

MAINTAIN PRESSURE

It is laudable that the security forces have mounted pressure on terror mongers in Valley and elsewhere because the same is imperative to eliminate the terrorism from the soil of J&K. Every successful anti-terror operation helps in building confidence among the security personnel as they are working under immense pressure and in adverse conditions because they are exposed to dangerous situations on daily basis. The security forces deserve kudos for showing phenomenal grit and extraordinary passion towards duty and infinite love towards the motherland. The role played by the security forces is incredible and no doubt the country is indebted for so many sacrifices which the Indian soldiers make on a day to day basis. It is the sincerity of the Jawans that terrorists are being killed, caught and convinced to shun the dreadful path and most likely the Valley will soon get rid of terror mongers due to the strong resolve of these soldiers who form the strong security grid. In this context, the trail of taming the terror mongers is going on unabated with two terrorists associated with terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) getting neutralized in an encounter with the security forces in Shopian. Reportedly, incriminating materials including arms and ammunition has also been recovered from the site. It is however unfortunate that a civilian was killed in the firing by the terrorists. The pressure has been maintained on the terrorists across the UT as four Over Ground Workers (OGWs) affiliated with banned Hizbul Mujahideen organization were arrested along with 2 UBGL grenades, 120 live rounds of AK 47, 2 empty magazines of AK 47 and posters of HM outfit. Similarly, three terrorists including two hybrid and one associate terrorist of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) were arrested from Budgam and Baramulla districts. The success of security forces in the last couple of days will go a long way in eliminating more terror mongers as they are under immense pressure now. The free-hand given to security forces in combating terrorism is proving beneficial for the country as hundreds of terrorists have been eliminated since the BJP government took over the reins of country in 2014.

SUCCOUR FOR AILING

The healthcare services in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir witnessed a complete transformation during past few months as the place, where a common man used to suffer due to lack of proper and timely medication and only privileged few were lucky to avail advanced medical treatments outside J&K, that too after spending huge money, is now equipped with all latest facilities available in medical field for the convenience of people while several prestigious projects are near completion in both the regions, which would transform the Union Territory into a hub of advanced medical facilities, thereby catering to the needs of not only J&K people but also from the neighbouring states like Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. After formation of Union Territory, seven new medical colleges, two All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), 10 new nursing colleges and several other projects worth approximately Rs 7,700 crore were launched in J&K to provide major fillip to the healthcare sector which was suffering badly earlier. Moreover, earlier there were just 129 basic healthcare centres across J&K before 2019 but during the past two years almost 1275 new health centres have been in both the regions of J&K. It is all due to the far-sighted approach of the present Government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi which not only ensured provision of medical facilities but also provided adequate medical security to every citizen across the country through the PM-SEHAT scheme. Further, as after abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A, outsiders were invited to invest in J&K by setting up their units, several renowned health institutes like Apollo also signed MoU with J&K administration for setting up a health institute in J&K. Now, in another major development, the TATA hospital has also inked a Memorandum of Understanding with GMC Jammu for providing latest technical expertise and required academic support to develop modernized cancer care facilities in Union Territory. This significant development will surely provide succour to the ailing patients of J&K, especially those suffering from the dreadful disease-cancer as now they will be able to get quality treatment and other facilities within the Union Territory that too under the expert guidance as after the agreement, the state cancer institute will be integrated with National Cancer Grid, Tata Memorial Centre.

OFF 'D' CUFF

When You Care Deeply

Nothing in nature is stagnant and all stages are beautiful. It's so tempting to hold onto that which was, rather than be present with that which is. Yet, in nature there are seasons. Seasons when fruit trees bear fruit. Seasons when they don't. Seasons when green leaves adorn branches. Seasons when they shrivel up and flutter to the ground.

When we let go of the idea that we are going to rescue our loved one who is unwell and bring her back, we begin to appreciate a new beauty in her — in my mother's case, a calm, still beauty, unhooked from the identities and personalities she wore for 77 years.

Love exists in a space of its own. It is not dependent upon a shared history or an ability to converse, or occupying the same mental or emotional place at the same time. As my mother let go of her mom-ness, I let go of my daughter-ness. We now exist and love each other beyond the roles, beyond the drama, beyond the identities.

Acceptance isn't giving up. It is leaning in. Too frequently we think of acceptance as a weakness. It doesn't mean I wouldn't change the situation if I could. Acceptance is simply a choice to be present with what is rather than with what cannot be... We can expand our awareness and our sense of 'I Am-ness' such that this situation and our grief can co-exist with the highest truth of who we are — love, joy, freedom.

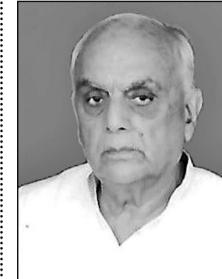
Sadhu Bhagawati Saraswati

Don't limit a child to your own learning, for he was born in another time.

-Rabindranath Tagore

EDITORIAL

Mahashivratri: The pious festival



■ ER P L KHUSHU

Shivratri is an annual religious ceremonial festival dedicated to the Bhagwan Shiv and is particularly important in Shaivism tradition of Hinduism. Unlike most Hindu festivals, which are celebrated during days, the Shivratri is celebrated at night. Mahashivratri is a solemn event notable for its introspective focus, fasting, meditation on Shiv, self-study, social harmony and an all night vigil at Shiv temples. The celebration includes performing an all-night prayer because Hindus mark this night as the time for 'overcoming darkness and ignorance' in one's life and world through Shiv. Offerings of fruits, leaves, sweets and milk to Shiv are made, some perform all-day fasting with Vedic or tantric worship of Bhagwan Shiv. In temples, 'Om Namah Shivaya', the sacred mantra of Shiv, is chanted all day. Devotees praise Shiv through the recitation of Shiv Mantras.

It is a major festival in Hindus, and this festival is solemn and marks a remembrance of 'overcoming darkness and ignorance' in life and the world. It is observed by remembering Bhagwan Shiv and chanting prayers, fasting, and meditating on ethics and virtues such as honesty, non-injury to others, charity, forgiveness, and the discovery of Bhagwan Shiv. The devotees keep awake all night and visit Shiv temples. According to the South Indian calendar, Maha Shivratri is observed on Chaturdashi Tithi during Krishna Paksha in month of Magha and in other parts of India, on 13-14 night of Krishna Paksha in Phalguni of Hindu calendar. The epics say that every lunar month, there is a Shivratri that makes it 12 per year. However, the main festival Shivastrati is called Mahashivratri, or great Shivratri, which is held on 13th night (waning moon) and 14th day of month Phalgun. This occasion mainly falls in either February or March. Kashmiri Pandits celebrate Shivratri with great devotion and festivity.

According to the legend associated with the origin of the worship, the Linga appeared at Pradoshakala or the dusk of early night as a blazing column of fire and dazzled Vatuka Bhairav and Rama or Rama Bhairav, who are supposed to be 'Mahadevi's', the mind-born sons, who approached it to discover its beginning or end but miserably failed. Exasperated and terrified they began to sing its praises and went to Mahadevi, who herself merged with the awe-inspiring the Jwala-Linga. The Goddess blessed both Vatuka and Rama that they will be worshipped by human beings and would receive their share of sacrificial offerings on that day and those who would worship them would have all their wishes fulfilled. As the Vatuka Bhairava emerged from a pitcher full of water when Mahadevi cast a glance into it, fully armed with all his weapons, he

is represented by a pitcher full of water in which walnuts are kept for soaking and worshipped along with Shiv, Parvati, Kumar, Ganesh, their attendant deities, Kshetrapalas when these are represented by clay images, as per rituals followed by Kashmiri Pandits in this regard. The soaked walnuts are later distributed as 'Naivedya', the 'Prasad'. The ceremony is called 'Vatuk Barun' in Kashmiri, which means filling the pitcher of water representing the Vatuk Bhairava with walnuts and worshipping it.

Kashmiri Pandits who are mostly Bhagwan Shiv devotees, observe this festival as Har-Ratri or Haerath or Herath. Herath word is derived from Sanskrit word 'Hararatri' the 'Night of Hara'. Shivratri, is regarded as the most important festival of the Kashmiri Pandit community. They celebrate it on Trayodashi or the thirteenth of dark half of the month of Phalgun (February-March) and not on Chaturdashi or fourteenth as in the rest of the country. The reason for it is that, this long drawn festival is celebrated for one full fortnight by them, as an elaborate ritual is associated with the appearance of Bhairav (Shiv) as a Jwala-Linga or a Linga of flame. It has been described as Bhairavotsava in tantric texts as on this occasion. Bhairava and Bhairavi, his Shakti or Cosmic energy, are propitiated through tantric worship. This festival is considered to be the convergence of Shiv and Shakti. It is believed that on Maha Shivratri, which is a Chaturdashi Tithi, Bhagwan Shiv married Goddess Parvati. Devotees celebrate this festival with zeal and enthusiasm. However, it is clear from what we have said above that there is difference in the way Shivratri is celebrated by the Kashmiri Pandits and by Hindus elsewhere in the country. Pandits not only celebrate it as Bhairavotsava one day earlier but also perform quite different rituals. Further, the tradition among Hindus in general is to strictly observe a fast on the Shiv Chaturdashi day. Even taking fruit or betel leaf is considered as violation of fast.

Shivratri, meaning Shiv's night, is a festival of great significance for Hindus all over the world, especially for those of Kashmir. Esoterically, it is symbolic of the mystic union of Jiva (individual soul) with Paramatma (Supreme Godhead) and represents the high state of spiritual realization wherein the world of relativity fades away and perfect peace and calm prevails. Festivals and sacred days have deep roots in our socio-religious traditions. They form a significant part of our cultural heritage. Their celebrations lead to spiritual upliftment, soul purification, and moral enrichment besides self-discipline. The festivals sustain our spirits, zeal, variety and zest to our existence and in the process help to keep our traditions and time tested rituals alive. Swami Laxmanan, the great Yogi spiritual saint of Kashmir with world-wide popularity says, "The cycles of bondage and liberation are both one with the Bhagwan Shiv. It was only a trick that we think that some souls are bound in ignorance, while others are elevated. It is only Shiv's play that we think that this covering of diversity actually exists as a separate

reality. There is not a second being or reality. His trick therefore is our trick because we are Shiv. We have concealed ourselves in order to find ourselves. This is his play and also our play." As per 'Trika' philosophy, "Let Shiv, who is myself, do pranama (bow down), to his real nature, which is Universal Shiv by his own Shakti, for removing the bondages and limitations, which is also none other than Shiv". The great Sadguru says that in the Indian culture, at one time, there used to be 365 festivals in a year. In other words, they just needed an excuse to celebrate every day of the year. These 365 festivals were ascribed to different reasons, and for different purposes of life. They were to celebrate various historical events, victories, or certain situations in life like sowing, planting, and harvesting. For every situation, there was a festival. Nevertheless, Mahashivratri is of a different significance. He further says that Mahashivratri, 'The Great Night of Shiv' is the most significant event in India's spiritual calendar. The fourteenth day of every lunar month or the day before the new Moon is known as Shivratri. Among all the twelve Shivratri that occur in a calendar year, Mahashivratri, the one that occurs in February-March is of the most spiritual significance. On this night, the northern hemisphere of the planet is positioned in such a way that there is a natural upsurge of energy in a human being. This is a day when nature is pushing one towards one's spiritual peak. It is to make use of this, that in this tradition, we established a certain festival which is nightlong. To allow this natural upsurge of energies to find their way, one of the fundamentals of this nightlong festival is to ensure that you remain awake with your spine vertical throughout the night. 'Mahashivratri is very significant for people who are on the spiritual path. It is also very significant for people who are in family situations and also for the ambitious in the world. People who live in family situations observe Mahashivratri as Shiv's wedding anniversary. Those with worldly ambitions see that day as the day Shiv conquered all his enemies'. But, for the ascetics, it is the day he became one with Mount Kailash. He became like a mountain - absolutely still. In the yogic tradition, Shiv is not worshipped as a God, but considered as the Adi Guru, the first Guru from whom the science of Yoga originated. After many millennia of meditation, one day he became absolutely still. That day is Mahashivratri. All movement in him stopped and he became utterly still, so ascetics see Mahashivratri as the night of stillness. Let us celebrate this Mahashivratri as an occasion, which will remove all our false beliefs of existence on the pretext of material gains and achievements. Let it give us a path to penance, salvation and service to the humanity. This author wishes happy 'Mahashivratri' to all through the columns of THE STATE TIMES.

(The author is a Chartered Consultant Civil Engineer, passionately attached and devoted to his motherland - Jammu & Kashmir).

Building world-class talent for accelerating growth through Gati-Shakti

■ M K TIWARI

The Prime Minister's Gati-Shakti Programme is an ambitious yet timely intervention that is aimed at synchronizing decision making and execution across 16 different ministries in India, to deliver a world-class multi-modal connectivity infrastructure to the nation. While the Gati-Shakti scheme aims at building world-class modern infrastructure and process streamlining, this would need to be complemented by accelerated skilling in the logistics sector to improve planning effectiveness, achieve high execution speeds and labour productivity levels. Opportunities for skill building have been explored in the last few years and initiatives have been taken up in this direction. For example, The Logistics Skill Council, set up under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship that aims to skill logistics personnel, has identified 11 sub sectors that could benefit from capability programmes ranging from warehousing, transportation and courier services to air cargo handling, e-commerce, EXIM, cold chain logistics, rail logistics, etc.

There are four key areas for skill building in the logistics sector that can complement the vision of the PM Gati-Shakti Programme.

Firstly, domain knowledge of the industry is critical to understand the needs of the logistics and supply chain activities that it entails. The Gati-Shakti programme aims at covering the connectivity needs for textile clusters, pharmaceutical clusters, defence corridors, electronic parks, industrial corridors, fishing clusters and agri-zones. Each industry has differing needs when it comes to the requirements for logistics, warehousing, transportation, and supply chain management. For example, containerized cargo is more common in textile exports while bulk cargo is common for steel products and heavy machinery exports. Accordingly, the mode of transport to be chosen would vary and hence, require different procedures and costs. Thus, from a skill-set perspective, the logistics personnel would deal with different process designs, technologies, and stakeholders as per sector. The business and process knowledge that comes with the understanding of the trade and movement of goods is also critical for employees that work within or across sectors.

Secondly, there is a strong need for developing digital literacy and increasing technology-adoption among logistics personnel across the sub-sectors given that the nation is fast moving onto a platform economy. Track & trace capabilities have become ubiquitous customer requirements in various tiers of the supply chain. There is also a need to regularly read data in various available information systems and then take tactical decisions related to planning and execution by interpreting details of inventory, location, aging/ environmental conditions, order/billing status, etc. Frequently, as is the case in last-mile deliveries and cab services, the use of such data can also be used to train personnel and incentivize desired service outcomes. Further, with the growth of new age technologies such as Control Towers and Block chains, decision-making may become more automated. Faster adoption of tech-driven tools can thus, help onboard potential employees and partners onto the businesses.

Thirdly, data-driven analytics and decision making is necessary for technical and management professionals in the supply chain

and logistics sectors. Logistics decisions such as location of facilities, sales planning, manpower planning and routing of vehicles are dynamic planning problems that require the need to crunch vast amounts of data and apply suitable optimization techniques in combination with forecasting and scenario planning that would be driven by AI/ML approaches. The knowledge of business processes coupled with data science is a strong asset that needs to be built in an accelerated manner and can help develop scientifically sound excellence in planning capabilities. Finally, for streamlined and seamless cargo movement, information-sharing, and strong partnerships are vital to supply chains. The famous 'Bullywhip' effect that is resultant of incorrect communication and coordination in supply chains is further testament to the failures caused by system-generated variabilities in an otherwise stable market. In a recent commissioned study of various cargo routes in India, the National Council for Advanced Economic Research has found that integrated service providers such as 3PLs and 4PLs are more competent than stand-alone players at providing cost-efficient cargo movement. Thus, logistics and supply chain personnel need to be trained on effective communication that contains accurate, clear, and timely information for stakeholders within the supply chain and strong negotiation and stakeholder management skills to build effective partnerships across the value chain. This is imperative, considering that the Gati-Shakti programme also looks at developing a Unified Logistics Infrastructure Portal (ULIP) that connects the various ministries and stakeholders on a common platform for data sharing and information dissemination to reduce decision making in silos. The logistics sector is known for issues related to low standardization in labour capabilities because of absence in formal training and poor social welfare. While training can create fungible skill-sets, there would still be a need to address issues related to social welfare through various means. Hence, it is highly important to ensure that skilling within the sector does not create inequitable job opportunities and result in counter-productive results such as high unemployment. For this reason, it is increasingly necessary that industry, academia, and the government collaboratively devise means to create capability building programmes and initiatives that aim at large-scale skill development at accelerated speeds. For technological and managerial positions, higher educational institutions would need to scale their output of well-qualified candidates with post-graduate and doctoral degrees in business analytics, IT, technology, operations, supply chain and logistics management. It is also important to increase the exposure of students in such institutions to real-life problems through live research projects. These can be supplemented with mass certificate programmes on modules related to business processes. PM Gati-Shakti Programme is a game-changer and will transform the nation into a world economic superpower. To hasten this transformation, the government, educational institutions, social enterprises, and the industry must collaboratively devise a strong capability building programme to onboard young India onto the new logistics landscape.

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Presidents and our NATO allies have demonstrated that they do not have slightest intention of fighting to defend Ukraine. Instead, Putin's demand that Ukraine remain outside of NATO—essentially that the status quo be codified—was scorned as violating NATO's 'principle' of admitting anyone it wanted. One immediate result was to encourage parallel irresponsibility in Ukraine. President Volodymyr Zelensky promised voters when he ran for Ukraine's presidency in 2019 that he would pursue a path to peace and end the war in the Donbas. Upon taking office, however, his government refused to implement the provisions of the 2015 Minsk Protocols—signed by Russia, Ukraine, France, Germany, and the EU—that essentially would have guaranteed Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity in exchange for Ukrainian neutrality. Now, sadly, Russia's illegal actions will embolden the hawks and armament-mongers on all sides. Already, armchair strategists are calling for doubling the US military budget, to grasp the 'strategic opportunity' to bleed Putin in Ukraine, while pushing the Europeans to build up their military forces. Amid the drums of war, we should not lose sight of the human horror that will follow, the massive displacement, the impact of sanctions not only on Russians but also on citizens in Europe, the United States, and elsewhere. Ukrainians in the East are already suffering. If Russia occupies the separatist republics, it will find itself confronting perpetual strife and upheaval, fueled by the US and NATO. And if it attempts to occupy the whole of Ukraine, it may face a prolonged guerrilla war far more costly than the Soviet debacle in Afghanistan.

Mool Raj

Life without science is nothing

► National Science Day

■ DR VIKAS SHARMA

Just to honor the greatness of science, we celebrate National Science Day with a mission that someday we eradicate the taboos and accept that nature is all about science and science is all about nature. Science brings about solutions for everyday problems and provides answers to the greatest mysteries of the universe. In other words, science is one of the most important channels of knowledge. It has a specific role, as well as a variety of functions for the benefit of our society: creating new knowledge, improving education and increasing the quality of our lives. A country can evolve thanks to scientists who find new approaches to problems and prove new scientific laws. In this regard, National Science Day is celebrated every year on February 28 to mark the discovery of the 'Raman Effect' by Sir C V Raman on February 28, 1928. It was this discovery that got Sir C V Raman a Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930. The Raman Effect states that when a light wave emerges out of a liquid, a portion of this light wave is distributed in a direction that's different from the direction of the incoming light wave. Most of this scattered light is of an unchanged wavelength. This research by Dr C V Raman thus explains certain phenomena like why seawater looks blue in colour. The Raman Effect is all about the flexible distribution of photon particles.

History: In 1986, the National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC) asked the Government of India to designate 28 February as National Science Day which the then Govt. of India accepted and declared the day as National Science Day in 1986. The first National Science Day was celebrated on February 28, 1987. Every year, National Science Day is celebrated with a particular theme that spreads the message about the importance of science. The theme is decided by the Department of Science and Technology. India's Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh, announced the National Science Day (NSD) 2022 theme of 'Integrated Approach in S&T for Sustainable Future'. As stated by the Prime Minister, a four-fold integrated approach in S&T for a Sustainable Future will help us break out of our virtual organization and take a leading position in the global arena. According to Dr Singh, "We must sustain this spirit and use the National Science Day as an opportunity to make a commitment to do so and work with an integrated strategy going forward in order to sustain livelihoods, human life and for India to emerge as a scientific leader".

Purpose of celebration: The main purpose of celebrating National Science Day is to spread the message of importance of science and its application among the people. National science day is celebrated as one of the main science festivals in India every year with following purpose-

- To widely spread a message about the significance of scientific applications in the daily life of the people,
- To display all the activities, efforts and achievements in the field of science for welfare of human being,
- To discuss all the issues and implement new technologies for the development of the science,
- To give an opportunity to the scientific minded citizens in the country,
- To encourage the people as well as popularize the Science and Technology.

Activities on day: Students of the schools and colleges demonstrate various science projects as well as national and state science institutions demonstrate their latest researches. The celebration also includes public speech, radio-TV talk shows, exhibitions of science movie, science exhibition based on themes and concepts, watching night sky, live projects and researches demonstration, debates, quiz competitions, lectures, science models exhibitions and many more activities. Life without science is a waste! Do miracles happen? It would be another part of the decision, but if you believe in science, you will always think about the logic behind you. We are lucky enough that we have witnessed some outstanding scientific research, discoveries, and technology. This event indeed marks the extraordinary effort of Sir C V Raman in science and discoveries by giving the coming generations a ray of hope and strength to work hard for their dreams. Not to stop with just one discovery in any field, but keep stalking up the nation's credits in all aspects. Just to honor the greatness of science, we celebrate National Science Day with a mission that someday we eradicate the taboos and accept that nature is all about science and science is all about nature.

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