

IMPROVING RAILWAY NETWORK

The railway network is a critical part of India's transportation infrastructure, and efforts to improve it are essential to protect the millions of people who rely on it for their daily commute and travel needs. The decline in the number of derailment cases over the past two decades is a positive trend, indicating some improvement in safety. However, incidents like the one at Balasore's Balnaga Bazar railway station demonstrate that more needs to be done to ensure passenger safety. Derailments are often a significant cause of accidents, and addressing them is crucial. Accidents like the one at Balasore railway station understandably lead to calls for accountability from railway authorities. It's essential to investigate such incidents thoroughly to determine their causes and take appropriate actions to prevent them from happening again. It's important to address systemic issues that may contribute to accidents. These can include outdated infrastructure, inadequate maintenance, and deficiencies in safety measures. Identifying and rectifying these issues is key to preventing future accidents. The suggestions to improve signaling systems and invest in better technology are crucial steps toward enhancing railway safety. Upgrading infrastructure and adopting modern technology can help reduce accidents and improve overall efficiency.

Charming Chinar-Beauty of the Valley

■ G.L KHAJURIA

Chinar is virtually a person derivation meaning thereby 'chit' 'naar' haying affiliation to what is so called 'fire' owing due to 'fiery colour of leaves when leaves fall in autumn and in their turning out as golden yellow manifesting flaming red 'leaves. Basically, this beautiful, giant and majestic tree is not only indigenous but exotic one. The mention of chinar as boin' is found in the folk lore of Kashmir.

The Chinar tree is the real beauty of the Kashmir valley where many films have over the years bear affiliations to this majestic trees as for example the most prominent films like 'Azroo' and 'JabJab Phool Khiley have beenshot in and around Dal lake and the mostmagnificent 'Parks' and Gardens of Kahmir. The picturesqueand kaleidoscopic beauty of the Kashmir valley over the years have attracted and haunted the foreigners from China and western countries and they have described it as the 'Paradise on earth. The environment that surrounds the valley is unambiguously enchanting and enthralling more and more so due to these largely spreaded over 'Chinars' amongst other enchanting greenery of the flora and salubrious and lush green deodars, kails, oaks, spruce and fir with altitudinal variations apart from Pinus gerendana (chilgoza) which is richly found next to Paddar in Jammu region. But the majestic Chinar finds its rich and unique placement in Kashmir Valley. The 'Charchinari' admist 'Dal lake' can most conveniently be attributed as a 'heritage' of velvet Kashmir valley and the more you praise, the less it is and this valley is in no way less than Switzerland of Europe over the mother earth which having other enchanting and bewildering spots on the other parts of globe, yet the enchanting beauty of the velvet valley has got its own significance of rarity of beauty.

The magnificent and majestic 'Chinar' tree attains a gigantic height more than a 100 hundred feet with 40-50 feet girth and with a round spreading crown, leaves are mostly heart shaped 10 to 25 cms and 12 to 30 cms in length and breadth deeply cut in triangular toothed lobes which give an appealing grace from long distance and provide abundant shade to the tourists and visitors alike. The bark of the tree is with silvery flakes.

The tree is propagated lessy by seed sowing, but it is preferential if it is propagated through cutting which yield success-oriented results and as the locals go in far propagation through cuttings. At times, it is reported that there were as many as 70 garden in the velvet valley of paradise' which have now reduced to few and all those gardens were well flourished with majestic chinar with kaleidoscopic variety of flowers of multihued nature but ironically now only few survive in their residence. The attention of the Govt. is invited to bring it to the pristine grandeur and glory to ensure and further invigorate more and more influx of tourists, pilgrims and cine-stars. These will in unison boost tourism which is the dire demand of the day and we can yield hefty dividends apart from providing job to the local populace and improve their socio-economic conditions.

Shah Jahan amongst the mughals was over-enthusiastic in the formation of gardens and parks and as such he introduced the magnificent and majestic tree inthe velvet valley of Kashmir in various parts and gardens extensively in Nishat Bagh, Shalimar, Harwan, Verinag, Hazrat Bal, Char Chinar, and on other prominent locations such as Tuhnulla, Avantipura, Mansabal, Sopore, Bara-nulla, Anantnag so on and so forth.

It is added over here that this majestic tree occupies its prominence in almost every corner of the beauteous valley of Kashmir also nomenclaturised as the "Paradise on earth". The majestic and magnificent tree gains an attitudinal height upto 2600mts but however in the lower belts of altitudethis tree is cultivable and now in Jammuand its vicinity it is successfully flourishing to the extremes of Kud, Batote ,Katra,Reasi so on and so forth.The wood is as good as anything likemanufacturing of plywood, apart from itsmultihued usages for the manufacture of furniture and its ilk. The tree as well find its usefulness in the firewood which mitigate problems of local populace of firewood in multitudinal ways. The timber is as well used for building construction and also used for the manufacture of furniture. It is, therefore, urged upon the Govt. to invigorate and boost 'chinar plantation extensively and intensively not confined to the Kashmir valley but elsewhere too where it is well suited to site so as to enhance the beauty of the state and haunt more and more tourists apart from improvising the environment of the State. In other words, this will yield and boost the socio-economic status of the local populace and help in mitigating the fire-wood, timber and other related problems of the locals.

Since the 'Valley of Kashmir' falls under temperate zone soextensive efforts should be accelerated to enhance maximum plantation on the occasion of 'Arbor's' day as is being- done in the sub-tropical regionof Jammu or Vanamahotsava.Tree culture had been a ritual inour old scriptures if we unfold the pious pages of Vanupurana, Ramayana, Mahabbarta, these echo that each part ofthe tree has most reverentially been prayed. Let us, therefore,pledge to carry this message tothe posterity to come by so as to ensure our state ever-flourishing with trees like chinar and its allied so that the beauty of the velvety valley of Kashmir enchants throughout every nook and corner of the charmingvalley.Elsewhere too, where the sites arewell suited in chenal valley which is thebiggest forest area of the state thecultivation of this majestic and beautifultree shall occupy its own place of prominence. The 'pride chinar apart frombeing of magnanimity of beauty is having medicinal properties too. The bark ofthis majestic tree is boiled as vinegarwhich is curative to multihued diseases eg. Dysentery, dirrhoea, toothaches, hernia and many more of its allied.

(The author is Former Dy. Conservator of Forest, J&K).

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

India including the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir observed vigilance awareness week from October 30, to November 5,2023 with utmost dedication .The vigilance awareness week is observed every year to make the public aware about the perils and dangers of corruption so as to prevent this menace which is eating vitals of the nation like a termite and so there is utmost need and necessity to not only prevent corruption but also to eradicate it from the government offices ,public corporations as well as from private entities. Thus we have to fight corruption from public life and make transparency in public life the aim and objective of vigilance awareness week .The purpose of the vigilance awareness week is to make public aware about the perils of corruption and to make sincere efforts to weed it out from the government and private institutions and make corruption free society and public life the motto of the vigilance week.

The Ministry of Micro ,Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) has observed the vigilance awareness week with the theme given by central vigilance commission , "Say No to Corruption ,Commit to nation. "During the vigilance awareness week ,the Ministry of MSME had organized various awareness programmes/seminars/workshops/capacity building training at the ministry level as well as through the organizations under this ministry .This will lead to aware the employees to work towards instituting corruption free philosophy /bring in transparency ,maintain absolute integrity and devotion to duty at all times .Like at the central level ,Jammu and Kashmir UT has also observed the vigilance awareness week with great devotion. Observance of vigilance awareness week remains one of the primary tools of preventive vigilance with the focus on building awareness and re-affirming the commitment of everyone to build integrity in public governance .Vigilance awareness week is observed every year to commemorate the birth day of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel .The purpose of vigilance awareness week is to generate awareness in the public at large about the ill effects of corruption .During the observance of the vigilance awareness week various activities viz ,essay writing competition ,quiz ,painting competition and extempore were conducted during the week to instill the theme of "Say no to corruption ,commit to the Nation. "and to increase awareness among the various stakeholders to fight the menace of corruption .In connection with the obser-

■ ABID HUSSAIN RATHER

In our fast-paced world, it is easy to overlook the invaluable treasure trove of wisdom and experience that our senior citizens and elders bring to our communities. As we rush through our daily lives, it is essential to take a moment to reflect on the elderly individuals who have contributed so much to society and are still contributing in countless ways. Senior citizens are an invaluable part of our society. They have a wealth of life experience and knowledge, which can be a source of wisdom and inspiration. As a society, we owe a debt of gratitude to the older generation who have contributed to our communities and played a pivotal role in shaping our world. It is our moral and societal duty to ensure that they lead a life of dignity, comfort, and respect. They have contributed their wisdom, experience, and often a lifetime of hard work to create the world we live in today. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that they enjoy their golden years with dignity, respect, and the support they need. Respecting and helping senior citizens strengthens the social fabric of our communities. It creates a sense of belonging, interdependence, and a culture of empathy and compassion. Helping and respecting senior citizens is not just a moral obligation; it's a duty we owe to those who have paved the way for our present and future. Senior citizens are a valuable and often overlooked segment of our society. These individuals have contributed a lifetime of wisdom, experience, and hard work to build the world we live in today. It is our responsibility as a society to ensure that they are not only cared for but also respected for their invaluable contributions.

Understanding the Needs of Elders and Senior Citizens

As people age, they may face a range of physical, mental, and emotional challenges. To offer genuine help and respect to senior citizens, it is crucial to understand their unique needs and challenges. It is crucial to understand and empathize with these challenges to provide appropriate help and respect. Some common challenges that seniors face include:

► Physical limitations: With age, mobility and physical strength may decline. This can make daily tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, or even dressing, more difficult. As we grow older, our body strength weakens and doesn't support us to do needful things for ourselves.

► Health issues: Seniors are often more prone to health problems, and managing chronic illnesses can become a significantly difficult part of their lives. With growing age, our immunity decreases and we become more prone to various infections and common diseases.

► Loneliness and isolation: Many senior citizens may experience social isolation due to the loss of friends and family members. Loneliness can lead to mental health issues like depression. In the later stages of life, people are left in isolation assuming that they are old fashioned, uninteresting and boring which ultimately leads to many kind of depressions among elder people.

► Cognitive decline: With growing age, our IQ decreases and our memory power starts declining. Some seniors may experience memory loss and cognitive decline, making it essential to approach them with patience and understanding.

► Help at Public Offices : Senior citizens often feel perplexed and confused at public offices. Recognize that many seniors may not be tech-savvy, they need various kinds of help at public offices. Public offices should prioritize accessibility by providing ramps, handrails, and elevators for those with mobility challenges. Elders often need help in information interpretation and proper communication with the employees at public offices.

► Mobility: Senior citizens may experience reduced mobility. Providing transportation or helping them with daily errands is a significant support. They often need support while walking, traveling or crossing roads.

Knowing and understanding the various needs of senior citizens, it is imperative upon every member of a society to help, support and respect them in every possible way. Following are some of the practical ways to help and respect our elders and senior citizens which may provide insights on how to provide them with the care and consideration they deserve:

Financial Support and Planning:

Financial matters can become increasingly complex with age. It is important to help seniors manage their finances, ensure they are aware of their entitlements, and prevent them from falling victim to financial scams. Seek legal advice for estate planning to protect their assets and provide a sense of security. It is duty of youngsters to support them financially when they are unable to earn because of their age factor. Elders too have basic needs like other people have and they need financial support to fulfill their basic needs.

Ensuring Safe and Accessible Housing:

For many seniors, their living conditions may need to be modified for safety and accessibility. This may include installing handrails, ramps, or adapting bathroom facilities. These adjustments not only enhance their quality of life but also prevent accidents. Nowadays elders and senior citizens are taken as burden on the family and are kicked away from the homes which renders them homeless.

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Teachers are the ones who help students to see reality as it is. In the modern age, teachers help students to make academic decisions that will guide them toward success in their future careers.

A good teacher impacts everything from classroom learning to long-term success to make a world of difference in a student's life. And for that, a teacher must have the following characteristics:

Good Teachers are strong communicators: By communicating with students at the beginning of the year about their hobbies and future careers, they can provide a supportive learning method.

Good Teachers are good listeners: Teachers are skilled in listening and observing and can help build skills and confidence in students.

Good Teachers focus on collaboration: Working as a teacher means working in groups and developing creative ideas.

Good Teachers are adaptable: Teachers must adjust their teaching according to students' mental capacities and work in an engaging environment.

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In this connection Jammu and Kashmir Bank also observed vigilance awareness week. "Every one of us is responsible for safeguarding this bank and should, therefore, remain vigilant about elements that can harm this institution besides defrauding its customers or staff," said MD & CEO Baldev Prakash after kick-starting the observance of vigilance awareness week 2023 across the Bank in presence of Executive Director Sudhir Gupta, chief vigilance officer Anbrish Misra, General managers ,DGMs and other senior officers of the bank .He also administered the integrity pledge on the occasion ,wherein the participants pledged to uphold the highest standards of integrity ,transparency and accountability while discharging their duties .Vigilance awareness programmes were organized by ACB in Mendhar ,Bhadervah ,Kathua ,Handwara ,Pampore ,Budgam ,Raffabad and Srinagar .

Jammu and Kashmir Anti Corruption Bureau has observed vigilance awareness week by conducting and organizing various programmes across the UT,ACB Rajouri held a seminar in the conference Hall of government ,Degree Collage Mendhar in presence of the officers and officials of other departments of division Mendhar along with representatives of PIR's .During the course of seminar ,the team of ACB also interacted with the participants including ,students and faculty members of Degree collage Mendhar ,representatives of PIR's and general public gathered and briefed them for lodging the complaints against corrupt activities whenever they observe.ACB Jammu organized a painting competition at Government College for Women ,Parade ,Jammu in connection with the vigilance awareness week .ACB Anantnag in collaboration with JKEIDI organized a seminar for sensitizing employees about perils of corruption at JKEID .Similarly ACB Baramulla organized an awareness programme at Government HSS Hadipora, Raffabad .The team of ACB headed by Dy SP interacted with students ,staff and civil society members and made them aware about the perils of corruption.ACB Srinagar also organized seminars at two different places under the agis of 'Vigilance Awareness Week 2023.'In short the vigilance awareness week was observed throughout the UT by not only the ACB but by the educational institutions ,various government departments, banks and other organizations to make officers ,officials and general public aware about the menace of corruption and the fight against it.

(The author is a columnist, social and KP activist).

Honouring the Wisdom of Age

missing their thoughts.

Include Them in Activities:

Isolation and loneliness can be significant and critical issues for senior citizens. Make an effort to include them in social activities and gatherings. Invite them to family events, local community gatherings, or simply spend time with them. Such interactions can provide much-needed companionship and keep their spirits high.

Support Their Health:

Senior citizens often face health challenges. Encourage regular check-ups and help them adhere to prescribed medications or treatments. Physical activity and a balanced diet are crucial for their well-being, so consider engaging in these activities together.

Ensure Safety:

Safety is a top concern for seniors, especially if they live alone. Help them create a safe home environment by addressing potential hazards, such as loose rugs or inadequate lighting. Consider installing handrails or ramps to make their living spaces more accessible. Their rooms should be regularly checked to ensure their safety from any hazard.

Promote Lifelong Learning:

Encourage seniors to pursue lifelong learning. They can take up new hobbies, attend classes, or engage in volunteer work. This not only keeps their minds active but also makes them feel valued in their communities.

Advocate for Their Rights:

Advocate for policies and programs that protect the rights and well-being of senior citizens. Support organizations that focus on senior issues and be aware of elder abuse, reporting any concerns when necessary. Their rights should be strictly safeguarded and any breach should be strictly dealt with law.

In conclusion, helping and respecting senior citizens is an essential part of building a compassionate and inclusive society. Our elders have contributed to the world in countless ways, and it is our responsibility to show gratitude and provide the support and respect they deserve. By implementing these guidelines, we can ensure that the senior citizens in our lives live with dignity and fulfillment in their golden years. In return, their wisdom and experiences can enrich our lives in countless ways, creating a mutually beneficial relationship that fosters a stronger and more compassionate community. Let us remember that age should be celebrated, and senior citizens should be valued for their unique contributions to society.

(The author is an academician, columnist, freelancer and occasional writer and can be reached at rather1294@gmail.com).

YOUR COLUMN

Teaching is the pious profession that creates all other professions

Dear Wditor;

Rightly said that teachers have Great Role in giving us filmmakers, astronauts, and entrepreneurs. Without teachers, we wouldn't have the internet. Youths are the nation's future, and teachers are the creators of this nation. But, What qualities does a teacher have that impacts the students.

Generally, a teacher may be a primary school teacher or college professor is a person who helps students to acquire knowledge and competence, and properties through the practice of teaching.

However, being a teacher is much more than only giving away knowledge, lectures, and attending classes. Since ancient times, teachers have been considered a symbol of truth, beauty, and purity. Ancient India valued teachers highly for their selfless high learning, morality and tireless efforts. I have seen this as my father was also in this profes-

sion and now retired as Headmaster.

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engage students with humor and creative lessons, and a strong classroom presence is an essential part of what makes someone a good teacher.

Good Teachers are empathetic: Teachers must understand what is going on in their student's life.

Good Teachers have patience: The patience of an educator is tested at every level of teaching.

Teachers have a remarkable impact on students' lives. They are crucial in shaping the character of students. Good Teachers demonstrate and illustrate and shape the personality of their students.Provide the right advice to students: teachers now guide students to make significant academic decisions that will guide them toward success in their future careers. They also work with high school students to offer advice and courses they should take to take the entrance exams, apply for the desired colleges and universities, etc.

Works as a leader: Teachers also transfer the skills that will be helpful to students in their personal life. They guide students towards becoming leaders and out of their comfort zone to achieve tremendous success.

Above all a great teacher inspires generations to come.

Rahul Sharma