under the name of religion". It reflected his vision of the social and spiritual needs of the downtrodden and underlined the urgency of their emancipation. He therefore, is regarded as a messiah of the downtrodden who revere him as devoutly as Hindus revered their Gods and Goddesses, and Sikhs their Gurus. They worship his image, celebrate his Jayantis (birth and death anniversaries), recite his hymns every morning and night, raise slogans like *Ravidass Shakti Amar Rahe* (the spiritual power of Ravidass live forever) and repose faith in his spiritual power.

The unique 'middle path' and bhakti-based model of Dalit social mobility was well received in Punjab for the following interrelated reasons: (a) Majority of Dalits in Punjab are followers of Guru Ravidass, (b) Ad Dharm leadership consistently worked towards the formation of alternative Ravidassia culture based on the life and teachings of Guru Ravidass, (c) the fact that Guru Ravidass himself belonged to one of the lowest castes (the Chamar caste) acted as a catalyst in the adoption of his unique path, (d) the widespread influence of Ad Dharm movement in Punjab prevented conversion of a large number of Dalits to other religions. It also worked as a bulwark against the cultural assimilation process for fear of losing indigenous Dalit culture, and (e) popularity of Ad Dharm (indigenous Dalit religion) among a large number of Dalits in the state and their faith in its capacity to salvage them from the abyss of social exclusion and oppression caused by the asymmetrical and oppressive structures that have emerged within the mainstream religions in the state. Since Guru Ravidass himself did not embrace any other religion nor try to escape social exclusion by assimilation into the mainstream social system of the upper castes, Dalits of Punjab found in him an exemplar of the 'middle path'. The presence of simple but sharp elements of social protest in his teachings along with the commonality of his caste provided the basis for the rise of radical consciousness among Dalits in the state. The mere mention of his name evokes a sense of confidence and self-respect among them. So much so that a large number of them prefer to be identify themselves as 'Ravidassia' rather than to be known by their customary caste titles coloured with derogatory connotations.

Thus, it is for such reasons, as mentioned above, that Guru Ravidass was embraced by the leadership of Ad Dharm movement as an exemplar of the 'middle path' in whose life and teachings the Dalits of Punjab found the necessary ammunition for the ignition of radical Dalit consciousness in the state. The establishment of a large number of Ravidass Deras by the Dalits in Punjab

and in other parts of India over the last few years is a case in point. Ravidass has become very popular among Punjabi Dalit diasporas as well, who 'have built Ravidass temples in almost all the towns of the world wherever they happened to live even in small numbers' in order to assert their separate caste identity. The number of Ravidass Deras has been multiplying very fast, and has taken the form of a sort of alternate socio-cultural Ravidass Deras movement. It has generated a sense of confidence among them and provided them with an opportunity to exhibit their hitherto eclipsed Dalit identity. These Deras, in fact, have been functioning as missions to sensitize Dalits and to facilitate their empowerment. In order to look different from the shrines of Hindu and Sikh religions, and to project a distinct religious identity, Ravidass Deras have formulated their own religious symbols, ceremonies, prayers, rituals and messages of social protest against the oppressive structures of caste domination in the agrarian society of Punjab. Led by varied Ravidass Deras, Guru Ravidass movement has offered new hope to those who have also been empowered by the constitutional provisions of state affirmative action. The goal-mouth of the Ravidass movement, based as it is on the teachings of Guru Ravidass, is rooted in the ideal of *Begampura* (a city free from sorrows and sufferings of all sort).

The *Begampura* city of Guru Ravidass promises a social order free from all sorts of hierarchies and buttressed by the principles of fraternity in the real sense of the term. *Begampura* promises freedom from all sufferings and sorrows, worries of paying taxes, and ensures an abode of everlasting safety. Except the sovereignty of the eternal God, none would be authorised to exercise any power on the inhabitants of the city of *Begampura*. Its inhabitants would be free to stroll throughout its length and breadth as they please without any fear of caste-based restrictions and punishments. Guru Ravidass concludes the description of his prescient joyful city by underlying that all those who live there would be his (an emancipated cobbler) friends. Thus, in a social order of *Begampura* fame, there would be no space for boundaries whatsoever between lower and higher classes and all would be treated equally without any difference of small or big – *Aisa Chahu-Raaj Main Jaha Mile Sabhan ko Ann, Chot Bade Sabh Sam Base Ravidass Rahe Parsan*. In fact, the very binary of low and high would cease to exist within the joyful city of *Begampura* of Guru Ravidass. And the absence of caste hierarchies and social binaries would eventually warrant the dignity of labour and realization of its genuine remuneration.

The establishment of an egalitarian social order, based on dignity of labour, presupposes caste-class solidarity. Caste-class solidarity, in fact, depends upon what Dr B.R. Ambedkar pithily articulated as the 'annihilation of caste'. Caste has not only divided the lower and upper castes into seamless boundaries of mutual antagonism, the lower and upper castes are further

deeply divided within their own social segments. All castes follow the principles of endogamy and exogamy. They marry within their respective social cocoons and limit themselves to their *biradari* (blood relationship) and *rishtedari* (family ties) during formal family functions and community social gatherings. Inter-caste marriages are not only a taboo among the upper castes. Lower castes too are equally afflicted with this divisive caste malady. Ravidassias, Ramdassias, Valmikis, Ad Dharmis – are just some of the total 39 Scheduled Castes categories in Punjab – follow their respective *biradari* traditions and customary social bindings in deciding their matrimonial and other social practices and ceremonies. Territorial social divisions in the rural setting are posing a formidable challenge to caste-class solidarity. Villages are divided into two social settings: mainstream village (*pind*) and the segregated Scheduled Castes neighbourhoods. The latter are contemptuously called *chamarlees*, *thathees*, and *vehras* in Doaba, Malwa and Mazha regions of Punjab respectively.

Dalits in Punjab constitute almost one third of the total population of the state. Majority of them earn their livelihood through various kind of manual work, including daily wage work on the agricultural fields of the farmers. Farmers too constitute about one third of the total population of the state. Majority of the Dalits and farmers are rural-based and many of the former earn their livelihood while working as manual labour (popularly known as *kirtis* – landless agriculture workers) at the agriculture farms of the latter. *Kirtis* and *kisans* (farmers) together formed a potent social force despite the fact of their being belonging to different class/caste categories. There is a general impression that the current Farmers' protests on the doorsteps of Delhi, has put the *kirtis* and *kisans* on a single platform as the contentious three agriculture acts – The Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act; The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance Act; and The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act – affect them in their respective domain in terms of the sustainability of their livelihoods. Landless agriculture workers are dependent on availability of manual work at the agriculture farms. They are equally worried about the allegedly long-term adverse impact of these three agriculture reform laws on their work conditions, which have motivated them to join the farmers' protest at Delhi borders. However, for a long-term sustainability of the current circumstantial coming together of the various *kirti-kisan* organizations, the teaching of Guru Ravidass and his vision of *Begampura* are of critical importance. For a durable association between *kirtis* and *kisans* to transcend their entrenched caste fault lines and to articulate fresh and long-lasting narratives of their newly formed unity, the spiritual vision of *Begampura* seems to be a most appropriate ideal in current circumstances!

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# Insights of Punjab Budget 2021-22 : Massive Shallow Promises with Empty Pockets



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The annual budget is a very small glimpse of government policies which is often deceptive. Significant changes are made to the government's revenue and spending policies in the budget due to political and many other calculations. With the passage of time, the economic condition of the State Governments has been made very poor as compared to the Central Government. The dependence of the State Governments on the Central Government in economic matters seems to be increasing day by day. Despite these facts, the common man waits for the budget so that this time the promises made to him by the rulers may come to naught and some of his problems may be solved. The general public's expectations of the pre-election budget are at an all-time high because after four years of deep sleep by the rulers, the rulers are compelled to do something for the people to come to the polls next year. At the same time, the rulers are finding it easier to claim that they have fulfilled the promises made to the people and to make new promises for the next five years.

Mela (fair) is very important in human nature. Ordinary people expect a lot of happiness from Mela. This expectation is fulfilled only if the visitors of the fair have money in their pockets to buy new clothes, shoes and the like as well as to buy food and drinks and some other useful items during the fair. If there is no money in the pocket, then with the help of old clothes and lack of money to buy food and other items, the condition of the people going to the fair deteriorates.

In the run up to the 2017 Assembly elections in Punjab, various political parties in their respective election manifestos and election rallies had showered promises of a fair to the people. At that time the people of Punjab were hoping for a good fair from the election promises of the Congress party which resulted in the party winning and forming its own government. The Congress party not only verbally claimed the waiver of all institutional and non-institutional debts of farmers and agricultural labourers to show the people a good fair, but also sought written information from the people on their debts. Apart from this promise, many other promises were made besides providing employment to every household. In the budget presented by the Punjab Finance Minister in the Vidhan Sabha on March 8, Rs. 1712 crore has been provided to clear the debts of farmers and agricultural labourers and promised to provide 48989 jobs in government departments and free travel facility to women and students in government buses. The old age, widow, disabled and destitute pension has been increased from Rs. 750 per month to Rs. 1500 per month,

the amount to be paid under Ashirwad scheme has been increased from Rs. 21000 to Rs. 51000, the recommendations of the Sixth Pay Commission would be implemented from July 1, two new medical colleges at Kapurthala and Hoshiarpur, one new college at Malerkotla, a grant of Rs. 90 crore to Punjab University, Patiala, Rs. 19641 crore for social services, Rs. 11000 crore for electricity subsidy for all sections and Rs. 200 crore for agricultural diversification.

A survey conducted in Punjab by the author and his colleagues revealed that Punjab's marginal, small, semi-medium and medium farmers and agricultural labourers have so much debt that what to talk about the repayment of their debt, they are not in a position even to pay the in-



terest on it as they are forced to take loans to keep the stove burning for their mere two meals. As we move from the large farm-size category to the marginal farm-size category, the debt burden per acre increases. The worst hit debtors are agricultural labourers because they have no other means of production other than selling their labour. The research study was discussed in the Vidhan Sabha in 2017 and the government assured to waive off the debts of farmers and agricultural labourers. Various research studies conducted in Punjab and government data have highlighted that at present the debt of farmers is close to Rs. 1.5 lakh crore and there are different estimates of debt of agricultural labourers. The Punjab Government waived only a nominal debt (less than Rs. 5000 crore) of marginal and small farmers but the farmers were humiliated by the politicians in public functions when they were given debt relief certificates and the agricultural labourers were completely forgotten. Now in view of the 2022 elections, the Punjab Government has set aside Rs. 1186 crore for waiving loans of 1.13 lakh marginal and small farmers and only Rs. 526 crores for agricultural labourers. Past experience has shown that when debt waiver certificates are distributed, many will be

disqualified by creating all sorts of knots and those who will be given debt waiver certificates will be humiliated by taking photographs in public. A door-to-door survey conducted by Punjabi University, Patiala, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar and Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana revealed that 16606 farmers and agricultural labourers committed suicide between 2000 and 2016. About 40 per cent of them are agricultural labourers and about 76 per cent of the farmers are marginal and small farmers. Debt has been the main cause of suicides among farmers and agricultural labourers.

The Punjab Government has been providing free electricity and water to the farmers for irrigation in view of the rising debt burden of the

sections. The point that needs to be taken into consideration in this regard is how these sections of the society, who are suffering from various afflictions, will be able to live with Rs. 50 per day. In this regard it is important to mention the pensions of MLAs and MPs or they too should realize the difficulties of these categories by taking Rs. 1500 per month. Apart from this, even the meager pension given to these sections is not received on time due to which they are seen stumbling.

The announcement of Punjab Government to provide jobs to 48989 people in the various government departments seems good. There are many aspects that need attention in this regard. In 2017, before the elections, door-to-door employment was promised. If employment had been provided to every household in the last 4 years, why would our young children migrate in large numbers to foreign countries? A study conducted by Dr. Gurinder Kaur, Dr. Gian Singh, Dr. Dharmapal, Dr. Rashmi, Dr. Rupinder Kaur, Dr. Sukhveer Kaur and Dr. Jyoti on international migration of young children from Patiala district due to lack of employment has revealed that Punjab and the whole country is suffering a lot more than just brain drain, capital drain and loss of demographic dividend.

Under Ashirwad scheme, the amount to be given for marriage of girls from poor families is increased from Rs. 21000 to Rs. 51000. Despite the passage of more than seven decades of independence, our rulers have not been able to provide the ordinary working people with even the minimum level of income in which they can meet their basic needs in a respectful manner. The rulers must answer when they will do so?

The Punjab Government has announced the implementation of the Sixth Pay Commission for its employees for which Rs. 9000 crore has been earmarked. It has also been stated that if there are any arrears of government employees, these will be paid in phases. The Central Government and many State Governments have already paid the revised scales and arrears to their employees.

The announcement to open two new medical colleges in Kapurthala and Hoshiarpur and a new college in Malerkotla is welcome. The point to consider in this regard is when will the severe shortage of staff and facilities in the existing medical colleges be met? Higher education can be imparted to the young children

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Increasing the old age, widow, disabled and destitute pension in the budget from Rs. 750 per month to Rs. 1500 per month will definitely give some relief to these



# Short changing Sacramento County on Vaccines

As we work toward what will hopefully be the end of this now year-long pandemic, a natural discussion topic is around vaccines. Through the roller coaster of the COVID-19 response, for many people the vaccines offered hope for bringing all of it to an end. Understandably, since the first doses of vaccines became available, I have heard from countless constituents frustrated with how challenging it is to access the vaccine or even get connected with information on the process. I get it. Some of the challenges in this process fall on the county. We could have come out with a better website and had a more thought-out plan for distribution. Like many of the struggles we have all gone through over the last year, I am afraid that the leading cause of our woes is the state once again.

When vaccines first became available, there was a simple explanation of why there were not enough vaccines to go around: limited supply. Not all of the vaccines that are available today were even approved for distribution back in January. The ones that were approved and in circulation were limited and had to be stored

under specific conditions. Of course, there is also the fact that both the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines required recipients to receive two doses, limiting the supply even further. Thanks to the approval of the Jansen vaccine, the total supply is increasing. Unfortunately, the state's increase in supply being distributed does not necessarily benefit Sacramento County residents hoping to get their dose(s).

The inconsistency in distribution became blatantly apparent in February when the state's total vaccine supply rose 20%, and Sacramento County's allocation dropped by 18%. Unfortunately, this has become a pattern. In January, Sacramento County received 2.83% of the state's total distribution of doses. Since then, we have seen that percentage steadily decrease. On March 8th, even with the newly available Jansen vaccine, Sacramento County's allocation from the state fell to just 1.65% of total doses distributed. There is some explanation for this, including that Sacramento County's population of eligible or priority populations is lower than neighboring counties. The best explanation

I've heard came from our Acting Director of Public Health. During the March 9th Board of Supervisors Meeting, he said that what is essentially happening is that the governor changes his mind every two weeks. The distribution formula changes, and it never benefits Sacramento County.

At this point, are any of us surprised? The state's response to the pandemic has been a series of changes based on state officials' whims uninterested in looking at challenges at the local level. As other counties take larger percentages of the state's distribution of doses, they are blazing past Sacramento County through the tiered system of eligible vaccine recipients. Meanwhile, my office is still receiving calls from individuals eligible since the first dose was administered, struggling to access the vaccines that will bring them peace of mind or closer to normalcy. At the same time, Sacramento County's public health officials have to spend their time advocating to the state for a distribution method that accounts for the fact that Sacramento County is a regional distribution hub, and even with 3% of the state's population, we have never re-

ceived 3% of the state's distribution.

I think everyone that wants the vaccine should be able to get the vaccine. I understand the challenges with rolling out an emergency vaccine amid a global pandemic, and I knew it was never going to be easy. However, the reality of what is going on at the local level continues to be an afterthought for the state, and it seems Sacramento County is somewhere in the far back.

Thank you for reading – and as always, if you want to contact me, call me at 916-874-5491, or e-mail me at SupervisorFrost@saccounty.net. Sue Frost represents the 4th District, which includes all or part of the communities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, Orangevale, Antelope, Rio Linda, Elverta, Gold River, Rancho Murieta,



**Sue Frost**  
Sacramento County Supervisor

# Insights of Punjab Budget 2021-22 : Massive Shallow Promises with Empty Pockets

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by opening new colleges, but in around last 25 years, professors have not been recruited in the government colleges of Punjab and the teaching is being done with the help of guest faculty. Among these guest faculty teachers are those who are unemployed because they have not been paid for months.

Punjabi University, Patiala is one of the leading institutes in Punjab for imparting education and research to young children. This institute has contributed immensely to a large number of students and researchers from different areas, especially Malwa, to reach the heights of their lives. But now due to the negligence and wrong policies of the Punjab Government, its very existence is in jeopardy. The persistent reduction in grants to universities has led to a situation where teachers and staff have been protesting and struggling to get their salaries and pensions. How will the teachers who do not get their salaries on time do research and development work? In this budget a grant of Rs. 90 crore for Punjabi University, Patiala may provide temporary relief for 3-4 months, but the definitive solution is to increase the grant given by the

Punjab Government as required.

Announcing Rs.200 crore for agricultural diversification may provide some relief, but only the Central Government can come up with a concrete solution. The Central Government and the NITI Ayog often give advice/instructions to the farmers and the Government of Punjab in this regard. At present, agricultural diversification is not possible without the help of the Central Government. Therefore, the Punjab Government should take a stand with the Central Government and persuade it so that the land, groundwater, environment and people can be saved from various problems.

Punjab's political parties are wasting a lot of time blaming each other. There are some very important aspects of Punjab that all political parties need to pay attention to. According to the Reserve Bank of India, Punjab's social sector expenditure during 2016-17 was Rs. 48270 crore which was reduced to Rs. 24896.10 crore during 2019-20. The per capita expenditure of Punjab was Rs. 6980 while that of Haryana was Rs. 13233 and the national figure was Rs. 8962. In the current budget of Punjab, the social sector expenditure has been

further reduced to Rs. 19641 crore. According to a CAG report, the Punjab Government has a debt of Rs.1.93 lakh crore in 2019-20 which will increase to Rs.3.93 lakh crore in 2024-25. With 73 per cent of the new loans taken by the Punjab Government, only the old loans and interest on these loans are being repaid. One of the reasons for the steady rise in debt of the Punjab Government is the ongoing discrimination by the Central Government. Subsidies to industries in hilly states, militancy-era law and order costs imposed on Punjab, Punjab being a border state and not providing financial assistance for contribution to the Central Pool of Foodgrains by bearing huge losses and some others are responsible for increasing debt of the state and many other problems. Most of the political parties in Punjab and other states are responsible for the weakening of the federal structure of the country. When the law on GST was enacted, most of the political parties supported it, but now the Central Government is forcing the states to take loans by not paying their share of the GST. Playing a game of statistics with the help of government economists to mislead the states, the Central

Government has claimed that the share of the states in the taxes collected by the Central Government has been increased from 32 to 42 per cent. But in reality, the revenue from tax surcharges and cesses, which constitute 19.9 per cent of the total tax revenue of the Central Government, was excluded. Out of 42 per cent, one per cent is reserved for Jammu and Kashmir. In fact, the share of states was merely increased from 32 to 32.84 percent.

Therefore, it is the need of the hour to strengthen the federal structure by allowing the states, municipal committees/corporations, panchayats to impose and collect taxes at their own levels. All the political parties should increase pressure on the Central Government through deliberations to strengthen the states.

The states can make commendable contribution to the development of the country while developing themselves. By doing so, all states, including Punjab, will be in a position to make their budgets pro-people. The Punjab Government should also set up state corporations for trading in sand, gravel, liquor and the like to increase its revenue.



**Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD**

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**Goodie Takhar, PhD**



## Forest Day

# Forests can protect against the effects of climate change

International Forest Day is celebrated on March 21, since 1971 when the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) decided to recognize the importance of forests for humans, animals and birds. Forests are a precious gift of nature. They are the natural asset of any country on the basis of which a good economy can be built. Forests are also called green gold because they cater to almost every human need. Forests absorb carbon dioxide from the air to make their own food through photosynthesis and produce oxygen for humans and other living things to breathe. They meet the nutritional needs of the human and animal population while providing habitat for wildlife. On Forest Day governments and society are made aware of the importance of forests. In the honor of the upcoming Forest Day, it makes it important to look at the global landscape and analyze how government policies are impacting current and future generations. The city of Miami in the United States of America is in the midst of a controversy over its decision to cut down palm trees to replace them with shade trees. Under The Miami Beach Urban Forestry Master Plan(2020), Miami city administration has unanimously decided to cut down 25 per cent of the city's palm trees by 2050 and replace them with dense shade trees such as Oak, Ash, Elm, and Sycamore. Currently about 55 per cent of the city's trees are palm trees. The swaying palm trees add to the beauty of the city and are an integral part of the landscape. The city administration also uses photos of Palm trees for tourism advertisements adding to the charm of Miami. Despite all this, the city administration has decided to cut down the palm trees to protect Miami from the ill effects of rising temperature. As compared to Palm trees, densely shaded trees such as oak, ash, elm, and sycamore will help more prevent sea level rise, reduce city temperature rise, improve air quality, and absorb more carbon and rainwater.

For Miami, natural disasters that come with climate change are their reality and no longer a problem to be faced in the future. The city is annually facing some kind of natural disaster. The sea level in the coastal parts of the city has risen by 5 inches since 1993. According to some scientists, the sea level could rise another 6 inches. According to a 2018 study by the Union of Concerned Scientists, if sea levels continue to rise at the current rate, 12,000 homes in Miami Beach will be severely flooded in the next 30 years, causing 6.4 billion in financial losses. Three years of study in cities of Baltimore, Richmond, Washington and some others by NOAA recorded that areas covered in concrete with few trees could be 17 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than shaded areas. The same study of NOAA, West Palm Beach near downtown was recorded at 122 degrees

Fahrenheit in August 2020, while Grassy Waters Preserve near the wetland was only 92 degrees Fahrenheit, 30 degrees Fahrenheit lower due to trees and dense vegetation.

One of the reasons for cutting down palm trees and planting Oak, Ash, Elm, and Sycamore trees is that a live oak tree with a canopy of 100 feet can absorb and store 92 pounds of carbon dioxide a year, while a large palm tree with 15 to 20 fronds can absorb only one pound carbon dioxide in an year. To protect the city of Miami and its inhabitants from the effects of rising temperature and to reduce carbon emissions, the administration has decided to change the species of trees. The Miami City Plan also provides guidance for different types of trees to have different carbon absorption capacity. Therefore, we need to pay attention to the



existence of trees, their species and forest cover and their maintenance.

According to a 2020 report by the Food and Agricultural Organization(FAO) of the United Nations, forests cover an area of 4.06 billion hectares, 31 per cent of the total area. The distribution of forests is not the same internationally. Some countries have more forest cover and some have less area. About 54 per cent of the total forest area is in the five countries - the Russian Federation (20.19 per cent), Brazil (12.2 per cent), Canada (8.5 per cent), the United States of America (7.6 per cent), and China (5.4 per cent) and 16 per cent in Australia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Peru, and India. On the other hand, 11 countries, such as Niger, Algeria, Bahrain, Iceland and others have less than one per cent forest cover. Greenland, Qatar, Nauru, and San Marino have no forests at all.

Forests are called the lungs of the earth. These natural plants produce an infinite amount of oxygen. Forests use the carbon dioxide which we produce through various processes to make our own food. Forests also contribute to the prevention of global warming by absorbing excess carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Forests absorb excess rainwater through their roots, increasing groundwater levels as well as protecting them from flooding. Their roots prevent the soil from eroding. Different types of trees provide shelter to

animals and birds and also increase biodiversity, but nowadays man has become very selfish. Humans are indiscriminately cutting down forests for their own narrow interests. According to a 2020 report by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, 178 million hectares have been deforested in the last three decades. During the period 2015-2020, deforestation was done from 10 million hectares per annum which is only 2 million hectares less than 12 million hectares per year during 2010-2015. According to the report, Brazil, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Angola, Paraguay, Cambodia, Bolivia and other countries have witnessed the highest deforestation in the last ten years.

Growing populations are generally considered to be the main

cause of deforestation because everyone needs food and shelter. Statistics show that deforestation in the recent decades has not been done to meet the basic needs of the people, such as food and shelter, but to expand commercial agriculture on a large scale. Commercial agriculture mainly includes animal husbandry, soybean, and palm cultivation. The need for commercial agriculture stems from the altered food choices of rich countries. Most of the food is being cut down in South America, Africa, and Southeast Asia, but it is being used by high-income European and North American countries. Livestock, palm, and soybean cultivation are responsible for 60 per cent deforestation and are also having a detrimental effect on the environment.

Deforestation provides habitats and pastures for animals to be eaten as food. This process significantly increases the amount of two gases in the atmosphere, carbon dioxide (by animal's respiration) and methane (by animal's digestion). Both of these gases are important gases that raise temperature. Methane gas is capable of heating the atmosphere 25 times more than carbon dioxide. One animal emits 220 pounds of methane gas each year. A study by Davis UC revealed that animals are responsible for producing 14.5 per cent of the total greenhouse gases. Old and dense canopy trees in forests can absorb more carbon dioxide than pastures and fodder crops. More than 75

per cent of soybeans are grown for animal feed.

The food industry associated with commercial agriculture is likely to have a severe impact on the environment in the near future. Big companies and banks are now investing heavily in this industry. For them, it remains an important source of profit. J.P. Morgan Chase Bank has invested \$450 million in Brazilian meat packaging companies since 2016. In addition, Rabobank, Morgan Stanley, Barclays, Goldman Sachs and others are investing heavily in commercial agriculture, which is directly and indirectly linked to deforestation and high carbon dioxide production. With the rapid deforestation, temperatures are already rising rapidly. According to a NOAA report dated January 14, 2021, the average temperature of the earth is 1 degree Celsius higher than at the time of the Industrial Revolution. An international team of scientists has revealed in a new study, released on March 10, 2021, that a half-degree Celsius rise in temperature could significantly increase the number of wildfires and the depth of their fire which will further reduce the forest area. The forest fires and the declining area under them will further increase the temperature.

The existence of forests is very important for human and animal life, but humans are endangering themselves by cutting them down for their own petty interests. Although the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) decided in 1971 to observe The World Forest Day to save forests, large-scale deforestation is still taking place. With the declining area of forests, humans are getting closer to the wild animals and also taking germs of various diseases from them. Humans have to increase the area under forests to protect themselves from all kinds of environmental degradation. In order to control the rise in temperature, local trees should be given preference over beautiful trees like the city of Miami. Brazil, a country in South America, needs guidance from countries in Africa. African countries have launched a campaign to plant 1 billion trees in a 5,000-mile-long and 9-mile-wide area from Senegal on the west coast of the African continent to Djibouti on the east coast in a bid to tackle the climate crisis. According to the Paris Climate Agreement, unnecessary changes in food should be prevented to prevent temperature from rising above 1.5 degrees Celsius so that indiscriminate deforestation in the name of commercial farming must not be allowed. Heavy investment by large companies and banks in commercial agriculture should be stopped in order to save forests and prevent natural disasters due to rising temperature.



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# Manyavar Kanshi Ram

## Floral Tributes on his 87th Birth Anniversary

March 15th, 2020, just a few days away, will be Manyavar Shri Kanshi Ram Ji's 86th birthday. Manyavar Kanshi Ram who is also revered as Yugpurush or Jan Nayak by his followers, devoted his entire adult life in pursuit of fulfilling the dreams of Babasaheb, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in political mobilization and upliftment of those who were amputated for centuries from the main body- organism of the Indian society. Before taking a glimpse into his dynamic role as a crusader for social justice, we, on behalf of SUPREME COUNCIL, SRI GURU RAVIDASS SABHAS USA, CONGRATULATE millions of his followers and admirers worldwide on this auspicious occasion of his 87th Birth Anniversary.

**CRUSADE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE:-** While employed in a responsible and a comfortably well paid job in Explosives Research and Development Laboratory in Pune (Maharashtra), Saheb Shri Kanshi Ram Ji came in close contact with some of his colleagues and friends who were associated with the concept of Babasaheb Ambedkar's philosophy and struggle for equality and social justice. Shri Kanshi Ram was motivated to make an exhaustive study of Babasaheb's literature and the five Books which impacted his conscience the most and illuminated his journey from early years in rural Punjab to his association with Ambedkarites in Pune are listed below. 1) Castes in India, their Mechanism Genesis and Development (1916). 2) Annihilation of Caste (1936). 3) Mr. Gandhi and the Emancipation of Untouchables. (1943). 4) What Congress and Gandhi have done to Untouchables. 5) States and Minorities.

Repeated and penetrating study of literary treasure of Babasaheb bequeathed by him to the future guardians of his Caravan awakened Shri Kanshi Ram Ji from a slumber of ignorance, urging him to dedicate his entire life to complete the unfinished work of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Chatrapati Sahu Ji Maharaj and Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

**MOVEMENTS LAUNCHED:-** Resigning from his Government job in Pune Shri Kanshi Ram Ji moved back to



**O.P. BALLEY**  
General Secretary,  
Supreme Council  
Sri Guru Ravidass  
Sabhas, USA

Northern India in the mid- sixties and after consolidating his basis in Punjab he decided to launch BAMCEF, DS-4 organizations and finally founded BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY which has now assumed the status of a National political party in India.

He was filled with an ardent ambition, fervor and dynamism to take the Caravan of Babasaheb to its destination for which he travelled day and night from village to village, rallying around him a large magnitude of supporters, pedaling his travels on bicycles or any other available mode of transport, soliciting support and collecting funds without which the ambitious campaigns he was launching could not be empowered to march on the track carved out by Babasaheb.

**FOCUS ON UTTER PRADESH:-** From Punjab he extended the focus of his activities to UTTER PRADESH which he believed more promising to execute his ideological plans. There he was introduced to Kumari Mayawati, then employed as a school teacher and preparing for her I.A.S Examination.

Shri Kanshi Ram who saw in Mayawati some shining rays of a brighter future to be his protégé, persuaded her to join his campaign to rid the people sitting at the lowest rung of the social ladder suffering while living a life of servitude at the hands of the so called upper classes of society. It was Manyavar Kanshi Ram Ji's sustained efforts, hard work, intellectual acumen and farsightedness to groom and launch Mayawati's political career, thus enabling her to become the first Dalit Chief Minister of U.P four times. Mayawati regards Shri Kanshi Ram Ji as her political mentor. Shri Kanshi Ram himself too was elected to the Parliament which provided him better leverage to move his political Agenda further.

**THOUGHTS ON CASTE SYSTEM:-** While elaborating his views on centuries-old caste system in India Manyavar Kanshi Ram Ji was very vocal and emphatic in stating that "There are millions of people who leave their villages and migrate to Metropolitan cities like Bombay, Delhi and Kolkata and other big

cities. These people do not bring anything else with them. The only thing they bring with them is their caste. They leave behind in their villages their small huts, small plot of land etc. But they cannot leave behind their caste in the village." This is very much true even when they migrate to foreign countries. He travelled all over India to attract the unprivileged people to his fold, telling them that "People who want to make history must learn from history. The greatest strength of weaker sections of society lies in their unity and solidarity."

**ERA OF CHAMCHA AGE:-** In his Book "CHAMCHA AGE" Manyavar Kanshi Ram Ji brings up a very candid and a crystal statement about those who pose and brag as leaders of the deprived sections but in reality they are tempted by personal greeds and sell themselves to boost their own fake images with no concern for those who put them in their positions of power.

**RESPONSIBILITY ON BAHEN MAYAWATI:-** Behan Mayawati who holds the strings of running the Bahujan Samaj Party knows very well the onus of responsibility left on her shoulders by his mentor Shri Kanshi Ram Ji to fulfil the dreams of Babasaheb, Dr B.R. Ambedkar. The entire Bahujan Samaj which Kanshi Ram Ji laboured so hard to rebuild has pinned its hopes on her for future course of action as the "SUPREMO" of the Bahujan Samaj Party.

**POLITICAL VACUUM AFTER BABASAHEB:-** For a period of more than twenty years after the sudden demise of Babasaheb in 1956 we saw a political vacuum in his life long struggle for social transformation. It was deliberately crafted by some unruly forces of Manuwadi- ideology to obliterate the life-long accomplishments of Dr. Ambedkar. But Saheb Shri Kanshi Ram's unyielding determination and sustained efforts provided a renewed vigor, momentum and optimism to the vision of Dr. Ambedkar. That is why Babasaheb is now venerated



as a universally acknowledged "LIBERATOR of the down-trodden and builder of modern India.

**KANSHI RAM JI'S PLACE IN HISTORY:-** Following the foot- prints of his mentor Babasaheb, Shri Kanshi Ram Ji decided to convert to Buddhism on October 14th, 2006 alongwith five hundred thousand followers, but unfortunately he breathed his last on October 9th 2006, just a few days before the projected date for conversion. This was a big jolt and shock to millions of his followers in the entire Bahujan Samaj. Though Kanshi Ram Ji has left his mortal frame but the inexhaustible treasure of his contributions to rekindle the flame of Babasaheb's struggle for restoration of human rights has immortalized him in the hearts and souls of his people. History will treat him with dignity and honor for his selfless services to his Samaj and the country as a whole.

For the sake of his mission he willingly gave up his personal interests and comforts by remaining unmarried all his life, acquiring no property or Bank Balances and never going back to visit his Native home in Punjab.

We salute in reverence to this great soul for his selfless contributions to the entire Bahujan fraternity for which he deserves to be awarded with the distinguished honor of "BHARAT RATNA".

Let us conclude with his famous Slogan  
**"VOTE HAMARA RAJ TUMHARA,  
NAHI CHALEGA! NAHI CHALEGA!"**  
With best wishes  
**O.P. BALLEY**

## Condolence Message

Demise of my close friend Narang Sahib, March 2, whom I affectionately called Guruji is a great personal loss which cannot be recovered. I first met him in Edinburgh (Scotland) when I was the Consul General of India sometime in the summer of 2008. He was kind enough to be our personal guest for a few days at India House, my official residence with one of his disciples and a friend Gurdial Mahey of Birmingham in UK who is one of my cousins. I cherish those memories - every evening Mehfil at the Guest House of our residence with Guruji and Gurdial taking turns on the Keyboard over several Cheers with good spirits freely flowing around. My wife, Vidya, whom Narang Sahib always addressed as Madame with

respect, also liked him very much as he was totally courteous and kind. Later I met him many a times both at my residence in Jalandhar and other social and cultural events. Guruji was a much respected personality in the elite social and cultural circles of Jalandhar and beyond. Once I went to drop him at his residence after a couple of drinks at the place of a common friend. He insisted to come in which I did. He insisted to have a drink and immediately brought a bottle of good Scotch. But with great pleading, I took leave without drinking and promised to drop in some other day later. Narang Sahib reminded me of that promise many times later and asked me to visit them with my wife. But I could not keep my promise. That



was not to be. I will catch up with him somewhere else. Naman to my sagacious friend, Guru ji Baldev Narang. Rest in Peace:  
Na Hath Tham Sake; Na Pakad Sake Daman,  
Bahut Karib Se Uthkar Chala Gya Koi.  
With heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family at his Antim Ardas on March 14, 2021.  
**(Ramesh Chander)**



# Boris Johnson to visit India in April-end, Indo-Pacific ties in focus

The confirmation from the UK PM comes two months after he had to cancel his visit to India due to rising Covid-19 infections in his country

Marking his first major international trip after Brexit, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will visit India at the end of April as part of efforts to boost the UK's opportunities in the region, Reuters reported citing his office on Tuesday. The confirmation from the UK PM comes two months after he had to cancel his visit to India due to rising Covid-19 infections in his country. Johnson, who was invited by India as a Republic Day chief guest, had planned the trip in January as part of efforts to speed up trade talks between the two nations.

Downing Street had announced that Johnson will travel to India in January 2021 to strengthen a key strategic relationship that supports jobs and investment across the United Kingdom as part of his first major bilateral visit since taking office, and the first since the UK's de-

parture from the European Union.

On the upcoming visit, John-

son's office said, "...it would 'tilt' its focus towards the Indo-Pacific region as part of its Integrated Review of



son's office said, "...it would 'tilt' its focus towards the Indo-Pacific region as part of its Integrated Review of

government policy for the coming years, saying the area increasingly

represented the geopolitical centre of the world."

Britain made a formal request

to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) last month, seeking membership of the 11-country bloc to open new avenues for post-Brexit trade and influence. The country has also applied to become a dialogue partner of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). "We are pursuing trade deals from Australia to the US and around the world – particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, a huge growth market for the future," foreign minister Dominic Raab wrote in December.

The UK and India are significant investors and markets for each other's economies with growing trade and investment relationship worth around £24 billion a year, supporting more than half a million jobs.

Source Courtesy:

Hindustan Times March 16, 2021

# Chandrayaan-3 launch planned by mid 2022, working on electric propulsion satellites: ISRO

ISRO Chief Dr Sivan spoke in detail about ISRO's Chandrayaan-3

(Moon mission 3) and also the ambitious Human Spaceflight programme (Gaganyaan)

While addressing the students and faculty of UPES University, on the 'Future of Aerospace and Avionics in India', ISRO Chairman and Secretary DoS Dr.K.Sivan spoke about projects planned for the coming year.

Among the projects he mentioned, he spoke in detail about ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 (Moon mission 3) and also the ambitious Human Spaceflight programme (Gaganyaan).

"Over the next decade, the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) is targeting several advanced capabilities including a Heavy-lift launch vehicle that can carry upto 16-ton payloads to the Geostationary Transfer Orbit (which is four times the current lift capability of GSLV Mk3) and also partially, fully reusable launch vehicles, among others," Chairman K.Sivan said.

"We have identified, understood the deficiencies of Chandrayaan-2 and taken corrective measures for the next mission, which we are planning for launch within the first half of 2022. Gaganyaan design is in the final stages and project realization has started, all efforts are on for first unmanned mission trial by this year end" he stated.

Elaborating on ISRO's plans for the upcoming year and the near future he said that payload capability to Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO) will be increased to 5 tons (an increase from the current 4 tons) using a semi-cryogenic engine on the existing GSLV Mk3 rocket.

Semi-cryo engines burn rocket-grade kerosene and liquid oxygen, such engines are powerful, environmentally friendly and cost-effective.



Dr. Sivan also mentioned the need for a more powerful booster stages (that powers the rocket at lift-off), adding that a more powerful 2000N(Newton) Liquid oxygen and kerosene engine was a work in progress.

The Indian space agency is

also making a switch towards environmental-friendly rocket fuels by working on Liquid oxygen - methane and similar green propellants.

Engines powered by methane and liquid oxygen (MethaLOX in short) are

widely used in reusable rockets as methane is a clean burning fuel that leaves no residue, as opposed to kerosene. Clean burning ensures that the engines can be reused many times with less or no refurbishment.

"For satellites we are in the final stages of developing a 300mN

high-thrust electric propulsion system. This will eliminate use of chemical fuels in satellites and result in lighter satellites by saving on fuel weight" Dr. Sivan said.

He added that India's first test facility for a semi-cryogenic engine is expected to be ready by later this year and that India had formulated a rocket grade kerosene that they call 'ISROsene' (to fuel the semi-cryo engines), which was formulated using the help of Indian industry. ISRO is also working with industry partners on the long-term production capability of this fuel.

Inviting academia and industry to ideate and provide payloads for India's second Mars Mission Mangalyaan-2, Dr. Sivan said that the second Mars mission project was in its definition stage.

Source Courtesy:

ZeeNews March 14, 2021

# In a first, Government schools in Punjab launch E-prospectus

After sprucing up infrastructural facilities, qualitative improvement in education, the government schools in district will now introduce e-prospectus. The education department has constituted "Enrollment Booster Teams right from the state to block level in the state to sensitise people about the massive improvement in infrastructure and quality in teaching-learning in government schools. In addition, to it, the schools will now have e-prospectus to facilitate online enrolment. "The e-prospectus is an innovative idea to showcase the revolutionary changes during the past four years in general as well as distinctive features and achievements of the government schools in particular," said Satinderbir Singh, District Education Officer (SE) cum State Coordinator, Enrollment Booster Team. School campus will also implement educative BALA (Building As Learning Aid) work, Smart Class rooms, equipped with LED Projectors to ensure optimum utilisation of e-content as well as latest digital applications, innovative teaching modules, techniques and activities. Consequently, the government schools witnessed about 15 per cent increase in enrolment during the academic session 2020-21. Deepika Dean, Principal, Govt.High school, Abdal, said the school had pre-

pared e-prospectus and is aiming to make the people aware about distinctive features of the school, including, optimum utilisation of digital applications, e content in smart classrooms, Smart Computer and science Labs, "A" grade sports facility in games of Hockey and Volleyball available in the school. "With the mobilisation of the village panchayat and community, the school has succeeded in getting donations in the shape of land and a community hall for extension of infrastructure facilities. The e-prospectus is being circulated among the target sections of the society by making use of the vast social media network being created by the education department. The schools have their own Facebook pages and Whats App groups of students, parents, sarpanches, anganwadi workers, SMCs and other sections of the society," she informed. Enrollment Booster Teams at the district and block levels are also mobilising school heads and teachers to come forward for massive public awareness activities including door to door enrolment campaigns, Nukkad Nataks, distribution of pamphlets, announcement via public address systems of religious places in their respective areas. Source Courtesy: The Tribune, March 16, 2021





# Isro to attempt solar mission by end of 2021

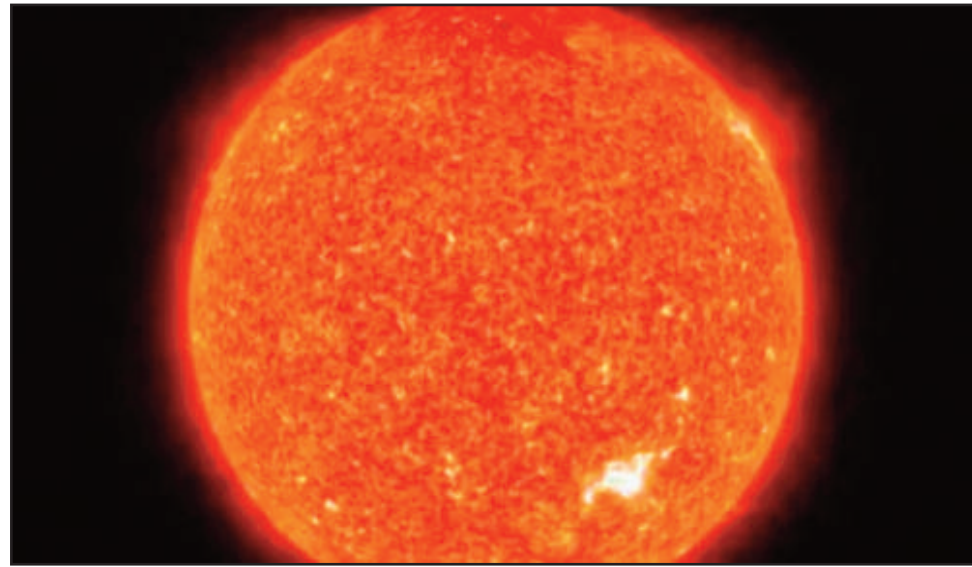
The scientific mission will see the satellite travel 1.5 million kilometres from the Earth to study the Sun's atmosphere

India is likely to attempt its first solar mission at the end of the year after the Covid-19 pandemic delayed the launch of the Aditya L-1 mission, earlier slated for the first half of 2020, according to people in the national space agency.

The scientific mission will see the satellite travel 1.5 million kilometres from the Earth to study the Sun's atmosphere. The satellite will be sent to the L1 or Lagrangian point between the Earth and the Sun, which is where the gravitational pull of both the bodies on the satellite is equal to the centripetal force needed to keep satellite in orbit.

These points are like parking spots in space from where a satellite can make observations without burning much fuel. This point between the Earth and the Sun allows an uninterrupted view of the solar surface. The mission will carry six scientific payloads that will study the visible surface of the sun called photosphere, the irregular layer over it called the Chromosphere, and the layer of plasma called Corona, which extends for thousands of kilometers and has a very high temperature of around 6,000 Kelvin (5726.85 degrees Cel-

sus), according to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). The mission is almost ready for launch, people aware of the



developments said.

This will be one of the two big-ticket missions that the national space agency plans to conduct during the year; the other being the launch of the first unmanned flight under the Gaganyaan mission, which is also planned in December 2021.

The generic space training –

survival training in snow, water and steppe, parabolic flights, theoretical classes on orbital mechanics, and astronavigation – of the four selected

Indian Air Force pilots for the first Gaganyaan mission is nearing completion at the Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Centre, according to a reply by the government in the Lok Sabha. An expert team has been constituted to define the training curriculum specific to the Indian mission.

The preliminary design re-

views of space foods, potable water, crew health monitoring system, emergency survival kits and crew medical kit have been completed, according to the government's answer.

The agency is yet to set a date for its third mission to the Moon with only a lander and rover that will attempt a soft landing on the lunar surface. The government green-lit the third mission soon after the lander-rover of the Chandrayaan 2 mission crashed and lost communication just 2.1km from the surface.

Isro has planned eight launch missions during the year other than the one commercial PSLV-C51 mission that was launched last month and carried the first satellite by an Indian start-up. The other missions scheduled for the year include the earth observation GISAT-1 that was to be launched on March 5 but was postponed. This was to be the first heavy satellite to be launched by the modified Geo-Synchronous Launch Vehicle with higher payload capacity.

The 10th satellite in the NavIC constellation is also scheduled to be launched this year.

Source Courtesy:

Hindustan Times March 16, 2021

# Indian Railways to soon run trains at 130 km/hr on Delhi-Amritsar route

A senior official of Indian Railways inspected yards at Chandigarh railway station and afterwards, there was a speed trial run at 130 Kmph between Chandigarh to Ambala Cantt

General Manager Northern Railway Ashutosh Gagal on Sunday inspected the stations of Ludhiana, Jalandhar, and Vyas on the Delhi-Amritsar route where the trains will start running at the upgraded speed of 130 kilometers per hour in the coming days.

"We are going to start running trains at a speed of 130 km/hr from Delhi to the Amritsar railway track for which we have come to inspect the track. Earlier here, trains used to run at a speed of 110 kilometers per hour. We will keep increasing the speed as the works get completed. Our trains are running at the speed of 130

km/hr on the Ahmedabad to Mumbai track," said Gagal.

Ashutosh Gagal inspected yards at Chandigarh railway station after there was a speed trial run at 130 Kmph between Chandigarh (Km 242/17) to Ambala Cantt (Km. 197.14)

Ashutosh Gagal, General Manager conducted extensive inspection of Amb Andaura- Chandigarh Section. He was accompanied by G.M Singh, Divisional Railway Manager, Ambala Division and Senior Di-

visional Officers of Ambala Division He inspected Amb Andaura Railway Station, circulating area and passenger amenities. He also discussed about Nangal Dam Talwara Project

Going over the station premises at the next halting station i.e.,

point no. K-4 at km 84/01-83/17 & SEJ no. 17 and its circulating area. Then in between Bharat Garh & Ghanuli, GM inspected Bridge no. 140 (11x30.5 m) at km. 60/04-59/11.

At the next halting Station

After that the General Manager inspected point no. 129-B in Chandigarh Yard in Chandigarh railway station and also inspected the S&T, WSO class room, Power cabin, running room, lobby, circulating area and Main Porch. Further there was inauguration of HRMS and RESS KIOSK by Personnel deptt and distribution of HRMS Booklet. He also discussed the station relocation plan in VIP Lounge adjoining SS office and after he interacted with media representatives.

GM Ashutosh Gagal also met with members of Railway Unions and Associations and interacted with representatives of Rail passengers in VIP room platform 1 at Ambala Station.

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, the railway faced a loss of ₹2400 crore, which is the biggest loss so far," he added.

The General Manager also informed that the bridge on the Chenab river will be ready soon for transportation and it will be the "world's highest bridge".

Source Courtesy:

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Una Himachal, the General Manager inspected station and on his next halting at Nangal Dam, Shri Ashutosh Gagal inspected the station along with C&W Depot, running room, railway colony ASM Office, Circulating area. He also inspected the newly renovated Waiting Room over there.

On his departure from Nangal Dam, the General Manager inspected manned LC-C-79 Eng-Interlocked at 96/5-4 km between Nangal Dam-Anandpur Sahib. Next at Anandpur Sahib he inspected the station yard at

Rup Nagar, the General Manager inspected the whole premises of the station and circulating area. He also inspected at curve no. 12 (2 Degree, 510m) at Km. 34/11-3 and further inspected Gang No. 5 (1 + 1 + 15) at Km. 34/04-02 between Mianpur – Kurali station and also distributed benefit booklet of employee by the Personnel Department. Next halting Station at Saheb jada Ajit Singh Nagar GM Shri Ashutosh Gagal inspected the station, colony, USFD & the small track machine.