

CONSERVE WATER

The increasing demand for water, coupled with the careless and unsustainable use of this precious resource, poses a significant threat to the environment, agriculture, and overall human well-being.

The pollution of water sources, often caused by industrial discharges, agricultural runoff, and improper waste disposal, further exacerbates the problem. Polluted water not only affects human health but also disrupts ecosystems, leading to a decline in biodiversity and the availability of clean water for various uses. The consequences of water scarcity are evident, with irregular rainfall patterns, droughts, and a rising global water crisis. Government policies, rules, and movements aimed at water conservation are positive steps in the right direction. However, the success of these initiatives depends heavily on public awareness and active participation. Individuals, communities, and industries need to adopt sustainable practices to reduce water wastage, implement efficient water use technologies, and prioritize environmental conservation.

Urgent action needed to save freshwater fish from extinction

■ SHIVANSHU K. SRIVASTAVA

The recent release of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List assessment has unveiled a distressing reality for freshwater fish species globally. Approximately 25% of these species are now facing the spectre of extinction, a dire predicament attributed largely to the multifaceted impacts of climate change. However, the crisis extends far beyond rising temperatures, with extensive fishing, water poisoning, pollution, and a plethora of other human-induced factors compounding the urgency of conservation efforts.

In the intricate dance of ecosystems, climate change acts as a powerful disruptor, exacerbating an already precarious situation for freshwater fish. The assessment, which comprehensively covered 14,898 species, spotlights the various threats these aquatic inhabitants confront. Seventeen percent of threatened species are grappling with the consequences of decreasing water levels, shifting seasons, and the encroachment of rising sea levels into rivers. Yet, climate change is not acting in isolation; it is a catalyst amplifying the impacts of other anthropogenic activities.

Extensive fishing stands out as a major contributor to the freshwater fish crisis, exerting immense pressure on populations already teetering on the edge. The IUCN Red List update reveals that a quarter of threatened species are victims of overfishing. This over-exploitation, largely driven by economic interests, depletes fish populations beyond their capacity to recover, hastening the decline of species already rendered vulnerable by other stressors.

Water poisoning and pollution, responsible for a staggering 57% of threatened species, form another critical piece of the puzzle. Industrial discharges, agricultural runoff laden with pesticides and fertilizers, and untreated sewage collectively contaminate freshwater habitats, rendering them inhospitable for fish. Chemical pollutants not only disrupt ecosystems but also pose direct threats to the health and reproductive capabilities of freshwater species, pushing them closer to the brink of extinction.

Dams and water extraction, cited as threats for 45% of threatened species, represent a significant human intervention altering the natural flow of rivers. While dams are often constructed with the aim of harnessing water resources for human use, they have profound and often irreversible impacts on the delicate balance of aquatic ecosystems. These infrastructural interventions disrupt migratory patterns critical for many freshwater fish, leading to habitat fragmentation and a decline in genetic diversity.

Invasive species and diseases, affecting 33% of threatened species, further complicate the scenario. Human activities, including unintentional introductions and habitat destruction, create favorable conditions for the spread of non-native species and diseases, intensifying the stress on ecosystems already grappling with the consequences of climate change.

The urgency of addressing the freshwater fish crisis demands a comprehensive and integrated approach that acknowledges the interconnectedness of these threats. While the IUCN Red List update underscores the immediate need to combat climate change, it is equally crucial to confront the root causes of extensive fishing, water poisoning, pollution, and other anthropogenic factors.

Sustainable fishing practices must replace the current paradigm of over-exploitation. This shift necessitates a reassessment of existing fisheries management strategies, incorporating science-based quotas, closed seasons, and the establishment of marine protected areas. Moreover, fostering community engagement in sustainable fishing practices is integral to the success of conservation efforts, ensuring that local communities become stewards of their aquatic resources.

Stringent pollution control measures are imperative to mitigate the impact of industrial and agricultural pollutants on freshwater habitats. This requires the implementation and enforcement of environmental regulations, investment in wastewater treatment infrastructure, and the promotion of eco-friendly agricultural practices. In parallel, efforts to restore degraded ecosystems can aid in revitalizing habitats and providing a lifeline for endangered fish species.

Responsible water management is a key component of the solution. Balancing the needs of human societies with the preservation of freshwater ecosystems requires a paradigm shift towards more sustainable water use. This involves reevaluating the environmental impact of large-scale water extraction projects, promoting water conservation practices, and investing in alternative water sources to alleviate pressure on natural habitats.

While addressing these immediate threats is crucial, the overarching challenge of climate change cannot be ignored. The IUCN Red List update rightly emphasizes the imperative to limit global warming to below 1.5 degrees Celsius. This requires a paradigm shift in our approach to energy production, land use, and consumption patterns. Governments, industries, and individuals must commit to ambitious targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, transitioning to renewable energy sources, and promoting sustainable land management practices.

Gretel Aguilar, the IUCN director-general, rightly calls for immediate action to curb the havoc caused by climate change. Governments, industries, scientists, and the public must collaborate in a concerted effort to develop and implement policies that promote sustainability, protect freshwater habitats, and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Public awareness and advocacy are equally crucial, fostering a collective commitment to safeguarding the diversity of life on our planet.

In conclusion, the freshwater fish crisis is a manifestation of the complex interplay between climate change and a myriad of human-induced threats. Recognizing the interconnectedness of these challenges is the first step towards crafting effective solutions. The fate of freshwater fish is inextricably linked with our own, and the time to act is now. It requires a comprehensive and collaborative effort on a global scale, driven by a shared commitment to preserve the delicate balance of our planet's ecosystems. The cost of inaction is not merely the loss of biodiversity but the unravelling of the intricate web of life that sustains us all.

(The writer is an advocate, pursuing Master of Laws (LL.M.) from Banaras Hindu University).

■ GL KHAJURIA

There is no well accepted definition of wastelands but Bhumble has used the following definition for wasteland are those lands which are virtually unstable ecologically, whose top soil is completely lost, devoid of any vegetative cover. Such lands have developed toxicity in the root zones for the growth of most plants, both for growth of annual crops and trees". Further, this shall cover all lands affected by erosions, floods, soil salinisation and alkalisation, water logging and so on. On hilly terrain, wastelands on snow clad mountains bare and denuded fragile rock which over the years are geo- logically unstable.

Some three decades back, the consultative committee of Parliament chaired by the then Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi on August 23rd, 1985 stated that India has a land mass of about 329 million hectares andestimates are that approximately degraded whose productivity is far below its potential.. The broad sub-divisions of degraded land resources are in Agriculture (out of 143 million haect; atleast 40 million ha or so are degraded) and in forestry sector, out of 75 million hac; 30 million hac have barely, some shrubs only, apart from the pasture and grazing and other uncultivated lands which are almost largely degraded. As, such we are having only 175 million of degraded lands in toto Amongst the major uses of land- Agriculture, forestry and grazing lands have been the most neglect-

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

Modi government is on the right path of obliterating the signs and symbols of slavery and it is giving an Indian and indigenous touch to British laws. With this end in view Home Minister Amit Shah has re-introduced three new bills in Lok Sabha to replace IPC, Cr PC and Evidence Act incorporating changes as per the recommendation of parliamentary penal recommendations lock stock and barrel and thus the Modi government is giving Indian tinge to the British laws which are operative in India even after 75 years of independence .It is very unfortunate and disturbing that while India has got political freedom in 1947 and removed foreign slavery. But the ruminants and signs and symbols of British slavery are still seen in India and the Modi government is taking steps to remove and obliterate the sings and symbols of foreign slavery. The BJP government has removed hundreds of foreign signs of slavery and now it is overhauling the legal system and laws by replacing Indian Penal Code ,Criminal Procedure Code and the Evidence Act and in their place will bring wholly Indian and indigenous acts so that the signs and symbols of British slavery are given a burial and at their place Indian laws are framed to operate the legal system. Recently parliament passed a bill to repeal 76 redundant and obsolete laws with the government saying that the move is part of continuing efforts to improve the ease of living and doing business. Thus union government on Tuesday, December 12, withdrew and re-

■ VIJAY GARG

Recently a film '12th Fail' came out. This is the story of a lower-middle class youth living in a village in Chambal region becoming an IPS officer, who had failed in 12th due to his inability to copy. It is worth noting that this film is based on his life. Based on this, the filmmaker gets the opportunity to add whatever spice to the film, which will bring tears to the eyes of the audience and force them to applaud. In such a situation, the social concern of any creation Becomes suspicious. For the last few years, the Civil Services Examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission i.e. UPSC for the administrative services considered to be the most prestigious in the country has been in the news a lot. The discussion ranges from the successes achieved by youth from underprivileged backgrounds to UPSC making the Civil Services Examination favorable to a particular section of the society. The good thing is that this examination, which was almost unknown to the people till one and a half to two decades ago, has now reached the people of every village. For the first time in the year 1979By breaking the dominance of English, the doors of Civil Services Examination were opened to other Indian languages. Just before this, every year around thirty thousand youth used to apply for around 600-700 posts. The number of people sitting in these was around 16-17 thousand. Now the maximum number of posts is around one thousand. About 12 lakh youth apply for this, out of which about five and a half lakh appear in the examination. This is a testament to the democratization of civil services examination. It is a principle of economics

YOUR COLUMN

Find Solutions of Malnutrition

Dear Sir,
According to the latest report of UNO's Food and Agriculture Organization, 74% Indians do not have access to nutritious food. This report is about the 'situation of food security and nutrition' in Asia and the Pacific region.T he NFHS-5 round report of the Government of India, the dire situation of malnutrition was described in detail .In this report also, this UN organization said that malnutrition-related health parameters are very low in India and the condition of anemia in children is bad. Regardless of adequate food, the percentage of people suffering from malnutrition is 16.6.The country's children are becoming thin and stunted due to mal-

Greening Wastelands

ed and perhaps the most degraded areas."

In such an inexplicable situation1 wastelands are formed by misuse or overuse and the large livestock population, far beyond the carrying capacity of pasture lands has probably been the major factor in the formation of wastelands. Besides, impeded drainage due to the construction of embankments, roads, canals, railway tracks and other multihued development have created new wastelands, The denudation and decimation of forest covert have ushered in large scale erosions resulted into big nallahs and ravine formation in the most degraded hills side down-below the plains. Water-logging is another glaring aspect accruing from canal seepage which de- facto attribute the major part of degraded and wastelands.

Greening methodology:

Greening or so to say afforestation of all such wastelands is the paramount need of the hour and - covering of all such lands with suitable vegetative species prevents soil erosion, water conservation,removal of salinity from soil, restores soil microbiological activity apart from lowering soil temperature increasein water percolation and above all increase the agricultural productivity of adjoining lands. The methodology of afforestation is, however, site specific and some of the mostly degraded wastelands are usar lands, ravines, hill slopes, coastal areas, areas subject to seepage, river banks and other areas of blackish water and as such differ-

ent categories of wastelands demand different ways of treatments.

User lands: Such lands which 2onstitute a part of wastelands include saline, sodic and alkalinesoils and such soils are met with on hard clay as well as on sandy tracks However, intermediate stages can also be met.

Sandy soils with high PH Value 1 can be found alongside major riversand such soils are characterised by PH range from 9 to 10 severe L drought during summer and heavyfrost during winter with temperature going down to 0oC preceded flooding , lire hazards and sand drifts,On such soils popular at 5 m interval inrows, 4 m apart is best suited. Introduction of certain species in between isofample importance and such suited species are 'Syzygiumcumini, terminalia arjuna' and Dalbergia sisso.

Denuded hill slopes : Hill slopes in Himalayas Shivaliks have their own sad stories to tell as in such areas, most of the top soil has been badly eroded to the extent of its total wash away which hinders planting on such barren and denuded areas So, in treating such areas, introduction of shrubs is the firststep to go ahead and every precaution is to be ensured to avert biotic pressure. The shrubs should be preferably be nitrogen fixing and of the few are vitex negund Bana), Athatodavasica (Brankers) wood fordiarutricosa etc. After the soil is reclaimed, the most suited plants needs planting (local species) supplemented and supported by soil conservation

Indianising the legal system and Laws

introduced the three new criminal bills to make changes that were recommended by the parliamentary standing committee on Home Affairs. Union Minister Amit Shah said that the bills were re-introduced as the standing committee had made several suggestions and instead of moving different official amendments ,new bills have been introduced.

The three re-introduced bills are the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita,Bharatiya Sakshya Adiniyam and Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita bill meant to replace and repeal Indian Penal Code ,Indian Evidence Act and Code of Criminal Procedure respectively .

The central government listed 18 bills to taken up for consideration and passage during the upcoming winter session of parliament ,which is being held from December 4to 22 .Among the 18 bills are significant criminal law legislation aimed at replacing the Indian Penal Code(IPC) of 1860,the Code of Criminal Procedure (Cr PC) of 1873 and Indian Evidence Act of 1872.The proposed Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023,Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanita 2023 and Bharatiya Sakshya Bill 2023 aim to replace the IPC, Cr PC and Evidence Act respectively. The soul of these three re-introduced bills is to protect all the rights given by the constitution to Indian citizens.

The objective will not be to punish anyone but to give justice and in this process ,punishment will be given where it is required to create a sense of crime prevention. Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that the three bills introduced in par-

liament by the centre to replace IPC, CrPC and Evidence Act will ensure no case can continue for more than two years ,which will result in elimination of 70% negative energy. Amit Shah said that the Criminal justice system will be overhauled.

These three bills were earlier introduced in the monsoon session of parliament .The aim of these three re-introduced bill is to replace, repeal and overhaul the criminal justice system and make it more Indian and indigenous so that the tag of foreign slavery is completely removed and the laws look and operate as the purely Indian way .After the passage of these re-introduced bills ,the sings and symbols of the British slavery will be removed to a vast extent and justice will be met with Indian and indigenous manner. Modi government is doing splendid work to make the criminal system to look Indian so that the justice is given as per the Indian law .The British criminal laws will be eliminated and it will facilitate the delivery of justice in Indian manner and the scope of the foreign criminal laws will be done away with. The aim of introducing of the three laws to replace the British era laws will do away with the symbols and signs of the British slavery. The Congress and other opposition parties in the parliament should show positive and constructive politics and cooperate with the government to replace the British era laws and this will be the great service to the nation. The Congress should shun the politics of criticism for the sake of criticism and follow positive and constructive opposition and

measures.

Ravines: The major problem with such areas is that these occupy vast tracks and further such areas I are prone to soil erosions, scarce moisture ,fast run off, low precipitation, uncontrolled grazing, high temperature during summer and severe cold/frost during winter. Here, on such areas the main thrust should be on gully-plugging and once the gullies are plugged. Root cuttings are strongly recommended. After this being done, the most suited local spp. to site should be planted out to reclaim the wastelands and some of the most suitable viz Bamboos, grasses need preference at places for soil binding apart from introduction of Acacias, Syzygiumcumini Dalbergia sisso and caesi-asiamea on flat top areas. Nothing can be achieved unless their depredations are controlled and insofaras aerial seeding on such areas is concerned as a method of greening the wastelands, the operation has proved to be costly one, apart from a futile exercise.

As a corollary, all out attempts have been made over the years in greening/afforestation of wastelands, of which successful results have been achieved to varying degree.The moot point to emphasize is to protect such wastelands from grazing,lopping and above all illicit cutting. Once the area is afforestedit should form a permanent feature of the landscape. The system as such should be that the ground always remain covered.

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

criticism so that the foreign penal laws will be removed and in their place Indian laws will be framed and made operational. The British era laws will be repealed and replaced. The laws that will be replaced the focus of those laws was strengthening the British administration, the idea was to punish and not to give justice.

By replacing them, the three new laws will bring the spirit tom protect the rights of the Indian citizens. The aim not to punish but provide justice. Punishment will be given to create a sentiment of stopping crime. The re-introduced three criminal bills will replace the old ,redundant British era criminal laws and in their place wholly Indian criminal laws are being re-introduced which will cease the highhandedness of the British criminal laws which are operative in India .In short the passage of the bills to repeal the existing IPC ,Cr PC and Indian Evidence Act and replacing them with the Indian laws and the Passage of the bill repeal 76 redundant and obsolete laws will to a vast extent remove the symbols and signs of British slavery at the same time led to delivery of justice with the People .It done will go a long way to infuse Indianness and indigenous spirit in the new bills and repealing of the old and existing laws which are a burden on the people. Therefore all opposition parties should co-operate with the treasury benches and bury the redundant and obsolete laws and at the same time legislate and pass the new laws in place of the criminal laws.

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

Civil Services Examination in the clutches of the market

that as soon as someone sees a possibility somewhere comes, he starts preparing the market for himself. Since sufficient number of consumers is the primary condition for the existence of the market, one of its functions is to create new consumers for itself. Today platforms like YouTube are also playing a big role in doing this. The civil servant is being presented in such a glamorous manner, which is beyond the truth. For example, showing a circuit house as the residence of a collector. Even some IAS officers go to Bollywood due to the temptation of becoming celebrities. As members, they are presenting their activities on the internet media. With all this, the market has succeeded in sowing the dream of becoming an IAS in the eyes of the youth. Since the coaching model for engineering and medical entrance exams already existed, there was not much need to think of a format for preparing for the IAS exam. Gradually coaching centers started coming up at various places. From the format of big companies to small tuition type institutes, we found all of them .The efforts made have succeeded in instilling in the minds of the youth that without coaching it is almost impossible for them to overcome the difficulty of this difficult examination. The market weakens the confidence of consumers by telling them in various ways that 'you will not be able to do this'. To prove himself right, he makes even a simple process extremely complicated. Then presents its solution. 7 At present, the form of preparation for Civil Services Examination has been so mechanized that the youth preparing for the examination goes to coaching centers .Due to this lack he is beginning to find himself extremely helpless. This has not only increased the cut-

throat competition to be successful among the youth, but such competition has also started taking place among the coaching institutes. The race is on to attract the youth to take admission in our institute, come what may, at any cost. As soon as the results of the examination are declared, the tendency of the successful candidates to take credit for their success by calling them students of their locality has made the advertisement quite ridiculous. As a result, a few days ago the central consumer The Protection Authority imposed financial penalty on some coaching institutes for making false claims of making IAS and sent notices to many. Here a simple question arises that when coaching institutes are publishing the names of successful candidates and their big photographs in newspapers and magazines and calling them their students, then why should our youth who have become fresh civil servants object to this? do not do? His silence creates doubt in the mind. As far as I know, 2018 batch topper Kanishk Kataria is the only ace. It was the youth who had directly objected to such advertisements by rejecting them. Such a fascinating illusion of Civil Services Examination has been created in the country, in front of which Vivek has surrendered. The gap between eligibility and qualification has disappeared. Despite trying for years and being far away from success, they are not ready to reconsider their decision in a rational manner. Lines like 'I will not give up on '12th failed' film' keep provoking him, but it lasts only for a short time. Its Despite this, the market is at its full strength. And also the enthusiasm of the youth. Now the wait is for a film which can awaken the conscience of the youth and help them in taking right decisions.

nutrition. However, in the latest report of the Global Hunger Index, the Indian Government has dismissed these things as a foreign conspiracy. 31% of children up to the age of five years are stunted. According to the report, apart from malnutrition and poor health of the mother during birth, stunting is caused by the child not getting proper feeding and nutrition after birth.The question is that if landing on the moon is possible then why not eliminate malnutrition?

N Mateeni

Pannun Case

Dear Editor,
It is strange that the US has alleged that India had plotted to assassinate the Khalistani activist Gurbpatwnt Singh Pannun. It is also strange that the US has taken the issue so seriously to save a separatist and a trouble monger of its friendly country India. Protection for separatists and terror-

ists are alike bad. If a separatist is protected by another country, it is tantamount to allowing its soil to be used for hostile activities against another country. The separatists always encourage terrorist activities to subserve their separatist interests. In doing so, the separatists are directly or indirectly and overtly or covertly responsible for the killing of innocent civilians and subversive activities. In fact, sheltering the separatists strains the relationship between countries. The US is enraged over the "Indian attempt" to kill Pannun. In fact it Is India which should have taken the issue seriously for fostering the separatists. US law makers are of the view that ties with India may suffer serious damage. It shows that for US, the interest of a separatist is more important than friendship with India. The US needs to change its outlook towards India and it should not allow its soil to be used by it against a friendly country.

K V Seetharamaiah