

BLACK HOLE

The universe is full of mysteries. New discoveries are being made every day. Now scientists have discovered one of the fastest growing black holes. This black hole is increasing by the size of one Earth every second. An international research team has discovered that the mass of this giant black hole is 3 billion times more than that of our Sun. The most surprising thing is that the growth of other black holes of similar size has stopped billions of years ago.

Astronomers have discovered the fastest-growing black hole ever recorded -- the most luminous known object in the universe that is devouring the equivalent of one Sun every day.

The researchers at The Australian National University (ANU) noted that the black hole with a mass roughly 17 billion times that of the Sun, has set a record that may not ever be beaten.

The incredible rate of growth also means a huge release of light and heat.

Why should parents let kids choose their own careers?

SURJIT FLORA

Every individual has a unique journey to navigate in life, and it's crucial for parents to respect their children's choices and not impose their own desires on them. In The Teaching's of Don Juan, it is mentioned that selecting a path with no heart will make every step a struggle, while choosing a path with a heart will allow for a lighter journey.

Parents have a significant impact on guiding their children's academic journey, from choosing subjects to shaping career decisions. Parental guidance is important, but it's also crucial to allow children the freedom to explore their interests and make their own decisions, particularly when selecting courses to study.

Of course! Parents should refrain from dictating their child's career path.

They won't be the ones working at this job for many years to come. Their well-being is not being affected, neither mentally nor physically. It's hard to fathom how a parent can decide their child's career path. The responsibility lies with the child to finish their education or training for their chosen career. It is crucial for individuals to prioritize their passions, interests, and abilities when selecting a career path.

What lifestyle are they aiming for? What income level are they aiming for? There's a lot to think about. Are they interested in office work, hands-on work, shift work, working with people or machinery, pursuing further education for years, or opting for minimal job training? Are they looking to live a lifestyle that demands a substantial income? How much stress are they able to handle? What kind of job would bring them joy?

Others cannot make these decisions because they are personal. Choose a career that aligns with your own aspirations, not those of your parents.

Many parents hope their kids will pursue the same career path as them, especially if they've been successful, as they can provide valuable support and guidance. It's much simpler to assist someone when you understand the challenges, they will face to reach their destination. Parents, particularly those from less privileged backgrounds, often focus on their profession to ensure their children have a better future. Research indicates that minority families, particularly those who are on the brink of poverty, are seeing their children experience poverty in adulthood.

It must be really challenging for a parent after putting in so much effort. They're rooting for your success and are eager to assist you with their expertise!

Unfortunately, a lot of parents who try to impose their decisions on their children are motivated by narcissism. They're feeling really proud and are excited to create mini versions of themselves.

Here's the deal: It's perfectly fine to desire that your children pursue a similar path as you. It becomes a significant issue when not considering each child's preferences and trying to force them into it.

To inspire your children to emulate you, strive to become the kind of individual they naturally aspire to be.

Many of my friends have pursued engineering due to parental pressure. I am familiar with an individual who excels at photography and is interested in enrolling in a visual communication course. His parents strongly disapproved of such "low-class" courses. He has not completed his first year yet because of several pending papers.

Encouraging children to select their courses promotes exploration of various subjects and the discovery of their passions and interests. It also offers them an opportunity

Allowing children to choose their courses gives them a sense of responsibility for their education, which boosts their motivation and involvement.

They are committed to taking ownership of their academic achievements and actively pursuing ways to thrive in their studies. The job market is evolving rapidly, so being adaptable and versatile is crucial.

(The Writer is a veteran journalist and freelance writer based in Brampton)

Modi won hearts of Jammu Dogras

HARI OM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's February 20, 2024 MAM Stadium, address won the hearts of the Jammu Dogras by saying "Khand Mithey Lok Dogrey". Indeed, they are.

He made many important statements, including a very strong statement on the dirty dynastic politics (of separatist Abdullahs, Muftis and Nehru-Gandhis). He also explained away in minute details the ongoing developmental processes in J&K and reiterated his wish: 370 seats for BJP and over 400 for NDA.

However, he thought it politically prudent to not speak on the highly weak political status of Dogra Jammu vis a vis highly prosperous and highly developed Kashmir. He should have emphasised the need for making Jammu strong enough to defeat Kashmir jihad through the institution of statehood, but it was not to be.

At the same time, However, he didn't utter a word on the assembly elections in J&K and it's really very inspiring. Obviously, conspicuous absence in his speech on the issue of assembly polls must have shocked the Abdullahs, the Muftis, the Azads, the Bukharis, the Lones, the Rasools, the Bhallas, to mention only a few, who want assembly elections to capture power and restart the process of disintegration and destruction of Dogra Jammu.

It is hoped that PM Narendra Modi would surely appreciate the Jammu aspiration and grant statehood to her sooner than later.

Tribute to Sant Shiromani Acharya Shri 108 Vidhyasagar Ji Maharaj Acharya Ji will always be remembered as Triveni of wisdom, compassion



NARENDRA MODI

Sant Shiromani Acharya Shri 108 Vidhyasagar Ji Maharaj Ji attained Samadhi and left us all saddened. His life is a spiritually rich epoch graced with profound wisdom, boundless compassion and an unwavering commitment to uplift humanity. I have had the honour of receiving his blessings on numerous occasions. Thus, I feel a deep sense of loss, akin to losing a guiding light that has illuminated the path for countless souls, including myself. His warmth, affection and blessings were not just gestures of goodwill but profound transmissions of spiritual energy, empowering and inspiring all those fortunate enough to have come in contact with him.

Pujya Acharya Ji will always be remembered as a Triveni of wisdom, compassion and service. He was a true Tapasvi, whose life epitomised the ideals of Bhagwan Mahavir. His life exemplified the core principles of Jainism, embodying its ideals through his own actions and teachings. His care towards all living beings mirrored Jainism's profound respect for life. He lived a life of truthfulness, reflecting Jainism's emphasis on honesty in thought, word, and deed. He also led a very simple lifestyle. It is due to stalwarts like him that the world continues to be inspired by Jainism and the life of Bhagwan Mahavir. He stood tall among the Jain community but his impact and influence were not limited to only one community. People

across faiths, regions and cultures came to him and he worked tirelessly towards spiritual awakening, particularly among the youth.

Education was an area very close to his heart. His journey from Vidhyadhar (his childhood name) to Vidhyasagar was one of deep commitment to acquiring and imparting knowledge. It was his firm belief that education is the cornerstone of a just and enlightened society. He championed the cause of knowledge as a means to empower individuals, enabling them to lead lives of purpose and contribution. His teachings emphasised the importance of self-study and self-awareness as the pathways to true wisdom, urging his followers to engage in lifelong learning and spiritual growth. At the same time, Sant Shiromani Acharya Vidhyasagar Ji Maharaj Ji wanted our youngsters to get an education that is also rooted in our cultural ethos. He often said that it was because we drifted away from the learnings of the past that we were not able to find solutions to key challenges like water scarcity. He also believed that a holistic education is one that focusses on skilling and innovating. He took immense pride in India's linguistic diversity and encouraged youngsters to learn Indian languages.

Pujya Acharya Ji himself wrote extensively in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Hindi. The heights he reached as a saint, and how grounded he was on the earth, is seen clearly in his iconic work Mooknati. Through his works, he gave a voice to the downtrodden.

In the domain of healthcare too, Pujya Acharya

Ji's contributions were transformative. He was associated with several efforts, especially in underserved areas. His approach to healthcare was holistic, integrating physical well-being with spiritual wellness, thereby addressing the needs of the person as a whole.

I would especially urge the coming generations to study extensively about Sant Shiromani Acharya Shri Vidhyasagar Ji Maharaj Ji's commitment to nation building. He would always urge people to rise above any partisan considerations and instead focus on national interest. He was one of the strongest votaries of voting because he saw it as an expression of participation in democratic processes. He advocated healthy as well as clean politics, even saying that policy making has to be about people's welfare, not self-interest (Lokneta is about Loksangrahot Lobhsangrah). He believed that a strong nation is built on the foundation of its citizens' commitment to their duties-towards themselves, their families, society, and the country. He encouraged individuals to cultivate virtues such as honesty, integrity and self-reliance, which he saw as essential for the creation of a just, compassionate, and thriving society. This emphasis on duties is of great importance as we work towards building a Viksit Bharat.

In an era where environmental degradation is rampant world over, Pujya Acharya Ji called for a way of life which would minimise the harm being inflicted on nature. Likewise, he saw a paramount role for agriculture in our economy, also stressing on making agriculture modern as

well as sustainable. His work towards reforming jail inmates was also noteworthy.

The beauty of our land is that for thousands of years, our soil has produced greats who have shown light to others and made our society better. Pujya Acharya Ji stands as a towering figure in this illustrious lineage of saints and social reformers. Whatever he did, he did not just for the present but also the future. In November last year, I had the opportunity to visit the Chandragiri Jain Mandir in Dongargarh in Chhattisgarh. Little did I know that this visit would be my last meeting with Pujya Acharya Ji. Those moments were very special. He spoke to me for a long time, blessing me for my efforts in serving the nation. He expressed joy on the direction our nation is taking and the respect India is getting on the world stage.

He was filled with enthusiasm while talking about the work he was doing. Then and always, his gentle gaze and serene smile were enough to instill a sense of peace and purpose. His blessings felt like a soothing balm on the soul, a reminder of the divine presence within and around us. Sant Shiromani Acharya Shri 108 Vidhyasagar Ji Maharaj Ji's void is deeply felt by all who knew him and were touched by his teachings and his life. However, he lives on in the hearts and minds of those he inspired. In honouring his memory, we commit to embodying the values he espoused. In this way, we not only pay tribute to a great soul but also take forward his mission for our country and people.

(The author is the Prime Minister of India).

PM Modi's visit to Jammu and mega development drive



DR SHENEZ GANAI

As the Prime Minister Narendra Modi prepares for his upcoming visit to Jammu on February 20, 2024, the anticipation among the citizens of Jammu and Kashmir is palpable. This visit isn't merely ceremonial; it's a meticulously strategically timed to amplify the government's developmental agenda and strengthen its bond with the people of Jammu and Kashmir who with their open arms welcome the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and are ready to follow the path which his vision has created. I remember Majrooh Sultanpuri's couplet,

"main Akela Hi Chalta Tha Janib-E-Manzil Magar; Log Saath Aate Gae Aur Karvaan Banta Gaya."

The upcoming visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi carries immense developmental significance and the Modi-led government's proactive stance towards operationalizing a slew of developmental initiatives in Jammu and Kashmir. With a combined investment exceeding Rs 30,500 crore, the inauguration, dedication, and foundation laying ceremonies for various projects symbolize a strategic move towards strengthening socio-economic infrastructure. This approach, spanning healthcare, education, transportation, infrastructure, and civic amenities, represents the Modi-led government's commitment to steering the region towards comprehensive progress and inclusive development. The Prime Minister's engagement during the event, including the distribution of appointment orders to approximately 1500 new government recruits and his slated interaction with beneficiaries of various government schemes under the Viksit Bharat Viksit Jammu program, resonates deeply with the political mantra of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikaas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayasa."

I remember Makhdoom Mohiuddin's couplet that resonates with the mantra, "hayat le ke chalo

kaenaat le ke chalo, Chalo to saare zamane ko saath le ke chalo".

The Prime Minister Modi's visit will be the monumental boost to the education sector; with the inauguration and laying of foundation stones of various developmental projects including the prestigious institutions such as IIT Jammu, IIM Jammu, and these educational landmarks not only signify a paradigm shift in Jammu and Kashmir's academic landscape but also serve as catalysts for nurturing talent, innovation, and driving socio-economic transformation across.

The inauguration of the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Jammu, symbolizes a pivotal moment in the developmental landscape, a strategic investment in the region's healthcare infrastructure. This grand inauguration will usher a new era of healthcare accessibility and excellence, strategically positioning AIIMS Jammu as a cornerstone in the provision of medical services for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. With a staggering investment exceeding 1660 crore and sprawling across 227 acres, AIIMS Jammu will emerge as a beacon of modern healthcare infrastructure that will cater to the diverse needs of patients and medical professionals alike.

The imminent visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi not only emphasizes the government's steadfast commitment to healthcare and job provisions, but will also strengthen connectivity and transportation infrastructure in the region that also represents a big step to wield connection with masses through the developmental projects. With a visionary eye on progress, the Prime Minister will inaugurate the rail projects, laying the cornerstone for expansive road networks, and the groundbreaking ceremony for state-of-the-art airport terminals. These transformative endeavors not only streamline travel logistics but also serve as catalysts for economic dynamism, tourism revitalization, and the amplification of trade prospects.

Of particular note is the forthcoming laying of the foundation stone for a cutting-edge terminal building at Jammu Airport, spanning an impressive 40,000 square meters. By fortifying air connectivity, invigorating tourism, and propelling commercial activity, this landmark infrastructure initiative promises to act as an essential cornerstone in propelling the region's economic route towards unprecedented heights.

In a historic move to strengthen the infrastructure and public amenities, the Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone for a cutting-edge Common User Facility (CUF) Petroleum depot

in Jammu, a project valued at Rs 677 crore. This state-of-the-art automated depot will boast a storage capacity of 100,000 KL, accommodating various fuels including Motor Spirit, High Speed Diesel, and Aviation Turbine Fuel, among others. Moreover, the Prime Minister is set to inaugurate and initiate a slew of development projects worth over Rs 3150 crore for strengthening the civic infrastructure and provisioning of public facilities across Jammu and Kashmir. The projects to be inaugurated by Prime Minister include, Road projects & Bridges; Grid Stations, receiving stations transmission line Projects; Common Effluent Treatment Plants and Sewage Treatment Plants; Several Degree College buildings; Intelligent Traffic Management system in Srinagar city; Modern Narwal Fruit Mandi; Drug Testing Laboratory at Kathua; and Transit accommodation - 224 flats at Ganderbal and Kupwara. Beyond the venter of development, Prime Minister Modi's visit to Jammu carries developmental initiatives and engaging directly with beneficiaries, and it's obvious that his visit will strengthen the party's appeal in the region through a narrative of progress, prosperity, and proactive governance, thereby validating the slogan, "Tesri baar Modi Sarkar; ab ki baar 400 paar".

With this confidence, we are sure that in another couple of years, J&K will be a completely different and a transformed region. Spearheaded by the Narendra Modi, the unveiling of the new rail line traversing Banihal-Khari-Sumber-Sangaldan (48 Km) and the electrification of the Baramulla-Srinagar-Banihal-Sangaldan stretch (185.66 Km) will write a new chapter in the region's transportation saga. This transformative journey, the inaugural run of the valley's maiden electric train and the maiden service between Sangaldan and Baramulla stations will mark a symbolic union of progress and prosperity. Beyond mere infrastructure, these rail projects stand as beacons of connectivity, indicating a sustainable future and igniting the flames of economic revitalization across the region.

Witnessing a surge in nationwide road connectivity efforts, Prime Minister Modi's vision of "connecting Jammu and Kashmir" is swiftly materializing with the initiation of pivotal road projects. These include two segments (44.22 KM) of the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway, linking Jammu to Katra, and Phase two of the four-laning of Srinagar Ring Road. Five packages for enhancing the 161 km long Srinagar-Baramulla Uri stretch of NH-01 and the construction of Kulgam Bypass & Pulwama Bypass on NH-444 further strengthen the regional infrastructure.

In a historic move to strengthen the infrastructure and public amenities, the Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone for a cutting-edge Common User Facility (CUF) Petroleum depot

In this essence, Prime Minister Modi's visit to the region epitomizes a bold vision for a transformed Jammu and Kashmir; characterized by infrastructure, thriving institutions, and empowered communities. As the region lines on a new line of growth and development, guided by the Narendra Modi's visionary leadership, the promise of a brighter future beckons, beckoning all stakeholders to unite in the pursuit of a Viksit Bharat, a Viksit Jammu, and a Viksit Kashmir. I wholeheartedly welcome the visionary and a statesman to the land of temples. Let me conclude by Meer Taqi Meer's couplet, "Bare dunya me raho gham-zada ya shaad raho, Aisa kuch kar ke chalo yaan ki bahut yaad raho," and yes, our Prime Minister will be remembered forever for your visionary and statesmanship.

(The writer is Ex Member of Legislative Council Jammu and Kashmir)

Agro-ecotourism-A Tool for Sustainable Development

DR. BANARSI LAL

The urban stress has led to growing interest in the rural areas. We all know that real India resides in the villages. Industrialization and development is mostly urban centric. Agro-ecotourism (AET) is a new concept in the tourism industry. It normally occurs on farms and is associated with the agriculture. It is the symbiotic association of farming sector, tourism industry and farm business. It can create the job opportunities for the rural people. The concept of agro-ecotourism entails visiting a working farm or any agriculture, horticulture or agribusines operation, for the purpose of leisure, refreshment, recreation, education and active involvement in the activities of the agriculture including agricultural operations, fishing, dining and celebrating local festivals with the farming communities. The development of agro-ecotourism is primarily aimed to give awareness and knowledge on conservation of environment and natural resources in a participatory mode with farmers and to improve their socio-economic status. Agro-eco-tourism (AET) as an enterprise possesses immense potential to boost the economic growth especially in the rural areas. Environmental consciousness, increasing interest in culture and heritage, improving villages' accessibility etc. are the factors responsible which are shifting the trend towards agro-ecotourism. Under this scheme key geographic regions are identified for the development of agro-ecotourism. Jammu and Kashmir has tremendous potential for agro-ecotourism due to its unique heritage, culture and natural attractions. Agro-ecotourism is possible in J&K where about 80 per cent people reside in the villages. It can create new jobs in rural areas, attract many youths for rural employment and can slow down the migration of rural people towards the urban areas. Indeed, the economic activity occurs when people link travel with agricultural products, services or experiences to cater the needs of mutual demands. Agro-eco-tourism (AET) provides an opportunity to experience the real enchanting and authentic contact with the rural life, taste the traditional food and get experienced with the various farming tasks. This tourism enterprise keeps the tourists relaxed and helps to revitalize in the pure natural environment, surrounded by magnificent agricultural setting. It would also provide tourists with an opportunity to be close to where about 70% of Indians live.

Jammu and Kashmir is one of the most beautiful tourists' destinations in the world. This beautiful Union Territory(UT) is characterized by scenic beauty, folded mountains, gushing fountains, cool pollution free breeze, deep gorges, rich wild life, natural waterfalls, alpine pastures, lush green forests, snow clad fields, carpet green

turfs, lofty skying grounds, charming gardens, shimmering lakes, apple orchards, benevolent people etc. The industrial sector in J&K is not well developed and Agro-eco-tourism (AET) can play a significant role for the upliftment of the rural economy of the UT. It can improve the quality of life of the rural people of J&K. Agro-ecotourism (AET) entrepreneurship has gained importance as it is seen as a major driving force behind Agro-eco-tourism (AET). J&K has lot to offer to the tourists across the globe because of its scenic beauty, a kaleidoscope of traditions, a variety of cultures and an array of opportunities to explore the outdoors activities through sporting and adventure activities. J&K possess rich diversity of flora and fauna and there are large numbers of international and domestic tourists' destinations throughout the Union Territory. J&K is one of the most important places in terms of tourism in India. Religious places like Raghunath Temple, Amarnath, Mata Vaishno Devi shrine, Shiv Khori Shrine, Baba Aghar Jitto Ji, Siarh Baba, Nao Devian, Deva Mai, Dhansar Baba etc. are in J&K and pilgrims from across the globe used to visit these spots throughout the year and pay homage. Considering this scope for combining the natural resource available in J&K synergistically with agriculture and tourism activities, it is essential to promote the concept of Agro-eco-tourism (AET) in the Union Territory.

The successful Agro-eco-tourism models can act as a sustainable source of income for rural youths and farm women of the UT. Diversity of flora and fauna can be sustainably utilized through AET. Apart from the core agricultural activities, the animals and fish components can easily be linked with agro-eco-tourism to effectively blend the natural resources within the system in an integrated manner. However, there are no systematic guidelines for the functioning of AET models. There is need to investigate and document the status of AET models in J&K, to study the sustainability of agro-ecotourism model and to promote the agri-tourism entrepreneurship in J&K. Plash (Butea Monosperma) and Kaehnar (Bouhnia Bahalai) can be useful to make eco-friendly cup and plates and by establishing such types of units employment can be created in the rural areas of J&K. Cottages for lodging and dining of the visitors can be constructed. Horticultural crops nursery activities can be promoted to educate the visitors or tourists about plant propagation techniques. As J&K is rich in biodiversity so biodiversity parks can be established. Bamboo/wooden handicrafts units can also be established in J&K. Ponds can be developed for initiating the fish angling/boating activities in the UT for the tourists. Primary processing units, value addition kiosks and packaging units for fruits, oil extraction units, vegeta-

bles and spices can be established. Rural museums containing the villages' ancestral items can also attract the tourists in J&K.

Agro-eco-tourism is different from other sectors of industry. The agro-ecotourism industry can earn a huge amount of money and thus can enhance the income and employment in the rural areas of J&K. It can thus be a source of aid from within the Union Territory, country and out of country. Agro-eco-tourism is directly helpful in correcting UT's economic position and thus can divert the rural people towards progress. Through Agro-eco-tourism, government can gain more economic profits from taxes on things tourists use and buy. Agro-eco-tourism can become a major sector influencing all aspects of the rural people. Government should take proper measures for creating framework for the promotion of agro-ecotourism in J&K. The technical expertise is also required for successful promotion of agro-eco-tourism and for that purpose Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) of SKUAST-J and SKAUST-J can play the pivotal role. There is need of proper planning and effective legislation for resource conservation and balanced developmental activities for the promotion of Agro-ecotourism in J&K.

Agro-eco-tourism units in J&K can help to demonstrate and promote the concept of the agro-eco-tourism to farmers, entrepreneurs, researchers, students and related stakeholders in a scientific manner. The components from agriculture, livestock and fisheries can be included in these units. Indigenous and new varieties of field and horticultural crops can be maintained in the units to serve as information to the visitors and to create awareness about bio diversity in the area. Biodiversity parks comprising of different species (herbs, shrubs, climbers, trees etc.) can be demonstrated in the units. A fish pedicure unit and a public aquarium complex can be maintained. Major fisheries resources of this area can also be displayed in the AET unit. Other important components are apiculture, recycling of biodegradable waste through composting and vermi-composting, organic inputs preparations, nursery and plant propagation activities etc. Rabbit units and ornamental poultry units can also be established in J&K. Systematic research on development of ecofriendly and sustainable Agro-eco-tourism models to improve the farm income and improve the socio-economic status of the farmers of hilly areas is also needed.

There is need to promote the sustainable and ecofriendly Agro-ecotourism models. There is also need to impart knowledge on sustainable Agro-eco-tourism practices through awareness, trainings and demonstrations.

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