

STUDENTS ROLE

Students have a duty not only to acquire knowledge but also to use that knowledge for the betterment of their community and country. Acquiring knowledge is not just a personal endeavour but also a religious and societal duty. Students are expected to use their education for the benefit of their society and nation. A student's life is characterized by sacred values and civilization. During their education, they are expected to internalize these values and use them as a guiding force in their actions and decisions. The values acquired during a student's educational journey should inspire them to be dutiful towards religion, society, and the nation. Students are encouraged to dedicate and even sacrifice their lives for these higher principles. The significant role that students can play in the progress and prosperity of their nation. Their contribution can be extensive, and they can make a difference even while pursuing their education. Students are encouraged to enter the field of work with loyalty and truthful conduct. This is seen as essential for contributing effectively to society and the nation. Despite the challenges, students who can balance their education with contributions to society and the nation can be considered great patriots, rulers of the nation, and national heroes. In essence, the idea that education should be seen as a means to serve one's society and nation. It encourages students to embrace their role in shaping the future and making a positive impact on their communities and the country.

Unleashing India's Food Processing Potential: World Food India 2023 and Beyond

India's journey in the 21st century has been one worth celebrating. Our growth story as a nation, is adorned with sustained progression, technology, commitment to sustainability, resilient enterprises, and our global outlook. This exemplary growth has been importantly fuelled by our industries and its many constituent sectors, that transform India every day. One of the most promising, dynamic and under-highlighted of these is the Indian food processing sector.

Food processing industry in India has had a remarkable growth trajectory in recent years and has the enormous potential for consistent growth ahead. The value addition through processing makes food processing sector one of the key sectors that can transform India's agricultural landscape and contribute to the push for doubling farmers' income. In the light of United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) of ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns, food waste reduction has been given emphasis. Through innovation in processing techniques, sustainable sourcing, reprocessing and efficient utilisation of agricultural produce, the food processing industry can be the catalyst in food waste reduction, contributing to realisation of multiple SDGs.

Given its consistent high growth rate in recent years and impressive future projections, food processing industry will be one of the critical drivers of India's economic growth. Government of India has undertaken numerous policy initiatives to augment this sector's growth.

The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY) is a scheme launched by the union government with the objective of creation of modern infrastructure in the food processing sector. The scheme is expected to leverage substantial investment of around Rs 11,000 crores, creating 5.44 lakh jobs and providing a strong impetus for the food processing industry. The PM Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) is another centrally sponsored scheme with the objective of helping micro food processing enterprises' inclusion in the formal sector. With an outlay of ₹10,000 crores, it undertakes to provide capital linked subsidy to 2,00,000 micro units. Under PMFME, MoUs have been signed with 15 leading banks and project implementation plans for 25 states have been approved. The Union Government also aims to provide financial support to Indian food brands through the Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industry (PLISFPI), a Rs 10,900 crores scheme. The scheme is expected to help expand output in food processing sector by Rs 33,000 crores and create 2.5 lakh jobs.

An important initiative highlighting the vision of the Government of India has been 'World Food India', a global event with domestic and international participation. The mega event is focused on showcasing India's potential in the food processing domain to investors, leaders and partners across the globe. The first edition of World Food India (WFI) in 2017 was a remarkable success and welcomed leaders, delegates, and participants from 61 countries and 27 states. World Food India, 2017 also turned out to be an unprecedented success in facilitating investments which will induce transformative growth in this industry.

The Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) is set to organize the second edition of World Food India (WFI) in 2023 as a truly global event enabling convergence of Indian and global food processing industries. India's food processing industry has significant export potential. Connecting with global industry players, Indian business can tap into these lucrative export markets for processed foods.

The food processing industry is built upon the primary sector as processing starts with agricultural inputs. With the second largest agricultural output in the world, India is in the most comfortable position to sustain very high growth in the food processing sector for years. Also, food processing levels in India hover around 10% which represents massive untapped potential. Global demand for processed foods is rising at a steady 4% due to increased urbanization, higher incomes, and convenience food preferences. With its large population, increasing income levels, and strong economic growth, India is a promising investment destination, with its food processing industry shining as one of the most reliable sectors. As India marches towards becoming a \$5 trillion economy, the food processing industry is poised to play a pivotal role. With the right mix of innovation, investment, and policy support, it can significantly contribute to this ambitious goal. With World Food India 2023, India's potential is going to attract unmatched global attention. It is just the right time for domestic and foreign investors and the global food processing industry to tap into Indian food processing potential, forging ahead a better global future with India's growth story. World Food India 2023 is set to be a landmark event and the gateway to the Indian food processing industry, addressing global challenges with India's potential. (The author is Secretary, Food Processing Industries).

When 'Development' Became a Mass Movement: The Essence of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas

G. KISHAN REDDY



This country has been built on such foundation of ancient cultural heritage, where we were told of only one mantra during Vedic period... which we have learnt, we have memorized - "sanghachchhdhvamsam-vadadhvamsam wo manasi jaanataam" - we walk together, we move together, we think together, we resolve together and together we take this country forward - Shri Narendra Modi"

In 2014, from the ramparts of Red Fort, Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, eloquently put forth his vision for a Bharat, where development is not just an agenda but a goal shared by every Indian. He hinted at a future where Jan Bhagidaari will emerge as our strongest weapon and our claim to the throne of being a Vishwa Guru. That very year, the Hon'ble Prime Minister, etched a momentous date on the calendar - October 31st as 'Rashtriya Ekta Diwas', a tribute to the legacy of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the 'Iron Man' of India. However, it signified more than just a date; it embodied a solemn commitment to rekindle the very essence of unity and integration that Sardar Patel had envisioned. It was a promise, a pledge to follow in his footsteps, progressing in the timeless values of cohesion and collective endeavours.

A decade later, as we celebrate Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, it is the perfect time to recapitulate the remarkable voyage India has undertaken on a path illuminated by the enduring principles of unity and the mighty force of collaboration.

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ethos of public-centric governance, India has transformed into a global leader, soaring from the "fragile five" to the world's top-five economies. With a GDP of \$3.75 trillion in 2023, our nation shines brightly, recovering from the "lost decade" of 2004-2014.

It is interesting to note that under the leadership of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, the Annual Financial Budgets metamorphosed from a mere financial blueprint to a dynamic policy document, anchored in the aspirations of the people. The "people's budget" empowers citizens to hold the government accountable for its fiscal decisions, enabling active participation in monitoring budget progress and ensuring efficient resource utilization. Our remarkable growth has ignited national pride, renewed dignity, and shared ownership. People have spearheaded comprehensive development through groundbreaking initiatives: 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan,' which built nearly 12 crore toilets, eradicating open defecation; 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao,' championing daughters' rights; and the 'Give it up' movement, with over a crore families voluntarily forfeiting LPG subsidies to support the less privileged, are but a few of the shining examples of 'Jan Bhagidaari' and 'Rashtriya Ekta'.

'Make in India' and 'Vocal for local' revived our Bhartiyyata, sparking a nationwide popular participation-oriented movement. We championed our MSMEs, inspiring youth entrepreneurship, and leveraging India's unique skills and abundant resources. This philosophy reshaped India from a net importer to a major global mobile phone producer, with a 300% surge in electronic manufacturing since 2014. India is now also the world's third-largest startup ecosystem, with a patent boom and record goods exports at \$448 billion in FY 2022-23. The digital revolution, represented by 'Digital India' and the drive towards a 'cashless' economy, underscores the government's collaborative partnership with the common citizen, promoting widespread acceptance of digital payments. India stands today as one of the world's largest digital markets, with a Fintech adoption rate of 87%, far surpassing the world average of 64%. Since 2014, the anti-corruption crusade has surged as a nationwide movement, recouping over Rs 2.73 lakh crore from 2015 to 2022 through JAM (Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, and mobile phones), exposing counterfeit beneficiaries and sealing delivery system leakages that were rampant before 2014. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, India's solidarity and Jan Bhagidaari shone once again. Prime Minister Modi's foresight led the nation to swiftly implement preventive measures. COVID warriors emerged, hand in hand with the Government, stabilizing the ship. Subsequently, rapid vaccine production

showcased an empowered India, capable of self-defence and simultaneously offering global support. India's G20 Presidency, supported by over a crore of its citizens, showcased "Rashtriya Ekta" in action. The summit affirmed India's global stature and "Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam" as the compass for reshaping global governance, ensuring inclusivity and people-centric leadership in the "People's G20."

"Rashtriya Ekta Diwas" is not just a commemoration; it's a profound philosophy empowering people, and breaking free from outdated practices. It's democracy in action, akin to Sardar Patel's vision of grand unification of Maa Bharti's vast geo-cultural-political landscape. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to integrate every voice into governance mirrors this spirit. It's about national pride, uniting a diverse nation, echoing Sardar Patel's dream of a united Bharat, that is India! Each citizen's participation shapes our destiny, nurturing inclusivity, diversity, and collective strength.

On this Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, under the leadership of Pradhan Mantri Shri Narendra Modi ji, let us rededicate ourselves to the philosophy of empowerment, transcending entitlement, which has become the bedrock of a truly realized and fulfilled democracy, guiding us into the promising era of Amrit Kaal. (The author is the Union Minister of DoNER, Tourism and Culture).

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Jammu and Kashmir: A Beacon of Progress and Achievements

KARISHMA PARIHAR

Jammu and Kashmir, renowned for its picturesque landscapes, has recently gained recognition for its outstanding accomplishments across various sectors. The region's consistent performance on the national stage has solidified its position as a leader in numerous areas. Let's delve into the notable milestones that have propelled J&K into the ranks of top-performing regions.

PMGSY Success: Leading Rural Connectivity Efforts For two consecutive years (2020-21 & 2021-22), J&K has secured the prestigious 3rd position at the national level in the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY). This achievement underscores the state's dedication to enhancing rural connectivity, positively impacting lives in remote areas.

Agriculture Income Soars: J&K Among Top Five According to the Economic Survey 2021-22, Jammu and Kashmir stands tall as the 5th highest state in terms of monthly income for agricultural households. This accomplishment places J&K in the league of agrarian powerhouses, showcasing its thriving agricultural sector.

NeSda Triumph: J&K Leads in e-Governance In the realm of e-Governance, J&K takes the crown. The region has secured the top spot amongst the Union Territories in the NeSda (North Eastern States Data Applications) rankings, a testament to its efficient use of technology in governance.

E-office Revolution: Setting a Benchmark in Digital Administration J&K is spearheading the digital revolution with its robust e-office uptake. At present, the region stands as the foremost Union Territory with nearly 400 offices utilizing e-office solutions, achieving an impressive disposal rate of 97%.

Reducing Compliance Burden: J&K Ranks 5th in Business

Category

Jammu and Kashmir's efforts in reducing compliance burden in the business category have not gone unnoticed. The region has secured the 5th position, having successfully streamlined 3188 compliance procedures.

Amrit Sarovar Initiative: A Testament to Devotion and Efficiency J&K emerges as a frontrunner in the nationwide initiative to construct 75 mandatory Amrit Sarovars in each district. Not only has the region completed an impressive 2341 Sarovars, but it also stands as the 3rd highest achiever in percentage terms.

Nasha Mukht Abhiyan: J&K Leads the Way in Substance Abuse Eradication

J&K takes a formidable stance against substance abuse, securing the 2nd position in the Nasha Mukht Abhiyan, showcasing the state's dedication to creating a healthier, addiction-free society.

Dachigam Forest Management: An Exemplary Model Dachigam Forest in Jammu and Kashmir has been recognized as the best-managed forest in the country by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII). This acknowledgment affirms the region's commitment to preserving its rich natural heritage.

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav: J&K's Remarkable Cultural Contribution

In the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations, J&K shines bright, having uploaded an impressive 41528 events to date, reflecting its vibrant cultural tapestry.

SVAMITVA Scheme: Pioneer in Property Rights

J&K has made history as the first Union Territory to commence Property Card distribution and achieve saturation in the Srinagar district under the SVAMITVA scheme, a remarkable step towards securing property

rights.

Renewable Energy Leadership: A Sustainable Future Beckons

In the pursuit of renewable energy, J&K leads the pack among Union Territories, earning the coveted 1st position during the year 2021-22 as recognized by the Association of Renewable Energy Agencies of States (AREAS).

Ease of Living: J&K Among Top Performers J&K has demonstrated exceptional progress in enhancing the quality of life for its citizens, securing the 5th rank in the Citizen Category for ease of living.

SDG Progress: J&K at the Forefront of Sustainable Development

Jammu and Kashmir has secured the 4th rank in incremental progress of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) score, propelling it into the Front Runner category as per the SDG Index by NITI Aayog.

Educational Renaissance: From 17th to 8th in National Achievement Survey

In the realm of education, J&K has made a remarkable leap, catapulting from the 17th rank in 2017 to the 8th rank in the 2021-22 National Achievement Survey. This includes an impressive 6th rank in Primary class, 3rd rank in Middle class, and 12th rank in Secondary Class.

Transparent Governance: Setting the Standard J&K stands tall among the best-performing states/UTs, reaffirming its commitment to transparent and accountable governance.

In summary, Jammu and Kashmir's extraordinary achievements are a testament to its unwavering commitment to progress, development, and the well-being of its citizens. From infrastructure to education, the region is setting a benchmark for excellence on the national stage.

The famous Sarthal Mata Shrine

OMKAR DATTATRAY

Hindu shrine, Sarthal Mata is famous for the annual pilgrimage known as Sarthal yatra. The idol, considered as reincarnation of Goddess Durga, was originally carved from stones by locals during the Raja Agar Dev of Kishtwar and later renovated by Maharaja Hari Singh in 1936. Mata Sarthal Devi Mandir is a Hindu temple of Kishtwar district in Jammu and Kashmir. It is situated at approximately 6000 feet and usually covered with snow during winters. According to local legend, Shri Paul who was the first saint from Kishtwar region, had directed his disciples to worship goddess Durga in the form of Mother with 18 Arms. The legend goes on to say that one of the locals was able to invoke goddess in the form of a young girl who pointed towards the eighteen armed idol of goddess. King Agar Dev of Kishtwar is then believed to send his courtiers to make a temple for the idol at an appropriate place. It is said that the Idol became too heavy to be carried beyond its present abode at Sarthal where a stone temple was constructed. The management of the temple lies with the Dharmarth Trust that takes care of the running of the temple. An inn (Dharamshala) had been constructed next to the temple where pilgrims stay for the night at nominal payment. Annual pilgrimage in the month of July to the temple is an important event in the local calendar when people from nearby villages through the temple to pay obeisance and seek the blessings from the Goddess. People bring in tridents - trishul to the temple. The temple boasts of trident collection that is hundreds of years old. During the Dogra rule, this

pilgrimage was known as Sarkari Yatra during which there was a 3-day holiday in entire Doda district for celebration of the yatra. It is considered auspicious to have Mundan (first Hair removal of a baby) at the temple. It has a dedicated vehicular road starting from Hasti near Kishtwar that leads upto the base camp. The temple is situated on the top of a hillock, and has some difficult stairs to be climbed to reach the top. The ancient Asthdash Buja Mata black Idol of Mata Sarthal devi was stolen in 2008 from the temple. However the Idol could not be smuggled out of the area and was recovered and reinstalled at the temple. This incident caused anguish amongst the local populace. Kishtwar district has got the distinction of housing and having the religious places of all communities and one of the most famous shrines is the Sarthal Mata temple frequented by a large number of people especially during Yatra. "Ashta -Dash -Bhuja Mata an incarnation of Goddess Durga has been the chief Deity of the Hindus of Kishtwar and adjoining areas from ancient time. The holy temple in the present form was got constructed by Maharaja Hari Singh in the year 1936-37 from the proceeds of the timber extracted from Dayalwan and Deviyun - Van. The sacred temple of Mata is located at Sarthal which is 30Kms from Kishtwar town connected by a vehicular road which takes off from Hasti from the NH-18, 11 kms ahead of Kishtwar town. The holy shrine is at an altitude of about 6000 feet, surrounded by beautiful mountain ranges, lush green fields, vegetation and charming surroundings. The holy site has a cluster of villages and habitations like Agral, Sarthal proper

, Lawa, Karool etc. in the neighborhood having a good population. Thousands of Yatries from different parts of the UT through the shrine almost throughout the year to pay their obeisance and get the blessings of Mata for their well being and prosperity. Whatever one prays has never found un-rewarded. So the people have an enormous faith in the mother deity. Many people proceed to holy shrine in the form of a big processions like yatra with large number of their kith and kins, friends and relatives, chanting and reciting bhajans amidst beating of drums and allied music to offer their prayers to the holy Goddess during the ceremonies of 1st hair cut of their children/babies or for fulfilling their oaths having made earlier to have blessings of Mata. For such occasions, the yatra or function lasts for 2 to 3 days. Sometimes such yatras are in dozens at a time when entire shrine complex gets flooded by Yatries and people, and there is a great hustle and bustle and hectic activity which thrills one and all. The month of July every year witnesses heavy rush and excitement of yatries, pilgrims and devotees who come in streams to visit the shrine and to get the blessings, as it is in this month when Sarthal Devi Management Committee Kishtwar under Dharmarth Trust Jammu organizes a Shoba Yatra with holy Mace on Harshudi Saptami (7TH day of the bright fortnight of Ashaah month) which starts from Shri Gouri Shanker Temple Sarkoot Kishtwar and goes up to holy shrine of Mata Sarthal Devi ji with great pomp and show and religious fervor in the shape of a huge procession chanting religious slogans, Bhajans and musical arrangements. The Yatra leaves

Kishtwar on all types of available vehicles. During Dogra rule this yatra was declared as Sarkari Yatra. Three days holiday were announced for the entire district of Doda on the religious festival. At the holy shrine of goddess, Yagna, Pooja and Havans amidst chanting of Vedic Mantras, Shalokas, Bhajans is performed on Harshudhi Asthami with other religious ceremonies as per the ritual with Puran Ahaooti on the last day. Also Kirtan and Jagrata is performed at the shrine. Langer is also arranged at the shrine complex. At the holy shrine complex necessary arrangements for made for lodging and boarding of thousands of Yatries in the existing guest house and Dharamshala. But more accommodation for lodging and boarding is required to be made available by the Trust by constructing more huts and rooms, as the number of Yatries and devotees is on rise day by day and year after year due to Mata's blessings and growing faith among people. Even Muslim Rajas of Kishtwar used to take the holy mace to Sarthal on the prescribed day with great reverence. The government is required to harness and channelize the pilgrim, religious and historical spots of the hilly district of Doda and cover these places including the Sarthal Mata shrine on the tourist map of the UT. People of Jammu and Kashmir are required and advised to visit the Sarthal Mata shrine and seek blessings from the Goddess. In short Sarthal Mata Shrine is the shining spot of Hindu-Muslim unity and mutual brotherhood as the people of Muslim faith also pay visit to this Shrine with great reverence. (The author is a columnist, social and KP activist).

YOUR COLUMN Hike in Onion

Dear Editor, Some time ago, tomatoes were being sold at Rs 200 per kg in the country. Now, tomato prices have come down, but there is a big jump in onion prices. Its price has

crossed Rs 50 in many states. It is surprising that the government adopts a lenient attitude towards this matter.

The high prices of onions and the miserable situation of farmers in an agricultural country is truly shameful and condemnable. Even before this, onion prices were increasing and there has been politics on this issue.

It is not a new thing that expensive onions have brought

tears to the eyes of the common man, but even before, whether it was a Congress government or a BJP government, onion prices have skyrocketed. Agricultural experts should develop such technology so that onion production increases in every state of the country. The wrong policies of the government which are responsible for the rising onion prices can definitely be improved.

N Ashraf