

Terrorism: A Threat to Humanity

Terrorism is an abominable act aimed at instilling fear among ordinary people through illicit means. It poses a significant threat to humanity, perpetuated by individuals or groups engaging in various forms of violence, such as riots, bombings, kidnappings, and more. It is an act of cowardice that transcends religious affiliations; a terrorist is simply a terrorist, not defined by any specific faith.

Terrorism inflicts profound psychological scars, fostering a pervasive sense of insecurity among affected populations. The loss of innocent lives, destruction of property, and disruption of livelihoods underscore the devastating impact of terrorist activities. Moreover, terrorist incidents breed mistrust and disillusionment, perpetuating a vicious cycle of violence as disillusioned individuals are drawn into extremist ideologies. The global nature of terrorism necessitates concerted efforts by governments worldwide to combat this menace.

Terrorism transcends borders, posing a shared challenge for nations across the globe. The tragic events of September 11, 2001, epitomize the catastrophic consequences of terrorism, with the attack on the World Trade Center resulting in unprecedented loss of life and widespread devastation. Efforts to combat terrorism must be collaborative and multifaceted, incorporating intelligence sharing, diplomatic initiatives, and targeted military action to dismantle terrorist networks and prevent future atrocities.

Terrorism remains a grave threat to global peace and security, necessitating a concerted and coordinated response from the international community. By addressing the root causes of terrorism, fostering social cohesion, and promoting dialogue and understanding, we can mitigate the allure of extremist ideologies and build a safer, more resilient world for future generations.

Majestic Mansrovar

There comes a moment in life when renouncing all worldly possessions, adjuring all family ties, the Hindu of the highest intellectual eminence and recongnised social possessions delight in making the pilgrimage to the most revered Kailash Mansrovar lake adorable. Francis younghusband said, man's ever seeking search for the Gods and Goddesses and their Vide varied manifestations have remained bewildering with the dawn of civilization over the remote past. And the observations and the experiences of men of all hues, irrespective caste, colour or creed have found expressions of supernatural shakties embedded in a varitifulMyths and legends which radiate the truth and spirituality of past. This of course, emboldens and emblazon the spirit of soul and mind of the man who gets entouraged with the divine entity par excellence beyond exposition. And listen to pious words of Sukand Puran, "one who thinks and revers of greater Himalayas behold him in a much more compassion than who performs all worships in Kashi through hundreds of years"

As a dew is dried up by the first rays of the sun, so are the sins of mankind exonerated by sight of the Himalayas. The Himalayan range which off - shoots from the extreme east siang (Arunachal Pradesh) to Ih Ju- Ruto (Pongong -Leh) alongside Brahmaputra and its ranges are around 2500 kms long and 350 kms broad with hundreds of high peaks and pinnacles above 20000 feet high from mean sea-level (MSL) . The Himalayas, snow capped top peaks are so well the abode of our revered Gods and the Goddesses. And this great and mighty "Kailash peak ranges" near lake-Mansrovar lie in the North Latitude 30.41 degree to the east longitude and 30 degree 78 latitude at an elevation of 6500 mts (22,750 feet from mean sea) level (MSL).

As per our revered scriptures, Kailash-Mansrovar finds its unique and appropriate placement in so far as the holiness ,magnanimous and majestic lake is concerned.The lake is situated amidst the snow-capped the greater Himalayas. The pride Bramputra river flows to its East South and drains down into the Bay of Bengal and the Indus meanders to the North- South serpentinly and finally drains into Arabian sea. Lake Mansrovar is located in the proximity of Kailash which in other words around is a sanctum sanctorum of purity and holiness, the abode of Lord Shiva.

The mighty rivers viz. The Brahmputra and the Indus originating from Kailash Mansrovar lake are having their headwatersgushing out like firey flames and meander thousands and thousands kilometres. The breathtaking phenomenon of Kaleidoscopic colours and variegated moods of nature topped by an exotic aura compared to any of enthralling, enchanting picturesque panorama which excels the beauty and glory of this sacred spot.

The Kailash peak is, de facto, close to the proximity of lake Mansrovar and occupies the middle of the zone running from Bhutan to Kashmir and is justlike moving universe having its unique beauty and charm. The Sun radiates in Kaleidoscopic colours and the Moon Sooths the azure sky which is studded with twinkling stars and the chilly air all over adds beauty and charm to the divinely spot. Raakas Lake or Ravana Tal is adjoining Lake Mansrovar where Ravana is reported to have an arduous penace of lord Shiva to obtain his favours.

And if someone likes to have spiritual glimpse of Mansrovar - Ravana tal, then he can have a look from South - west of greater Kailash while taking Parikarma of Kailash Parvat. From Lake Rakas, Mansrovar, energesLangehh or khabab towards west-South and is situated in the Tibetan Plateau.

The Kailash-Mansrovar is approachable from Badrinath, the extremist pilgrimage point in Uttarkhandamongst Gangotri, Kedarnath and Nandadevi but Shnirthal- Dolna which is the highest point of the pass devoted to the consort of lord shiva, Mata Parvati, which forms the holiest point of worship and in other words around is also nomenclatured as the point of renaissance. It is as well abode of Lord Shiva and abundantly reflectsIndian manifestation, consciousness and to top these all, a deep rooted Hindu philosophy over the bygone centuries and centuries together. The echoing resonance and unaccountable enchants establish the magnanimity in a variety of multihued formto the appropriateness in that such patterns are having Visualisation of divine manifestation which most prominently are known as "Tandav' of the lord in his multihued manifestations.

The silvery protuberance is the supreme where heavenly echo (Nada) and the Kaleidoscopic Kadiance emerges out in rain-bowey melliflously with 'om' which signifies address to all mantras related to the Gods and Goddesses in the entire cosmos where human's attachments get detached. The om's primordial echoes'Nadabindu' from the chime of rhyme of 'Lalita Prakrit' which reveals whatever was hiddened in the tune of divinely vibrations. The Dvani which expurgate from the holy feet of Lord Shiva, the omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient move to and fro of uncertain origin whose divine fragrance-the Atman is an unutterable truth. It would rather be coinciding the adage, if a zero is placed before any number is meaningless but if the same zero is enmexed with any number , the same changes countlessly.

The Kailash-Mansrovar pilgrimage is enthralling, enchanting and beyond all ambiguities is a piece of heaven amidst the inner himalayas and whosoever wantshave holy darshan and bath in the lake is washed off all sins and blessed by the showers of the lord of lords, the supreme shiva.

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

Relationship between Water and Climate Change

■ DR. BANARSI LAL

As the global population is increasing at an alarmingly rate so does the demand for water and this is depleting the water and other natural resources. There is dire need to tackle the global water crisis. By using the water more efficiently we can reduce the green house gases. By washing our hands properly we can minimize the risks of many other infections. Water is the most precious resource on the earth. It is a finite natural resource on the earth. We must use it judiciously with more responsibility. We need to balance the use of water while ensuring the poorest people don't left behind. Water is indispensable for the existence of animal and plant eco-systems and is an essential element in the development of any nation. It is the most vital resource for the existence of life on earth. No other natural resource is having such an overwhelming influence as water has. Earth three-fourths surface is covered by the oceans. Freshwater constitutes a very small proportion of this enormous quantity of water: Only 2.7 per cent of the total water available on the earth is fresh water out of which 75.2 per cent lies frozen in Polar Regions and another 22.6 per cent is present as ground water. Remaining water is available in rivers, lakes, atmosphere water and soil and vegetation. Climate change increases the intensity and frequency of natural disasters and water-related extreme events such as rainfall, droughts, floods etc.

India is the seventh largest country in the world with a total area of 3,287,263 sq.km. India accounts for about 2.4 per cent of the world's geographical area, 4 per cent of the world's water resources and 17.7 per cent of the world's population. Globally, 785 million people do not have access to basic drinking water facilities. Water is often contaminated from urban, industrial and agricultural pollutants. Many of those who lack access to basic water services also live in conflict-affected states with poor governance, high rates of poverty, insecure tenure and weak institutions. The pressure on freshwater resources is rising including the drinking water supplies. There is need to increase the investments that can sustainably manage and equitably allocate water supplies, expand watershed protection and restoration. There is dire need to provide the basic facilities of safe and reliable drinking water even to the poorest amongst the poor of the nation for a good health and livelihood. The reliable provision and management of drinking water also develop credibility in local and national authorities. The rapid pace of urbanization also requires attention to urban services particularly

clean drinking water. There is dire need to provide adequate clean drinking water to the people, schools and clinics. It is predicted that upto, 5.7 billion people could be living in areas where water is scarce for at least one month a year: Climate-resilient water supply and sanitation can save the lives of more than 3, 60,000 infants every year. It is also predicted that by 2040, global energy demand is projected to increase by over 25 per cent and water demand is expected to increase by more than by 50 per cent. With the extreme weather changes, rainfall has become unpredictable affecting the livelihood of millions of farmers especially in the developing countries. If water is used efficiently in agriculture then crops production can be increased and land, water and ecosystem degradation can be prevented. Freshwater is indispensable for all forms of life and is needed in all human activities. Anthropogenic climate change adds a major pressure to nations that are already confronting the issue of sustainable freshwater use. The challenges related to freshwater are having too much water; having to little water and having too much pollution. Every year; there are around 250 million cases of water borne diseases with about 5-10 million deaths. It is not only the human beings who are threatened by water shortages and pollution but other living species on the earth are badly affected. About half of the world's wetlands have been destroyed in the last 100 years. Two-fifths of the fish are freshwater species and of these about 20 per cent are threatened, endangered or have become extinct in recent decades. The freshwater demand is increasing not only because of demographic pressures but also because of improved living standards, urbanisation and industrial growth. The world's thirst for water is likely to become one of the most important issues of the 21st century. Global water consumption is increasing more than the rate of population growth. In some areas, water withdrawals are so high relative to supply that surface water supplies are literally shrinking and ground water reserves are being depleted faster than they can be replenished. Water tables are dropping due to overexploitation of ground water and some rivers often become dry before they reach the sea. It has been observed that the amount of water available per person in India has decreased steadily over a period of time. Water is scarce even for drinking purpose. India already is facing an alarming situation and its fragile water resources are stressed and depleting while various sectorial demands are growing rapidly even as about 200 million people in the country do not have access to

safe drinking water and nearly 1.5 million children under five die each year due to water-borne diseases. The droughts conditions in several parts of the country are on the rise and disputes over sharing of the water resoures are increasing. If the available freshwater resources in India are not managed properly India can face a severe water crisis.

Water can fight climate change.The relationship between climate change and freshwater resources is of primary concern. At present, six of India's 20 major river basins already fall into water scarce category. It is expected that by the year 2025, five more basins will be water scarce. It is expected that by the year 2025, India can face a severe water shortage it is predicted that within a few decades availability of water in the country will be about 1700 to 2000 cubic metres as per person as against the world average of 5000 to 9000 cubic metres per person. India is heading towards a freshwater crisis due to improper management of water resources and environmental degradation which has led to lack of access to safe water supply to millions of people.The freshwater crisis is already evident in many parts of the country varying in scale and intensity depending mainly on the time of the year: Ground water crisis has been caused by human actions. Acute scarcity of water may cause the different nations to wage a new world war. There is need of new strategies for water management and development. Major institutional policies and technological initiatives are required to ensure efficient, socially equitable and environmentally suitable management of water resources. Water management programmes should be implemented in a systematic way. Immediate steps are needed for drastic reduction of wastage of water in all sectors. There is also need to frame an appropriate water policy and equally important indomitable conscience of water users to utilize water judiciously. Climate policy makers should put water at the heart of action plans.

Water can help to fight the climate change. There is need to focus on sustainable, affordable and scalable water and sanitation solutions.

We all need to join our hands together to save water and protect the environment. There is need to make more efforts on water sustainability and environmental protection. Sustainable water management can build the resilience of societies and ecosystems and to reduce the carbon emissions.

(The writer is Sr. Scientist & Head, KVK Reasi).

Fight Against Drug Abuse

The Kashmir Valley is seeing a wave of rejuvenating initiatives to eradicate the menace

■ JAZIM BAZAZ

Jammu and Kashmir, a region synonymous with breathtaking beauty, faces a growing menace - drug addiction. This shadow threatens to engulf the very essence of "paradise on earth." However, there's a beacon of hope - a multi-pronged attack on drug trafficking and abuse led by the Jammu and Kashmir Police and the "Drug Free Bharat" initiative.

Official data reveals a staggering truth as nearly 10 lakh individuals, or 8% of Jammu and Kashmir's population, grapple with drug abuse. Heroin use has skyrocketed by a concerning 2,000% in the past five years. This not only impacts individual lives but also fuels terrorism, as drug sales fund weapon procurement.

Drug Free Bharat, an initiative started by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, stands as a beacon of hope in the fight against drug abuse across India. Amit Shah emphasized the necessity of strict measures against drug suppliers and sellers to effectively combat this problem. Over the periods 2006-2013 and 2014-2023, the initiative yielded notable results, with drug seizures doubling. Moreover, the government has issued directives to employ technologies like drones, satellites and advanced surveillance methods for area mapping, as to stop the cultivation of drug producing plants. The link between drug sales

funding and procurement of weapons, leads to an escalation in terrorism within the country. Breaking this cycle is essential to prevent the dual threats of drug abuse and terrorism, as to safeguard the nation's security and ensure peace.

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) conducted a recent study comparing opiate use in Punjab and Kashmir. The findings revealed a 1.2 percent opiate usage rate in Punjab, while Kashmir exhibited a higher rate at 2.5 percent. The study also unveiled that substantial sums of money are being spent on these drugs daily in the valley. Shockingly, individual drug users in Kashmir are spending over 88 thousand Indian rupees per month, with a majority being daily users.

Accordingtothe National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report shedding light on the escalating drug-related incidents in Jammu and Kashmir,in 2020, there were 1,222 cases registered under the NDPS Act, which surged to 1,681 cases in 2021. Moreover, as per a statement from the Zonal Police Headquarters Srinagar quotedbymedia, Baramulla District emerged with the highest number of cases and arrests in 2023. Specifically, Baramulla police filed 264 cases under the NDPS Act during the mentioned period.

The Jammu and Kashmir Police are taking decisive action. In 2022 alone, over 1,700 drug peddlers were apprehended, and efforts have intensified in Shopian and Baramulla dis-

tricts. It gives us hope that specialized training programs for officers equip them with the latest knowledge on tackling drug-related offenses. The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act is being rigorously enforced, which is being seen as a beacon of hope for the safety of our future generations.

Recognizing that laws alone cannot eradicate the issue, the police are continuously making efforts of community engagement. A cash reward for spotting suspicious drones aims to encourage public cooperation in curbing smuggling. Pertinent to mention that the Director General of Police (DGP), R.R. Swain, is leading a crucial outreach campaign. This initiative bridges the gap between the police and the public, creating trust and collaboration in tackling drug abuse and its negative consequences.

The fight against drug abuse in Jammu and Kashmir is a collective effort. By combining strong law enforcement, community support, and effective leadership, the promise of a brighter future - a Kashmir free from the clutches of drugs - becomes a reality.

Let's join hands to pave the way for a brighter future in Jammu and Kashmir; where the breathtaking beauty remains unblemished, its citizens are empowered and its promise of paradise is fulfilled for generations to come.

(The author studies engineering at IUST, Kashmir).

Holi, a festival of colours

The Guru, took place as a backdrop to the famous Hindu temple of Mata Naina Devi in Shivalik on the bed of the Charan Ganga river.

This annual festival was held at Anandpur Sahib in Punjab and is now repeated in other Gurdwaras around the world. It was started by the tenth guru as a gathering of Sikhs for military exercises and mock battles on the day after the festival of Holi at Anandpur Sahib. It reminds people of valor and defensive preparations, the tenth Guru's cherished concepts that were protecting the Sikhs from the attacks of the Mughal Empire and the hill kings at that time.

On the occasion of this three-day festival, after prayers, a music and poetry competition, an armor exhibition, a weapons exhibition, etc. are conducted. Participants perform daring feats such as gatka (mock combat with real weapons), tent pegging, bare-back horse riding, standing on two galloping horses and many other feats of bravery.

Holi, on the other hand, is an ancient Hindu religious festival that has become popular among non-Hindus as well as people from many parts of South Asia as well as other communities outside Asia. Apart from India, the festival is celebrated by diaspora from the Indian subcontinent in countries such as Jamaica, Suriname, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, South Africa, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Mauritius and Fiji. In recent years, the festival has spread to parts of Europe and North America as a springtime celebration of love, joy and color.

The night before Holi, people congregate, conduct reli-

gious rites in front of the fire, and hope that their inner evil will be destroyed, like Holika, the sister of the demon king Hiranyakashyap, who was burned. People throw color on each other during Holi the following morning. They also play with water pistols and balloons. All are fair game, friend or stranger, wealthy or poor, man or woman, kid or elderly. Colors clash in parks, temples, streets, and buildings. Drummers and other musicians travel, sing, and dance. Family, friends, and foes fling powder, laugh, chat, and enjoy Holi food and beverages. Some traditional drinks include addictive cannabis. People prepare for dinner parties and visits with friends and family after a night.

But color adulteration is damaging to skin health nowadays. Which requires caution. Use only safe, natural colors from flowers, vegetables, or other organic things. Chemical colors and heavy metal dyes may cause skin sensitivities, eye irritation, and other health issues.

Guard your eyes. Protect your eyes from colors and water using sunglasses or glasses. Wash your eyes with clean, cold water if any color gets in.

Stay hydrated: Stay hydrated throughout the day, particularly if you're playing outdoors in the heat. Be respectful and don't make them play Holi if they don't want to.

Maintain your nails, hair, and skin. Nails may also weaken from water and synthetic colors. Dye-contaminated water breeds germs.

This may cause a fungal or bacterial nail infection with discoloration, swelling, or discomfort.

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

YOUR COLUMN

MEKEDATU PROJECT

Dear Editor,

From the very beginning, 2024 has witnessed water scarcity of unprecedented scale in Bengaluru. Suppliers of tankers load of water have been exploiting the situation and they are making huge earnings taking undue advantage of the water scarcity. Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar hails from Kanakapura Constituency. Mekedatu Project is his brainchild. If Mekedatu dam across the river Cauvery is given a 'go ahead', the drinking water problem in and around Bengaluru can be alleviated to a large extent. Karnataka has received raw deal both when the Congress was in power at centre and BJP is at centre. There were double engine government both when the Centre was ruled by Congress and by BJP. The Cauvery water dispute between Karnataka and Cauvery with regard to the release of Cauvery water dates back to 1890. The dispute was handled by the noted advocate late Fali Nariman. He could not convince the Supreme Court or Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) and Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) of Karnataka's inability to

the release of water to the extent of the quantum prescribed by the CWRC. CWRC was created on June 1, 2018. Government of India constituted Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT) on June 2, 1990 to adjudicate the water dispute between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, and Kerala and Puducherry. In the recent past, D.K. Shivakumar conducted Pada Yatra pressing for sanction of Mekedatu Project. Now Congress and DMK are the constituents of I.N.D.I alliance. DMK has shown in its manifesto that it would halt any move for Mekedatu project. Congress has not yet broken its silence on the promise made by DMK in its manifesto. In the same vein, Congress has not made any mention of Mekedatu project in its manifesto. Congress has not made any promise that it would accord sanction for Mekedatu project. If I.N.D.I alliance wins, which is a distant possibility as seen from the opinion polls released from various agencies, even then the strength of the Congress members would be higher than that of DMK members. But the silence of Congress party on the Mekedatu Project is disquieting. BJP is also found wanting in making any mention of Mekedatu project. Mekedatu issue is used only for political purposes. The interest of the people of Karnataka has taken back seat. Even from political point of view, both BJP and Congress are obligated to come to the rescue of Karnataka people in

times of their distress. Because Tamil Nadu people have not shown inclination to instal either the Congress or BJP government in Tamil Nadu. People of Karnataka have many times elected Congress and BJP. Naturally, the centre irrespective of the BJP or Congress in power should be disposed more towards Karnataka. This shows that the Karnataka leaders of both the parties are high on promise and short on delivery. Karnataka is the gateway of BJP in South India. So far, no South Indian state but Karnataka has allowed the BJP to form government in Karnataka. BJP should steal the show, promise to get sanction for Mekedatu project in Karnataka if BJP is returned to power at centre. Complacency among BJP leaders with respect to Mekedatu Project is writ large on their face in the face of opinion polls coming in favour of them that NDA would stage a come back to power. NDA under the leadership of Modi has to come back to power. In return the Modi government should accord sanction for Mekedatu Project. It is foreknown that if sanction is accorded, the Tamil Nadu government moves the Supreme Court. What happens in the court is a different matter. No intended projects can be abandoned anticipating that political rivals take the issue to the courts. Who knows, the judgements may come in favour of the projects also.

K.V. Seetharamaiah