

## GOOD INITIATIVE

Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Dr Raghav Langer did the right thing at the right time by holding a whirlwind tour of region to inspect ongoing de-silting work of Ranbir Canal from Akhnoor Head to tail-end at Arnia. Usually under the earlier Governments, de-silting of aforesaid was a big seam because works were mostly shown on papers as was evident from the number of protests which farmers used to hold to highlight their plight especially those living at the tail ends of the canal and its various tributaries. The interest shown by the Divisional Commissioner in this regard is praiseworthy as this is also a signal for the corrupt to mend their ways and complete the de-silting work without any negligence. Reportedly, the Divisional Commissioner started the tour with inspection of Tawi Lift Canal Pump House. Several valuable instructions came from the Divisional Commissioner's side to improve the efficacy. What is laudable is the fact that the Divisional Commissioner took painstaking in inspecting the de-silting work as he inspected several spots where de-silting was in progress. The spots include Canal Head, Akhnoor, Paloura, Mishriwala, Satwari, Miran Sahib, Pandorian, Arnia and other places. Going by the reports, the inspection was complete in many aspects as never in the past the officers of this level took so much pain. Surely, this year the farmers will get a sigh of relief because things have been streamlined and the quality of work on ground is of highest standard. All this, means that farmers at the tail end of the Ranbir Canal will get their due share of water which earlier never reached those spots leaving the tiller community lurching for water for irrigation. It is pertinent to mention that the Jammu province is being irrigated through a network of irrigation canals and distribution network starting from Chenab and Ravi basins. Showing keen interest, the Divisional Commissioner checked flow gauges and other details of Canal Head near Rajinder Park. Ranbir Canal plays a major role in irrigating much of agricultural areas of Jammu and therefore needs focused attention.

## DO MORE

As Jammu and Kashmir's DGP Dilbag Singh has raised a valid point that until the UT of J&K will not be cleared of guns and grenades violence will not end. This is something which everyone in the country knows but the point is that police will have to ensure this as by making appeals to youths will not change the scenario as the DGP has asked the youngsters who have joined terrorist ranks to shun path of violence and join mainstream. Another important aspect which the DGP has shared is the fact that number of terrorists has been decreased considerably and the work is in progress as on regular basis the security forces are neutralizing the terror mongers in the Valley. The assertion made by the DGP that the violence will continue is a bad message but nothing could be done in this direction as this is a harsh reality today and the top cop of the UT has shared this with the people in a very transparent manner, which is highly praiseworthy. As the DGP has said the killings by terrorists are condemnable and such acts need to be stopped but the onus of stopping this is on the shoulders of either JKP or other security forces therefore instead of creating fear, the top cop should direct his men to remain on toes all the time as the common man can at the most provided information by acting as eyes and ears of the police. The preventive action should be taken by the police and other security forces. It is pertinent to mention that Jammu and Kashmir has seen violence and destruction for the last 30 years and thousands of lives have been lost. It will be good for all when the peace will return to Valley and for treading the path of peace a new narrative is required to be set up in Kashmir where terror has no room and peace taking all space. Path of violence is not right as its outcome is destruction and nothing else therefore it is the time for all to shun this path and follow the path of development and prosperity. Though cops are doing quite a lot in containing terrorism but there is need to do more to curb the terrorism completely.

## OFF 'D' CUFF

## Learn the Art of Ego Management

ally a phenomenon arising from the simple fact of living amongst a wide variety of human beings.

It is said that when the ego is provoked, it turns into a super-ego and the result is breakdown. There is some truth in this saying, but it needs to be understood in the proper perspective. It is a phenomenon of social living rather than a phenomenon of solitary living. Society creates problems for individuals, but at the same time it has to be conceded that very few people can live alone. In social life everyone shares with others. It is this 'sharing culture' that helps individuals to develop their personality and to bring their plans to completion. Without this willingness to share, there is very little that can come within the reach of human beings.

Every person is like a rose plant, in that he has a 'flower content' and at the same time he has a 'thorn content'. This double-sidedness of all individuals should be accepted as a reality. When a person comes into contact with the 'flower content' of another, his equanimity remains undisturbed. But the moment he comes into contact with the 'thorn content' of the other person, his ego flares up. It is natural to have this kind of contrary experience in social life. One has to accept the thorn in the same way as one accepts the flower. Failing this, one shall have to suffer irreparable loss. Sharing in social life is of benefit to everyone but, at the same time, it is accompanied by the negative experiences of ego clashes.

Everywhere throughout nature, there is diversity – an essential part of nature's scheme. The same is true of human beings. All men and women are born with different characteristics. Society is thus a melange of different personalities. It is personal differences in tastes, ways of thinking, and modes of expression that create problems. What is called an ego-problem is actu-

Transforming J&K  
Carpet export picks-up pace after launch of GI-tagging

The launch of Geographical Indication (GI) for the famed hand-knotted Kashmiri Carpets by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha to revive the sheen and glory of Kashmiri Carpet Industry has bestowed a new lease of life to carpet trade in Kashmir. The GI certifies genuineness of Hand-knotted Kashmiri Carpets with relevant information of manufacturer, weaver, district and raw material.

An official of Handicrafts Department said that innovation will go a long way in preserving the quality of hand-knotted carpets. The artisans and traders dealing with Kashmiri carpet say the initiative was much-needed to see Kashmir carpets flourishing again. "Earlier, Kashmiri carpet was a big brand; competent enough to sell it anywhere in the world but some people were selling Iranian and machine-made carpets in name of hand-made Kashmiri carpets. Now buyers can distinguish between hand and machine-made carpets," said a group of artisans of village Gadekhoud, known for carpet-weaving and artisans have been weaving carpets for decades.

They also said that GI-tagging will fetch better returns to their products and would certainly encourage and motivate younger generation to learn carpet weaving for preserving this art. On February 11 2022, history was created with the launch of QR-code by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha for hand-made Kashmiri carpets, first-of-its-kind in the country. Customers could now verify authenticity and other requisite details of carpets produced in Jammu & Kashmir and assure themselves that product they purchased was not fake.

The QR code-based system can help in checking cheating and misbranding that has badly dented the carpet Industry in Kashmir. QR-code based label will capture vital parameters of the carpet such as GI user, manufacturer, artisan, knots per square inch, the material used, among others.

LG Sinha said that with the help of modern technology, the government will be able to standardise uniqueness of handmade carpets and boost the export of J&K's carpets in international markets. The carpets from J&K are being exported to at least 25 countries. In

2020-21, carpets worth Rs 115 crore were exported to Germany while figures were Rs 34 crore for US, Rs 36 crore for UAE and Rs 22 crore for Netherlands. J&K administration is also working on starting a mega carpet village.

Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Chief, Sheikh Ashiq, has welcomed the launching of QR-code based mechanism. He said GI-tagging of Kashmiri's hand-made carpets would increase exports of Kashmiri handicraft, which have been on decline for last 3-4 years. "This GI tagging restores customer's confidence besides protecting authenticity of artisans," he said and urged the authorities to provide maximum grants for the QR-code-based mechanism so that artisans can compete in the international market.

Addressing a seminar virtually on introduction of GI tag for the carpets, organised by Carpet Export Promotion Council (CEPC), Ranjan Prakash Thakur, Principal Secretary, Government Industries and Commerce, said the QR code-based mechanism will help in checking the duplicity or

fake branding sabotaging the growth of the carpet industry in the valley. "Given the international export size and market competition, it is a prerequisite to safeguard the authenticity of the products for sustainability of the local weavers and exporters," Thakur said.

A month later for first time, GI-certified Kashmiri silken carpets were exported to Germany which are valued at around 40,000 Euros. The export of the consignment reflects the commitment of the Government to help the artisans, traders of J&K to export their products to international markets for better returns. Any carpet dealer can apply for the GI license and get their products checked to increase their brand value. GI-tagging is a process in which knotting of the carpet is tested. Customers can use their mobile phones and scan QR code after which they will get a certificate containing all information. Lt Governor recently remarked that Government is determined for providing new markets, create sustainable livelihood for the local artisans, besides preserving rich cultural heritage of J&K.

## Mega projects like JTFRP emerging as agents of change

In a major overhaul to Jammu and Kashmir's infrastructural landscape, the World Bank-funded, Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Projects (JTFRPs) are acting as agents of change across region. "We are doing our best to keep the pace of the projects," Chief Executive Officer, JKERA & JTFRP, Dr Syed Abid Rasheed Shah said, adding, "We are glad that the projects undertaken by the JTFRP are making some mark on the ground and acting as agents of change."

The CEO also said, "J&K is prone to multiple disasters like floods, earthquakes, flash floods, avalanches etc and for strengthening of response systems to these disasters, we at JTFRP recently have taken several initiatives and also held a day-long workshop on multi-hazard Risk Assessment." It may be recalled that in this regard, the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Union Ministry of Finance, Government of India, have recorded their praise for Jammu and Kashmir Government for the successful implementation of World Bank-funded projects JTFRP during virtual Tripartite Portfolio Review Meeting (TPRM) held recently. The Bank team informed that the project has made notable progress in the last 1.5 years and all milestones agreed upon after the extensions have been completed. "80 per cent of the total disbursement till date has indeed been achieved in the last one year," the Bank team observed.

The CERC implementation has progressed well including the oxygen generation plants. While the key concerns that need to be addressed in the project focus needed to close the gap between the financial and physical progress improved the performance of the two lagging PIUs, update and disclosure of EIA/EMP on Bridgeworks and hospitals, and address the gaps in staffing the safeguard.

The project team has reaffirmed that the project was able to show progress in the last 1.5 years. The project exceeded the disbursement targets and achieved all agreed actions in the last TPRM. "This project has shown positive progress in the rural areas (artisan support) and supported the UT in the COVID times by augmenting the capacities at primary and secondary Health Care Centers," the Bank team lauded during the virtual meeting.

The DEA has recorded praise for the project implementation during the virtual Tripartite Portfolio Review Meeting (TPRM) between DEA, World Bank, and the Project Authority, further observing that there was now weekly monitoring of the project with a weekly update of the Management Information System (MIS). The TPRM, which reviewed the progress of various projects funded by the World Bank across the country was attended by the senior officers of the DEA (Department of Economic Affairs) Ministry of Finance, Govt of India, World Bank, and senior officers of various EA's (Executing Agencies). The meeting expressed immense satisfaction over the marked improvement in the implementation of the World Bank-funded USD 250 mil-



lion Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project in Jammu and Kashmir.

Earlier the meeting noted that disbursement has to improve in the next 5 to 6 months. It was unanimously agreed during the meeting that Jammu and Kashmir Government is directed to achieve a disbursement target of USD 40.00 million in the Bank's financial year 2021. It was also recorded in the meeting that there has been tremendous progress in the project in the last one year and it should be maintained. According to the meeting, an amount of 50 million USD has been allocated to the CERC component.

"We have gone ahead of the previous disbursement targets set by the DEA," said CEO, JKERA & JTFRP, Dr Syed Abid Rasheed Shah. He further told that his team would continue to give their best in every possible way to complete the vital developmental projects works on the component of strengthening and restoration of livelihood and the component of the strengthening of the critical infrastructure of the World Bank-funded JTFRP. "The new disbursement target will be met well in advance due to big improvements in the implementation of the project," the CEO assured.

JTFRP project funded by World Bank has 7 components which include components including Reconstruction and strengthening of the Critical Infrastructure, Reconstruction of the roads and bridges, Restoration of the Urban Flood Management System, Restoration and strengthening of the Livelihoods, Strengthening of the Disaster Risk Management System, Contingency Emergency Response for COVID-19 and Implementation Support. Pertinently in the last quarter of July-September appreciable progress has been made under the project with 96.41 per cent, 86.52 per cent, 100 per cent, 78.30 per cent, and 55.15 per cent sub-projects awarded under the components 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

In order to increase the production of silk garments across the Valley, the Jammu and Kashmir Government is focusing on upgrading silk factory with new facilities and equipment funded by the World Bank (WB). With this, the government aims to generate more employment in the valley and is upgrading the new building with the machinery of the latest technology so that this factory is able to produce larger quantities of silk. Zamirullah, the manager at the factory said that these facilities would benefit the local people and help in generating employment in the Kashmir Valley. He added that the new machines would also help them compete in the market.

"Most of the buildings and around 50 per cent of the machinery here got damaged in the 2014 floods. This forced our employees to sit at home. We thank the World Bank for its funding. This would boost our silk production. We will have effective and efficient results. They helped us at a time when we thought this business was dying," he said. "The machines cost somewhere around Rs 5 crore to Rs 6 crore. With these new machines, we hope that we will have new designs and we can compete in the market. This industry supports the livelihoods of around 23,000 families. This will also create jobs and benefit locals," he added.

Many families in Srinagar depend on the silk factory for their livelihood. They work at home and make silk raw material and sell that to the factory. An employee at the factory said, "We are very happy because of this project. We can no longer work on old machines. It will make our work easy and it will benefit us. We thank Government for this project. We didn't have this many facilities earlier."

"With the new building and the latest machinery, we hope that it will benefit us a lot. That would also increase production. Till now, we used to work by repairing these machines. Now, we hope new machines would bring success. We are eagerly waiting for the new building to get

ready soon," said Bashir Ahmad, another employee working at the factory. The project is worth around Rs 12.5 crores and is funded by the World Bank through the Economic Reconstruction Agency (ERA). The process to upgrade the factory is underway and efforts are being made by the government to finish the project at the earliest. This project is expected to generate more employment.

Meanwhile, the government is also focusing on the production of mulberry crops and the production of cocoons to boost silk production in the state and generate more employment. Moreover, with an objective to give a determined push to the growth of the woolen industry in Jammu and Kashmir, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha had inaugurated Showroom cum Interpretation Centre at Government Woolen Mill, Bemina established under the World Bank-funded Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project (JTFRP).

In the 1st Phase of the project, the Showroom cum Interpretation Centre was completed at a cost of Rs 4.25 crore. The sub-project was undertaken as part of the Restoration & Strengthening of Livelihood component of the JTFRP project. In Phase II, up-gradation of machinery and ancillary work - shall be completed by August 2021 end at a cost of Rs 4 crore. Speaking on the occasion, the Lt Governor had observed that the new Showroom cum Interpretation Centre will greatly impact the livelihood opportunities of people working in the mill, besides providing market opportunities for the thousands of wool-producing farmers in J&K. At the same time, the new facility will give a massive revamping to Woolen industry of the region. Stressing on providing viable market opportunities to those associated with the wool production, the Lt Governor asked the officers to work put in committed efforts and formulate a comprehensive strategy to promote local woolen products at the national and international markets.

## YOUR COLUMN

## Eco-friendly farming

Dear Editor,

The rapid rise in average global temperatures calls for a shift from conventional agricultural patterns to a sustainable and climate-friendly approach. For long, researchers have warned us about damaging impact of climate change on agricultural productivity. The consequences are particularly dire in the developing world, where most countries are located in regions with already warm temperatures. Increases in temperatures beyond that level are causing a massive reduction in yields and leading to food insecurity. The impact is exponential considering that most of these countries are heavily reliant on agriculture, which makes up a major chunk of their GDP, employment and foreign reserves. American economist William Cline, in his study Global Warming and Agriculture aptly sums up this disproportionate impact of climate change on agriculture. The study found that a 2.5 per cent increase in global temperatures would slash agricultural productivity by 6 pc in America while cutting it by almost 40 pc in India and other South Asian countries. It is indeed unfair that most of these developing countries bearing the brunt of climate crisis have least contributed to it. India, for example, contributes less than 1 pc to global greenhouse gas emissions, yet it is the fifth most vulnerable country to climate change. Agricultural yield in India has stagnated due to the absence of comprehensive policy measures to reform

the sector. Despite central role that agriculture plays in the economy by contributing around 20 pc to GDP and absorbing almost 40 pc of labour force, it continues to lag behind its potential. Agriculture must be rescued from the impact of climate change. The past few years have witnessed constant food shortages due to low yields, resulting in elevated food prices, double-digit inflation, and a deteriorating current account as major staples were imported. This is even more worrying considering the population growth rate of 2 pc, one of the highest in South Asia. To ensure food security and adequate nourishment for the ever-growing population the ailing agriculture sector must be rescued through sustainable solutions.

Major climate change challenges in agriculture are frequent floods, droughts, irregular rainfall, soaring temperatures and pest attacks. Floods, which are now a regular calamity, wash away agricultural produce along with soil nutrients, at times leaving the land uncultivable. Scorching temperatures have increased evapo-transpiration rates, thereby reducing crop yield and quality. Irregular rain patterns and water scarcity have effectively caused land output to wither away. Pest attacks, like locust invasions, pose a grave threat as crops can be devastated almost instantly. The solution lies in implementing climate-friendly policies focusing on adaptation and mitigation. Firstly, the focus needs to shift from only a few crops that are now producing low yields to other crops which can better survive the changing climatic conditions. Similarly, uniform access to new seed varieties that are pest- and drought-resistant as well as water-efficient, is crucial. Some of these techniques have been successfully intro-

duced in some areas, but they need to be uniformly implemented throughout. Holistic and comprehensive research is needed to ensure that the right crops are grown in the right place. To address water-related woes, water management techniques need to be implemented. Since drip irrigation and sprinkler system are unviable due to their high cost, options like rainwater harvesting, canal water lining, and laser leveling can prove effective. Additionally, wide-scale adoption of renewable technology in the agriculture sector is necessary for enhanced water supply and storage. These measures would not only ensure water conservation but also generate much-needed employment. And lastly, insurance and credit in the agriculture sector need to be enhanced. The risk-averse nature of farmers prevents them from venturing in new directions. Thus agricultural insurance would play a tremendous role in boosting farmers' confidence and encourage them to turn towards eco-friendly solutions. It will also attract further investment in the sector by making it more profitable. It's clear that continuing with conventional agricultural techniques is no longer viable due to climate change. In order to counter its consequences, adaptation is the key. We need to move beyond knee-jerk policies and adopt a comprehensive agriculture policy focusing on climate change adaptation. But in a country where it is easier to make policies than to implement them, strong dedication is needed for monitoring and implementation. As we have seen, numerous well-researched policies go to waste due to absence of good governance. Enough with lip service now, it's time for some action.

Mool Raj

