


## BSF DESERVES KUDOS

Beyond any doubt the Border Security Force (BSF) is rendering yeoman's service to the nation by remaining at the forefront in ensuring safety and security along the borders and also in hinterland. As India is facing continuous threat of terrorism because neighbouring Pakistan has waged a proxy war and pushing terrorists to this side besides arms and ammunition and narcotics using conventional methods and also by taking help of latest technology acquired from various countries including China as lately drones have been used by the rogue nation to smuggle arms and narcotics. Despite innumerable challenges and multifaceted threats, the BSF has emerged as a force to reckon with because it has successfully thwarted many bids by Pakistan to dent the interests of the country by way of infiltration attempts, narcotics smuggling, etc. In order to counter the ill-conceived designs of Pakistan, the BSF never compromised on acquiring technology that can decimate Pakistan's plans to harm India. In this regard, the border guarding force has now deployed additional troops along with anti-fog surveillance equipment on the International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir as part of its winter strategy to foil infiltration bids and terror plans ahead of Republic Day celebrations. Surely, the BSF deserves kudos for the preparedness which the security force shows to take Pakistan head on and foil its plans there and then. Ahead of Republic Day, the BSF troops guarding the 200-km International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir have been put on alert to ensure high-degree of security against infiltrating terrorists. The surveillance and night domination exercises have also been increased along the border which witnesses dense fog during the months of January and February thus enabling the BSF to brace up the security grid so that enemies from across the border could not cause any kind of harm. It is pertinent to mention that terror mongers use fog as a cover to infiltrate to this side of the border and therefore steps taken by the BSF will ensure that no such thing could take place. Besides it has been reported that BSF has plugged all the gaps in riverine areas of Ujh, Basantar and Chenab making it impossible for the Pakistanis to do anything which may prove detrimental to the country.

## FOLLOW PURSUIT

This time the Republic Day Function at MA Stadium, Jammu has to take care of two issues the first one is the threat from anti-nationals and the second is the lethal COVID-19 virus which is spreading everywhere like wildfire especially after the advent of its new variant Omicron. Though security forces are on tenterhooks to foil the nefarious designs of terror mongers and other anti-nationals but for ensuring safety from the contagion corona the government has to rely on a foolproof strategy like the one being implemented during the Republic Day Parade at New Delhi. The people in Delhi have been advised to adhere to all Covid protocols, such as wearing face masks and maintaining social distancing, at the programme on Rajpath on January 26. The police has made it mandatory that people having both the jabs of vaccinations can only witness the parade. For this bringing certificate either in physical form or online is a must. There is another important restriction which the Delhi Police has put in place this time for the visitors of the aforesaid parade at Janpath and that is the children below 15 years of age will not be allowed to attend the function. Although Government in J&K has also issued advisory for the guests and participants with regard to COVID-19 precautions but the guidelines have not mentioned about the entry of children less than 15 years of age. Looking into the restrictions imposed by the Delhi Police during the January 26 Parade, it is advisable that J&K Government should also follow the pursuit and come clear on the issue of bringing children to the venue of the Republic Day Function viz MA Stadium in Jammu. Reportedly the Omicron virus has enveloped over 171 countries and being a highly virulent infection it is likely that children will be at risk therefore following the Delhi Police advisory is in no way a bad decision and the government should come up with the same as soon as possible because this will be good for both the children below 15 years of age and those who are above 15 years.



OFF 'D' CUFF

### When Pilgrimage becomes Tourism

you and force you to understand this truth.

Earlier, pilgrimage to places of spiritual significances was a ritual that people undertook when they were freed of their worldly duties. Even now some sadhaks, seekers, take up such pious, religious journeys as a path to peace and knowledge. Anyone travelling with this bhav, feel travels light, with only a few essentials items that his body can carry, travelling mostly on foot, eating light – roasted chickpeas or fruit, whatever is available. No need for special bedrooms, air-conditioned cars or delicious savouries. They carried forth the duty of a pilgrimage for days, creating a feeling/sense of belonging with all, conveying a message of brotherhood amongst all the people they met in small caves, ashrams or local settlements. They received the blessings and satsang of yogis and mahatmas, and blissfully fulfilled the dharma of pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage is a sadhna, penance which is performed by staying near Nature and experiencing a feeling of oneness with it; keeping the body healthy, content with the meagre means; leading a life free from attachment, happy despite being away from relatives and associates, and experiencing a sense of belonging and oneness with fellow travellers.

Meena Om

## Good Governance in our Federation requires Centre and States to work together

■ B K CHATURVEDI

There are recent reports in the media about serious concerns of several State Governments on Government of India's proposed move to amend the IAS service rules to meet the shortage of IAS officers at various levels at the centre. Under current dispensation officers opt for central deputation from the states voluntarily. Centre then makes a selection from these officers for posts, vacant or likely to be vacant in near future. While doing so it considers suitability of the officer based on his past experience. Once the selection is finalized, orders are issued requesting state government to relieve the officer concerned. Each state has a certain quota beyond which its officers are not accepted by the centre.

In the last decade, there has been a gradual decline in number of officers who opt for central deputation. While in the 60s there were a number of IAS officers even at undersecretary level, it is increasingly getting difficult for the central government to get adequate officers at even joint Secretary Level. Generally, of the total cadre strength of the states, about 25% -30% used to be on central deputation. Currently less than 10% are working in various central ministries. According to certain reports these numbers in states like UP, Bihar, Odisha and Tamil Nadu and Kerala are between 8% to 15%. There used to be a charm for officers in going to central deputation. This was considered a recognition of officer's ability. The selection process was tough. Part of the reason for this non-availability of officers for central deputation is inadequate recruitment in certain years more than decade and a half back. But an important reason is also comparatively better service condi-

tions in the states. Any change in rules must however ensure that the shortages of officers in centre and states are balanced. If there is a shortage of officers in the state, the centre should recognize this and in the beginning of the year work out an arrangement with the state. There is a corresponding responsibility on the states too.

The proposed change in rules clearly cannot be faulted on the above grounds. It aims at correcting an aberration. While fixing the cadre strength of states about 40% posts of senior duty are earmarked for central deputation. So there is an inbuilt provision in recruitment and posts sanction for states to keep certain number of posts for meeting needs of the centre. Considering that recruitments in past were not adequate, the proposed change in rule provides for shortage to be shared equitably between the centre and states. Also since vacancies need to be filled in time, there is a suggestion of time limit in which states must respond and relieve the officer selected.

There are however several concerns of the states which need to be addressed. It has to be clearly understood that in the discussion with the states when they give list of officers which they wish to offer for central deputation, it will be the proposal of the states alone. It will look at its own requirements in the state and then offer names for central deputation equitably sharing the shortages in recruitment in the past. In preparation of list of officers to be offered for central deputation Centre will have no role.

The centre if it wishes to have an officer would suggest to the state. If the two agree, the officer would be put on central deputation. If the state does not

wish to suggest his name for deputation, the centre would respect their views even though they have the power under cadre rules to do so. Past experience has shown that such an exercise of power by the centre is counterproductive. It does not result in good cadre management.

The centre has to realize that improving working conditions for officers of Deputy Secretary and Director Level is critical to the success of cadre management. If a large number of officers show their willingness and opt for central deputation, the states will have pressure to offer names. If there are few takers, the state would be forcing people to opt for going to Delhi. Many of the officers at this level have problems of education for their children, transport and higher cost of living in Delhi. These issues would need to be sorted out. A deputation allowance for the period for deputation in Delhi could be an option. Education could be assured by ensuring admission in schools like Sanskriti and other reputed institutions who could tie up on this issue with DOPIT.

The states also have to look at this issue not in an adversarial but positive manner where needs of both, Centre and the State have to be matched and met. The proposed amendment is just suggesting a mechanism for meeting the shortages and sharing it where necessary. The centre should dispel fears of states about misuse of central power.

The centre will have shortages at the level of DS and Director for coming years. It should look at meeting some of these gaps from senior public sector officers. Many of them are highly qualified and can meet the needs of the secretarial work for a couple of years.

(The author is a Former Cabinet Secretary).

## Republic Day-The firm bond of nationhood

■ DR. ASHAQ HUSSAIN

Being Indian is our identity however; being republican is our Country's identity.

On 15th August 1947, after the unforgettable struggle and unparalleled sacrifices of the freedom fighters of our homeland, our country India became independent and we got the great blessing of freedom. Today India is one of the largest democracies in the world where people of all faiths, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jains etc are living together with great love as a single family and celebrate their own religious festivals with great fanfare. However, from the last seven decades, there have been two consecutive national festivals, Independence Day and Republic Day, which every citizen of the country has been proud to celebrate. The Republic day is linked to Democracy, and there can be no better system of government than democracy for a country like India, with a vast population of different religions, races, languages and even of different nationalities.

Republic Day is celebrated all over the country on 26th January every year. Let's take a look at what democracy is and why we celebrate Republic Day and what is the significance of this day in our lives. On 26th November 1949 the Constituent Assembly repealed the Government of India Act of 1935 and passed a new constitution, the longest written constitution in the world and thanks to this constitution, India at present is recognized as a 'stable democracy' of the world. This constitution was officially adopted on 26th January 1950 and as such India became a formal republic country on this day. It is the occasion that we celebrate Republic Day every year. Let me remind you that at the time of India's independence and even after, many countries of the world became independent but in most of these independent countries democracy died very quickly but the roots of democracy in India are so deep that even after 72 years, India is still a democratic country where constitution, law and democracy prevail. India is perhaps the only country that

has managed to establish a stable and successful government, despite the presence of pluralistic, innumerable linguistic and religious sects.

In terms of independency, India is the largest democracy in the world and the real source of this power are citizens of the country. No one here can be discriminated on the basis of religion, caste, creed, region or language. 42nd Amendment of the Constitution is the main spirit of the Constitution where India has been declared as a secular country. In other words, the state is declared to have no religion and no school of thought can be discriminated against on the basis of religion. In the spirit of the Constitution, every Indian citizen, irrespective of his religion, is equal before the law and every citizen has the right to freedom of expression as well as to practice and propagate his religion, this is what the democracy has given us. That is why Republic Day is celebrated here every year with great pomp and splendor.

Today we are going to celebrate the 73rd Republic Day and on this day today it has become inevitable to think on some very important aspects like; have we really succeeded in implementing the constitution made by our elders? Do the citizens of the country really have the right to freedom and equality at this time? Are we aware of our rights found in the Constitution of India? Of course! These and several other questions are echoing in the minds of every conscious person in the country today. What so ever may be your answer but without any doubt freedom is certainly a great wealth and a great blessing and in a society like India, it is necessary to have a democratic and secular constitution to maintain it. Recalling the past, the first caravan of the British came to India in 1601 during the Jahangiri era. According to this calculation, the British withdrew from India in 1947 after 346 years. During this time a long story of oppression and barbarism was written when all Indians dedicated to the spirit of freedom irrespective of race and religion were at the forefront and jumped into the fire of danger for the

survival of their beloved homeland and their civilization. Thus the history of India's independence would have no meaning if the sacrifice of any section in the war of independence is separated.

Thus after independence, the biggest problem was the constitution of the country; as whether it should be religious or non-religious, how to determine the rights between the minority and the majority was another issue, so keeping in view all these facts the constitution was framed and the first part of it clearly states that we the people of India suggest that India should be created as a free, socialist, democratic country, in which social, economic, political, justice, freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of belief, religion and worship, individual identity and respect for all citizens will be ensured, and the integrity and unity of the country will be maintained. Thus Indian democratic system is an excellent system, inhabited by people of different ideas, cultures and civilizations. So let us value this system and thereby celebrate this day by paying great tribute to the martyrs of the country and the founders of the constitution and the freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives to gift us this day and this democracy. Republic Day Celebrations should reaffirm our commitment towards our constitution and reevaluate our faith in the cherished ideals of liberty, equality, fraternity and justice for all, as enshrined in our constitution. So, on this joyous occasion, let us celebrate the achievements of our country and solemnly resolve to dedicate ourselves towards building a peaceful, harmonious and progressive India. Let's today recall the ideas on which the Constitution was framed, the ideas of Justice, Equality, Liberty, Fraternity, Sovereignty and so on and take an oath to keep them alive in our lives; it shall give us the strength to stand strong in the very violent world around us. Let's work together to make our country a better place to live in. Happy Republic Day.

(The author is Assistant Professor (Selection Grade) At Govt. Degree College Chatroo).

## YOUR COLUMN

### Healing from the Pandemic now

Dear editor,

Lately, I can't help but feel impatient at life not moving fast enough. Yet, looking back on the experiences and people that have been lost to the past few years in a raging pandemic, it feels like everything has changed. This is a moment that calls for quiet reflection, resilience, and a lot of patience. None of these things feel natural to do for a deeply anxious person who is used to distracting herself with unending work. For some of us, joy and normality have always lived in movement; the ability to experience the ordinary as special has only been an anomaly justified by the end of the workweek-the recourse of two days off, for appreciating all the ways in which free time can be spent, and for all the ways in which one would have spent it, if they had only a bit longer. As someone who has had more than her fair share of 'a bit longer' recently-as most of us have, either working or studying from home, or simply taking a longer break from routine than expected-I see that it is not all that it is cut out to be. Having responsibilities and concrete goals on a daily basis makes life all the more worth living.

## Agriculture Startups: Reshaping the career

■ SUMIT SAURABH

India is the second-largest agricultural land in the world. Around 60% of rural Indian households are largely dependent on agriculture for their daily sustenance. Being the backbone of India's economy, the agriculture sector provides massive employment opportunities to the youth. However, there are some other uncontrolled factors on which the agricultural sector depends to a great extent. They are weather conditions, market fluctuations, and topographical conditions, which simply cannot be ignored. Therefore, there is a dire need to elevate the agriculture sector through modern advancements in agriculture technology, which will ease the burden on farmers and create huge scope for agriculture startups in the country.

What is Agriculture Startup?

A startup is an entrepreneurial venture started by two or three people to develop any unique product or service and then bring it to the market. Likewise, agro startups are primarily for the agriculture sector and its related fields. The cutting-edge technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet-of-Things (IoT), and Drones, Robotics etc., helping farmers to improve their productions and reduce the adverse outcomes occur due to any uninvited natural condition.

Agricultural Startup is growing rapidly -According to a research, every ninth agrotech startup in the world is originating from India. Technology-based companies are coming up with new business models. The agriculture sector is growing at an average rate of 25 percent. The Government of India has formulated a policy to encourage start-ups in the agricultural sector and to enhance the income of farmers by providing employment opportunities to the youth. The Ministry of Agriculture is providing financial assistance to the startups under the Innovation and Agripreneurship component of Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY). In the first phase, 112 startups are already funded for a sum of Rs. 1185.90 lakhs. In addition to 112 startups, 234 startups in the agriculture and allied sectors will be funded for a sum of Rs. 2485.85 lakhs. The scheme encourages states to increase public investment in agriculture and allied sectors.

Innovation in Agriculture Sector -The agriculture sector is undergoing vast change due to innovation. Farmers' demand for agricultural produce has increased in the organized sector as our government taking all necessary steps to boost investments in the food processing sector. The agriculture sector has been strengthened with the approval of the Mega Food Park. As local farmers are involved with better solutions for agrotech startups, all forms of business have received a boost.

Role of Agro Startups-Nowadays, numerous startups are providing services like mapping of soil quality through imagery technology. With the help of this technology, farmers can easily understand the quality of the soil and are able to use the right fertilizer and seeds. There are many startups providing services related to infestation prediction, weather forecasts, water availability, auto sprinkling systems, which also helps in testing the soil. Many financial institutions have also come forward to solve the debt problems of farmers. The digitization of the agricultural sector is said to be a major reason. Agritech startups are helping farmers get better prices for their produce, providing better distribution system and increasing their income by reducing middlemen. Needless to say, there are good career prospects in the agriculture sector today.

Scope of Employment Opportunities- In addition to nearly a hundred institutes of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), more than 650 agricultural science centers and various state agricultural universities are engaged in the development of these technologies. There are opportunities at different levels in agribusiness, i.e. there is ocean of opportunities for the youth interested in finance, technology and non-technical fields. However, with special study in the field of agriculture gives you an opportunity to get to know this area more closely and it's easy to enter in this field. There are several institutes that conduct post-graduation courses on the subject of Agribusiness. The students who opt for such courses get opportunities to do internships in the agriculture industries during the course and the institutes also provide career placements to the students.

Capabilities an individual must have to start agriculture business -Interest in agriculture and various prepared food products; Willingness to work in established processing units in rural areas;

Monitoring of demand and supply of agro products in the international market; Ability to convince large farmers for contract farming; Reasonable thinking and leadership ability; Communication skills;

Must have patience and ability to work as a team.

Eligibility Criteria for Startups in India- For a company to get into the startup category, it has to be registered as a Private Limited Company or a Partnership firm or a Limited Liability Partnership. The startups or business must not be older than 5 years and the annual turnover of the startup should be upto Rs. 25 crore. The company will come under the scope of startup if the startup or business is involved in developing a new product or service. But, if there is any kind of modification in a product, then it will be necessary to see whether the customer is getting the benefit of it.

Government will provide these facilities to Startups - In the action plan released for the startup, the government has made several important announcements, which will promote the culture of entrepreneurship and give a boost to the startups in India. There will be a self certification based Compliance for the startup. Government will give 80% rebate on patent application fees. There will be no inspection of the startup for 3 years. Startups will get income tax rebate for 3 years even if there is a profit. Those who invest in startups by selling their properties will get capital gains tax exemption. The startups will be given seed capital along with various other facilities.

If ever there was a moment to make grit and resilience key learning goals, and to map curricular learning objectives and exercises to this, it is now. Be it at school, or the workplace, for teachers, their students, or professionals at your place of employment - we need to prioritise building coping skills, in order to recover from this experience in a sustainable way. The isolation and loss experienced during this time has taken its toll and ignoring it will only mean leaving wounds to fester. Whether this results in trauma that families, employers, and states will spend the next few decades trying to mitigate, or real financial losses when unhealed problems come to the surface and hinder productivity and community-level wellness, future costs are always harder to bear than present efforts at pre-empting and responding to the needs of those most emotionally vulnerable.

Be it in the form of meditation programmes, mental health workshops, clinical psychological support, or school counseling, we need to enact programmes and policies to protect generations across the board from spiralling into despair. Grit and resilience are skills that we need to build now, by teaching key coping mechanisms and providing open lines of support, and communication.

Mool Raj  
Village Bhagota, Doda.

