

## WORSHIPPING TRIDENTS Indian Saints Seek Divine Intervention to Help 'Failing Economy'

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**NEW DELHI:** India's economic malaise has been deepening with growth declining and inflation rising, and the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) hitting a six-year low of 4.5 per cent in the July-September 2019 quarter against 5 per cent in April-June 2019.

At a time when India's federal government seems to be silent on what's perceived as the slowing economy, the county's saints have taken it on themselves to seek divine intervention to remedy the perceived economic malaise.

Saints in the holy city of Prayagraj, in northern Uttar Pradesh, have invoked good times for the economy by worshipping 54 tridents - a weapon that Lord Shiva, from the triad of Hindu gods, carries.

At an ongoing congregation of saints on the occasion of Magh Mela - the annual cultural and spiritual festival in the month of Magha (January/February) as per the Hindu calendar, saints have worshipped 54 tridents.

All the tridents have been smeared with red vermilion and offered to the Goddess Lakshmi - the Hindu Goddess of Wealth, with a plea to bestow economic well-being and help India out of its slowdown.

The worship was performed by one Mouni Maharaj of Paramhans hermitage in Amethi in Uttar Pradesh state. Mouni Maharaj told media, "I am trying to please and seek benevolence from the Goddess Lakshmi. This will help improve the economic situation in the country."

Mouni Maharaj said 54 red coloured tridents were offered to please the goddess, and the deity was invoked thrice daily for the purpose of economic well-being.

In New Delhi, however, the Modi government which had been completely silent on the economic crisis is preparing the annual budget, which will be tabled in parliament by the federal Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1. It remains to be seen what solutions Sitharaman offers to the economic troubles that run deep in the Indian economy.

All the macroeconomic indicators, meanwhile, reveal a gloomy picture. From a high of 8 per cent in April-June of 2018, India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth has almost halved to 4.5 per cent during July-September of 2019. The impact of the slowdown is multiplied by rising inflation.

According to government data, the retail inflation rate in the month of December touched 7.35 per cent compared with 5.54 per cent in November. Similarly, India's wholesale price index-based inflation zoomed to 2.59 per cent in December 2019 against 0.58 per cent in November.

## Encroachment Turns Famous Haigam Rakh Into A Big Marsh

**SRINAGAR:** Haigam Rakh, a famous sanctuary near Sopore of North Kashmir Baramulla district, which was once a world famous sanctuary for migratory birds has turned into big patch of marshy land today, due to large scale unchecked encroachment.

Due to large scale encroachments and insensitivity of authorities to keep check on human interference in the wetland, it has reduced a big pond, forcing migratory birds to find an alternative habitat as their winter home.

Residents from the area said that the Haigam wetland, which used to be winter home for thousands of migratory birds like Siberian geese, ducks and cranes, hardly witnesses any presence of these now.

Ali Mohammad a member of the group, who visited CNS said, "Over past fifty years, Haigam Rakh has been brutally vandalized, with the result it has



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turned into big marshy pond today."

"What once used to be home for thousands of migratory birds during the winter season, hardly witnesses presence of any of these now, in it", he added. Another local Mohammad Sharif said, "Haigam had an area of 3500 Kanals, just half a century ago, but due to the human interference at large scale, it is reduced to 5 or 7 hundred kanals today." "People have constructed

houses in the wetland, water cover has been turned into paddy lands through land filling, while plantation has been done within it, but authorities have never taken a cognizance of the large scale vandalization of wetland, which is still continuing without any let up" he added.

He further said that due to the plantation within the wetland, huge silt has accumulated in its base, due to the retention

by trees and their roots, turning it into a marshy pond.

If the leftover of the wetland has to be restored, it needs drugging at a large scale", he said.

The group of locals demanded action against those, who have encroached upon the wetland and their eviction from the wetland. They also demanded the drugging of the Haigam Rakh, to make it viable for migratory birds to return again to this sanctuary. (CNS)

## 'If Davinder Singh was a 'Khan', Trolls Would React Differently'

**NEW DELHI:** Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Tuesday said had police officer Davinder Singh been "Davinder Khan", the reaction of the "troll regiment of the RSS" would have been different.

Police on Saturday had arrested Singh, a deputy superintendent of police, at Mir Bazar in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam district, along with Hizbul Mujahideen militants Naveed Baba and Altaf, besides an unidentified lawyer who was working as an over-ground worker for militant outfits.

"Had Davinder Singh by default been Davinder Khan, the reaction of troll regiment of RSS would have been more strident and vociferous. Enemies

of our country ought to be condemned irrespective of colour, creed and religion," Chowdhury said on Twitter. The Congress leader also said now, the question will arise who were the real culprits behind the Pulwama attack.

The deadly strike in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama had left 40 Central Reserve Police Force personnel dead on February 14 last year.

"The chink in the armour is exposed in the Valley much to the consternation of us, we can not afford ourselves to be penny wise and pound foolish," he said.

"Now, question will certainly be arisen as to who were the real culprits behind the gruesome Pulwama incident, need a fresh look on it," Chowdhury said. PTI

## Davinder Singh was not awarded gallantry medal: J-K Police

**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu and Kashmir Police on Tuesday said reports claiming that suspended officer Davinder Singh, who was arrested along with two Hizbul Mujahideen militants, was awarded a gallantry medal by the Union Home Ministry are not true.

The recipient of the medal was another officer with the same name, it said. Some media reports have claimed that Singh was awarded the police medal for meritorious services on Independence Day last year.

"It is to clarify that Dysp Davinder Singh is not awarded any Gallantry or Meritorious Medal by MHA (Ministry of Home Affairs) as has been reported by some media outlets/persons. Only gallantry medal awarded to him during his

service is by the erstwhile J&K State on Independence Day 2018," the Jammu and Kashmir Police said in a tweet.

Singh, who was posted as DySP in the anti-hijacking squad, is being grilled by a team of police and intelligence investigators, police said on Monday. His office at Srinagar airport has been sealed, they said.

According to police, searches were carried out at Singh's residence here, right next to the Army's XV corps headquarters at Badami Bagh cantonment, where he had sheltered Naveed, Altaf and a new joiner in the banned militant outfit.

Two pistols, an AK rifle and a large quantity of ammunition were seized from his residence, they said.

### SHORT TAKES

#### Kumar reviews JK's school education scenario

**JAMMU:** Commissioner Secretary School Education Department, Hirdesh Kumar today chaired a meeting here to review the functioning of education sector in Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Chairman JK BOSE Veena Pandita, Director School Education Jammu Anuradha Gupta, Director School Education Kashmir Mohammad Younis Malik, Riyaz Shah, Director Finance School Education Department Ghulam Mohammad Hajam, Director Planning School Education and Additional Secretary School Education and other concerned.

During the meeting, the Commissioner Secretary was briefed in detail regarding the functioning of the education sector. The meeting also deliberated upon various issues concerning the school education sector.

While reviewing the status of various developmental projects, Kumar directed the executing agencies and concerned officers to work with utmost dedication to ensure the timely completion of all the works being undertaken to improve the education scenario in Jammu and Kashmir. He laid special emphasis on ensuring that the works are completed as per the required quality standards.

The meeting decided that meritorious students should be identified and felicitated so as to motivate them to excel in academic and other fields and other students to follow the suit.

The Commissioner Secretary also directed that Departmental Promotion Committees should grant promotions in a time-bound manner.

#### Union minister urges scientists to conduct more research on cow dung

**MATHURA (UP):** Union Minister and BJP leader Giriraj Singh urged scientists to conduct more research on cow dung, suggesting that this could make it financially viable for farmers to keep their cows even after they have stopped producing milk.

Stray cattle is a major problem in Uttar Pradesh, Singh said at a workshop for vice chancellors and veterinary officers from 12 states here on Monday.

The minister was suggesting that if farmers can make money out of cow dung and urine they will not abandon their cattle.

There is immense scope of value addition to milk, dung and urine of the cow that would ultimately contribute to the economy of the country, the Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying said.

He said if the input cost of agriculture decreases, villages and farmers would progress.

The BJP leader further said he followed the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, Ram Manohar Lohia and Deendayal Upadhyaya.

"Just like people keep in mind the teachings of Gita, Quran and Ramayana, I practise the ideals of Gandhi, Lohia, and Deendayal Upadhyaya," Singh said.

## Unethical practices in medical profession Govt taking slew of measures to rein in unfair practices

**JAMMU:** The government is taking slew of measures to rein in unethical and unfair practices in medical profession in Jammu Kashmir.

This was disclosed at a meeting convened to discuss the action plan in this regard. The meeting was chaired by Financial Commissioner, Health and Medical Education Department, Atal Dulloo.

The meeting decided to constitute a Prescription Audit Committee (PAC) in each district and sub-district hospital, issue advisory for doctors, strengthen grievance redressal mechanism and undertake certain other measures. It was disclosed in the meeting that the prescription audit will be started at district hospitals and sub-district hospitals soon. The designated nodal officer at the health facility will collect one

percent of the prescription copies of Out Patient Departments on random basis that will be audited by the PAC comprising officials from the administrative department, excluding the consultants. The key findings will be submitted to the concerned CMO and routed to the administrative department through the Health Directorate. Atal Dulloo said that the audit of the prescriptions written by the doctors working in the government hospitals would be conducted to see whether the doctors are following the ethical guidelines and if found otherwise, action will be taken accordingly. "The audit will also check any contravention to the provisions of the Drug and Cosmetic Act and Regulations, unnecessary diagnostic tests and arbitrary referrals to higher centres," he said.

He also directed the officers to hold workshops to educate the doctors about moral duties and responsibilities towards their patients and make them aware of what is covered in unethical acts and what constitutes a professional misconduct.

He also said that the billboards will be placed in all the government hospitals, highlighting the ethical guidelines to be followed by the medical officers.

It was further decided to make it mandatory for a doctor to display the registration number accorded to him by the Medical Council of India at his clinic and on the prescriptions.

The physician will have to prescribe drugs with generic names, preferably in capital letters and ensure that there is a rational prescription and use of drugs.

## India's Flagship Global Conference Kickstarts in Delhi

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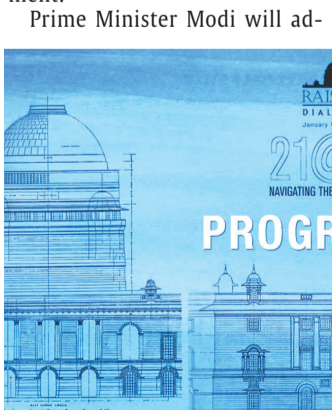
**NEW DELHI:** Several high profile delegates from the Middle East and Africa are among 700 international participants from over 100 countries attending Raisina Dialogue - India's flagship global conference on geopolitics and geo-economics, which opens in Delhi on Tuesday.

This is the fifth edition of the Raisina Dialogue where global leaders in policy, business, media and civil society will be hosted in New Delhi to discuss cooperation on a wide range of pertinent international policy matters. The title of the Raisina Dialogue this year is "Navigating the Alpha Century".

"The Dialogue has been India's contribution to global efforts to discover solutions, identify opportunities and provide stability to a century that has witnessed an eventful two decades," said an MEA statement, explaining the significance of the annual conference.

The conference, jointly organised by India's ministry of external affairs (MEA) and the Observer Research Foundation,

a think-tank backed by Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Group, will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and seven former heads of state and government.



Prime Minister Modi will address the inaugural session while other visiting leaders will talk about important challenges facing the world, a spokesperson of MEA said.

Along with foreign ministers from 12 countries, including the foreign ministers of Russia, Iran, Australia, Maldives, South Africa, Estonia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Latvia,

Uzbekistan and the European Union, the National Security Adviser (NSA) of Afghanistan, the Deputy NSA of the United States and several other ministers of state will also present their ideas.



The Secretary-General of Shanghai Cooperation i.e. SCO and Secretary-General of Commonwealth will also be a part of the event. This year's edition of Raisina Dialogue assumes added significance as it is being held in the backdrop of nationwide protests in India against a new controversial citizenship act and the ongoing tension bet-

ween US and Iran.

Over next three days, 80 sessions will take place pertaining to five major subjects including 'The Nationalist Impulsive Challenge as Global Institutions and Collective Action', 'The Debate on the Global Trading Architecture', 'Role of Technology in Data Mining', 'Political Economic and Military Power', 'The Global Development Agenda and State Individual Relationships in the Age of Digital Communities and Cyberspace.'

The heads of over 30 international think-tanks will also moderate or present their view points across different sessions at this year's conference, offering an opportunity for exchange of diverse view-points from around the world.

Ebtesam Al Ketbi, President, Emirates Policy Centre, and Ali Rashid Al Nuaimi, Chairman, World Council for Muslim Communities, are among the dignitaries from UAE who will be addressing the conference. Al Nuaimi will be speaking at a session on "Geopolitics and God: Identity and Religion in the Digital Age".

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