


EFFORTS SHOWING RESULTS

In past, the air-pollution level in Delhi was deteriorating with every passing day but now the efforts of the Government to control the situation have started showing positive results. As per Bulletin provided by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Delhi's overall Air Quality Index (AQI) clocked 213 as per 4 PM AQI. In view of remarkable improvement in overall AQI of Delhi since invocation of Stage-III of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) and also considering the meteorological/ weather forecasts by IITM/ IMD, the Sub-Committee for invoking actions under GRAP of the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR & Adjoining Areas (CAQM) met to review the current air quality scenario. While reviewing the overall air quality parameters of Delhi-NCR and other aspects, the Sub-Committee noted that forecasts by IMD/ IITM do not indicate the overall AQI of Delhi to slip into 'Severe' category in the coming days and is likely to fluctuate between 'Poor' and 'Very Poor' categories. Therefore, it is felt advisable to relax the stringent restrictions and roll back Stage-III of GRAP with immediate effect in the entire NCR. The overall AQI of Delhi has remarkably improved from the level of 434 ('Severe' category) observed on 09.01.2023 to 213 ('Poor' category) recorded on 15.01.2023. The preventive/restrictive measures under Stage-III of GRAP invoked on 06.01.2023 (when Delhi's overall AQI reached 400) might have also helped stabilizing the AQI levels thus improving the overall air quality of Delhi-NCR. Forecast by IMD/ IITM also does not predict the AQI levels reaching the 'Severe' category in the coming days.

Based on earlier decisions of the Sub-Committee for invoking actions under GRAP, preventive/ restrictive actions up to Stage-III of GRAP are already in force vide order dated October 5, 2022 for Stage-I; order dated October 19, 2022 for Stage-II; and order dated January 6, 2023 for Stage-III respectively. Stage III & Stage IV of GRAP have been imposed and thereafter revoked from time to time by the GRAP Sub-Committee based on the prevalent air quality scenario in Delhi. Furthermore, as the actions under GRAP especially from Stage-III to Stage-IV are essentially an emergency response and are disruptive in nature impacting a large stratum of society, the Sub-Committee, accordingly decided to revoke the order, issued vide dated January 6, 2023 for implementation of actions under Stage-III of GRAP with immediate effect. Allactions under Stage-I to Stage-II of GRAP shall however remain invoked and be implemented, intensified, monitored and reviewed by all agencies concerned in the entire NCR to ensure that the overall air quality of Delhi-NCR does not deteriorate further in the coming days. All implementing agencies shall keep strict vigil and especially intensify measures under Stage I & II of GRAP like mechanical/vacuum-based sweeping of roads to be carried out on a daily basis, ensuring water sprinkling along with use of dust suppressants (at least every alternate day) on roads to arrest road dust especially at hotspots, heavy traffic corridors, vulnerable areas (before peak hours) and proper disposal of dust collected in designated sites/landfills, regular inspection and strict enforcement of dust control measures at C&D sites, discouraging usage of coal/firewood including in Tandoors in Hotels, Restaurants and open eateries, ensuring hotels, restaurants and open eateries use only electricity / clean fuel gas-based appliances, enhancing parking fee to discourage private transport, banning usage of Diesel Generators except for emergent and essential services and regulate their use for industrial applications.

C&D project sites and industrial units which have been issued specific closure orders on account of violations/ non-compliances of various statutory directions, rules, guidelines etc. under no circumstances shall resume their operations without any specific order to this effect from the Commission. Further, the Commission has once again appealed to the citizens of NCR to cooperate in implementing GRAP. Various agencies responsible for implementing measures under GRAP and Pollution Control Boards (PCBs) of NCR and DPCC have also been advised to ensure strict implementation of actions of Stage-I and Stage-II under GRAP in the NCR to prevent deterioration of air quality. Further, the Commission shall be keeping a close watch on the air quality scenario in the coming days for appropriate decision on GRAP. The revised schedule of GRAP is available on Commission's official.



OFF 'D' CUFF

How can Moksha be obtained?

What is the ultimate goal of man? We live, we seek happiness, we believe that success and achievement is our goal. But this is a myth. Why? Because ultimately man must die, and everything we achieve is left behind. Man has not stopped to understand that his ultimate goal is liberation, freedom from the continuous cycle of death and rebirth.

Hindus called it Moksha 4000 years ago. The Buddha called it Nirvana. The Western World has struggled with the ultimate purpose of life, calling it 'Salvation', but ultimately realizing that it is 'Enlightenment' or 'Realization of the Truth'. Whatever we may call it, the ultimate goal as per all the religions of the world is becoming one with God.

How does one achieve this goal? How does one reach that state of God-realization, the ultimate goal of humanity?

As long as we do not contemplate the truth about life, we will just live and die. Those who ask the question, 'Why?' while they are here on earth, discover the Universal Laws like Karma. They realize that heaven and hell are not physical locations that we will go to, but rather, we are reborn in heaven or hell, right here on earth,

depending on our past actions. A very few amongst us go on the quest of 'Koham?' or 'Who am I?' Only a rare minority realizes the answer- 'Soham,' or 'I am That.' How do the true seekers of God come to this conclusion? It is through a quest.

The journey to God-realization cannot happen without self-realization. Unless we first realize who we are, we will never realize God. And to realize who we are, we must realize who we are not. The reward for self-realization is that it opens the door to realizing God. Most people are searching for God. But we can't find God. We have to realize the Divine. As long as we live and die in ignorance, without realizing the truth of who we are, we will never realize who God is. There is an equation that reveals the ultimate truth and liberates man.

Man - Ego = God
God God Ego = Man

What does this mean? As long as man lives with the ego, and believes 'I am ME', the Mind and Ego that lives in this body, man will continue to live and die as a human being and return again and again to planet earth as he takes rebirth. When we let go of our ego, then we realize God. Thus, the above equation reveals the truth.

-Air Atman In Ravi

■ DR VIKAS SHARMA

Bael is believed to be a sacred plant which brings wellness and good luck to home. Placing Bael plant in leaving room near a window brings prosperity and stability. Planting these trees around home or temple is sanctifying and is equivalent to worshipping a Linga with Bilva leaves and water. Bael, is one of the medicinally treasured tree species and is also known as begal-quince, golden apple and stone apple in India and a sacred tree in places where Hindus lives. Bael trees are usually planted near temples dedicated to Lord Shiva and routinely worshipped by the devotees. Bael is one of the most appreciated plants used in ayurvedic medicine by the Indian and other South Asian inhabitants in ancient history. According to the historical records, Bael is used as a medicinal and food item since 5000?B.C. and known to human beings even when writing the famous Sanskrit epic-poem Ramayana. Bael mentioned in the renowned book Charaka Samhita, a comprehensive compilation of all the essential ayurvedic information, which identified bael as a necessary item in ayurvedic medicine. It holds much significance in Ayurveda due to its wide range of benefits. The tree is aromatic, and all the parts are medicinally important.

Anti-bacterial and Anti-parasitic: The anti-bacterial and anti-parasitic properties and

the presence of tannins in Bael help in fighting against the infection called shigellosis which causes diarrhea and treats cholera. Studies showed that people consuming ripe Bael in the form of juice or just pulp got cured of cholera and diarrhea.

Anti-diabetes: The active constituent 'Feronia gum' present in the bark and branches of the Bael tree have reportedly shown helpful properties in controlling diabetes. It regulates the production of insulin from the cells into the blood stream and low glycemic index of Bael maintains the blood sugar level.

Beneficial for Digestion and Constipation: Bael is an apt fruit for curing many digestive issues due to its anti- bacterial, anti- fungal properties. It is recommended for people suffering from stomach ulcers as the high content of tannin in its leaves reduces inflammation. The laxative properties of Bael help in cleaning the intestines and prevent constipation. Regular consumption of Bael juice with a pinch of salt and pepper has been known to show wonders in treating constipation.

Scurvy: Scurvy is a disease caused due to the deficiency of Vitamin-C in the body resulting in sore arms and legs and weakness. Bael having a load of vitamin-C acts as a boon for people suffering from Vitamin-C deficiency and cures the disease in no time. Bael for Skin Problems: Due to the presence of the anti-bacterial properties in Bael, it is highly

effective against skin infections, cures many skin disorders and promotes skin health.

Controlling Cholesterol: Bael plays an essential role in detoxifying the body by removing toxins from the body. It controls triglycerides, serum and tissue lipid profiles and also reduces the accumulation of LDL cholesterol (i.e., Low-Density Lipoproteins or bad cholesterol) within the body. This action in turn improves metabolism and helps the body to shed weight faster. It is useful in treating heart, liver and kidney problems. Due to the high amount of potassium, it purifies the blood, removes toxins and boosts the overall immunity of the body.

Cardiovascular: Being a natural antioxidant and a cardio-protective fruit, Bael has been found to have a positive effect on the heart and hence plays a pivotal role in treating a host of heart ailments. It not only strengthens the heart muscles, drops cholesterol levels in the blood but also prevents lipid accumulation, which in turn reduces the risk of atherosclerosis, heart blocks, heart attacks, blood clots etc.

Respiratory Anomalies: Imbued with anti-inflammatory, anti-biotic, and anti-asthmatic properties, Bael holds high significance in treating the common cold, cough and flu symptoms. It also thins and loosens rheum deposits within the chest and nasal cavities and hence eases breathing and helps the

body to get rid of mucus. It is also beneficial in treating bronchitis and asthmatic conditions.

Promotes Hair Growth: Apart from uplifting overall health, Bael has been a boon for promoting hair growth since ancient times. The anti-microbial nature of the plant treats various scalp and hair infections like folliculitis, itching and dandruff. It nourishes the hair follicles with essential nutrients, improves blood circulation and strengthens the hair strands from the roots. By normalizing the secretion of the stress hormone, it also prevents hair fall and breakage due to stress and anxiety.

Antilucer properties: The glycoprotein secretions of Bael have been found in various studies to be extremely effective in treating different types of stomach ulcer including peptic and ulcerative colitis and even treat colic pain. Owing to its soothing properties, the pulp of Bael when applied on ulcers or blisters within the oral cavity helps in speeding up the healing process. Bael leaves are naturally antibiotic and antifungal, which is beneficial for health. The extract of Bael leaf can control cholesterol levels in the blood. The juice called Bael sherbet is also made from the tree's fruit which holds high medicinal values.

(The author is Associate Professor of Biochemistry in SKUAST-Jammu).

Nature's fury in Joshimath

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

The calamity which has struck the Devboomi Joshimath is natural and it has caused much agony and suffering to the residents of this place as they were forced to leave their homes and hearths and it is a very painful experience for the people. The nature has played a cruel joke with the people of this mountainous place and they were left with no choice but to leave their homes and belongings. The tragedy in Joshimath is natural fury but the role of unregulated and unplanned construction activities is not less responsible for the unpleasant happening of sinking of the land in Joshimath and therefore it is imperative and necessary to control and regulate the constructions of buildings at Joshimath. The people of the Joshimath are facing worst kind of natural calamity as the land is sinking and cracking and with this the houses and other constructions have also developed cracks and there is danger that the houses in which people live and the people also are at a great risk to their lives and properties. Anger, despair, disquiet, frustration and tension are rife large on the face of the people living in Joshimath and they need help, succor and relief and rehabilitation. The government of Uttarakhand headed by chief minister Pushker Singh Dami should provide adequate relief to the affected people and also give compensation for the losses the people have suffered. Besides this the government should rehabilitate the people who have left their homes and hearths and fled to safer places out of compulsion. There are infrastructure projects worth Rs 40,000 crore coming up in Chamoli district. NTPC's Tapovan-Vishnugad project is one of them. Scientists have, time and again, declared Joshimath ecologically fragile as it is situated on an old landslide deposit, and advised against projects that involve blasting to cut mountains, tunneling and unabated disposal of debris into river. In fact the reckless and unregulated and unplanned constructions have also played its part and disaster is the result which has adversely affected the lives of the people in Joshimath. People of this unfortunate place who have been haunted by the sinking and cracking of land and because of this sinking there are cracks in the houses and other buildings of the residents. The unfortunate and unlucky residents of Joshimath are narrating their sorrowful experiences and woeful stories that move us all and bring shivers down the spine. A gilt of emotion rolls into one when one asks

Atul Sati about the current situation in Joshimath. While Uttarakhand hill town has faced nature's fury several times in the past, Sati, the convener of the Joshimath Bachao Sangrath Samiti sais tunneling for NTPC's 520 MW hydro project has also contributed towards the present fury in Joshimath. The ongoing crisis in Joshimath has brought the focus on the climate crisis ailing several Himalayan towns and villages in Uttarakhand. While environmentalists say that this Chamoli town is damaged beyond repair, some other towns can be saved from nature's fury by timely intervention. One such town is Nainital, a famous hill resort town situated at an elevation of roughly 2,000 mts in the Kumaon region. Resting in its lap are Naini Lake, the Governor's house and Uttarakhand high court besides many hotels, resorts and hundreds of homes. Hills surrounding Nainital valley are made of poor to fair rock class due to which the town has witnessed several landslides over the years. During British rule in 1880, nearly 150 people died in a major landslide in Nainital. There has been rapid land erosion and due to this the government has declared Hari Nagar neighborhood in Nainital as unsafe for human habitat. Speaking to reporters, union minister and senior BJP leader Ajay Bhatt said, "Cracks have been seen at many places in Nainital, Kranprayag, Mussoorie and Uttarkashi. We know that disasters are in our destiny because fault rocks form this part of Himalayas. Noneheless, our government is fully prepared before, during and after any disaster. Army, ITBP IAS officers are camping there." Losing their homes and their past, the residents of Joshimath spend their time in fear and trepidation." Losing their homes along with their past that they have built brick by brick, the residents of Uttarakhand's Joshimath nor spend their time in fear and trepidation. Dreams of the children are being crushed under debris of relentless construction work and unregulated gentrification. In Chamoli district, located at a height of 6150 ft, nature's fury is on full display in Joshimath as land is sinking water is leaking and houses and buildings are beginning to show deep cracks. People have had to flee their homes and in fact have fled for their safety. One such resident, Chandralekha Bhatt, holding back her tears, Chandralekha said, "We are four sisters, my father rears goats and takes care of the family. My mother was an only child, so my maternal grandfather built us a house. We were living happily. I also

studied up to intermediate level and hoped that I would be able to support my family after completing my education. Nature, however decided to play this cruel joke on us." She added, "Those who are staying in their homes during these cold nights are most fortunate. Of course, I am young, but when I see my mother's tears, I am afraid that my mother's time will come before me. She has told me that she built our house by carrying stones on her back." Chandraleka, whose younger brother left the family a long ago, laments that her mother has stopped talking to her and the rest of the family. Maybe she is worried about how my daughters will get married. Now the house is abandoned, the fields and apple orchards have collapsed along with the Mansik Santulan (mental state) of our life." Being the eldest, Chandralekha said that she is well aware of her mother's situation." As our house is collapsing, my mother is lurking in the corner of the courtyard. Even if I want to, I can't shed two tears because if I breakdown, my family will break down. I have a duty to my family." The residents of Joshimath are suffering extremely because of the sinking of land, cracking of land and as a result of this the cracks and chinks in their houses and other buildings and the very scene of their sufferings bring shivers down ones spine. The people of Joshimath are in the trouble because of the sinking and cracking of the land and their houses and the scientists, experts and authorities have declared many houses unsafe for living and asked the inmates to leave their houses and go to safer places. The centre and the state government of Uttarakhand is providing every kind of help to the affected people and have also promised rehabilitation in addition to relief to the affected people. The government is required to ban unregulated and reckless constructions so that the chances of such calamities in future will lessen but at the end one can say that humans have no control over nature but with the positive work and handling of this grave situation, government will be able to free people from the enormous suffering of the nature's fury. We should use land and other natural things judiciously so that nature is not displeased with us and bring ruin to us. For this we humans should stop reckless constructions and save our land from erosion by planting trees on the banks of the rivers. To conclude we can say that the present natural fury in Joshimath is the indication that Kalyuga has got strong roots and we should remember God who only can save us from these catastrophes.

Where to find justice?

■ DR SATYAWAN SAURABH

In cases of rape, women are asked to recount the trauma they faced, similarly, incidents of caste violence or discrimination go unreported to the police because of their caste prejudices or fear of upper-class dominance. Refuses to register FIR due to According to the Efficient Access to Justice Survey, 2017, the complex, costly and time-consuming process of the court is the only reason for the weaker section not to approach the courts. Civil servants with empathy and sensitivity play a vital role in access to justice or redressal of grievances. Being in the weaker section is unfortunate but in a developing country like India, it is worse to be marginalized, weak, and vulnerable. They face many difficulties in accessing justice and grievance redressal. Access to justice refers to the ability to participate in the judicial process. But the weaker section of society is not aware of the judicial process. For example, Women, LGTBTQ, Disabled, SC/ST, etc. Many people do not know the NALSA judgment, Sexual Harassment Act, and SC/ST Act. Being marginalized is unfortunate, but being marginalized, vulnerable and vulnerable in a developing

country is even worse. Marginalized people are most affected by even minor disruptions or shocks, e.g. During the nationwide curfew to contain the spread of Covid-19, the economically disadvantaged were the most affected. Access to Justice is the capability of a State where every person irrespective of his economic and other disabilities can get judicial redressal and that too in a fair, equitable, and speedy manner. Access to justice can be formal i.e. by approaching the courts for judicial remedy and informal i.e. legal solutions outside the court, such as mediation, arbitration, and conciliation. Many communities like Adivasis/Scheduled Tribes are not aware of the constitutional safeguards and other statutory provisions put in place for the upliftment of the community and redressal of their grievances, as a result, they accept discrimination and ill-treatment as normal. How long does it take to give a final decision? This aspect is essentially related to laxity in the police investigation, and the perception of the weaker sections harming them. For example, the incident shown in Jai Bheem Movie 2021. Marginalized groups in particular fear the system, it leads to unrecognized and unrecognized

nized grievances, they see it as foreign, and are not used to it. For example, in cases of rape, women are asked to recount the trauma they faced, similarly, incidents of caste violence or discrimination go unreported to the police because of their caste prejudices or because of the upper class. refuses to register an FIR fearing dominance of the According to the Efficient Access to Justice Survey, 2017, the complex, costly and time-consuming process of the court is the only reason for the weaker section not to approach the courts. Civil servants with empathy and sensitivity play a vital role in access to justice or redressal of grievances. For example, violence against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes cannot be judged as a general act of assault, and thus the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes Act, 1989 is being invoked. The civil servant may set up a mechanism so that the people especially the marginalized may know about their rights and seek redressal in case of violation of those rights. A civil servant or any officer having sympathy for the socially and economically weaker sections can provide free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of society by approaching the

courts for judicial remedy with the facility of service under Article 39A. Helping them through Lok Adalats informally out-of-court solutions like mediation, arbitration, and conciliation to cut time. Over the years, civil servants have worked to protect, promote and uplift the weaker sections of society. Meanwhile, it involves strengthening social, educational, economic, and political empowerment with the collective efforts of policymakers, the state, and various NGOs. Access to justice is an inalienable right of a citizen. Courts are the last bastion of hope for marginalized communities and barriers to access to courts and justice rob these people of basic humanity and dignity and vitiate democracy. Today the world is talking about the shift of geopolitical power from West to East and India is considered an important element in South and South East Asia, however; it will not be of much use-victim be victim, the culprit Excuse me! Dragging legs without justice, where will justice be found, if India is unable to ensure implicit justice.

(The author is a poet, freelance journalist and columnist, All India Radio and TV panelist).

PROGRESSING J&K

Govt establishing strong grass-root institutions for poor through UMEED JKRLM emerging as ray of hope for rural women

Jammu and Kashmir Government is building strong grass-root institutions for the poor, engaging them into gainful livelihood interventions and ensuring appreciable improvement in their income on sustainable basis through UMEED scheme of J&K Rural Livelihood Mission (JKRLM). JKRLM's mandate is to reach out to 66 per cent rural population across the 125 blocks of Jammu and Kashmir and to provide them sustainable livelihood opportunities and nurture them so that they come out of poverty and appreciate an honorable quality of life. The core values which guide all the activities under JKRLM are inclusion of the poor and substantial role of the poorest in all the process, transparency and accountability of all processes and institutions, proprietorship and key role of the poor and their insti-

tutions in all the stages - planning, implementation and monitoring and lastly community self-reliance and self-dependence. JKRLM is emerging as the ray of hope for rural women as the programme has brought self sufficiency among them. The women have not only come out of poverty but their status has also been raised within their own families by this mission. The mission is extensively based on capacity building and strengthening of community based institutions by empowering rural women at different levels.

Several girls from Kulgam district of South Kashmir forayed into mushroom cultivation under the RLM scheme in collaboration with the agriculture department. Tahira Bashir, an entrepreneur and beneficiary of JKRLM from Kulgam expresses gratitude to the department due to which

she started Mushroom unit. "Officials guided us, which is why our unit is on the track. We had to deposit Rs. 15,000 which was refunded later. The profit from selling mushrooms entirely belongs to us", said Tahira with satisfaction. Saima Jan, another entrepreneur from Kulgam appeals other women to start their own units with the help of UMEED and become self-sufficient as well as job providers.

Notably, CLF (Bhadarwah, Doda) was awarded as best performing SHG Federation during the 'National Conference on three Decades of SHG Bank Linkage Program and SHG Federation Awards Presentation' organised by APMAS, Hyderabad. Meanwhile, JKRLM and Meesho, India's fastest-growing internet commerce company signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support the

growth of 1,800 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) by providing them an online platform to launch and grow their business and empower the rural women entrepreneurs.

In Pulwama district, 23-year old Khairun Nissa became part of women self help group under UMEED and started milk collection business. A gaining experience she started a dairy unit which she has been running successfully. Afterwards, Nissa set up a fodder shop and high-tech poly house for growing various exotic vegetables. Nowadays, she is doing fairly well. All her family members have been engaged in the business in one way or the other. Her business is also creating job opportunities for others. "I hire many labourers at my business units on a wage basis", Nissa said. With her hard work and dedication, Nissa has become an inspiration for many in the area.

