

COUNTER PAKISTAN

The assertion by Jammu and Kashmir Police Chief, Dilbag Singh that the recent attacks on civilians in the Union Territory have been orchestrated by Pakistan and are a sign of frustration of terror groups calls for appropriate action to stop the rogue nation from unleashing the wave of terror in the country especially Kashmir. There is no doubt that security forces are on tenterhooks to eliminate each and every terror monger but the big issue is that terrorists are still carrying out targeted killings at their will without any fear of law implementing agencies. It is good that terrorists involved in earlier terror attacks have been eliminated and one can confidently say that those involved in attacks which were carried out recently will also meet the same fate sooner than later. Pakistan's internal crisis and its conventional policy towards Kashmir are the reasons behind the rogue nation's indulgence in such barbaric actions in the Valley. There is no doubt that such attacks snarl the pace of peace initiatives but this doesn't mean that the commitment of the security forces to restore normalcy will get affected because security forces are committed to bring peace in the Valley and no power on earth can stop this from happening. The entire community in Kashmir, Jammu and elsewhere in the country is condemning such ghastly acts carried out by enemies of humanity after getting orders from their Pakistani Masters. The situation in Kashmir is calling for another Balakot type action or surgical strike to teach Pakistan a lesson of life because the country is not mending its ways and is continuously abetting terrorism in India. It is pertinent to mention that besides martyrdom of para-military Jawan, two non-labourers were injured in a terror attack in Pulwama while a Kashmiri Pandit shop-keeper was injured in a similar attack in Shopian. The political leadership in Valley has also condemned these attacks calling the same to be an attempt to cripple the economy of Kashmir. Under such circumstances, people of the Valley have understood well now that these terror mongers are unprincipled and have nothing to do with the welfare of people of Kashmir rather they are satiating their own vested interests, which India will never allow to happen.

GO FOR HAWK-EYED MONITORING

It is good that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, utilizing the emergency powers under the IT Rules, 2021, has issued orders for blocking 22 YouTube-based news channels, three Twitter accounts, one Facebook account, and one news website for spreading disinformation related to India's national security and foreign relations. The government should keep vigil at all times as the ever changing world on internet can be useful also but there is every possibility that countries like Pakistan and other adversaries of India can again come up with such machinations against the country using the technology which is quite easy to acquire but the same has very dangerous effects on the country. One can guess the extent of the damage which such kind of digital streaming can cause by simply knowing the fact that these few YouTube channels had a cumulative viewership of over 260 crore. The action has come after getting confirmation that these channels were used to spread fake news, and coordinated disinformation over social media on subjects sensitive from the perspective of national security, India's foreign relations, and public order. This is just the tip of an iceberg as there may be many more channels which are denting the interests of the country therefore the hawk-eyed monitoring is must for putting an end to all this. As one can guess well that the main conspirator behind such a machination against India is Pakistan therefore government should not waste even a jiffy while taking similar action against other such entities on the internet because the same has the potential to brainwash the people who are naïve and easily believe on content which is fabricated in a manner that can affect the people's perspective because experts are behind such a nefarious designs. It is pertinent to mention that since December 2021, the aforesaid Ministry has issued directions for blocking of 78 YouTube-based news channels and several other social media accounts on grounds related to national security, sovereignty and integrity of India, public order, etc. It is quite laudable that the Indian government is abreast with such nefarious designs of the enemies of the country because otherwise things could turn precarious as this conspiracy has potential to dent the country's interests in a big way.



OFF 'D' CUFF

Making the Invisible Visible - World Water Day special

One of the five elements of nature, water, is fascinating in all its forms. Its flow, its texture, its constituents, its colourlessness, its worth, – all draw human attention. They are truly spell-binding. A running stream, with water gracefully touching the edges and retreating, is surely going to bring inner calmness.

Water, a Symbol of Protection & Purification

In various cultures people use water is considered sacred. It has been at the centre of spiritual symbolism and offering water has been an important ritual for thousands of years. It symbolizes the mystical dimension of protection, purification, healing, and redemption in life.

In India, The River Ganges are an embodiment of Power or Shakti that bestows Pranik energy upon living beings. She is a symbol of life and also a revered place where people can wash away their spiritual impurities.

In a parallel way, ancient Jewish tradition summons people on some occasions to cleanse their bodies by immersing in a 'mikveh' or 'mikvah' bath. And for Muslims, ablution with water is a mandatory preparation for daily prayer.

Needless to say, Water means spiritual protection and purification.

But what about its own purity & protection?

The Invisibility of Clean Water

While almost 70% of the Earth is made up of water, many parts of the globe suffer from an acute shortage of clean drinking water; they are invisible.

In India, unfortunately, a majority of rivers are dirty and are sometimes covered with toxic foam leading to more water pollution.

The invisibility of clean water affects hundreds of millions of people across our country. And, unfortunately, the worst sufferers of water crisis are mostly women.

Is there any solution to such problems?

How to make the invisible visible?

Let's Make 'Water Preservation' an Ethical & Spiritual Act

Science helps people understand the function and properties of water in the natural surroundings. But 'ethics' can help people understand how to protect, preserve, and dispense water resources wisely.

Let spirituality help everyone identify their core convictions about the value of water. The conviction has to be demonstrated in how they act for respecting and preserving the water resources.

Dr Archika Didi

Panchayati Raj System scripting democratic decentralisation of governance in J&K

The resolve of the Central Government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to return power to the people of J&K is reciprocated by the people of the UT to turn to democratic decentralisation to achieve better governance and development. To strengthen the grassroots democracy, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) amended the J&K Panchayati Raj Act, 1989 for the first time in October 2020 and paved the way for the creation of District Development Councils (DDC). "27 functions were transferred as per 73rd amendment. In 14th Finance Commission Rs 1727.50 cr devolved under MNREGA, Mid-Day meal scheme and ICDS. Panchayats were empowered to generate resources," a senior official said on Wednesday.

DDC is a directly-elected local government body in each district with jurisdiction over the entire district excluding areas designated as a municipality or municipal corporation. The newly created DDC along with Halqa Panchayats and Block Development Councils (BDCs) are ensuring a three-tier Panchayati Raj system for the first time in the region. The elected third tier of the Panchayati Raj institution marks the implementation of the entire 73rd Amendment Act in J&K, which was never made effective by previous governments. District Development Council (DDC) elections in Jammu and Kashmir provided self-rule and autonomy, and empowered leaders from the grassroots to take their own decisions as committed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to empower the people at the grassroots. DDC Elections in Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir were a part of a 3-tier system to strengthen democracy at the



grassroots level which J&K has never witnessed in the past 70 years.

Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), through which the self-government of villages is realized, have been entrusted with the task of "economic development, strengthening social justice and implementation of Central and State Government Schemes at the grassroots level. The democratic exercise of free, fair and peaceful Panchayat elections were held in the UT which led to the constitution of vibrant Panchayati Raj institutions. In a significant achievement, these Panchayat elections recorded a substantial 74.1 per cent voter turnout. A total of 3,650 Sarpanchs and 23,660 Panchs were elected to lay the foundation for the 3-tier Panchayati Raj system for the first time across J&K.

After the successful conduct of the Panchayat elections, elections for Block Development Councils (BDCs) were conducted for the very first time in history of J&K. The BDC elections saw an overwhelming voter turnout of 98.3 per cent in which 276 chairpersons were elected in a transparent manner. Finally, District Development Council elections were held in 8 phases which witnessed a tremendous voter turnout of 51.7 per cent. The process elected 20 DDC Chairpersons and 20 Vice-Chairpersons; a total of 278 DDC members were also elected thus completing the implementation of the 3-tier Panchayati Raj system in its total form. To give these institutions financial strength, a historic district level planning process was accomplished in accordance with the constitutional mandate.

The preparation of the plan adopted a bottom-up approach-first at the panchayat level, then at the block level and then at the district level.

"District plan was approved for all 20 districts via online meeting with participation of all DDC chairpersons, district administration and concerned departments," a senior official said, adding, "Plan allocation was more than doubled in 2021-22, i.e. Rs 12600 cr in comparison to Rs 5136 cr in 2020-21."

For the first time since independence, elected grassroot representatives get formal protocol- hoist the National flag on Independence day/ Republic day. The elected representatives were given honorarium and formal position in the warrant of precedence and a regular system of interaction of district officers with Panchayat representatives was institutionalized. Regarding key focus areas of the UT, the Lt Governor has said that after the democratic decentralisation in the spirit of the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment Act, 14 sectors have been identified for investment at a large scale with a special focus on tourism and employment. PRI representatives were trained through a slew of capacity building and training programmes to further enhance their skills and efficiency in reputed training institutions like IMPARD and outside institutions as well. Besides, induction courses on digital literacy training, Gram Panchayat development plan training and training workshops have been organized for newly elected BDC Chairpersons. About 711 elected representatives have been provided training cum exposure visits outside UT.

WORLD HEALTH DAY

■ DR VIKAS SHARMA & PROLOY SANKAR



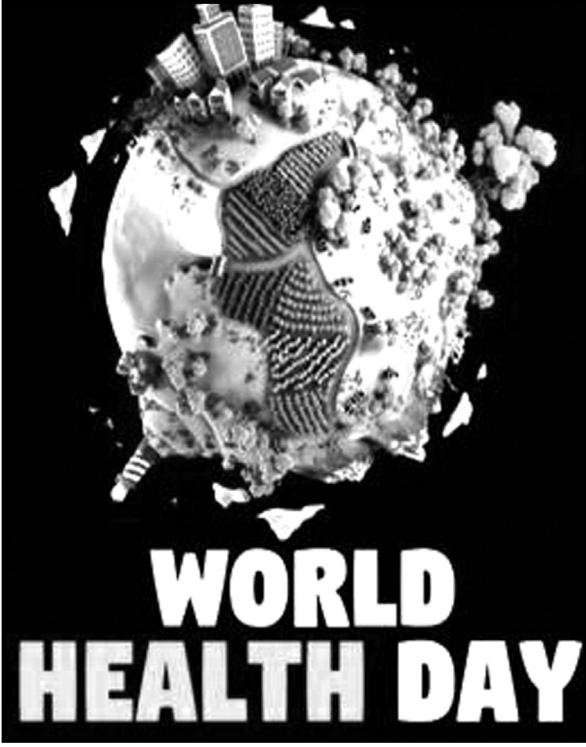
A famous quote cited by Mahatma Gandhi, "It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver". The growing trend of civilization has instigated a question, 'Is Our Planet Safe?' Probably answer is a big No. The cons of this question have incited The World Health Organization (WHO) to commemorate a day every year, 'World Health Day' with a new theme.

It is a global health program celebrated in collaboration with related organizations on April 7 every year. First organized in 1948, the WHO evolved with an idea that it will prove to be an opportunity to draw worldwide attention in regards of global health. The World Health Assembly formed erstwhile in 1948 decided to celebrate every year since 1950, as the World Health Day. It is celebrated to mark the WHO's founding and it offers an opportunity to draw worldwide attention to the major theme being importance to global health. Since then the theme has been acknowledged by various government and non government organizations to support the cause of public health issues. It is celebrated annually and each year draws attention to a specific health topic of concern to people all over the world. The World Health Day, being one of the 11 official global health campaigns of WHO, is also a sister concern of World Tuberculosis Day, World Immunization Week, Worlds Aids Day to name a few. This year amidst the ongoing pandemic, the theme of World Health Day is Our Planet, Our Health, the main aim being to foster well being in health sector, focusing on a healthy planet nurturing human health.

Every year, WHO chooses a unique theme to commemorate World Health Day. In era of the current pandemic, WHO has decided to focus this year on preserving the planet.

The theme being to present a unique opportunity for a green and healthy environment to foster a movement to create awareness focused on well being. Environmental risks arising out of air pollution, contaminated water, inadequate sanitation, risks owing to hazardous chemicals etc. have proved to be a burning risk for the planet more precisely the environment. Various new diseases have cropped up owing to the climate crisis. These threats are being compounded by governance negligence and legislative loop holes. However this year's theme can be a powerful reminder and can instigate the population to look for sustainable environmental remedies. Furthermore, this day can contribute to evolve a world where all people including those living in situations of vulnerability, can live longer, happier and thrive.

The theme this year have raised a question, Are we able to re imagine a world where clean air, water and food are available to all? Being a part of polluted environment and with an alarming rise in diseases namely cancer, asthma, cardiovascular diseases, the WHO has taken an initiative to foster the urgent need of actions pertaining to keeping humans and the planet healthy along with creating societies focused on well being. Statistics predict that above 13 million deaths every



year are due to avoidable environmental crisis.

The ticking time bomb, the climate crisis is the single biggest health threat faced by humanity. An alarming rise in globalization and industrialization are the key players in climate and health crisis.

Medical statistics suggest that over 90 per cent of the population breathe unhealthy air resulting out of the burned fossil fuels.

The global heating due to climate change is witnessing faster breeding of mosquitoes and spreading of diseases the world have never witnessed before. Pollution owing to the use of plastics and entering the food chain have made it the biggest player in the climate crisis. Unhealthy foods are driving a wave of obesity, heart diseases and cancer. The Covid-19 pandemic has made us aware of the various inequities in our world along with weaknesses in all areas of our societies.

It has aroused the need for developing sustainable well being societies to sustain future generations without breaching ecological limits. Reframing the present economy is the need of hour as a substantial member of our population live below poverty line, but the growing industrialization to feed the hungry population has various detrimental effects on the climate more precisely the planet.

The modern economy should be designed to support the human well being and ecological sustainability as its sole goal.

Taking these points into consideration, well framed legislative laws need to be designed, which can promote sustainable environment and health. It arises, the need for various reforms which can support and incentivised healthy choices. So this year's theme of the global World Health Day incites us to break the cycle of destruction to save our Mother Earth.

(The authors are from Division of Biochemistry, SKUAST-Jammu).

YOUR COLUMN

MC Udhampur under severe attack

Dear Editor;

Through the columns of your esteemed paper I would like to highlight the concerns of number of Municipal Councilors of Udhampur Municipal Council regarding an amount of Rs 2 crore that has been placed at disposal of MC Udhampur. Number of Councilors has accused President of the Council for distribution of aforesaid amount among various wards on the pattern of 'Bandar-Bant' and have exclusively condemned the action of the President for earmarking Rs 40 lakh for a swimming pool. If we look into the aspect we find there is dire scarcity of drinking water in town. It would have been better if this amount should have been utilized for augmentation of water supply in the town. Udhampur town is not so developed as to provide this facility from a meager amount of Rs 2 crore

BUDGET 2022-23: Transforming J&K from aspirational to Industrialised territory

Rs 555.80 crore allocated under Capital Expenditure for 2022-23 for I&C sector

The industrial landscape of J&K is dominated by MSME and it plays a crucial role in propelling industrial growth and economy in UT as they contribute around 8 per cent to GSDP and employ the largest number of people in the manufacturing and services sectors.

Approximately 25,000 MSMEs that are operational in UT contribute almost 60 per cent of the total investment and 90 per cent of total employment in industrial sector in UT. It is thus imperative that MSME sector be further supported through policy interventions. For Industries and Commerce Sector, an allocation of about Rs 555.80 crore has been made under Capital Expenditure for the year 2022-23, which is Rs 139.84 crore more than the previous year's budget allocation. Government of Jammu & Kashmir is providing an enabling environment for investors to start their ventures in the Union Territory. The focus of Jammu & Kashmir Industrial Policy 2021-30 is to attract new investment, creation of employment opportunities for youth, development of backward regions and nurturing of existing industrial units.

Adequate provision has been kept for providing of incentives to prospective entrepreneurs as per Jammu & Kashmir Industrial Policy 2021-30. The financial outlay of the proposed scheme is Rs 28,400 crore for scheme period 2020-21 to 2036-37. Scheme while encouraging new investment, also nurtures existing industries in J&K by providing them working capital support at the rate of 5 per cent for 5 years. J&K Government is set to hold its first J&K Global Investors Summit with an objective to bring together investors, decision-makers, senior government officials and local business community for a dialogue on concrete investment opportunities in the state. It will be replete with Strategic Sectoral sessions, Round Table Deliberations, one-to-one Business to Business (B2B) and Business to Government (B2G) meetings. The main objective behind the summit is to increase the employment opportunities by accelerating the industrial growth in the newly carved UT.

Under new budget, Rs 150 crore has been provisioned for development of New Industrial Estates during 2022-23. Also, a sum of Rs.42.60 crore have been earmarked for development of new Industrial Estates at Budhi Kathua, Mearth Ghatti, Rakh Rara Swankha Morh Samba & Katli Dhaini (Samba) in Jammu division and Khonmoh, Sempora, Chandgam Tahab, Hardoo Dahrana Dooru and Hassan Noor in Kashmir division. Rs 3.91 crore has been provisional for construction of 7 Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs) in existing Industrial Estates. Common effluent treatment plants (CETPs) are treatment systems specifically designed for collective treatment of effluent generated from small-scale industrial facilities in an industrial cluster. The main objective of CETP is to reduce the treatment cost for individual units while protecting the environment. 1,354 units under Jammu & Kashmir Rural Employment Generation Programme (J&KREGP) will be established in 2022-23 involving margin money of Rs 25 crore with employment to 8,124 persons. REGP is implemented through Khadi & Village Industries Commission (KVIC) to help eligible entrepreneurs to set-up village industry units and thus create employment opportunities in villages including small towns with population upto 20,000. 2,000 Cooperatives/Self Help Groups will be covered under Credit Card Scheme benefiting directly/indirectly 20,000 persons. 7 per cent interest subvention is available for availing loan upto Rs 2 lakh by artisans under Artisan Credit Card (ACC) Scheme. It is a card designed exclusively for artisans, to meet their day to day working capital needs. The vision for industrialization of Jammu & Kashmir is to transform Jammu & Kashmir from an aspirational to an Industrialised territory and unlocking its potential through Convergence (UT and Central) and Collaboration (Industry and Government). The industry policy framework will be driven by the slogan Jammu & Kashmir tradition, growth and transformation. The policy intends to provide a regulatory environment within a supportive framework of Ease of Doing Business.