

BALANCING NATURE

The balance of nature has been disturbed due to excessive exploitation of nature. There has been a change in the seasonal cycle and it is becoming more and more difficult to get pure air. The smoke emanating from the chambers of the great ones is swallowing up the purity of the air.

The filth of cities and megacities is being discharged into the sources that provide clean water. Dirty water is being discharged into rivers due to which the problem of water pollution is increasing. While modern means of transportation are increasing air pollution on one hand, noise pollution is also increasing on the other; air planes, high-speed jet planes flying in the sky, day- The noise that emerges from loud-speakers while playing at night is not only piercing to the ears but also weakens the power of hearing.

Soil pollution is another new problem of today's times. Excessive use of chemical fertilizers to get maximum yield from the fields is making the earth barren. The problem of pollution has been created by man and if man wants his own well being then he will have to make efforts to keep this planet clean as soon as possible.

Sacred Shrine of Sukrala Devi

■ G.L. KHAJURIA

The state of Jammu & Kashmir is beset with a land of the Gods and Goddesses in the greater part of Himalayan and sub Himalayan region of the Indian land scape. Likewise the shrine Shakties of Sh. Mata Vaishnood Devi (Katra) ChandiMaa (machail), Sarthaldevi (Kishtwar), Pingla (Rannagar), Mahakali (Bahu Fort), Chichi Mata (Samba), Chanchlo Devi (Basohli), Sarthaldevi (Bani) and many more other sacred Shrines of Devi Maa Shakti. Mal Mata Sukrala Devi occupies its unique and prominent place of devotion and revera-tion.

The Devi MaaSukrala is also most reverentially addressed as Jagat Janani, Rajarjaswari Mata where devotees Throng in thousand to have holy darshan, pay obeisance for blessings.

Sukrala or Sukral is a small village located in Billawar in district Kathua. The spot is located amidst dense chirpings forest intermingled with other borad - leaved trees, bushes, shrubs and herbs. The village is located aside river Naag where a big slab of rock of historic time exist which is having an engraving of Lord Hanuman which is regularly besmeared on every Tuesday and Sunday both by the locals as well as the outsiders who throng over this sacred spot. Sukrala Mata shrine is reachable by road around 80 Kms from Jammu and about 30 kms from district headquarter. It is situated at a height of about 4000 ft from mean sea level (MSL) and commands an idyllic view of mountains and cliffs all around of the vicinity of the Shakti shrine. Both the roads from Jammu and Kathua are well maintained and are conveniently approachable by regular buses, private or hired vehicles. The sacred shrine from other destination, Like Bani Basohli and other areas of the country are also reachable through these routes.

Through legends and historical record, the name of Sukrala is derived from Sharikalaya, the abode of Sharika which though, of course is another revered name of Mata Sharda. The historical records reflect the narration as to the origin of the sacred spot of Mata Sukrala Devi. The story goes that used to live a renowned saint at Basohli who had received his education in Kashmir and Kashi there he visited many shrines including those of Shri Amarnathji, Sharda, Hari Parvtati etc. He was a strong devotee of Gods and Goddesses. During his arduouspenace and devotion, the mother goddess was very pleased and so he had holy dream. When asked by Mata ji as to what he wanted. The devotee prayed that he wants that she should be at his place so that with locals can be relieved of the pains and agony and are blessed by her Shakti. Mata ji granted him the boon that she will appear at the time of his grandson and so the devotee disclosed to the locals. The devoted Brahmin had number of sons amongst whom two most pious and learned were by name Amolak Ram and Mahadev Shiv Nandan. They preferred and adopted Billawar and Basohli as their residence.

Exactly in the time of Mahadev (ShivNandan), a shila (stone slab) miraculously started emerging out from a spring at Sukrala. The people of the area started realizing the prophecy of the grandfather as had earlier been disclosed. They (the inhabitants) accepted it as an emblem of the goddess and as such started worshipping it regularly. With the passage of time, a prince from Chambha by name Madho Singh exiled by his elder brother was wandering desperately and reached Sukral area. The story further goes that Sukrala village was having dense forest with abundant wild animals and birds, the prince started hunting wild animals and birds but with the passing days, the prince fell seriously ill. Despite application of all treatments, the prince could never be recovered. Ultimately, as suggested by the locals, he approached Shiv Nandan who had a good spiritual reputation and so he asked one of the devotee (Chila in local parlance) of the goddess by name Hira Thakur to dance (locally spoken as Chanki) and when the devotee (disciple of goddess got into trance (a Shakti dance), He was asked to let know the malady of the prince Madho Singh. As a result, the disciple stated that goddess was very annoyed as the prince had hunted many animals and birds of the forest. Further; the disciple told the prince that he would not recover unless a temple of the goddess is built with material from Chambha. The exiled prince was perplexed as how he could manage to build the temple of Mata for he was ill and for away from Chambha, his native place. He expressed his inability to both Shiv Nandan and Hira Thakur. But the dancing devotee (disciple) replied exiled prince to proceed Chambha immediately and nothing on towardness would come in his way by the grace of the Shakti of Mal Mata. A few days later, the prince was well and after vowing before Mal Mata footed towards Chambha, while way-ing towards the desired destination, he came to know enroute, about the demise of his brother who had exiled him. Reaching Chambha, all the inhabitants of the vicinity embraced the prince and accepted him as the ruling prince. In due course of time, the prince became obsessed with the routine care taking and admin-istration of his kingdom and in the process, he forgot the promise he had made before Sukrala Mata to build a temple there. One night, when the prince was comfortably sleeping, he felled down from the bed and remembered the promise he had made before Mal Mata and so as such he resolved to make good the promise. On the next day, the prince started for Sukral with a large entourage carrying all short of building material. The temple was as such constructed and an image of Mahishasurmardini was installed in the spacious temple Chamber in later stages a temple was constructed by Raja Brajraj Singh, son of Ranjit Singh Dev around 1755 AD and so such the promise made by the prince redeemed. Later on lot of springs and baolies were constructed in and around the temple complex. Mal Mata Sukrala Devi is very benign goddess who fulfills the wishes of his true devotees. According to a popular belief, all wishes to the extent of the birth of child, securing Job for livelihood and for the curing of chronic diseases are fulfilled by the shrine Shakti of Mal Mata. The images of Mata Ji is a Shila (Piece of rock). It is seated on a brass lion with a silver mounted head. And in its backdrop is a figure of Mahishasurmardini (MaaDurga) standing on Mahishasur. The goddess is chaturbluja, the goddess with four arms with a sword in one of her hands. The eyes are of silver inlaid with dark vermilion. Lord Vishnu is shown reeling under the hoods of Sheshing with Maa Lakshmi pressing lords lotus-like feel. From the navel spring a lotus, on which is seated a four headed Brahma and a five - faced Shiva and the lord Ganesh. There are two images of the lion in front of the temple complex.

Delicious Kalari of Udhampur gets GI Tag

■ DR. BANARSI LAL AND DR. DD DOGRA

It is a pride moment for all of us that Kaladi of Udhampur distt.of J&K got prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) tag. It will help to increase the income and employment among the families associated with Kaladi.GI will also help to export the Kaladi from Udhampur and future of many families especially the rural youths of the area can be secured. A GI tag is a sign used on product that has a specific geographical origin and possesses qualities or reputation that are due to that origin. A GI is primarily an agricultural, natural or manufactured product originating from a definite geographical territory. It conveys an assurance of quality and distinctiveness, which is essentially attributable to the place of its origin. Kaladi is a famous Dogra cuisine which is originated from Udhampur distt. of J&K. It is made after processing the milk and is the most relished street food snack among the ethnic Dogras. This dish was also relished by G20 delegates in Srinagar held recently in J&K.GI tagging in Kaladi will protect it from counterfeiters and unfair competition. It will help to increase its sales value. Already many farmers are earning their livelihood through Kaladi making. Through generations, farmers of Rannagar, Chenani and Panchari areas of Udhmapur distt. have nurtured this delicious milk product. Their expertise in Kaladi making has made this product popular. Recent GI tagging will have help to take this product of national and international level and farmers of the area can fetch more returns. Kaladi is very attractive and is liked by all the sections of society. In fact Kaladi reflects and represent the essence of Dogra cuisine. It is also used in the various functions as something auspicious. By proper packaging and branding it can open

some new avenues of income and employment in the area.

Udhampur distt. of Union Territory of J&K is known for many exceptional things and Kaladi is one of them. This district is considered as the home of the world's most unique cheeses, called as the Kaladi. Kaladi was traditionally made from raw full fat milk, vigorously churned in an iron pot with a wooden plunger-like tool. The molten mass of milk solids was then separated by adding sour milk or curd called mathar. Once stretched, the flattened cheese was cooled on the black iron pot itself, before being placed in a bowl to solidify. The solidified cheese was then sun dried to help it to lose the moisture. Since the ambient temperature in the mountainous area of Udhampur distt. remains low despite a strong sun, the Kalari dried from the outside yet remain moist inside. Kaladi is widely consumed as a street snack, flattened Kaladis are salted and sautéed in their own fat on a hot griddle. After sautéing, the cheese develops a crisp golden layer on its exterior but retains a soft, creamy, goeey molten from interior. Flavoured with spices and served hot, Kaladi is topped with chopped vegetables and rolled into a kulcha that is served with garlic and chilli chutney. In Udhampur distt. of J&K farmers sell quintals of Kaladi daily and secure their livelihood.

Presently the govt. is paying major emphasis on the value addition in agriculture and allied sectors and value addition in milk can help to open new avenues of income and employment.

Udhampur is a hilly district of J&K and about all the households in the rural areas are having dairy animals. In the past there was sufficient availability of fodder as there were many meadows. There was lack of transportation facilities and it was difficult for the rural

people to carry their milk to the urban areas. As milk is having a short shelf life so the people were processing their milk in the form of curd, ghee, butter, cheese, kaladi etc. After collection in large quantity, they were transporting these commodities in the urban areas. With the passage of time Kaladi gained the recognition and now it has become a delicacy of the whole region. Now the visitors always ask for Kaladi of the area. Kaladi is very delicious milk product and is liked by everyone especially the tourists. Kaladi has become a source of livelihood for many farmers of Udhampur distt. of J&K. Starter or Mathar plays a crucial role in the preparation of Kalari. It is prepared by mixing curd in luke-warm milk and then milk splits due to the curd reaction. Solid part is taken out and a proper shape is given to it. Then this product is dried after draining the excess liquid from it. The final product in this process is called as Kaladi. Kaladi is having cheese like taste with a good look and fragrance. The remained liquid is called as Mathar and is used to split the milk. It is a 4-5 days long process and ultimately a special shape mainly spherical is given to this product. Kaladi has its own uniqueness and flavor. Bamboo baskets of plants leaves are used for the drying purpose of Kalari. Kalari from hilly areas of Udhampur distt. of J&K has its own identity and uniqueness. There are certain specific hubs for Kaladi making in the distt. such as Rannagar, Panchari and Chenani. These areas are known specially for the quality Kaladi and many farmers are associated with Kaladi making. Rural women of the area play the crucial role in Kaladi making. There is need of milk storage facilities in the Udhampur distt. of J&K. Farmers go for milk processing and they coagulate the milk to

make the Kaladi. Also the hilly terrains are very difficult. The farmers generally sale their Kaladi twice a week and fetch returns. Their Kaladis are then transported in the urban areas of J&K. Its price enhances according to its movement in different areas.

Kaladi has high energy value, rich in nutrition and contains proteins, carbohydrates and minerals. It is also sold as the Kalari-Kulcha in the market. Kaladi making need skill and knowledge and concerned institutions impart skill among the rural women farmers for its making. In this regards KVKs and Department of Animal Husbandry play the significant role. By Kaladi making entrepreneurship can be developed in the rural areas of Udhampur distt. and many youths who are migrating towards urban areas for income and employment can be employed in their respective areas. Kaladi is served hot with bread, tomatoes, cabbage and onions. It can also be used in making curry. It can be kept for about one week under room temperature and can be stored for about one month under refrigeration system. Quintals of Kalari is prepared and sold daily in Udhampur distt. of J&K. Kaladi of Udhampur is very famous and is liked by everyone.GI tag will help to promote Kaladi of Udhampur distt. and more avenues of the income and employment can be generated in the rural areas through Kaladi making. Kalari can be a boon to the farmers of Udhampur distt. of J&K and special efforts are needed to scale up and promote its production.GI tagging will help to identify certain organized markets to sale it. It can uplift the socio-economic status of the farmers of Udhampur distt.

(The writers Dr. Banarsi Lal is Sr. Scientist & Head of KVK, Reasi and Dr. D.D Dogra, Ex-CAHO, Udhampur, SKUAST-J).

Religious Fundamentalism: A Horrifying Phenomenon in Present Day World Order

■ MANMOHAN DHAR

Religious fundamentalism has emerged as a deeplyunsettling phenomenon in the present day world order. It transcends borders, cultures, and faiths, affecting millions of lives worldwide. While religion can be a source of solace, Universal brotherhood and guidances for for the mankind to live a better life.

The dark side of religious fundamentalism is characterized by intolerance, violence, and a distorted interpretation of sacred books and texts.

In our increasingly interconnected world, diversity in religious beliefs is more apparent than ever: People follow various faiths and spiritual paths, and this diversity is often celebrated as a testament to human freedom. However; religious fundamentalism threatens this diversity, as it seeks to impose a singular, often extremist interpretation of a religion upon entire communities. This has dire implications for social cohesion, tolerance, and understanding.

Religious fundamentalism is quite oftenly manipulated for political purposes, enabling leaders and groups to rally followers around an extreme agenda of dividing people on religious grounds.

While ignoring the broader context of peace, compassion, and tolerance that many religious texts convey. This selfish approach fuels hatred and division, terrorism and Violence. One of the most horrifying consequences of religious fundamentalism is its association with terrorism and violence. Extremist groups that subscribe to such ideologies commit acts of terror in the name of religion.

These acts not only cause immediate loss of life but also create a pervasive atmosphere of fear; undermining peace and security on a global scale.

Religious fundamentalism often intersects with issues of gender; sexuality; and individual freedoms. It leads to the oppression of women, and denial of basic human rights to the common man. In many cases, these practices are justified through selective religious interpretations and the ulterior motives of very nefarious planning to horrify the human race on the global scale.

Religious fundamentalism also contributes to interreligious conflict. In a world where diverse faiths coexist, fundamentalist beliefs can fuel animosity and conflict between different religious groups. This conflict, often manipulated by political forces, further destabilizes regions and hampers global efforts to foster peace and cooperation.

The present world order is heavily influenced by technology and the digital age. While technology can be a force for good, it also provides a platform for the spread of extremist ideologies. Social media, in particular; has facilitated the dissemination of extremist propaganda, recruitment efforts, and the radicalization of vulnerable individuals. Addressing religious fundamentalism requires a comprehensive approach that considers the role of technology in its propagation.

Countering religious fundamentalism is a multifaceted and an uphill challenge. It necessitates a global effort to promote educa-

tion, interfaith dialogue, and the empowerment of moderate voices within religious communities. Governments and international organizations must work together to address the root causes of fundamentalism, which often include poverty, lack of access to education, and political instability. By promoting tolerance, diversity, and inclusion, societies can combat the appeal of extremism.

There happens to be a dire need for the overhauling of some global organisations like the UNO, in order to make them more inclusive where the voices of those who comprise the large chunk of world population, can be heard with a resolve to make the world communities come closer to understand the cultural and social ethics that can have a lasting effect on making the world a better place to live.

Global leadership cannot be the silent spectator to the deteriorating world peace. Religious fundamentalism is indeed a horrifying phenomenon in the present world order and needs to be addressed on a collective platform. Because, It threatens the principles of diversity, tolerance, and peace that are essential for the coexistence of various faiths and societies. While eradicating religious fundamentalism may be an ambitious goal, countering its influence and impact is imperative to ensure a safer, more inclusive global society. This requires collective efforts at all levels of society, from individuals to governments and international institutions, to promote a world where religious belief is a source of harmony and understanding rather than division, conflict and religious hatred.

Multifaceted tourism of Basohli

■ SHIV KUMAR PADHA

The entire Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory is bestowed with the enormous beauty in the shape of snow clad mountains with blanket of forests, verdures, green meadows, springs of crystal clear water; rattling brooks, big lakes and the white water rivers by the bountiful nature. Kashmir region has been accredited as a heaven on the earth by the Mugal emperor Shahjehan which is also known as Switzerland of Asia. It will not be an exaggeration if we call Basohli an ideal tourist destination in Jammu region.

There was a time when Lakhampur was considered as the only gate way to Jammu and Kashmir but after the completion of Atal Setu over RSD, Basohli being situated at the confluence of three states, J&K UT, Punjab and Himachal pardesh, has emerged as the legitimate gateway to J&K. Atal Setu at Basohli, joining these states with J&K UT, is the only entrance which throws open the gates of world of tourism located in Jammu region in general and Basohli Bani areas in particular because these areas have got the potential of offering multidimensional tourism opportunities for the tourists of the varied tastes and temperaments. Atal Setu over river Ravi, now RSD, resembles with the one Golden Gates bridge of California, USA with the difference the former is built over 600 m wide stretch of RSD lake at Basohl, while the later over one mile wide and three miles long channel between San Francisco bay and the pacific ocean, USA. Like the Golden Gates, Atal Setu is also counted among the wonders in terms of design and technology globally. Due to its unique structure and technology, it has become a tourist destination in itself because thousands of the tourists from different states especially the students throng Basohli in order to have first-hand knowledge and information about the design of the bridge.

The moment tourists place their first step on the threshold of Basohli, the gateway of Jammu and Kashmir; whole tourism world from Basohli and Bani, is unveiled. The entire region is rich in natural, historic, religious and adventurous tourism. The terrain of Basohli Bani is an ideal for the trekking and mountaineering expeditions. The mountains are covered with thick blanket of forests, whereas, the peaks clad with snow, from where small brooks and the rivulets emanate producing the rattling sound which entertain the auditory senses and lull the tourists to sleep. The cascades of water; stair like farms, waterfalls and rich flora n fauna are enough to capture the attention of the visitors.

Basohli tehsil has many tourist places and spots which can cater the different tastes and likings of the tourists. The 88 sq. km water reservoir of RSD passing below the famous Atal Setu has got ample scope for water tourism, water sports, boating, surf riding, para sailing, boat racing and floating restaurants. The world famous Basohli miniature paintings, Pashmina shawls, the wonder of the Basohli palaces and the lake beach, which resembles with Goa, are the attractions available at Basohli. The entire region from Basohli to Bani is gifted with beauty by the mother nature. Besides traditional tourism, Bani Basohli have got ample scope for number of adventure tourism for the tourists.

Bestowed with natural beauty and climatic variations, whole Bani tehsil is considered as a unique geographical entity. Entire Bani tehsil is hilly which abounds in sights rich in natural beauty. Places such as Sarthal, Lowang, Bani town, Dhagar, Chala-Dhar, Banjal, Rolka, Jaurian Mata and a terrain extending from Sarthal to Kailash are worth mentioning as rich in tourist potential. Ever green tall waiving deodar trees, forests of cheel and padtal, crystal clear water; streams and brooks, springs and cascades, snow clad mountains, green pastures, vast stretches of water and snow and the verdure enhance the beauty of Bani.

2. Water tourism in Ranjeet Sagar Dam

The Basohli Bani Development Authority, a nodal agency for the tourism development in the area has constructed the jetties from where the tourists enjoy the motor boat rides and trips. A good number of the tourists enjoy the motor boat ride in the RSD Lake bearing the life jackets for the safety. The entire area adjoining Basohli town is rich in multidimensional tourist potential. Town as well as the entire tehsil has got as many tourist spots as can capture the attention of the tourists. The new and the old historical temples of Mahan Dera, Shiv temple, Fort shrine of Mata Chanchlo,Sheetla and Mahakali temples, world famous Basohli miniature paintings, pashmina shawls, the wonder of the Basohli palaces and the lake beach of Purthu, resembling with one in Goa are the main attractions for the tourists at Basohli. A good number of the tourists camp at the beautiful beach and enjoy the nature in the real setting, organize bonfire and campfire programs during the whole nights, where the tourists enjoy dancing on the tunes of the DJs. The water all around the lake and especially at the beach is blue, crystal clear producing the ripples tossing the shores which are sending invitation to the tourists. Apart from water tourism, fort shrine of Mata ChanchloDevi is a beautiful tourist spot. The loca-

tion of the fort, its height in comparison to its surrounding adds to its beauty and makes it one of the most charming, beautiful and worth visiting tourist spot in the Jammu region . From the view point at the fort shrine, the tourists can have bird's eye view of the whole area below spreading up to dozens of miles in all directions. One can have full view of the 88 sq. km vast stretch of RSD water at one glance. The steamers and the boats transporting passengers and other material from either sides of the lake present a beautiful and charismatic view to the visitors. The night view due the reflection of the city lights in the lake waters resembles with the view of Dal Lake as seen from the ShankerAcharya temple in Srinagar.

The upcoming Water Sports centre at Basohli

Lakes of India in general and that of Jammu and Kashmir in particular are not only significant geographically, but have major tourist attraction. The vast 88 sq. km crystal clear fresh water RSD of Basohli situated amidst Shivalik hills are some of the popular and panoramic lakes The vast RSD is one of the largest fresh water lakes of the country which has been formed as a result of ponding of the RSD. The lake is situated at the border of Jammu and Kashmir and has got ample scope for water tourism and water sports in the state, where its development can add one more feather in the cap of tourism industry of Jammu and Kashmir in future.

With the proper training and guidance given at the right age, J&K will have National & International paddlers in the coming time and RSD is an ideal water front for hosting national and international water sports competitions in the future. Keeping in mind the accommodating potential for all the water sport events such as Kayaking, Canoeing, Dragon boat, Canoe polo and rowing for trainings and competitions, the government of J&K has sanctioned one Water Sports centre at Basohli, where construction of the centre has already begun with the foundation stone laid by LG. Sh. Manoj Sinha. Due to its location, it will facilitate large number of local population to take water sports and excel at the national and international level. The centre will promote water sports specially Rowing, Kayaking and Canoeing, which has high medal winning capacity. The Sports centre will facilitate players for high performance coaching at all levels. The water sports centre will attract youth towards the water sports and keep them away from drug addiction. As per the study, the water sports centre will provide facilities like. Boosting the Basohli tourism can enhance the opportunities of employment, number of the tourists and the income to the exchequer of the UT.

YOUR COLUMN Perfect preparation for JEE mains and NEET UG exams with virtual tutor

Dear Editor,

If you are preparing for competitive exams like JEE and NEET, then artificial intelligence based virtual tutor can be very useful for you. For this you do not even need to go to the coaching market. You can get guidance right from the comfort of your home. In traditional coaching classes, it is not possible for the teacher to pay attention to every student. But a virtual tutor gives you personal attention, improving your preparation. from machine learning algorithms Preparation AI Virtual Tutor helps students by encouraging them to study smart.

AI technology provides a customized report based on the individual strengths and weaknesses of students through machine learning algorithms, making it possible for students to plan their course completion and focus specifically on the subjects in which students excel. Are weak. With this technique, students' time is saved and exam preparation can be made easier by covering the syllabus better. virtual tutor feedback from Virtual tutor powered by AI guides students preparing for competitive exams by providing feedback and assistance in a variety of ways. By knowing the learning styles of the students, the virtual tutor ensures that the learning process is easier for them and different learning strategies can be created for different students as per their needs.

Previous display is continuous track AI technology tries to improve the performance of students by tracking their progress at every moment. This the difficulty level of questions in the virtual test is based on the previous performance of the students, through which students can focus on the

weak topics and boost their confidence. Special focus on time management In competitive exams like JEE and NOTES, AI technology understands the exam pattern and prepares strategies to improve time management for students. It helps students to understand how to solve important questions first while staying within the time limit during the exam.

If student exam When students learn to develop time management skills, they can mentally prepare themselves at the time of examination by knowing how much time to give to which questions. Start your preparation from here To ease the preparation for competitive exams like JEE and NEET, the Ministry of Education has launched Sathi app for students, through which students can easily prepare for JEE and NEET exams. Apart from this, students can also do AI virtual studies through Darwin NEET, Imbibe, Melveno and EduRev app.

Vijay Garg