

METROLITE FOR J&K

In its endeavour to ensure feasible mode of transport to people of Jammu & Kashmir besides taking Union Territory far ahead on the path of development and progress, at par with other developed states and UTs, the much awaited metro rail project for the Union Territory is on anvil and likely to be approved within a month. Although the announcements regarding the same were made earlier by the Lt Governor but the proposal got halted due to some official formalities which now have been completed fully. As per sources, the prestigious project namely J&K MetroLite project, costing about Rs 10,599 crore has been submitted by the UT administration to the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and after all formalities, is supposed to get final approval of the Union Cabinet in the month of March 2022. As per the MoHUA sources, the approval to the project is a mere formality as the Union Minister for MoHUA Hardeep Singh Puri, during his recent visit to J&K, has already announced regarding the same and all requisite formalities have been completed by the UT administration. Now, as the present dispensation always accords a prioritized treatment to the Union Territory, the much awaited project is likely to be approved by the Cabinet anytime in the month of March, before the expected visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is likely to visit J&K for launch of industrial investments. Sharing further details, it was informed that the MetroLite project, to be started simultaneously for both Jammu and Srinagar regions, will be completed by March 2026. While the Jammu MetroLite will be 23 Km long with approximate 22 stations from Bantalab to Bari Brahmana, the Valley MetroLite, 25 Km long, will consist of two corridors, one from Hazuri Bagh to Osmanabad while other from Indira Nagar to HMT junction, with 12 stations on each line. Further, in the first instance the MetroLite will be operational in Jammu for 17 hours in Jammu and only 14 hours in Srinagar, and will consist of several elevated corridors in place of underground tunnels. This much awaited project of Government will not only ensure quick and easy transport facilities for the commuters but will also help a lot in de-congestion of traffic on the roads of J&K, which is increasing rapidly with every passing hour.

EVERY VIAL PRECIOUS

By now it is clear that vaccine jabs for COVID-19 are of immense value and under no circumstances the same should be allowed to get wasted. As the reports coming earlier suggested that a lot of vaccine doses have been wasted due to mismanagement therefore the government has now come up with failsafe planning to ensure that not even a single vaccine jab goes unused and for this an advisory has been issued asking states and union territories to replace near-expiry vaccine vials available with private health facilities with long expiry jabs by acquiring the same from government hospitals as the consumption in private is comparatively lesser than their counterparts in government sectors. In this way the near-expiry vaccine doses would be utilized well before the date of expiry thus utilizing the jabs fully. Besides, there are also ways to stop wastage of vaccine as once opened the whole lot has to be consumed in one go and therefore the healthcare staff should ensure that the number of people are in proportion with the vials meant for inoculation. As per the Health Ministry all the States and Union Territories should consider exchange of near-expiry vaccine vials at private COVID-19 Vaccination Centres (CVCs) with long-expiry vaccine vials available with government CVCs after due diligence. This is important for ensuring that no vial of COVID-19 vaccine in government CVCs as well as private CVCs is wasted. Already government had made a provision for entry of these exchanged vaccines in CoWIN. Already, directions have been issued to specific States of West Bengal, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra in this regard and things are being accomplished accordingly. All the states have been asked to ensure regular review to check the status of vaccines available with private CVCs. The vaccination is vital to stop the COVID-19 from wreaking havoc and looking into the latest study by researchers in India predicting fourth wave from mid June, taking care of every single vial of vaccine has become quite significant and therefore the step taken by the Centre will go a long way in combating coronavirus.

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OFF 'D' CUFF

Reciprocity, DNA of All Relationships

Reciprocity is undertaking exchange for mutual benefit. It may seem like the most natural thing to do, but few realise that the wheels of society and more so diplomacy are driven by it. Some say diplomacy is 99 per cent reciprocity and one per cent generosity. Even in matters of faith, while it is logical that the Supreme Consciousness is neutral and loves all beings equally, still the belief is that if there is more display of devotion to the Lord, the Lord will be more kind to us.

Working together or exchanging services, people by reciprocating are able to accomplish more than they would individually. Reciprocity is not always an even exchange, which opens up the potential for abuse, yet people are often willing to perform a proportionately larger favour in return for something small. In 1974, sociologist Phillip Kunz mailed out Christmas cards with a note and photograph of him and his family to approximately 600 randomly selected strangers. Kunz received nearly 200 replies. Reciprocity operated – Kunz had done something for them and many felt obligated to respond.

Our upbringing plays an important role in the internalisation of reciprocity. In school, we happily share our tiffin with friends but not with the bully, who just takes

and does not share. Through experience, children learn to share with others, take turns, and engage in reciprocal actions.

Several types of reciprocity are recognised. Balanced reciprocity which involves a calculation of the value of the exchange and an expectation that the favour will be returned within a specified time frame is most common. It is essentially quid pro quo. Carpools are a pragmatic application, whereas wedding gifts are an extreme example. If reciprocation is inadequate, it may lead to breakdown of relations. Politicians seek votes invoking reciprocity. In diplomacy, election of candidates in multilateral organisations is conducted by tying up reciprocal support amongst countries.

Generalised reciprocity or exchange involves give and take within families, friends, within and outside the kinship groups and also in the metaphysical world. There is no expectation of a returned favour; instead, people simply do something for another person based on the assumption that the other person would do the same thing for them. Generalised reciprocity is based on the acceptance of delayed gratification. Returns may not materialise at all but if they do, they provide the greatest of benefits. They build trust, loyalty and stability in society.

Sandeep Chakravorty

NRLM changes lives of many through its support structure

National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) - Aajeevika was launched by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India in June 2011 as a restructured version of Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna (SGSY). The NRLM strives towards unleashing the entrepreneurial capability of rural communities and individuals by providing them with an appropriate platform through a dedicated and sensitive support structure.

In Udhampur district, Illiteracy, ignorance, insufficient awareness and lack of organized effort appear to be the root cause of the major problems of socio-economic, educational, health and backwardness of the rural people. Agriculture, physical labour and collection of minor forest products are the main sources of their income.

Solar dryers are a simple but high-impact technology solution. Through this service, a wide variety of solar-dried vegetables, fruits, greens, herbs, immunity boosters etc can be value added with a shelf life of more than a year. With solar Drying, all the nutritional qualities, colour, taste and flavour of the original product are retained, resulting in efficient value addition. To prevent wastages of vegetables and fruits, the Mission took up solar drying. What started as wastage prevention has now become a full-scale livelihood program. For this purpose, various SHG members are identified to generate livelihood earning from this technology with proper ori-



entation of the use of this technology. The potential for rural women's livelihood through solar drying is immense. The horticulture department is keen to associate with the SHGs in J&K, through JKRLM, for solar drying based livelihood generation programs. The SHG members from Block Chenani, Ramnagar and Dudu Basantgarh installed these solar dryers with help of the horticulture department on 50 per cent subsidy basis. The story behind the installation of solar dryers are a very self-motivated journey with zero income to 8-10k per month earning made the life of SHG, members very cheerful

and motivation to other community members for livelihood generation, Presently in district Udhampur (130) members are involved for this solar drying of various products like vegetables, fruits, and they are supplying these solar dried products to various platforms like SARAS fairs in different states for marketing and selling of these products. The SHGs are now moving towards solar-dried powders of red chili, coriander, tomato, mushroom and many more to generate livelihood for the members. Sushma Rani's Journey with JKRLM (UMEED) dates back to a time when she had nothing but only worries about

her sustenance. She was married but was jobless. She had concerns about her family which had no means of getting income but was bearing expenditure on a daily basis which too was barely minimum to keep them going. With the intent to bring a change and become an entrepreneur, she stepped forward and joined (UMEED.) With this she decided to take Pickle and solar drying as her venture for which she was imparted training and provided assistance by NRLM and other department. She initially setup 1 solar dryer unit and pickle unit and with the time she increased the count to which is providing her adequate quantity of pickle and solar dryer products to sell locally as well as nationally.

She has customers from other states as well who are well satisfied with the quality. She has been consistently upgrading the instruments which are being used in her business and is now exploring other areas to expand her business eyeing on processing and marketing of various processed fruit and vegetable products like Jams, Pickles, Jellies, Sauces, Chutneys, and Ketchups. She has received praises from all for her dedication and has even employed her husband who was struggling to find a suitable job for himself. She is satisfied with the way her business is nurturing and is thankful to JKRLM. She is also involved in mobilizing rural poor women to join UMEED and change their fortunes just as she did it.

Sanctions against Russia- a right step

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

Laying and heaping the economic sanctions against the arrogant super power Russia is a step in the right direction. These sanctions against Russia will definitely have the positive effect in so far as the abatement of Russian invasion on Ukraine is concerned. Thus, super power of the world America has laid economic sanctions against Russia to pressurize and force the invading country so that it may not continue war against Ukraine and end the same. America has heaped substantial sanctions against Russia in order to force it to submit to the civilized norms and ultimately shun devastating war against Ukraine. It is not the America only that has imposed economic sanctions against Russia but many countries of the world have also heaped economic and other sanctions against Russia. Great Britain, European Union, NATO countries and group seven countries have imposed economic sanctions against Russia so that it face economic losses and isolation, thereby forced to halt the war in the interest of the humanity. Even those countries which are inconsequential have also laid sanctions against Russia. Pakistan laid economic sanctions against Russia. This is a matter of some satisfaction that America, Britain, NATO and other European countries have not directly involved into the war but have indirectly laid economic sanctions so as to force Russia into submission. Therefore different countries of the globe have laid economic blockade and sanctions against Russia in order to penalize it for making it bear the economic brunt of these sanctions. Different countries which matter in the international arena have laid economic sanctions against Russia so that it will face economic hardships and bear the economic consequences of these sanctions and it is forced to think of not continuing war. It will be seen as to how will economic sanctions have a positive effect upon Russia so that it will in the ultimate analysis desist from war. At the moment one can say that the economic sanctions is a step in the right direction and it is a positive way of persuading as well as forcing Russia to obey the world opinion and submit to it. Thus have the countries across the world laid economic sanctions against Russia to pressurize her to desist from continuing the war in the best interests of the humanity. Through the imposition of the economic sanctions against Russia countries have determined to bleed her economically so that it will submit to world opinion. There is no controversy about this fact that the sanctions against Russia are a step in the right direction and will have a

positive effect on Russia. United States, the European Union and several other countries and entities have expanded their economic sanctions against Russia as punishment for its invasion of Ukraine. The first actions in the most recent crisis were taken after President Vladimir V Putin of Russia signed decrees on recently about recognizing Donetsk and Luhansk, two pro-Russian breakaway regions in eastern Ukraine, and then later ordered troops to enter those areas. The multipronged invasion began in earnest on Thursday, prompting the West to widen its efforts to crack down on Russia by targeting Putin's top allies, the country's banking system and its access to crucial technology, although some analysts have said the measures do not go far enough. The United States and Europe have avoided direct military conflict with Russia amid its invasion of Ukraine. But they are using a powerful tool to try to push back against Russia and create consequences for its aggressions: an unexpectedly fast and powerful set of financial sanctions meant to shock the country's economy and hamstringing its access to financial resources. While Russia may have anticipated the measures, what the country perhaps did not anticipate was for so much action to be taken so swiftly. US and European allies have limited its ability to transact in foreign currencies such as dollars and euros, frozen the assets of multiple Russian banks, and cut off Russia's banks from the SWIFT messaging system banks use to transmit information globally. Japan said it would join in freezing the assets of Russian leaders and some banks and freezing Russia's foreign reserves in yen. Even Switzerland, a historically neutral country in conflict, has agreed to join sanctions efforts. In turn, Russia has taken action to try to shore up its economy and finances. Its central bank has doubled its interest rate in an attempt to stabilize the ruble after the currency sank against the dollar. The country, which has been facing sanctions since its invasion of Crimea in 2014, has over \$600 billion in foreign reserves, meaning money in other countries' currencies and gold. It built up those reserves specifically to help fend off sanctions. New York Times noted, a lot of that money isn't actually in Russia but is essentially on paper in banks around the world. So now, the country could have a hard time accessing that money. Sanctions are likely to hurt the Russian government; they are also hurting the Russian people, who were already in a tough spot before now. These developments have major implications not only for Russia's economy but potentially for

the world's; it's unlikely their impact will be contained to one country's borders. What will be the potential effects of these sanctions over the days, weeks and months to come. It will give rise to double-digit economic contraction. Russian government has pursued extreme measures in terms of capital controls and blocking transfers of foreign currency to non-residents. Exporters have to convert 80 percent of their proceeds to the domestic market, and Russia's central bank has more than doubled interest rates. Russia is also undertaking banking sector support, releasing some capital for the banks. All these measures are just basic crisis management efforts. But this crisis will grow larger for the Russian economy and common Russian people than whatever it can be forecast or expected at the moment. In trade, there is likely an effect on commodity prices, and we are already seeing that. Russia is an important exporter of oil and gas, various metals and mining commodities, and agricultural products. Ukraine is also a very important exporter of some metals and agricultural products. The sanctions will have effects there, and it will have effects on global inflation, and then the question is how global central banks will react in each individual country's conditions. In the financial channel, Russia is not as significant as some other emerging markets in terms of foreign investor participation in the local market. So, it might not have massive direct effects. But Russian financial institutions, its central bank, they are important players in certain global markets. They have \$640 billion in foreign exchange reserves, so they have positions still, or were hedging via financial instruments. So that's something to watch for as the situation develops. And then there's pure contagion if there is a risk of high inflation and tightening of global financial conditions. There is definitely a high risk posed for global repercussions from this war. Thus the economic sanctions against Russia will not only have the adverse bearing upon the Russian economy only but the sanctions will have global economic complications and these economic sanctions will have adverse effect upon the international community. To conclude we can say that the economic sanctions imposed upon Russia by America and other European countries will have the devastating effect on Russian economy only but it will have adverse effect upon the world economies. It is hoped that the sanity will prevail upon Russian President Putin and he would desist from war against Ukraine.

(The author is a columnist and social activist).

Har Gaon Swachh Gaon: Cleanliness campaign for effective implementation of SLWM

To ensure effective cleanliness across the urban and rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir, the government has launched renewed Swachhta campaign 'Har Gaon Swachh Gaon' in all villages by enhancing implementation of Village Action Plan prepared for Solid & Liquid Waste Management (SLWM), as well as improving door to door solid waste collection in all wards of 78 ULBs.

The drive is part of 10-point campaign initiated by the government to give a renewed push to implementation of employment and other beneficiary oriented schemes on ground. The objective of the campaign is to achieve quantifiable results within specific timelines in an effort to touch the lives of ordinary citizens at the grassroots level. 'Har Gaon Swachh Gaon' campaign is being implemented in consonance with Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (SBM-G).

The second nd phase of Swachh Bharat Mission mainly focused on hygiene, cleanliness and solid waste management in rural areas. Considering its importance, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, has laid special emphasis on implementation of 10 point programme and 'Har Gaon Swachh Gaon' is one of them. Single Use Plastic and other non-biodegradable wastes have become a menace in our localities. It has disturbed our ecology by polluting our land, water, air and forests. Solid waste like plastic has polluted local ponds which have made water unfit for drinking and for other domestic purposes. It needs to be addressed and we can overcome it only by making Swachh Bharat Mission phase-2 a big success just like the SBM-1. The Rural Sanitation Department is stepping forward with the objective to achieve Swachh Bharat as a fitting tribute to 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, which in rural areas shall mean improving the level of cleanliness through Solid and Liquid waste Management activities and making Gram Panchayats Open Defecation Free (ODF), clean and sanitized with various components like Individual household latrines (IHHL), Community Sanitary Complex (CSCs), Solid and Liquid Waste Management and Information, Education & Communication (IEC) campaigns. Under SBM-G, incentives are being provided for construction of Individual Household Latrines (IHHL). The incentive amount being provided under scheme is Rs 12,000 for construction of one unit of IHHL with water availability and other facilities.

Under SBM-G, Community Sanitary Complexes are being set up in villages comprising appropriate number of toilet seats, bathing cubicles, washing platforms, wash basins etc. The objective of SBM-G is to bring about improvement in cleanliness, hygiene and general quality of life in rural areas. SLWM is one of the key components of the programme. The total assistance under SBM(G) for SLWM projects is based on total number of households in each Gram Panchayat. Information, Education & Communication (IEC) is a very important component of SBM-G programme. IEC strives to bring about community wide behavioural change and to trigger the demand for sanitary facilities in rural areas for households, schools, Anganwaris, Community Sanitary Complexes and Solid and Liquid Waste Management project (SLWM) through provision of information and awareness generation. The activities being carried out under these components will be 'area specific' 'community specific' and should also involve all sections of the rural population. 'Har Gaon Swachh Gaon' is a remarkable step towards achieving cleanliness across rural areas of J&K which will significantly transform face of villages and towns.

YOUR COLUMN

Need to revise medical fee structure

Dear Editor,

As it is quite difficult to get admission in Government Medical Colleges in India, apart from Kyiv, the students from India also go to countries like Russia, Kazakhstan, China etc to do MBBS. Moreover, several irregularities have come to the fore in name of nominations to be done under Management Quota.

Amidst ample opportunities of education and employment in India, a large number of students going abroad for studies appear astonishing. A view of Kyiv airport during a trip to Ukraine in past years still astonishes. On reaching here, it was both astonishing and curious to see a large number of Indian students. Seeing such a large number of people from India, once it appeared that it is an airport in India itself. Most of the Indians there would have been 20 to 25 years old. More than 80 per cent of the people on plane going to Ukraine were

Indian people, with majority of the students. An Indian student sitting next to me was studying medicine from Kyiv. Till then I was unaware that such a large number of students from India go here to study medicine. During conversation, I came to know that the student belonged to a very normal family. After passing 12th, he prepared for two years sitting at home, but could not get rank, high enough to get admission in any Government Medical College. He told that as he was unable to study medicine in a private college in India, someone told that studying abroad can be much cheaper. Then through help of many people, he got enrolled in a medical college in Ukraine for MBBS studies. Actually it is very difficult to get admission in Government Medical College in India. Although this path has become easy in the last few years, but still the path of enrollment in it is very difficult. Many types of irregularities have come to the fore in the name of nominations to be done under Management Quota. It is just like that in a residential colony the cost of housing was Rs 15 lakh and a builder comes here and buys all land and sells it at an arbitrary price and the one who wants to buy will come to the builder, because all places in that whole area are owned by him. Those who want

a plot or residential building should buy it at the stated price. There are still no seats in medical courses as per demand in India, and the ones that are present, are so expensive that students from families with normal economic status cannot afford to study. There is no such hefty exam for admission in MBBS abroad. Students get admission easily. After coming from abroad, these people easily start practicing in India after giving FMGE exam. This test did prevent some students from going abroad, but it cannot resolve the problem. There can be many other ways too. After coming from abroad, if it has been one year while doing private practice and there is no complaint, then these doctors can take permission for private practice from State Governments. The number of such doctors is very less who, after studying medicine from outside, practice abroad. When they have to work in India, why not find a way to do their studies here. Since studying abroad, a large amount of money is sent from India to those countries, thereby causing huge loss to Indian economy. In such a situation, if an effective arrangement is made in India itself, that money can be prevented from going abroad.

Vijay Garg.