

## AMRUT SCHEME

Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) was launched on 25th June 2015 in selected 500 cities and towns across the country. The Mission focuses on development of basic infrastructure, in the selected cities and towns, in the sectors of water supply; sewerage and septage management; storm water drainage; green spaces and parks; and non-motorized urban transport. A set of Urban Reforms and Capacity Building have been included in the Mission.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has approved State Annual Action Plans (SAAPs) of all the States/Union Territories (UTs) amounting to Rs 77,640 crore for the entire Mission period, which includes committed Central Assistance (CA) of Rs 35,990 crore. So far, States/UTs have taken up 5,873 projects worth Rs 82,222 crore, of which 4,676 projects worth Rs 32,793 crore have been completed, and another 1,197 projects worth Rs 49,430 crore have been grounded which are at various stages of implementation. Further, over-all works worth around Rs 66,313 crore have been physically completed and expenditure of Rs 59,615 crore has been incurred.

Till date, 134 lakh water tap connections and 102 lakh sewer connections (including households covered through Faecal Sludge and Septage Management - FSSM) have been provided through AMRUT & in convergence with other schemes against targeted 139 lakh water connections and 145 lakh sewer connections respectively.

AMRUT Mission has been subsumed under AMRUT 2.0, which was launched on 01st October, 2021 and ongoing projects of AMRUT 1.0 will be funded with CA till 31st March, 2023.

Mission also has a reform agenda on ease of living of citizens through reduction of non-revenue water, recycle of treated used water; rejuvenation of water bodies, augmenting double entry accounting system, urban planning, strengthening urban finance etc.

ST OFF 'D' CUFF

Tempered Risk-Taking

Is Risk-taking is mostly Due to Hormones?

Picture a young couple driving on a cliffside road, with the man driving. They come by a slow-moving car, and wish to overtake it, but a truck rapidly approaches on the oncoming lane. Rather than wait, the driver accelerates, and narrowly overtakes the slower car, while the truck honks furiously.

While the man gets a dopamine surge, and feels on top of the world, his partner is mortified, and tells him not to take such risks. Testosterone distorts one's RRR (Risk Reward Ratio). Greater risks are encouraged, as they lead to much greater thrills.

A quick look at prison statistics in developed countries would show that in America, 93% of prisoners are male, and a majority of these are under 35. This is mirrored across the globe – India's prisoners as of 2020 were 96% male, most of them being in the 18-30years age category. A majority of women in prison are there as accomplices of crime by a man.

A big contributor to this statistic would be that men on average have 20 times the testosterone of women, and younger men have a larger amount of the hormone than aging ones. Parents dread teenage years of their children, as this is a rebellious phase. This is especially true for boys aged 13-18, as testosterone is at its highest levels, and one has not yet learnt to temper one's thinking.

#### Adapting Modes of Risk

Human beings, or at least half of them, have always been aggressive risk-takers, just channelled in different forms. From our caveman days to more recent times of conquerors, Mongols, Vikings, pirates, grave-robbers, pillagers, to modern times of drug dealers, bombers, arsonists, murderers, rapists and more, some factor has always driven human beings towards aggressive risk-taking behaviour, often culminating in what we label today as 'crime'.

As we have moved from physical to digital, so has risk-taking. Over the past two or three decades, one would've witnessed a surge in risky business behaviour, i.e., soft or white-collar aggression. Banks have often been labelled as casinos. Whether with high-frequency trading, excessive leveraging, derivatives and options trading, or something outright illegal, like Enron, Madoff, Mossack Fonseca, or Mallya, businessmen have not suddenly developed an increased appetite for risk but have simply adapted their hormonal pangs to changing times.

-TOI Edit

Generally speaking, the Smritikars never care to explain the why and the how of their dogmas. -B. R. Ambedkar

## GURU GOVIND SINGH : SON OF THE ETERNAL FLAME

■ I.D. SONI



The more we think of Guru Govind Singh Ji, the more we repeat to ourselves the words: "The Guru did so much for us: what are we doing for him"? His life was a yagna, a sacrifice for India to the Eternal. We think of him as the Guru of the Dark Night. He bore his cross heroically. He went into great agony and he shared his agony with his disciples, his countrymen. He bore his agony and shared it in silence. Again and again have we thought of the silence of the Guru in the last, closing, crowning period of his blessed life. He kept his heart as a sanctuary for the Hidden Word of the Holy Spirit. In his little "Abchal Nagar", the city of Eternal, he communed with God in silence and love. Only one language he spoke in that last period of his agony and isolation, only one language. He spoke in silence. We may hear it in silence, the language of love.

In tattered garments he travelled from place to place and then stayed in the "Abchal Nagar". He travelled as a pilgrim: he stayed there as a pilgrim. And in silence he wrought the wonder of his work and the wonder of his life. In silence, too he communed with God. What wondrous songs he sang! We still may sing them and find that they nourish our interior life, a life radiant with strength and serenity, with service and interior peace - a life rich in suffering and sacrifice, in the love of God and the love of the poor; broken bleeding ones.

What has not the great Guru done for us! The Hindus had failed to organise their forces for the protection of their frontiers and their cities, their families and their village-folk. India was immensely rich. Alas! the Hindus had failed to guard their wealth and freedom. And Turks and Afghans had swept down to destroy India's peace and prosperity.

Mahmud of Ghazni had swooped over India and pillaged the cities of Hindus and destroyed their temples and carried away to his capital, Ghazni, treasures accumulated for centuries - pearls and diamonds and rubies and emeralds and jewels. Mathura and Somnath had been sacked. Mahmud of Ghazni had become the richest king of the world.

Ala-ud-Din came after Mahmud. He, too, proved a scourge for India. In quick succession came Babar; the Moghul. He continued the terrible work of destruction. In the line of the Moghul kings, Akbar was the one king who combined statesmanship with sympathy in his attitude and dealings with the Hindus. But Aurangzeb upset the conciliatory work of Akbar. Aurangzeb's dream of a Muslim empire in India was never realised. He weakened Akbar's work: he wrecked his own dynasty: and the mute millions of India prayed for his death. Indeed, he himself began to realise, when, alas! it was too late, that his narrow, sectarian policy had destroyed the heritage of Akbar. His deathbed "letters" are Aurangzeb's "confessions" - a lesson and a warning.

"I know not", he writes, "who I am and where I shall go or what will happen to me, a sinner full of sins. My years have gone by, profitless. I have greatly sinned and know not what torments of hell await me". Guru Gobind Singh Ji surveyed the situation of India. He saw that if Hindus would maintain freedom, they must pay the price of freedom: and that price was "vigilance", "eternal vigilance" not the non-violence of the weak. If power corrupts, so may non-violence corrupt, too. India has been invaded, again and again, by barbaric and aggressive forces. And India's hope, I humbly submit, is not in a creed of non-violence but in the spirit of heroic resistance, which surrenders life in reverence for the Great Life. Guru Gobind Singh Ji dared to go out to meet Aurangzeb and his forces of intolerance and oppression in the true Kshatriya spirit that fights, not for selfish gain but in order to purify and heal. This I interpret as the true Khalsa spirit that awakes in him who has reverence for life.

In this spirit, indeed, Gobind Rai - then, a mere, boy - said to his revered father, Guru Teg Bahadur Ji: "Father! Offer yourself as an oblation and save the people of Kashmir! Embrace death as a bride"! In the same spirit did Guru Teg Bahadur Ji and faced death

## Global Recognition to Namami Gange Programme

■ ER. PRABHAT KISHORE

India is a country of rivers. Major cities of the country are situated on the banks of these rivers. These rivers symbolise the Nation's cultural, spiritual and economic prosperity and are the lifelines of the majority of the population, which is why they are worshiped and termed as "Mata". River Ganga has special significance in Indian and Sanatan culture. Ganga's water has always been called nectar.

Rivers, especially the Ganga, are full of medicinal properties and their waters contain bacteria that are more effective than antibiotics in treating serious human infections. Over time, as the cities settled on the banks of the rivers, the challenges of these rivers also increased. These challenges range from the decreasing depth of rivers due to siltation to safeguarding its cleanliness& purity. Most of the rivers including Ganga, Yamuna, Sabarmati have become polluted due to improper disposal of wastes. Sewerage and excreta of the cities are being released directly into the rivers without proper treatment. Due to domestic waste, industrial waste, agricultural waste, chemical fertilizers, pesticides etc., pollution in most of the rivers has reached its peak and the river water is no longer usable.

After covering a distance of 2525 kms from Gangotri, the river Ganga joins Gangasagar. The Ganga sub-basin extends over an area of 10,86,000 Sq KM and lies in India, Nepal, Tibet and Bangladesh. The drainage area lying in India is 8,61,404 Sq KM, which is nearly 26.2% of the total geographical area of the country. Due to great bond of Indian culture and civilisation with Mokshadayini Ganga, in June 2014, the Government of India launched an integrated Ganga Conservation Mission named Namami Gange, whose twin objective is effective abatement of pollution and conservation & rejuvenation of the holy river Ganga and its tributaries. For the success of this mission, targets have been set



when he was beheaded, reciting the Japji under the banyan tree which still stands a witness to the heroic spirit of the martyred Guru. Guru Gobind Singh Ji was in his revered father's Anandpur; when the news reached him of the passing away of Guru Teg Bahadur Ji, others mourned, but Guru Gobind Singh Ji asked them all not to weep but to give glory to God and bless His Name. Gobind said to them:

Say not he is dead!  
Listen to what the angels sing:

"He cometh home:  
The Victor cometh home!"

In our love for the beloved is our freedom for ever!  
Gobind, as a boy, cheerfully offers the life of his father as a sacrifice to God for the freedom of the people. The same Gobind, in the maturity of his years, offers his two sons as a sacrifice to the Akal Purukh for the sake of the people. The Guru dresses his little boy, Ajit, as a soldier and says to him: My child go forth! The Akal Purukh so Wills it"! With the same spirit the Guru fills the Khalsa Brotherhood that he organises for the service of his country.

The Khalsa was Brotherhood of soldiers who aspired to be servants of saints. The Khalsa called himself "Akali", the soldier who feared not death but lived in the Akal, the Eternal. And to Him he gave all credit, crying, "Wah Guru!"

Thrilling is the story of the deeds of Guru Gobind Singh Ji and his disciples, the Khalsa. They stood up heroically against the imperial power of Aurangzeb. Many were killed, but they would not surrender. Pursued was the Guru by imperial forces: he faced them. Then, overcome by tremendous odds, he ran from place to place: he never surrendered. Separated was he from his beloved disciples, but they remembered him and loved him to the last. The Guru finds himself, one day, in the solitude of the Lakh Jangle. Some of his disciples come to know that their beloved leader is in the forest, cut off from his people. The disciples hear in their hearts the call of the beloved, saying: "Come"! And they come: they speed on: they come quickly, crying to him.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji himself tells us in his autobiography Bachitar Natak (Wondrous Drama), that he was aware that God sent him to this earth with a purpose: in his earlier incarnation, he had been a renunciate engaged in a life of contemplation. When he became one with the Unmanifest, God commanded him: "I have cherished thee as my son, and created thee to establish a religion and restrain the world from senseless acts". Thereupon, the Guru continues, "I stood up, folded my hands, bowed my head and replied, "Lord, the religion will prevail in all the world, when it has Thy support. The Guru concludes his account thus: "For this purpose was I born, let all virtuous people understand. I was born to advance righteousness, to emancipate the good and to destroy all evil-doers root and branch".

The Guru in his Divine Wisdom knew that he was the last leader of the faith; therefore he pondered deeply on the future of his followers. How could he ensure the physical and spiritual well-being of his community when there would be no Guru in human form? He resolved on the answer to that problem thus: henceforth, each and every Sikh must become the vehicle of the Master's Teaching: the word of the Master must be enshrined in the heart of the Sikhs; the presence of the Word in their hearts and souls would compensate for the absence of the physical form of the Guru in their midst. With the last benediction of his earth life, he left to his disciples the Book Beloved, the Granth Sahib, the Guru Granth Sahib, Saying: "The bani, the word is the Master; the Guru, now". Yes, the living spirit of the Gurus speakth in the words of this ever-living Book, this inspired testament of the Sikh Faith.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji healed Bharata by sparks of the divine fire that flowed into him from the Eternal Flame. He, the wearer of the blue robe, the deliverer of India's millions, the guardian or the sacred idea for which stands the Sikh Faith, does he not still lead his beloved Sikhs to guard the purpose of India's history?

He was a poet, he was a prophet: he was a seer: he was a scholar: he was a singer: he was a hero: he was a patriot of purest ray serene. And to lowly acts of service he bent his hands to labour and earn his daily bread. He truly realised the dignity and meaning of manual labour. He used to say that labour was worship.

He was not an enemy of Islam. His bani clearly indicates that he saw the Divine Spirit, the one Akal Purukh, in the Koran, no less than in the Vedas. He, therefore, always emphasised that alike for the Muslim and the Hindu the urgent need was dhyanaam: meditation, and bhakti, Devotion to God and the Gurus, service of the poor and broken ones. What was needed was Nama, life in Nama, life of devotion and service. What was needed was not a creed but a realisation. Man's pilgrimage, he saw, as the first great teacher of the Sikh Faith, Guru Nanak Ji Maharaj, had seen with radiant eyes, was to the Satya Loka, the Realm of Truth, the Abode of Eternal life.

The last brief period of his brief life - he was but forty two when he passed away - he spent in loving communion with God. He began his life as a contemplative on the Hem Kanta Mountain: he closed his life in deep communion with the Akal Purukh on the banks of the Godavari at Nader. There he stayed and a few gathered around him: and this community of the contemplatives he called "Abchal Nagar" - words which literally mean, "The city of the Eternal". I believe that if the Living Word, the Bani of ten Gurus and the saints, the Seers, and sages of India and humanity, of all climes and races could re-inspire the Sikh Faith, it would indeed become a living faith and its message would thrill India again from end to end. This may not be until we enter with sympathy into the child-like spirit of the Sikh Village - folk and their great Teachers, the Sikh Gurus, the saints and the Bhaktas of India. How may we speak of thee, O thou who speakst still? The tumult and the shouting centuries hath died: the captains and the kings have gone" But thou, O Guru Gobind Singh, dost live on! The sacrifice stands: and thy light shines on - the light of humble and holy heart. He gave to the Khalsa some simple rules from his Mother-heart - Eat little, sleep little, love compassion and forbear; etc!.

Knowledge and Monitoring Center Projects have been completed.

But in reality, after more than 8 years of launching of the ambitious programme and expending thousand crore rupees, the net effect on the ground is negligible. The quality of water is still poor: The infrastructure being created is of substandard quality and slow pace of work is creating hurdle in day-to-day lives of the people. Red-tapism in the administrative system and arbitrary attitude of the construction agencies raise questions on the sustainability of the scheme.

The Namami Gange programme has been included among the world's top 10 regeneration flagship initiatives by the United Nations at the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biodiversity (COD) in Kunming-Montreal (Canada). Other top 9 pioneering initiatives for restoring the natural world include T'ri-national Atlantic Forest Pact (Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina), Abu Dhabi Marine Restoration, Great Green Wall for Restoration and Peace (Africa), Multi Country Mountain Initiative (Serbia, Kyrgyzstan, Uganda and Rwanda), Small Island Developing States Restoration Drive (Vanuatu, St. Lucia, Camoros), Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative (Kazakhstan), Central American Dry Corridor, Building with Nature (Indonesia) and Shan-Shui Initiative (China).

Following recognition by the United Nations, all selected ground breaking initiatives committed to the prevent and reverse the degradation of natural spaces across the planet are expected to receive UN-backed promotion, funding and technical expertise. When the power of our resolve is strong, even the biggest challenge becomes easy. Government initiatives alone will not last, but, citizens have to come forward by involving themselves in every activity of Namami Gange to keep Ganga clean and save biodiversity.

(The author is a technocrat & educationist).

PROGRESSING J&K

Farmer prosperity, Rural livelihood security set to be a reality under HDAS scheme

Rs 5013 crs to be spent in next five years across J&K under scheme

With an outlay of Rs. 5013 crores over the next five years under the newly approved Holistic Development of Agriculture and Allied Sectors (HDAS) scheme, a new phase of farmer prosperity and rural livelihood security across Jammu and Kashmir will become a reality.

The scheme will transform the agriculture economy of J&K putting it on a new trajectory of growth, doubling the output of the sectors, boosting exports and making the sectors sustainable & commercially viable.

The unique thing about 29 projects under the scheme is not only that they have been prepared by some of the finest brains in the country but also the fact that their formulation was undertaken in a consultative mode - ensuring that the opinion of all stakeholders including our farmers is taken onboard.

Notably, in July this year the UT administration constituted an Apex Committee for holistic

development of Agriculture and Allied Sectors for which leading luminaries like Dr Mangala Rai, Former DG ICAR, as its Chairman and Dr Ashok Dalwai, CEO NRAA apart from other well known figures in the field of Agriculture, Planning, Statistics & Administration.

The committee working in a mission mode came with a comprehensive plan in the form of 29 projects covering all the sectors within the ambit of APD in a record time of 5 months, an official said.

These twenty-nine projects will almost double the output of the sectors, boosting exports and making the sectors sustainable & commercially viable, an official said and added that these gains shall be equitable, reaching the last person in the pyramid and ecologically sustainable through efficient use of bio-resources for food, feed & industry.

As per the officials, the agricultural output which stands at Rs 37600 crores shall increase by

over Rs 28142 crores to reach more than Rs 65700 crores per year; with a resultant increment in sectoral growth rate to 11%. The interventions shall create employment opportunities for over 2.8 lakh youth and establish around 19,000 enterprises. Apart from this, more than 2.5 lakh persons shall be skilled in various agri-enterprises ranging from seed production, precision farming of vegetables, bee-rearing, cocoon production, mushroom farming, integrated & organic agriculture, high-density fruit farming to processing, dairying, sheep & poultry farming as well as fodder production.

In the next five years the UT shall have a motivated workforce with agri-entrepreneurial skills in a commercially viable and ecologically sustainable agri-ecosystem. The projects approved in the agriculture sector are Development of Seed and Seed Multiplication chain in PPP mode, Promotion of Niche crops in UT of J&K, Promotion of Vegetables/exotic vegetables under

open & hi-tech protected cultivation, Strengthening Agri-Marketing System in UT of J&K, Promotion of medicinal/aromatic plants on commercial basis.

Moreover, the Promotion of Apiculture, Technological interventions to strengthen Sericulture in J&K, Promotion of Nutri cereals (Millets), Farm mechanization and automation, Promotion of mushroom cultivation, Promotion of Oilseeds, Formulation of 300 FPOs, Adoption & promotion of integrated farming system (IFS)/Integrated Livelihood systems (ILS) in UT of J&K, Promotion of commercial floriculture in UT of J&K and Development of rain fed areas of J&K.

The projects under agriculture sector also include alternate Agriculture System for sustainability; Sensor based smart Agriculture, Minimizing pesticide use in Agriculture, J&K soil & land resource information system and Innovative approaches in agriculture extension.