

APPRECIABLE INITIATIVE

It is really appreciable that on initiative of G Asok Kumar, Director General, National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti, a Joint Committee of stakeholders including NMCG, Upper Yamuna River Board (UYRB), UP Irrigation Department, Delhi Jal Board (DJB), Irrigation and Flood Control, Delhi and Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) was constituted to oversee and coordinate efforts being made to control/minimize the froth formation downstream of Okhla Barrage in River Yamuna during Chhath Puja. The Committee was formed in exercise of powers available in Para 7 of the River Ganga (Rejuvenation, Protection and Management) Authorities Order dated 07.10.2016. The Joint Committee comprised Executive Director, Technical, NMCG (Chairman), Member Secretary, UYRB (Member), Member Secretary, Delhi Pollution Control Committee DPCC (Member), Chief Engineer, Irrigation & Flood Control, I&FC, Delhi (Member), Chief Engineer, SDW NW, DJB (Member), Executive Engineer, Okhla, UP Irrigation Department (Member).

The role and responsibilities of stakeholders remained NMCG & UYRB - Coordination among Delhi, UP and Haryana, DJB and I&FC - Anti-surfactant dosing & optimum and efficient operations of Delhi STPs, DPCC - Monitoring operation of STPs and discharge of industrial effluents, UP Irrigation Department - Operation of Barrage. As per deliberations, eco-friendly anti-surfactant was sprayed from October 25 to Chhath Puja from boat mounted sprayers. Other measures to control the froth formation including operations of barrage gate to avoid/minimize free fall at Okhla Barrage were also taken.

This was in addition to the efforts going on towards sewerage interventions and monitoring discharge of industrial effluents under Namami Gange programme, central schemes and state plan. These efforts brought about different scale of changes in river water quality during different seasons. In view of festive season, it has been felt to coordinate efforts of different departments/agencies in the efforts to try and contain the problem of froth in River Yamuna downstream of Okhla Barrage. Cleaning of tributaries of River Ganga, especially Yamuna, was one of the focus areas of Namami Gange Programme, whereas a 318 MLD STP at Coronation Pillar has already been commissioned in March 2022, 3 other main STPs on Yamuna funded by NMCG are targeted to be completed by December 2022, which include Rithala, Kondli and Okhla. Okhla will be Asia's biggest STP. After the completion of these projects, there would be a considerable improvement in quality of water of river Yamuna as around 1,300 MLD of wastewater will stop flowing into the river. A concerted campaign on Yamuna is also being run since the start of this year in association with NGOs and other stakeholders as part of which cleanliness drives are organised on River Yamuna in Delhi on the 4th Saturday of every month by NMCG and on one more important day of the month since February 2022 with the support of NGOs and other stakeholders. Yamuna Arti was also organised at Sur Ghat in New Delhi on the occasion of Swachhta Diwas on 2nd October to raise awareness on rejuvenation of Ganga and its tributaries, especially Yamuna. Under Arth Ganga campaign, as espoused by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, NMCG facilitated Ganga Artis on Ghats and training local people in Ganga Basin to generate more and more livelihood opportunities.

OFF 'D' CUFF

How can I break out of negative patterns?

Negative thinking is a tragic pattern that many of us fall prey to. Sadly, we do it because we've been programmed to do it.

One part of the problem stems from our basic culture of education and discipline, which is a system based on punishments rather than rewards. The children who do well and behave are ignored, while the kids who cause problems are the ones who get all the attention. So, we don't hear and learn positive ways of thinking and identifying, but the negative ones are emphasized. Whenever we make a mistake we hear, 'You're stupid, you're bad, you're this, you're that,' and we internalize the message and also the voice.

The other part of the problem comes from the rest of the culture—media, politics, etc.—that is rooted in and founded upon convincing us that we are lacking something in our lives which they are going to fulfil. This is called marketing. If you already have everything, how am I going to sell you something? I need you to feel that there is something missing in you, which my product is going to solve. This is how advertising works.

Look at car commercials. They're selling freedom, driving off into the horizon. How many among us feel stuck in our jobs or other aspects of our lives? We see the commercial and we say to ourselves, 'God, freedom looks so good. If I just had that car, I could drive off into the sunset. Leave everything behind.' They're not selling

airbags, brakes and seat comfort; they're selling freedom, romance. Want to sell a sports car? The guy with the car has the beautiful lady. Want to sell an SUV? Kids in the back seat are singing together. While your own kids try to strangle each other in the back seat, the subliminal message of the commercial is that you have the wrong model of car: But if you buy this SUV, your kids too will sing in the back seat.

So, through marketing and advertising, we are indoctrinated and brainwashed to believe that: a) we're not enough, and there's something wrong with us, b) these people have what we need and c) we're running out of time. Now that ploy sounds very superficial, and even if we don't internalize the message about the car, we do internalize the message that we are not enough. And we project that in our lives, so thoughts of lack plague our minds.

The way to deal with negative thoughts is to, first of all, make a commitment to practice compassion in your life to compassion, and make sure that that commitment includes you. Make a commitment to loving kindness, and make sure that you are also a recipient of it.

Second, identify the voices. As the negative voice comes into your mind, ask, 'Who are you? Are you a commercial, are you my fifth-grade teacher, are you my mother who always asks, "Why can't you be like your sister?"' We internalized negative messaging somewhere.

Sadvi Bhagawati Saraswati

We believe in peace and peaceful development, not only for ourselves but for people all over the world.

-Lal Bahadur Shastri

EDITORIAL

Quest for social equality

■ M R LALU

The Hijab rumpus never ends. Massive protests in the Iranian streets did not make any ripples in India. Almost forty days after the death of 22 year old Mahsa Amini, a young lady alleged to have defied Iran's strict laws, its Islamic administration could not contain the protest of the common people, especially women. The only demand of the revolting women is the country's emancipation from the clutches of radical Islamic structure and the first move that they did to register their protest was to remove the compulsory headscarf and trim their hair. An outcry for freedom in a country that believes in patriarchal authoritarianism invariably supported by a powerful religious clergy was met with an iron fist. The police intervention to quell the public outrage killed more than 250 people across Iran. The magnitude of the intense protest could successfully hijack the state TV during the speech by the country's supreme leader replacing it with the images of the women who have been killed by police brutality. The intensity of emotions that the country is rattled with is unparalleled and cries for women, life, and freedom became a usual affair for the Islamic state. Is this just a beginning? The image of young women chopping off their hair comes as a symbol of greater resilience and an inspirational resistance against the patriarchy that throws them into relentless suffering and persecution and suppression. The Islamic morality police and its intervention in people's life seem to have gone beyond an acceptable limit. India did not debate this important development of Iran. There is a visible reluctance in our country to bring the topic for a sensible discussion. Everybody is conveniently silent on the impact of Islamic radicalization and a revolution seeking progress and liberation in a country which considers women as veiled creatures. Amini is a symbol and the Iranian outrage is a message that the world should actually be cognizant of. With its reach in essence and practice across the globe, the world's second largest religion poses certain significant questions when its rigidity becomes abhorrent and dishonest. The first one is, how long any

administration would fight back human aggression against the spiritual madness of religions. Will clamping down on the internet and clashing with the outrageous public cure the real malady that the society is infested with? Why are some religions unable to bring credible, viable and visible humanitarian amendments in their religious ethos? How long should the world suffer these unprincipled ways of patriarchal interventions? India's hesitation to debate the Iranian stalemate needs to be seen as the result of its secular compulsions. The split verdict on the hijab controversy has added to the confusion. Sloganeering and unrepressed gatherings in the Indian streets have disappeared temporarily since the perpetrators of the controversy, the Popular Front of India (PFI), have been under the scanner of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and a nationwide crackdown on the outfit on issues that concerned the country's internal security. And of course, a predictable silence on Iranian uprising against the clergy is mostly because we have the same subject which is a controversy from a different angle. India witnessed a well calibrated protest in favour of Hijab but the Iranian outrage is exactly against the Hijab imposition; it is for the liberation from the suffocation of a veil that the religion made mandatory. The veil, indeed, is a reminder of the hegemony of the religious patriarchy that celebrates the suppression of the feminine considered to be pre-ordained by the divine, therefore treated as holy and obligatory. Modesty laws enforced to the extent of persecution began to bring bubbles of repercussions in Iran. India being a democracy is yet to march in the direction of such extremist interventions. This is mainly due to the religious diversity that India managed to maintain with its significant majority and the majority in India not only advocates but also practices secularism. But we cannot deny the fact that the history of India tells us tales of intolerance in localities where religious radicalism flourished. Unrest, anger and outrage against other religions in areas where Islamic beliefs consolidated and disruptions amounting to rioting often disturb India's social fabric even today. For the sake of ornamenting a secular democra-

tic republic with religious amity, it is unjustifiable to stay in denial of the reality. Essentially, the aggression in Iran is a frantic pursuit of a significant chunk of its populace seeking a new secular beginning for the country; a change that the clergy would fight to quash by all possible means. India's Hijab conundrum seems to be progressing in the opposite direction, compelling the secular framework of the country to snail-pace towards a 'religious' republic. In Iran the government's retaliation on the protesters is a possible effort to establish its control over the society and retain a complete patriarchal dominance. India's hijab battle is also indicating the same spirit of a male dominance. But the difference is that the religious clergy in India managed to convince the Muslim women on a political reason that they encouraged them to stand united irrespective of the discomfort in the veil, just for the sake of challenging the administrative reforms of a party that they count as majoritarian. Unlike Iran, the clash in India is not between the patriarchy and the suppressed womenfolk. While a religious leadership with an extremely hard line approach is acting against the revolting crowd in Iran, India's secular identity with its democratic structure have so far managed to barriacade such hard line ideas from being spread. A recent poll reveals that more than 60 per cent of Iranians want a non-religious state. An unquestionable thirst for democracy and freedom began to accelerate the movement in Iran. For India, its secular values always act as a platform for its people to cherish freedom in every sphere of life. But religious fundamentalism loaded with patriarchal sensitivities has despicably managed to gain attention and sympathy of the liberals and a section of the media in India with an insidiously imposed narrative such as the right to carry out religious dressing to schools and workplaces. The message that the Iranian public outrage passes would take time to sink in a beguiled society such as ours as India's secular freak show has terribly collapsed its cognitive abilities and its outlandishness seems to be dancing in tune with its own pathological condition of secularism.

Need to curb private practices of doctors

■ RAKESH AATHUR

We all have heard that doctors are second to God on the earth, before God almost patient cum parents has greater hope on his / her medical practitioner, who advises, authorizes, devises with legal medical advises when a patient visits them. A true doctor is better to all medicines that he or she prescribes while checking and relieving a patient from diseases. There is quite specialization in the legal medical professions i.e. technicians, surgeons, physicians, orthopedics, dermatologists, pediatricians, etc. And such specialization if among the wards available in the government hospitals, there across the J&K U.T and India, how much secure the innocent and poor people may feel. But there still we are far from such specialization of the facilities and a bias in the minds and hearts of the patients. Because so many of the patients would used to run towards private practice places like clinics, hospitals, private venues which also running by or under partnership of governmental doctors where they use extra time than their duty bounded venues called private practice without any accountability for the extra kind of earnings.

Due to which the poor people of the rural and urban areas are facing a lot of problems and dying at the early stage in the governmental hospitals. Because lucrative and voracious practices of these government practitioners at private places has coerced to the poor people to die on the first stage of the disease. As most of the doctors serving in the governmental hospitals are time passing and they are totally bent became towards their private practices for the sack of extra and lucrative earnings only. Due to which the doctors class had hoarded a huge quantity of wealth in the kind of money, materials, landed property there in India and abroad too, likely erected tall and high buildings, clinics and private hospitals etc which in other sense one may declare it as black money here there in the India and Abroad owing to which there are causing a high rated drain of wealth from Indian soil to abroad on the on hand and there consistently causing loss of professionalism to

the own nation on high scale on the other hands. In addition there disinterest of the common man towards the governmental hospitals is growing at par too. But lopsided governmental response in lieu of ban of private practices by the governmental doctors is seeming relentless, owing to which poor people across the Jammu and Kashmir U.T as well as India are incurring a lot off loss. So many years have ran with the vociferous for banning it but it always remains to be in the cool box because of high handed approach of few of the same professionals may be! There are several of the medical professionals like surgeons, physicians, ENT, Eye specialists, psychiatrists, pediatricians, dermatologists; technicians are earning a huge chunk of money and wealth at their own rates and charges without caring the interests of a common man. During this children are facing a lot of problems along with their parents because they fell ill very easily while ending and coming seasons and remains under diseases like coughing, headache, indigestion, fever, cough, etc and their parents has to visit the nearby hospitals by time & again to pediatricians but did not satisfied with the prescriptions and check up in the government hospitals meant they bent to visit the their private places where they charges lucrative fee and costly medicines without caring the monetary condition of the parents, there same practitioners used to prescribe with good medicines plus advises to which they used to conceal at their governmental hospitals. And soon aftermath of it there the parents recognize the good result and when one of the parents observes it they advises to others. The history of golden card/ health card is not proving with best results in the union territory, because there is complete lack of information of money withdrawn and balance to the beneficiary. In which nothing any exact calculation can be calculated when a beneficiary use it because proper information regarding amount deducted from it is not screened to the beneficiaries. Within a short while there will be huge seam of health facility may be highlighted because beneficiaries

are not feeling satisfied with its present circulation in the empanelled hospitals and others. In so many of the governmental hospitals there a doctors are using it vehemently without assigning the bills and account of the same. Despite so many facilities started for the general people are lacks in formal checks, therefore every beneficiary wanted to have with the proper checks and golden card account settlement information after every treatment whether it may conducted in governmental or empanelled hospitals by the governmental and private doctors. Due to loopholes in the formal check-ups of the medical policies of the central and union territory are still prevalent vehemently owing to which poor people are suffering in the rural areas mostly. No doubt there is greater disequilibrium in the income level of both rural and urban people living in the union territory of the Jammu & Kashmir therefore the rural children are already facing the differential caloric intake owing to which they fall victim to contagious and non contagious diseases very faster than urban area's children because their immune system is quite lower than the their counterparts and the doctors mainly deployed are opting their keen practices in the private clinics and venues as par time are vehemently eroding the poor section's money in the kind of lucrative fee and other prescriptions including medicines. Meant we have heard that the governmental doctors are working on the very norms that they use to charge with the extra commissions from the company for prescription of their medicines and other in such situation when governmental doctors would use to have private practices the frail section of the society become like moth eaten- up and face the wealth problem in order to meet their both hands daily life. Therefore there is stronger need to ban the private practices of the governmental doctors in UT. In this way we may assign an opportunity to the vacant doctors who are in wait to join government job and other private professionals. People across the region are in greater hope from Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha may take strict and prompt action in this direction.

YOUR COLUMN
Setting-up meditation centers

Dear Editor,

Through the columns of your esteemed daily, I would like to request the Lieutenant Governor J&K, Manoj Sinha, who is also the Chairman of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, Jammu & Kashmir for setting-up Meditation Hall/Rooms/Cave (Dhayan Bhawan) at/near Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Bhawan/Shrine. Since ancient Indian times, the meditation/Dhayan has been integral part of any pilgrimage. In fact, the very purpose of pilgrimage is to attune with the vibrations of holy place through meditation, physical presence for seeking divine blessings & inner peace. Meditation is a technique through which devotees can attune themselves with presence of God & Divine Mother. The Scriptures tells us that, 'Whatever outward rituals you perform, the ultimate 'Pilgrimage' must be within and ultimate religious ritual must be the offering of your life-force on the altar of inner God-communication.'

Other major pilgrimages in India: 'Kedarnath' meditation caves came to limelight when Prime Minister Narendra Modi meditated in the cave. Pilgrims intend to stay & meditate in 'Kedarnath Caves' can book online with nominal charges. Most of the other major pilgrimage destinations in India like, 'Shri Shirdi Saibaba' temple in Maharashtra also have sound proof & air-conditioned meditation centre which can accommodate 125 devotees at a time. 'Shri Tirupati Balaji' temple in south India also have specified meditation hall for devotees.

International Airports: Today, not only pilgrimage, but all major international airports have dedicated space for meditation & yoga. International airports like Heathrow Airport

London, San Francisco International Airport, Chicago International Airport, Hong Kong International Airport and Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi also have specified room for meditation & prayer.

Proposal: The silent hall/rooms/caves (preferably sound proof) anywhere around Bhawan/Shrine area with maximum sitting capacity is suggested, so that devotees who are willing to meditate after 'Holy Darshan' can sit there in silence for meditation. It is not a coincidence that many holy pilgrimage in India are situated at mountain peaks & great heights, it is because of holy vibrations & calmness the saints always preferred mountains for meditation & 'sadhna'. It is for this very reason the meditation space should be at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi bhawan/shrine area only. Meditation hall/room/cave may have idol/picture of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi. The meditation hall/rooms can also be given the shape & colour of a holy cave/shrine from inside similar to original cave. Further, meditation place should have sufficient ventilation and temperature be maintained as per summers & winters with air-conditioning/heating system. Separate Hall/room/caves for Gents & Ladies is suggested and strict silence to be maintained inside.

Meditation hall/rooms/cave should have carpet and 'sitting cushions' used for meditation in sitting comfortable posture. Such cushions are also being used by many Yoga meditation centers across India. I am sure, 'Meditation Hall/Rooms/Caves' at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi shrine will be a great tourist attraction for pilgrims across the world and also a great facility for coming generations who will always be thankful to the LG for this great contribution. I would pray, may Mata Vaishno Devi bless all for this divine cause. I would feel blessed, if I can be of any assistance for this divine initiative.

Adv Narinder Sharma.

Rural Tourism: Step towards sustainable development

■ DR BANRSI LAL

Tourism is termed as an instrument for employment generation, poverty eradication and sustainable human development values of a country. Tourism is continuously growing across the globe because of its various attractive and new destinations for the tourists. Tourism has emerged as one of the world's largest service industries with sizable economic benefits. With the emergence of e-commerce, innovations and technological advancements, demographic changes and the de-regulation of airline industry, the travel and tourism is spontaneously contributing to improve Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and creation of jobs across the world economy. This has led to the improvement of other related industries especially transportation, construction, retail etc. The World Travel and Tourism Council estimate that the travel and tourism sector accounts for 10.0 per cent of global GDP. World tourism is the world's largest employer; generating about 289 million jobs, or nearly one out of every 12 jobs globally. This booming tourism industry is emerging as an important driver of growth and prosperity, employment generator, supports to enhance the national income and improves the balance of payments. India's tourism industry is experiencing a strong period of growth in high spending foreign tourists and coordinated government campaigns to promote 'Incredible India'. Promotion of agri-tourism needs conceptual convergence with rural tourism, eco-tourism, health tourism, adventure tourism and culinary adventure. Present concept of travel and tourism is limited to urban and rich class which constitutes only a small portion of the population. However, the concept of rural tourism takes travel and tourism to the larger population, widening the scope of tourism. Rural tourism is considered as the fastest growing sector in the tourism industry. Tourism is a socio-cultural event for tourists. Through tourism the person gets the opportunity to see different areas of the world and observe different cultures and way of life. Tourists are a major factor of socio-cultural change. Tourism has many advantages. It enhances communication with the people, improves self image of the community, increases employment opportunities, improves educational opportunities, motivates for learning new things etc. The growth of employment opportunities is lesser than population growth in India. At the time of independence, the Indian economy was having almost all characteristics of underdeveloped economy. In India about 70 percent of the country's population gets employment in agriculture. Most of the agricultural workers find only seasonal employment. At that time they try to find employment in local or nearby areas. A need has been felt to extend the tourism development in rural areas. Many countries like the Singapore, Malaysia, United States, Costa Rica, Kenya, Canada etc. tap their natural beauties in the form of nature based projects. The local beautiful areas are managed by the local community which helps in the upliftment of socio-economic status of the rural people. Tourism is also a major foreign exchange earner. Rural tourism refers the tourists' interest in the customs of the indigenous and exotic people. Rural tourism is very fascinating for the domestic and foreign tourists as villages have their unique styles and splendid natural beauty. Rural tourism is a different from general tourism which focuses on the local people. Union Territory of J&K has a great rural tourism potential, due to its unique heritage, culture and natural attractions. Rural tourism is a new concept which covers all those aspects of travel whereby people can reciprocate their cultures and traditions. In rural tourism, tourists visit the homes of villagers to understand their customs, traditions, life style, food habits, their festivals, folk dances, songs, rituals etc. It also involves a study, research and purchase of local products. The villages could be the centers of attraction for the people of urban areas, who live in the congested and polluted cities. Such people want to get away from their daily routine work and enjoy the rural areas during weekends and holidays. Rural tourism is participatory and designed to improve the economic and social well-being of local people. It also points the need for careful planning to project the integrity of sites and minimum harmful impacts. Local community needs to plan ahead to ensure that rural tourism sustains and benefits local community socio-culturally and economically and is not simply gaining the money for government or private entrepreneurs. If we want to commercialize the rural tourism, we need to endeavor to satisfy its obligations towards local villagers. In Rural tourism certain aspects such as fresh and non-polluting environment, traditions, village handicraft, village folk dance and music, painting and sculpture, history of the region, nature of local work and technology use, agriculture, horticulture, architecture, education system, religion, dress, leisure activities etc. can attract tourists from different places. Rural tourism can create new employment opportunities in the rural areas. It can attract many youths for rural employment and reduce the rural migration towards the urban areas. New jobs in the rural areas may motivate the rural people for education. Employment opportunities in rural tourism can draw workers from other sectors of economy. Domestic jobs may not only improve the status of the rural people but can also increase the income of rural people. Rural tourism may also revive the local people's interest and pride in their culture, traditions and values. The influence of mass media and hegemonic culture can push the local folk traditions into oblivion. Rural tourism can also provide the opportunities to study the religious and ritualistic services. These aspects of a culture can fascinate the strangers. Religious rituals, festivals and public performances can provide inputs to symbolic qualities of rural tourism.

The author is Head, KVK Reasi, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology-Jammu.