

NO CONFUSION

Those entities in J&K which are seeking clarification on restoration of statehood, conduct of Assembly elections, etc have got the answer after Union Home Minister Amit Shah's statement in Lok Sabha claiming that the Union dispensation will consult political parties before going for Assembly polls which he said are scheduled after the delimitation exercise's completion. The Home Minister's statement should be taken as a bugle for the start of elections in the UT of J&K as very soon delimitation commission will come up with the final outcome of the exercise which it has conducted with lots of pain and precision to give fair deal to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and eliminate any scope of prejudice or discrimination. With all this in mind, one can say with authority that there is no confusion in the minds of helmsmen about the future course of J&K as the Home Minister has once again cleared the chronology of events which J&K will witness in the coming time. According to Home Minister's earlier stance which still is firm first of all, the Panchayat elections will be held in Jammu and Kashmir, which have been held already. Thereafter, Delimitation exercise will be conducted after which Assembly elections will be held, and then J&K's Statehood will be restored, clearly showing that the Government has no interest in keeping Jammu and Kashmir under Centre's Rule. The political parties in J&K need to take things seriously now as the polls are already knocking the doors. No doubt, BJP, NC and few other political outfits have already started political activities in the UT eyeing the Assembly polls but still there are political parties which are sluggish and undecided over the issue but after the statement of Shah these parties should have understood by now that the time has come to put in all efforts to contest polls as Home Minister's statement really has much weight and the time of polls is not too far. The way the central government has tackled the situation in J&K is truly praiseworthy and for this both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah deserve kudos.

HUNTING PROHIBITED

This should be known to all that hunting is prohibited in J&K and whosoever is found involved in the illegal activity will have to face the music by either going to jail or paying a big penalty or even the both. No doubt in earlier times when the wildlife used to galore and there was no concept like extinction or endangered species, hunting was considered as a dare-devil sport and also people used to boast of their shooting skills after killing the wild in the wild but the situation now has been changed especially in J&K where wildlife has shrunk to an alarming level and many species of animals, birds and even plants have seen drastic destruction and their numbers have reduced exasperatingly. The situation calls for stopping this flagrant violation of Wildlife Protection Act because every day the number of endangered species in J&K is going down thus calling for stringent measures against poachers. In this context, reports have confirmed that the number of Turtle Dove has also reached to an alarming level forcing the Wildlife Department to issue public notice asking people to act as ears and eyes of the Government to stop poachers from indulging into this illegal activity as this can create an irreversible situation bringing this species also into pool of other animals which are facing extinction only because of indiscriminate hunting for fun, trade and to satisfy false ego by killing the innocent animals and birds. Other species which are tagged as endangered in J&K include Hanguls, leopards, Markhors (large goats with scraw-like horns) and Himalayan musk deer. In today's context, apart from threatening wildlife conservation, hunting and poaching activities are also alarming because they increase the chances of zoonotic spillovers-the transmission of infections from animals to humans. These spillovers can result in disease outbreaks like COVID-19, which has wreaked havoc across the world in recent times. The government should take strict action against the poachers and hunters so that no one can play with the future of wildlife as the same is necessary for ecological balance as already much damage has been inflicted on ecology by this uncalled for behaviour of a section of people, who indulge in poaching.



Awaken The Leader In You

of the intellect, and not swayed by the whims and fancies of the mind.

A leader works hard inspired by a higher goal. When you are uninspired, you experience boredom and drudgery. The same work driven by an emotional motivation becomes exciting. You break through physical barriers. A father may be laid back and demotivated. But when inspired to work for his child, he becomes enthusiastic, energetic and creative. Enthused by an intellectual ideal, you smash through even emotional hang-ups and achieve the impossible. And when you take the mighty leap into the Spirit, all barriers break down.

Most of us are strongly entrenched in feelings of separateness. A leader feels one with people. If politicians are busy fighting opponents and the mind is clogged with hatred and enmity, how will they contribute to the community or country? Look at others not as opponents but partners. Collaborate with them for the welfare of the country. Focus on the values that bind us together; not on the differences that push us apart.

Feel for people, emot with them, work for them, and you will be amply rewarded. Shivaji and his trusted lieutenant, Tanaji, were like brothers. It is this love that helped Tanaji win over a much larger and better-armed Mughal force with just a handful of people.

Jaya Row

We all have to die some day. Not very many immortals have shown up in this world.

-Munshi Premchand

EDITORIAL

Promoting organic farming in J&K

■ DR BANRSI LAL

Organic farming is gaining momentum across the globe because of increasing concern of people on health and environment. In organic farming non-toxic methods are applied to manage insect/pests, diseases and weeds and thus improve the natural resources in soil including soil and water quality. Organic farming reduces the risk of yield failure, stabilizes the crops production and improves the quality of lives of the people. Organic farming respects the environment by friendly practice of weeds, insect-pests and diseases control. The term 'Organic Farming' was coined by Northbourne (1940). Organic farming is a method of farming system which primarily aimed at cultivating the land and raising crops in such a way, so as to keep the soil in good health by the use of organic wastes and other biological materials along with beneficial microbes. Nutrients are provided to crops for increased sustainable production in an eco-friendly and pollution-free environment. The aim is to create integrated, human, environmentally and economically sustainable production system which maximize reliance on farm derived renewable resources and management of ecological and biological processes and interactions so as to provide acceptable level of crop, livestock and human nutrition, protection from pests and diseases and appropriate return to the human and other resources. Organic farming means holistic production systems which refer earth friendly methods for cultivation and food processing. It differs from other systems by the certification procedures, specific standards and a specific labeling scheme. Insecticides, pesticides, chemical fertilizers, growth hormones and antibiotics are not used in organic farming. Eco-friendly techniques are employed to increase production. Organic farming is based on the integral relationship and we need to understand the relationship between different entities of a farm. The organic farming is based on organic relationship. Organic farming can be perceived as a system which should always be in search of natural alternatives suitable to the local specificity. The organic manures supply the nutrients in the soil, promote microbial activities and improve physical, biological and chemical properties of soils.

Agriculture is the back-bone of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. This sector provides employment directly or indirectly to around 70 per cent population of J&K. Agriculture contributes about 65 per cent of J&K revenue which signifies the overdependence of the J&K on agriculture. The Environment Sustainability Index of J&K is worsening and is a matter of grave concern for the scientists and policy-makers. There are various factors which are responsible for the environmental catastrophe in J&K. The use of fertilizers and other agrochemicals has started to increase in J&K which deteriorates the soil health. Organic farming is a method of farming in which we largely exclude the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, growth hormones

and we maintain the soil fertility by the organic manures, green manures, crop rotation etc. It is a unique system of farming which sustains the agro-ecosystem including biodiversity and soil biological activities. Organic farming can prove as a major tool for the second green revolution especially in the hilly areas of J&K.

Over the years, the farmers of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir have adopted new agricultural technologies but still J&K is having low productivity of almost all the crops. There is need to develop systematic approach and plan for the development in organic farming in Jammu and Kashmir as J&K has immense potential for organic farming. Demand for organic crops is also increasing. Several steps have been taken by the government in order to highlight the importance of organic agriculture in the growth of J&K economy. There is need to make strenuous efforts to promote organic farming in J&K. Soil health is also deteriorating day-by-day in some regions of J&K due to indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers in the soil. In order to sustain the health of soil organic farming is the best option. Because of Government efforts, organic farming is picking up pace in J&K. There is need of capacity building of farmers for promotion of organic farming in the region. J&K has huge potential for organic farming as a large area in J&K is already under semi-organic cultivation in hilly districts of J&K due to the lack of availability of chemical fertilizers in these areas and the farmers of these areas hardly apply the chemical fertilizers. Organic vegetables, ginger and turmeric of Reasi district, Basmati rice of R S Pura, rajmash of Bhadarwah, potato of Gurez and Machail and red rice of Tangdar, Kupwara are major organic products in J&K and have the potential to fetch more returns in the market. There is need to explore markets in the country and abroad for saffron, basmati rice, vegetables, rajmash, spices and various other agricultural produce from J&K.

Jammu & Kashmir farmers can tap the opportunity of growing demand of organic products. Organic agriculture is generally environment friendly maintains soil health and enhance biodiversity. Already large numbers of farmers of J&K are organically growing vegetables, spices, basmati rice, walnuts, herbs etc. organically. There is need to introduce organic farming commercially, scientifically and in a systematized way in J&K so that the farmers can get rich dividends and farming can become sustainable source of income of farmers. Keeping the importance of organic products there is need to shift from chemical to organic farming so that more and more area can be covered under organic farming in the region. Organic farming system is not new in J&K and it is being followed from ancient times. It is a method of farming system which primarily aimed at cultivating the land in such a way so that the soil health can be maintained. There is tremendous scope for organic Basmati rice in J&K which is

grown on more than 35,000 hectares of land in J&K and has a production of over 88,000 metric tonnes, besides rajmash, spices, saffron, pulses and potato. There is need to provide logistic support for organic farming to the farmers of J&K so that they can get maximum benefits from it.

Modern crop farming has increased the food grain production but it has caused many problems to the environment and human health. Besides, it has contributed to global warming causing different kinds of ailments to the human beings and animals. The indiscriminate use of agro-chemicals in soil and on plants is not only damaging the soil bacteria, fungi, actinomycetes etc. but has given rise to phenomenon like pest resistance and pest resurgence. Dependence on the external inputs like fertilizers, pesticides, machines etc. have increased rural indebtedness and created dependencies. Our farmers have indulged in indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides and their numbering is increasing. In order to increase the agricultural production and control of insect-pests and diseases, our farmers are increasingly depending on agro-chemicals. Now the people are questioning the impact of modern agriculture on environment, economic and social aspects. Many farmers are seeking the alternative practices that would make agriculture more sustainable and productive. Organic farming is the only alternative taking care of all ecological aspects. A natural balance needs to be maintained for sustainability of crop production system. Therefore, recycling of resources through organic farming approach is of paramount importance. It can reduce the cost of cultivation and farmers can fetch more money. Organic farming is a market-driven agriculture which aims to fetch more money. Postharvest crop residues can be utilized to the fullest extent. Organic farming has experienced a dramatic expansion in all the crops due to increase in the awareness in the food security and environment safety. With the awareness-cum-trainings on organic farming, the area under organic farming is increasing every year. Currently the demand for organic products is more than supply. The market for organic crops is growing at a very high rate each year due to increase in the health consciousness of the people. The reduction in the input cost in organic farming ensures higher economic net returns. The emerging challenge for food security and environment sustainability amid COVID-19 can be mitigated by the organic farming. Good market demand for organic products will have a positive impact on the socio-economic status of the farmers. Organic farming can lead to prosperity among the farmers of J&K. A proper strategy is needed to promote organic farming in J&K. An integrated approach from government and non-government organizations is needed to encourage the organic farming in J&K to mitigate the problem of climate change, health and sustainability.

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Navratras and its significance

■ OKMAR DATTATRAY

India is basically and essentially a spiritual and religious land and as such different religious festivals are celebrated in the country with great pomp and show. One such great festival is Navratras and is celebrated in the length and breadth of India. It is celebrated especially in north India and is dedicated to Maa Shakti and its various manifestations. It is said that the festival of Navratras was in vogue and was celebrated even during Vedic period and infact before it. India is a country of unity in diversity where different religions grow and flourish side by side. It is a mere coincidence that the holy month of Ramdan commences on the day of first Navratri and this blinding of the two festivals will further strengthen communal harmony and mutual brotherhood. Since women have an enviable position in the country from ancient times and they are and should be held in great esteem by the people as women in fact is the form of Shakti and Vedas declare Yatri Sitreto Samanata Tatra Ramantya Deva meaning thereby where women are respected, Gods form of Maa Durga gives unlimited blessings to the devotees. Her worship bestows the people penance, renunciation, discipline, self control and celibacy and the like. The third day of Navratri is dedicated to the third form of Maa Durga which is called Chandraganta and this form of Maa Durga is worshipped on the third night of Navratras. This form of Maa Durga is very peaceful and bestows welfare. The worship of the Chandraganta helps us to overcome the worldly pains and obstacles and leads us to reach the supreme state. So the worship of this form of Maa Durga should be performed with great dedication and after proper bath and purification. For performing her worship we should not only be bodily clean but our mind, word, deed should be clean also for performing her worship. Her worship makes it possible for the true devotees to overcome worldly pains and make it possible for the people to achieve supreme bliss. She had killed demon Mahishashur and saved the humanity from the cruelty of the demon. Not only the people were saved from the clutches of Mahishashur but the gods were also freed from the fear of this demon. Not only the people worship this form of Maa Durga but the gods and deities as well worship this form of the Maa Durga. On the fourth day of Navratri, the fourth form of Maa Durga known as Kushmunda is worshipped. For her quality of light smile she is the creator of the whole world, space and cosmos therefore her name is Kushmunda. The worship and obeisance of Maa Kushmunda helps the devotees to be free from disease and bestows them peace, progress and prosperity. Or we can say that her worship gives the devotees the worldly and heavenly progress. She had killed demon Dumerlochan and saved world from the clutches of the demon. The goddess Kushmunda had reduced the demon Dumerlochan to ashes. The fifth form of Maa Durga is Skandmata and this form of the goddess is worshipped on the fifth night of the Navratri. She is also known by the name Skand or Kumar Kartikay. Because of being the mother of god Skand or Kartikay she is called by the name of Skandmata. She is also known as Padamasa Devi. She also has the loin as her vehicle. She had killed demon Chand and Mund and freed the gods and ordinary people from the clutches of the demon. The sixth form of Maa Durga is Kantayani and she is worshipped on the sixth night of Navratri. The goddess Katayani was born to sage Kantayan after he performed difficult penance and goddess Maa Durga was pleased over his penance and she agreed to be born as a girl child to his wife. Sage Kantayan had first of all worshipped this form of goddess Maa Durga and therefore she is called Katayani and is famous by this name. She gives great much bounties and blessings to the devotees. The goddess Katayani

had killed demon Neshumb and freed the earth from the cruelty and fear of this demon. The seventh form of Maa Durga is called Kalaratri and this form of her is worshipped on the seventh night of Navratri. Her form is very frightening but she is said to give the bounties and blessings very easily. Therefore she is also known as Subnari. She kills the wicked and removes obstacles from life. Her worship makes one fearless. The eighth form of Maa Durga is Maa Mahagauri and she is worshipped on the eighth day of Navratri. She bestows enough blessings to the devotees and her worship washes all sins of the people. The ninth form of Maa Durga is Siddhidatri and she is worshipped on the ninth day of Navratri. She is the ninth Shakti of Maa Durga. She bestows all bliss and blessings to the devotees. Siddhidatri is the last goddess among the nine goddesses and is worshipped on the last day of the Navratras. After her worship all the wishes of the devotees are fulfilled and so is she known as Siddhidatri. There is the practice of worshipping nine small girls in different parts of India and especially in north India. On the last day of Navratras that is on the ninth day or on eighth day nine small girls are worshipped and their feet are washed and money as Dakshina and fruit is offered to them. The girls should be preferably of the age of 2 to 10 years and not beyond this age. The nine small girls are worshipped as the nine forms of Maa Durga. By worshipping the nine girls the Maa Durga is pleased and she fulfills all the wishes of the devotees. There is also the practice of bowing Jaw in the earth in the earthen pot on the Amavasi and it grows into big green grass during these nine days and on the ninth day this Saak is immersed in the river or some pond and with the immersion of the Saak the festival of Navratras comes to an end. The people and especially the women folk observe fast during the nine days of Navratras and break the fast on the ninth day. Our Prime Minister, who is a religious man, also observes complete fast for full nine days and takes only water and some fruits and worships the goddess Durga in its nine forms. Here in Jammu the festival of Navratras has special importance because the Bhawan of Maa Durga is situated in Trikuta hills at Katra in Reasi district and the Yatris in very big numbers pay obeisance to the Goddess Durga during the Navratras festival. The Bhawan is specially decorated with flowers and lights for the purpose of this festival and the pooja and path is performed by the learned Pandits. The musical programmes are also conducted to give a grace to the occasion. There is enough rush of the devotees during the nine days of Navratras festival. May goddess Durga absolve us of all our sins and free humanity from the pandemic of coronavirus.

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Transformational Budget 2022-23: Path-breaking development for Education sector

Government of Jammu and Kashmir has introduced major changes in the education sector with path-breaking decisions to ensure quality, equity, accessibility, accountability and affordability in the system. The department of School Education has achieved landmark strides so far by effectively implementing all schemes and projects envisaging a notable improvement in the existing curriculum besides embarking upon various innovative new projects and works. In the recently announced budget for 2022-23, the highest allocation has been for the education department at Rs 11,832 crores which shows government's commitment towards quality education for the children of J&K.

Mid-Day Meal (MDM) Scheme: The MDM Scheme is a school meal programme designed to improve nutritional standing of school-age children nationwide. The new budget proposes that only fortified rice be served to about 8.30 lakh students at elementary level (I to VIII) under MDM scheme for improving nutritional health of students. Software application developed by CBSE is to be utilized for monitoring implementation of MDM. The Akshaya Patra Foundation, which is successfully implementing its own school lunch programme in the country, is to be involved in serving hot cooked meal to students enrolled in schools located in urban areas of Jammu and Samba District on a pilot basis. At Akshaya Patra, the menu is designed and implemented after taking into consideration various factors, including regional palate, taste and flavours. Menu diversity is achieved by using a wide variety of seasonal vegetables and locally available ingredients.

Establishing Kindergartens: With implementation of National Education Policy in Jammu & Kashmir, new kindergartens will come up in all Government schools. Under new budget of 2022-23, it has been decided that 500 Kindergartens will be established in government schools for increasing enrolment, providing early child care education and enhancing numerical and foundational literacy.

Smart/virtual classrooms: 518 smart/virtual classrooms will be established in higher secondary schools for imparting quality education to students. Also, 200 Vocational laboratories are to be established and 40 schools having vocational labs will act as hubs for imparting vocational/skill trainings.

Sports infrastructure: Under budget 2022-23, sports being indispensable part of quality education, sports infrastructure will be developed in 100 schools (5 schools per district).

Residential Hostel facilities for girl students & Education of Tribal Students: In a bid to address girl child dropout rate, 37 Girls Hostel Buildings and 12 KGBV (Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalays) buildings will be completed for improving residential facilities for girls and bringing about desired gender parity in education. Fulfilling the commitment towards inclusive education, construction work of two residential schools, one each in the districts of Rajouri & Shopian will be taken up for tribal students, besides 8000 meritorious tribal students are to be given tablets.

Talash App: Under the scheme Talash, the School Education Department will rope in Panchayats and enroll all out-of-school children and ensure universal enrolment of students in Jammu and Kashmir. Survey of out-of-school children to be conducted using Talash app, developed by UNICEF and appropriate measures to be taken for mainstreaming them.

Higher Education: In higher education department, 7 college buildings are to be completed in 2022-23. There will be establishment of Centers for Invention, Innovation, Incubation and Training (CIIT) at Jammu and Srinagar in collaboration with Tata Technologies during 2022-23 for skill development of students. NAAC accreditation of 59 colleges will be completed and e-governance system in all the colleges is to be developed within J&K. Two numbers of high-level Research Institutes for providing opportunity to students and faculty for high-end research and innovation will be set up and Skill enhancement training to nearly 20,000 under-graduate students is proposed in the new budget of UT. The steps are also being taken on the implementation of educational reforms and the new budget on education will play a significant role in giving impetus to the realization of a new and prosperous Jammu and Kashmir.