AYUSH GRID & AI

It is really a matter of satisfaction for the people of the country, especially those belonging to poor and underprivileged sections that a spree of initiatives has been started for providing best possible healthcare services to them. When it was observed that prices of medicines are too high for a common man, the Government started working for providing cheap and effective medicines to them. These days the AYUSH is witnessing a focused attention of Government for making in popular among masses. In this regard, the second day of 2nd Health Working Group meeting under G20 India Presidency saw an important brainstorming session on citizen-centric health delivery ecosystem for universal health coverage leveraging digital health and innovation. Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of AYUSH emphasized on an integrative holistic healthcare model of service delivery through comprehensive IT backbone for Traditional Medicine 'AYUSH Grid' and by ensuring benchmarking of AI in Traditional Medicine with the guidance and support of UN bodies. Vaidya Kotecha further said that there is need to advocate the use of digital tools for not only the efficiency and outcome of healthcare system but also to maintain the medical records, exchange information and extrapolate the effectiveness of various modalities of healthcare including; but not limited to pharmaco-therapeutic interventions, traditional medicine based approaches and other innovations. He said that the upcoming WHO - Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in India has one of the mandates to work on data analytics and technology in Traditional medicine. This will suffice the infusion of data and technology in TM in coming future.

The secretary also participated in the panel discussion on creation of Digital Health Ecosystem: Moving towards harmonised & efficient health-data governance frameworks. He spoke about the crucial aspect of digital health which is ever increasing and ubiquitous use of artificial intelligence in health care including traditional medicine. Kotecha said there is a need to catch up with the development of benchmarks, guidelines and policies for safe, effective use of the same in health care. To ensure the benchmarking of AI in traditional medicine and the guidance and support of UN bodies - World Health Organization and International Telecommunication Union, Ministry of AYUSH is leading a topic group on traditional medicine as part of Focus Group on Artificial Intelligence for Health (FG-AI4H). Ministry of AYUSH based on National Health Policy 2017- which envisaged the integral role of technology (eHealth, mHealth, Cloud, Internet of things, wearables, etc), has envisioned AYUSH Grid, which is aligned with the principles of Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission. It is a comprehensive IT backbone for the traditional medicine sector in India and created with a vision to transform the AYUSH sector to provide efficient, holistic, affordable, and quality services to all, through a secure and interoperable digital ecosystem. AYUSH grid operates at four levels viz., Core layer, National Layer, State Layer and Citizen access ensuring seamless digital connectedness between all stakeholders. Pertinent to mention here that more than 180 delegates from 19 G20 member countries are presently attending the 2nd Health Working Group meeting under India's G20 Presidency in Panaji, Goa, along with 10 invited states and 22 International Organizations.

Need to eliminate Pak's terror nexus

■ BHARATH NANDA

Pakistan has long been associated with a terror nexus, a web of homegrown insurgency, support to Taliban, and funding from the West. In recent years, the country's security situation has continued to deteriorate, and the role of the Pakistani army generals in profiting from western aid has come under scrutiny. Despite these developments, the situation in Pakistan has not received adequate attention from Western allies and the international community.

The Taliban has been a major challenge in the Afghanistan war on terror, and Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has been accused of providing support to the group. The ISI has been accused of training, funding, and arming the Taliban. The Taliban, which was ousted from power in Afghanistan in 2001, has since then carried out numerous attacks in the country, leading to the deaths of civilians and NATO troops.

Pakistan's support for the Taliban has made it difficult for the Afghan government to stabilize the country. The Taliban has been using Pakistan as a base for carrying out attacks in Afghanistan, which has led to the deaths of civilians and NATO troops. The Taliban has also been using Pakistan to smuggle weapons and other supplies into Afghanistan. The deteriorating security situation in Pakistan has been largely attributed to a homegrown insurgency. The Pakistani Taliban, which is a group of Islamic terrorists, has been responsible for numerous attacks in the country, targeting civilians and security forces. This has led to a large number of deaths and injuries.

The West has also played a role in funding the terror nexus in Pakistan. The United States has provided Pakistan with billions of dollars in aid over the years, which has been used to build up the country's military and security forces. However, some of this aid has also been siphoned off by corrupt officials and used to support terrorist groups.

Pakistan's Army Generals have also been accused of profiting from western aid. The generals have been accused of misusing aid funds to enrich themselves and their families. This has led to a situation where the aid has not been used for its intended purposes, and the security situation in the country has continued to deteriorate.

Despite these developments, the situation in Pakistan has not received adequate attention from Western allies and the international community. The country's strategic importance in the region, as well as its nuclear weapons program, has made it difficult for the international community to take decisive action against Pakistan. This has allowed the country to continue providing support to the Taliban and other extremist groups, which has made it difficult to stabilize the region.

The international community must take action to address the terror nexus in Pakistan. This includes putting pressure on Pakistan to stop providing support to the Taliban and other extremist groups. It also means providing support to the Afghan government in its efforts to stabilize the country and defeat the Taliban.

Pakistan army created a hoax of depleting internal security situation to attract western aid. Recent Peshawar bombing was also under probe, whether ISI had intentionally planted the bomb to showcase deteriorating security situation and raise narrative of funds for fighting terrorism. Pakistan GHQ are taking major chunk of profit from arms sales to Ukraine, in spite of the economic crisis in the country. Furthermore, the West must take steps to ensure that aid provided to Pakistan is not being misused by army generals for personal gain. This could include greater transparency and accountability measures, as well as increased oversight by international organizations.

The Pakistan terror nexus is a complex and multifaceted problem, with links to homegrown insurgency, support to the Taliban, and funding from the West. The role of Pakistani army generals in profiting from western aid has further complicated the situation. The continued support provided to the Taliban by Pakistan's ISI, as well as the country's homegrown insurgency, continue to be major challenges in stabilizing the region and winning the war on terror in Afghanistan. The international community must take action against Pakistan's support for terrorist groups and ensure that aid is being used for its intended purposes. Only through concerted efforts the region can be stabilized, and the threat of terrorism effectively countered.

(The author is a Geopolitical Analyst and IT-Entrepreneur.)

Mann Ki Baat-100: Celebrating India as a Sporting Nation

■ ANJU BOBBY GEORGE

It's an exciting time for sports in India. India has always had a promising and large pool of sporting talent. What was needed was modifying the existing policies and bringing newer ones that match their needs and aspirations. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Government is in mission mode to transform the sports landscape of the country by focusing on grassroots-level talent identification, sports infrastructure building, support to elite athletes, and creating an ecosystem that provides equal opportunities to women, divyangjan, and youth from even the remotest corners of the country. The success stories as well the stories of grit, struggle and determination of multiple sportspersons, of every age group, have found a place in the Prime Minister's 'Mann Ki Baat' and the hearts of the nation.

Khelo India has been a game changer. In fact, Khelo India Games have become like the mini-Olympics of India. The incentive of being recognised at the national level has given the impetus to not only the young athletes but also the individual States to develop their own robust sporting infrastructure. Apart from the development of an overall sports culture in the country, the personal interest that the Prime Minister takes in knowing every athlete and their progress is also something that was never seen before in our country. He makes it a point to interact with the Indian contingent before the final send off and after an international tournament/sporting event and motivate and congratulate them on their success or sincere efforts.

The Prime Minister also talks a lot about sports in his monthly radio programme, 'Mann Ki Baat'. In the past, the newspaper was the only medium to get any information about the sports achievers of our country, but now even before they head for the international tournaments, we are celebrating them. Be it the Commonwealth or Olympics-bound Indian contingent or the youth taking part in the Khelo India Games, 'Mann Ki Baat' has become a platform where the country's achievements on the sports front are brought to light. And today, when 'Mann Ki Baat' is going to hit its century-mark on 30th April 2023, I am sure that all its episodes, all through these years, have worked as an inspiration for the athletes to hone their talent and build a future in sports. When I had won the first medal for the World Championship, my fellow athlete who had also won a medal had got a call from the head of her country which was being projected on the stadium screens. And I was wondering when I would get a similar opportunity. In that sense, today's young athletes are really lucky that the Prime Minister is talking about them at such an important platform like 'Mann Ki Baat'. He also knows their personal interests well and is giving them grand send-over and felicitating them when they come back. The entire India

मन की बात 100
2023
MANN KI BAAT 100

is watching this and especially the younger generation.

The Prime Minister has repeatedly stressed on the fact that sports does not stop short at winning medals and putting India on the global map. What it primarily brings to the table is development of individual personalities by making us physically fit, mentally alert, and nurturing sportsmanship. Sports, as a whole, hold much importance for the development of a nation. Gone are the days when people used to follow only cricket. Today, there is a huge national pride attached to India's participation in every international sporting event. Be it badminton, javelin throw, handball, or fencing, and even indigenous sports like Mallakhamb and Kalaripayattu, people today are united in their appreciation for the sportspersons who are waiving the tricolour high all around the world.

Just before the Olympics 2020, the Prime Minister urged the listeners of 'Mann Ki Baat' to support the Tokyo-bound athletes with #Cheer4India, which subsequently transformed into a campaign, witnessing participation from school students to celebrities who sent their wishes for the athletes. It is interesting to see the different ways that we are finding as a country to celebrate our sportspersons. This momentum on the sports front is unprecedented for India and I am grateful to the Prime Minister for injecting a renewed vigour into sports. The

results are there for all to see. With seven medals in the Tokyo Olympics and 19 in the Paralympics, India performed its best in four decades. India recorded one of its best performances at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham with a total of 61 medals including 22 Gold medals. For the first time in the history of the prestigious international Thomas Cup (Badminton) tournament, the Indian men's team won the championship by defeating 14 times World Champion Indonesia. The Indian contingent for Deaflympics Brazil gave the best-ever performance for the country with 16 medals. New young talent is performing tremendously well and the entire nation is enjoying their victories.

'Mann Ki Baat' as a platform has inspired among the citizens, especially the youth, a collective enthusiasm towards sports in the country. In multiple episodes of 'Mann Ki Baat', the Prime Minister has appealed directly to the younger generation to make sports a crucial part of their lives. Through his radio programme, he has instilled a feeling of Sabka Prayas to make sports an important aspect for India's holistic development and together the people, the Governments, athletes and associations are striving to make this vision a reality of the New India. I am looking forward to the upcoming 100th episode of Mann Ki Baat and to hear our Prime Minister inspire, encourage and talk of ordinary people who have made huge difference in the life of others.

(The author is an Olympian and Vice President, Athletics Federation of India).

Management of Urban Pollution

■ DR BANARSI LAL

With a population of over one billion, India supports around 17.84 per cent of world's population on 2.4 per cent of world's land resulting in a paucity of resources that jeopardises growth in the long run.32 per cent of the Indian population live in the urban areas. It is estimated that by 2030 about half of the Indian population will be residing in urban areas. This rapid pace of urbanization is already being accompanied by air and water pollution, water supply, sewage disposal, municipal waste, transport, lack of open landscaped spaces etc. Most of these problems arise due to unplanned development in cities leading to higher use of natural resources such as land and water. In most cases consensus is not made as to which challenges are more important and how to mitigate them. We all need to have the awareness on India's environmental challenges. Presently urban air pollution is a major issue in both the developing and developed countries across the globe. population and vehicles in the urban areas have resulted in severe air pollution which ultimately is deteriorating our environment and health. Transport, domestic, commercial and industrial activities mostly contribute to urban air pollution. Urban development in India is going through a very dynamic stage. The urban areas have been expanding exponentially by encroaching the surrounding agricultural lands and forests from the last few decades. Urban areas harbour a variety of habitats such as water-bodies, parks, gardens, forests etc. We observe that urban areas have old monuments and old trees. Now-a-days our cities have millions of vehicles, ever expanding roads and spewing out immense pollution. People are migrating from rural areas to the urban areas and these people carry their poverty along with them to the cities which gets perpetuated in urban areas. These rural people migrate to the cities in search of employment and finally want to settle down in the cities. Urban areas have their own limitations as they too have limited resources. With the increasing urbanization and demand for more houses, transportation etc. does urban forestry today stands a chance? The answer may be yes. With the increase in population

the demand for wood has also been increased resulting in the fast degeneration of forests and villages woodlots. Presently India has only 11 per cent of the land area under close forest cover. The recorded forest area of Jammu and Kashmir is 20230 Sq Km, which is around 19.95 per cent of the geographical area of the state. Forests are largely distributed in Kashmir valley and Jammu region whereas Ladakh region is devoid of forest vegetation as the region is a cold desert. There can be severe environmental crisis as we cut more trees than we plant every year. Although barren lands are mostly in rural areas but we have a better scope for planting trees in urban areas. Our urban areas need more natural vegetation to check the increasing environmental pollution by purifying the air and improve our microclimate. In cities pollution is very high due to emission of harmful gases produced by the automobiles, factories, sewage etc. The towering buildings in the cities prevent the free circulation of air, absorb a lot of heat and thus increase the atmospheric temperature. Noise pollution affects the peaceful living in the cities and accelerates the sickness among the people. Pollution in cities can be controlled by planting trees in urban areas as the greenery in the cities helps to sustain natural ecosystem and acts as buffer zones against the pollution. These green areas can also provide habitats for a variety of animals and birds and act as rest places for the hectic life styles of urban people.

Tree planting in urban areas is easy because of protection of livestock, availability of water, among the literates' people etc. Water plays the critical role for the trees growth right from planting. Roof top water harvesting, proper water management and recycling of water including that of utilization of sewage and effluents and other untapped sources can be recommended for growing the trees in urban areas. Different trees species can be recommended according to the needs of the people. If a river flows through the city then the ecological and landscape value of the river need to be studied and analyzed. The River Front Development along with appropriate tree species adds to the beauty and health of the cities. Selection of tree species for industrial

areas is dependent on the nature of industry. It is necessary to select tall evergreen trees so as to reduce the wind velocity around the chemical factories. Adaptability of tree species to hazardous gases and particulates should be the primary criterion followed by the tolerance of effluent water. Species like Neem, Eucalyptus, Mulberry, Guava, Jamun, Ber and Bel can bear Sulphur Dioxide toxicity. In areas having fluoride pollution tree species such as Cashew, Amaltas Casurina, Peepal, Banyan and Jackfruit can be grown. In Cement factories and thermal power plants areas trees like Peepal, Banyan, Neem, Tamarind, Pride of India, Oak, Arjun, Teak etc can be grown. In areas where there is emission of Carbon Dioxide and smoke trees such as Bougainvillea, Shishum, Drumstick, Ashok and Neem can be grown. When pollution is not a serious concern in the area then selection of trees can be done on the basis of rate of growth, utility and flowering habits. People generally visit parks and other recreational sites to relax. The trees having spreading branches with colourful flowers are preferred for such areas. Trees such as Cassias, Bottle brush, Gulmohar, Putravanti, Banyan and most of ornamental trees can be selected for parks. Trees in parks should be planted at a wider distance and maintained with proper training and pruning. Medicinal plants help to cure the common ailments but unfortunately they are vanishing fastly. There is need to create awareness among the people about the scientific use of medicinal plants and to conserve them to make use of Ayurveda popular. Medicinal plants such as Aonla, Asparagus, Cinnamon, Neem, Jamun, Pomegranate, Tamarind etc. can be grown in the herbal gardens. For planting along the roads, the tree species should grow straight with medium canopy. Hardy, evergreen, deep rooted, flowering trees instead of fruit and other valuable species should be preferred. Tree species such as Coral tree, Protea, Plumeria, Raintree and Narra are preferred in these areas.

Strong and deep-rooted trees should be preferred in these areas so that they can be protected from fast winds.

Many times we observe that trees alongside the roads are uprooted because of fast winds.

Proper planning is necessary to facilitate water infiltration around the trees. Fruit trees such as Mango, Sapota, Lemon, Ber, Fig, Apple, Papaya, Guava etc. are preferred in residential premises. Trees such as Bottle brush, Bakul, Champaka, Exorta night Jessamine etc. can beautify our surroundings. Promotion of fruit trees cultivation can also motivate the people to plant more trees and take proper care. Recommended doses of insecticides- pesticides and fertilizers can be used for the utmost care of trees.

In urban areas we generally grow trees and plants in our houses or institutions but now-a-days this is not necessary that we will find open spaces for the plantation in these areas. Multistoried buildings and housing complexes have reduced greenery in the urban areas as apartment complexes do not always offer space to grow trees. We should not despair over this matter and need to find solutions. Now concept of urban agriculture has been emerged through which we can use our roofs and balconies of our buildings for plantation. We can use pots, old discarded buckets, drums, trays etc. for plantation at the roofs of our residential buildings. ornamental plants, vegetables can also be grown at our rooftops. For a good rooftop garden we must waterproof the place and should have proper drainage systems. If we do not water proof the place although our plants may not suffer it may harm our buildings. Seepage can occur in walls which further can damage the buildings. The water on the rooftop should not stagnate at one place and it should have suitable outlets. Many people in the urban areas are often keen to plant trees at their homes but they don't get the proper guidelines and planting material. They can seek the technical guidelines from the agricultural universities, agricultural institutions and concerned department. Print media and television too can play an important role for creating awareness on trees plantations in the urban areas. The NGOs and Municipal Corporations can also help to motivate the urban people in this direction. There is a need to make the eco-clubs who can encourage the people in planting trees.

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Human Birth: Worldly views and beyond

■ DR RAJKUMAR SINGH

Birth can have spiritual significance for many people, as it represents the creation of new life and the continuation of the cycle of existence. In many spiritual traditions, birth is seen as a sacred and miraculous event that connects individuals to the divine. The birth of a child is celebrated with rituals and ceremonies that honour the new life and offer blessings for their future. Similarly, in Hinduism, birth is viewed as a part of the cycle of life and death, or Sansar. According to Hindu belief, each birth offers an opportunity for individuals to learn and grow spiritually, and to progress towards the ultimate goal of enlightenment or Moksha. In some spiritual traditions, birth is also seen as a symbol of renewal and rebirth. It represents the opportunity for individuals to start anew, to let go of past mistakes, and to embrace new beginnings. Ultimately, the spiritual significance of birth varies widely depending on the individual and their cultural or religious background. However, for many people, it represents a profound and transformative event that connects them to the divine and to the larger cycles of existence. The main purpose of birth, from a biological perspective, is to ensure the continuation of the species through reproduction. Reproduction ensures that genetic material is passed down to future generations, allowing the species to survive and evolve over time. However, from a personal perspective, the pur-

pose of birth can vary widely. For some individuals, the purpose of giving birth may be to start a family, experience the joys of parenthood, or carry on their family's legacy, while for others, it may be a fulfilling experience or a personal accomplishment.

Human birth-Stages of development: The reason why we take birth, or why we are born, is due to the biological process of reproduction. Humans, like all living organisms, are designed to reproduce and pass on their genetic material to the next generation. This process ensures the survival of the species. humans, reproduction occurs through sexual intercourse, where a sperm cell from the father fertilizes an egg cell from the mother. The fertilized egg then begins to develop into a foetus, which eventually leads to the birth of a baby. While the biological process of reproduction is the main reason why we take birth, there may also be cultural or personal reasons why individuals choose to have children. In the context, some people want to start a family, carry on their family name, or experience the joys of parent-hood, however, the decision to have children is a personal one that varies from individual to individual. The stages of labour include the early stage, active stage, and transition stage. During the early stage, the mother experiences contractions that become more frequent and intense over time. In the active stage, the contractions become stronger and closer together, and the cervix begins to dilate. During the tran-

sition stage, the cervix fully dilates, and the baby begins to move down the birth canal. After the baby is born, the placenta and umbilical cord are expelled from the mother's body. The baby is then assessed and cleaned up, and the mother is monitored for any complications. It's important for pregnant women to receive prenatal care throughout their pregnancy to ensure a healthy delivery.

The benefits of birth can be both personal and societal. From a personal perspective, giving birth can be a rewarding and fulfilling experience. It can bring joy, love, and a sense of purpose to individuals and families. Many people also feel a strong sense of connection to their child and a desire to care for and protect them. From a societal perspective, birth can also have positive impacts. It contributes to the growth and renewal of the population, which can support economic and social stability. Additionally, having children can help to pass on cultural values and traditions to future generations. There are also many health benefits associated with giving birth. For mothers, the hormonal changes that occur during pregnancy and childbirth can have positive effects on mental health, including reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Dimensions and prospect of birth: In general, the birth of a human has many dimensions which include existential philosophy, birth is seen as a fundamental aspect of human existence. It represents the beginning of an individual's journey

through life and the opportunity for them to make choices and define their own existence. In metaphysical philosophy, birth is often associated with the concept of being or existence. It represents the emergence of a new entity or being into the world, and raises questions about the nature of reality and the meaning of existence. In ethical philosophy, birth is often tied to the idea of moral responsibility. It represents the beginning of an individual's life and their entry into a moral community, where they are subject to ethical norms and responsibilities. As the global population continues to grow and age, the prospects of birth may have significant impacts on society and the environment. For instance, declining birth rates in some countries may lead to changes in economic and social systems, while increasing population growth may put pressure on natural resources and exacerbate climate changed. The prospects of birth are also shaped by social and cultural changes, such as shifting attitudes towards family structures, gender roles, and reproductive rights. These changes can have significant impacts on the way individuals think about and experience birth, and may influence the way we structure our societies and institutions. Social sectors can have significant impacts on birth outcomes and the health of mothers and infants.

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