

CENSUS ON WATER BODIES

For the first time in the history of the country, under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and able guidance of Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, the Ministry of Jal Shakti has conducted the first-ever census of water bodies across the nation. The census provides a comprehensive inventory of India's water resources, including natural and man-made water bodies like ponds, tanks, lakes, and more, and to collect data on the encroachment of water bodies. The Census also highlighted disparities between rural and urban areas and varying levels of encroachment and revealed crucial insights into the country's water resources.

The census was launched under the centrally sponsored scheme, "Irrigation Census" in convergence with the 6th Minor Irrigation Census in order to have a comprehensive national database of all water bodies. The information on all important aspects of the water bodies including their type, condition, status of encroachments, use, storage capacity, status of filling up of storage, etc was collected.

It covered all the water bodies located in rural as well as urban areas that are in-use or not in-use. The census also took into account all type of uses of water bodies like irrigation, industry, pisciculture, domestic/ drinking, recreation, religious, ground water recharge etc. Census has been successfully completed and the All India and State-wise reports have been published.

'Incredible India' is endowed with diverse and distinct water bodies. Water is an important aspect for development which it is linked with every Sustainable Development Goal.

It is essential and fundamental for life itself. Water is a recyclable resource but its availability is limited and the gap between the supply and demand is widening over time.

Therefore, concerted efforts are needed to conserve and preserve water bodies. Ministry of Jal Shakti is the nodal ministry responsible for laying down policy guidelines and programmes for the development, conservation and management of water as a national resource.

The Ministry has multidimensional approach towards water sector, on one hand it is spearheading the ambitious programmes on providing safe and adequate drinking water to every household in the country, eliminating open defecation in rural areas, rejuvenation of river Ganga and its tributaries, improving the safety and operational performance of existing dams, etc and on the other hand, it is involved in assessment, development and regulation of the country's water resources through technical guidance, scrutiny, clearance and monitoring.

The finalization of results and completion of this report has been made possible by the strenuous efforts of all the officers and staff of Minor Irrigation (Stat) Wing of the Ministry of Jal Shakti under the supervision and support of Secretary, Department of Water Resources, RD & GR, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Pankaj Kumar, as well as dedicated technical support provided by National Informatics Centre and determined efforts made by the State/UT Governments.

The IEC Division of the Ministry is ensuring dissemination of the Census report across the nation and especially for planners, research scholars, agricultural and water scientists, policy makers, administrators and all other stakeholders in this sector.

Terrorists' attack: Cause of worry for normalization in Kashmir

■ ER P L KHUSHU



On April 20, an Army vehicle passing through Bhimber Gali and Poonch in the Rajouri sector was fired upon, by unidentified terrorists, likely through grenades, which lead to the death of five soldiers. Five personnel of the Rashtriya Rifles deployed for counterterrorism operations in the area lost their lives in the incident, the Army said. Poonch terror attack: 'How many more,' asks wife of slain Ludhiana soldier Mandeep Singh. The attack is suspected to have been orchestrated by the Jaish-e-Mohammad, said sources. The possible involvement of the same militants behind the attack in Dhangri village in which seven people were killed in January is also being probed. Where is the normaley in Jammu and Kashmir as is being claimed? It is a million dollar question. Are Pulwama's being repeated. Such an attack occurring near the border should have been met with full armed force against the preemptors of this terror attack which comes from Pakistan. This situation deserved a situation like that of a mighty martial surgical strike on the terror hubs located in our enemy country's hidden locations that is Pakistan. The terror attack was done on the concluding day of the holy Ramzan. Ruthless and barbaric acts of such cultures who have no religion, are doing so in the name of Islamic Jihad, supposed to be a byproduct of the terrorist aiming religious Islamic cult. They are maligning the holy teachings of Islam, with long beards on their culture like faces, which represent the ghosts of devastation in them. But the bigger demons of these demonic ghosts are located across the border. How long to bear its brunt and why. This event is a war like situation for the country, when our five army jawans have been killed by the cowards of Islamic terror. Who does not know the present condition of Pakistan as a country, when its economy is in deep peril? They are running helter shelter with a begging bowl for monetary help across eth globe. There is an internal political unrest in Pakistan, when presumably the army might take over the rule any time. Pakistan is staring in to an economic abyss with the rupee in free-fall, inflation soaring and energy running short. IMF team's visit to this country recently to discuss unlocking a vital loan programme did not conclude any help to this debt ridden country. The IMF now says that it wants not just the government but all political parties on board for a deal. Given the bad blood between Prime Minister Shebhaz Sharif and his predecessor, Imran Khan, who's angling to return to power in looming national elections that may be a tall order. Khan has conceded Pakistan needs the bailout. But the IMF may still be skeptical given that the ex-cricketer torpedoed the last IMF package by backing out of his word to slash subsidies. The point to convey is that Pakistan being in deep trouble financially, politically and strategically is still on the boil to disturb peace and tranquility in India by its peevish and childish approaches of using terror as its tool against India. Presumably, Kashmir dream is a regular hallucination with which Pakistan is obsessed. The Pakistan army through its ISI wing is bent to make it a point of unsuccessful events, for it to invade India through the proxy war of terror. It is doing so by utilizing the services of some misguided youth of Kashmir, in the name of Jihad and thus show these young misguided young people that Kashmir will be a part of Pakistan or will attain Independence. There is a saying that if wishes were horses, beggars would ride. Pakistan as a beggar this time is still not learning through its mistakes committed in the then west Pakistan now Bangladesh and Afghanistan cost it heavily, when Pakistan was divided in to two countries and Afghanistan is now ruled by the Jehadi's themselves. Probably such often repeated terror strikes and militant skirmishes in Kashmir will cost it heavily by again splitting Pakistan again in at least two more countries like Baluchistan and Sindh, when the uprising of the people of these locations want ceremonious separation from Pakistan. Last not the least the ISI and the military set up of Pakistan need to see the alarm signs on the horizon of

world corridors, when India is a mighty country now recognized world over as a deciding world power. Should ISI or the army rulers of Pakistan continue to use its ugly tools of proxy wars like the terrorists attacks and the uncalled for border violations, in Kashmir, it will do so to its ultimate peril. Better said than done. India needs now to show the mirror to Pakistan in this regard by taking strong military actions against it, so that the disturbed and unstable situations created through the terrorists acts in Kashmir ever since 1990, gets restored and peace and tranquility is brought back in Kashmir. More silence on this count by the government of India, after the abrogation of Article 370, may not be misunderstood by the enemies of India, both within and outside Jammu and Kashmir. More so it is now the need of the hour for an appropriate development of Jammu and Kashmir, which has received serious setbacks in this regard due to constant disturbance in the peace and better strategic conditions for development of Jammu and Kashmir, in particular in the valley of Kashmir. Though undoubtedly enough development has been done and is being done in Jammu and Kashmir by the present governance of Jammu and Kashmir with a mighty financial support from the government of India, yet, its fruits can be more sustainable and effective once the Terrorism is completely wiped out from Jammu and Kashmir. It can be achieved only through a strong willed action against Pakistan through the arm of military force as enough is enough now. Pakistan will not behave without such an action. Let it be accepted that conditions in Jammu and Kashmir are not perfectly normal as is being claimed through loud statements, particularly in Kashmir. It is the wearer who knows where the shoe is pinching, which is a famous saying in this regard. This situation of instability in Kashmir is better known to Jammu and its people who have suffered adversely due to the Terrorism in Kashmir for no fault of theirs. With the infusion of Terrorism in Kashmir valley, the position of Jammu division too became vulnerable for no fault of the people of Jammu. It spread to border regions of Jammu mostly in the Doda belt. Its vulnerable impact on the economy of Jammu has been sizeable. Lot of population from Kashmir migrated to Jammu with the onslaught of terrorism in Kashmir. Kashmiri Pandits migrated in a sizeable number to Jammu. So is the case with some Kashmiri Muslims and Sikhs too. Jammu people gave all of them shelter without any riddance, sometimes at the cost of their own comforts. In fact due this extra influx of people from the other regions, Jammu should have been given more priority in its development and allotted more funds for the development of Jammu. As against this a continuous discriminatory stand was adopted towards Jammu. It has otherwise a long back history, when due to the garnering of majority seats in the legislative assembly, through irrelevant reasoning, no person other than that from Kashmir could become the chief minister of the state. That is how the administrative set up of the authority of power took a shape, which ultimately led to regional imbalance between the regions of Kashmir and Jammu. Terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir further made the situation more complex for Jammu when Jammu has a tremendous potential for tourism development and has abundant charming tourist's spots which could be exploited for the development s of the tourism sector in Jammu. Just a max factor was added to Jammu in this regard like Patni Top tourist spot, when huge funds under central government schemes for tourism were utilized only in Kashmir. To cite the areas of development in the Jammu division for tourism development, it is necessary to mention here that If Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Sonamarg are considered as heavens on earth, as for as Kashmir Valley is concerned, Bhadarwah valley is no lesser a paradise as for as Jammu division is concerned. Bhaderwah is a lovely cool valley as the valley of Kashmir is. Its perpetual natural beauty and scenic status has made it to be called as 'Chota Kashmir'. This Splendid Springing Valley is a beautiful valley situated at a distance of about 200 km from Jammu. If developed to the standard rationale of appropriate tourism standards, it can easily invite the foreign tourists in abundance, particularly for adven-

ture tourism. It has enough potential to cater for the recreational tourism for the domestic and local tourists as well. The notable places for tourism development in Bhaderwah are Chinta Valley, Padri, Jai Valley, Seoj Meadow, Bhal Padri etc. Chinta Valley is situated 6500 ft above sea level is a picturesque valley in Bhaderwah bounded by thick coniferous forests. The valley is surrounded by several tourist spots including Thuba which is located across the Chinta Nallah. It is superb location for adventure tourism as also recreational tourism. Padri have beautiful landscapes and lies on the ensuing Bhaderwah-Chamba road at a distance of about 40 Kms from Bhadarwah. The landscape runs in a vast area when it is an ideal location for adventure sports like Snow-skiing in winters and Paragliding in summers. It is also highest Pass on Bhadarwah Chamba road. Jai is a green Valley which lies on the North East of Bhadarwah town about 32 Kms. away connected to the town by beautiful Bhadarwah-Jai Link Road. This Valley has a large area under its command when a river known Jai River divides it in two meadows. This Jai nallah is popular for Trout Fish Culture. It is the ideal place for winter sports and trekking in the cool blue waters of this mountainous location. Seoj is flanked by a beautiful river on its west which emanates from hills surrounding Kailash Kund. The landscape across the river is replica of the beauty of Pahalgam, whereas on the eastern side there are long stretches of grasslands. On the south is the sacred Kailash Kund, surrounded by snow-capped mountains. On way to Kailash Kund, there is unique landscape at Shankh Paddar. It is to just mention about some of a few spots in this range of mountains known as Pir Panchal range and its off-shoots which includes Doda, Poonch and Rajouri districts too, when there are numerous other tourist spots in this belt like Lal Draman (Doda), Bhal Padri (Bhalessa), Chatergalla pass (Bhaderwah), located on Bhaderwah-Bani-Basohli Road passing through Chatergalla pass, which is the highest pass in the area, among other such scenic beautiful tourist spots in this region. Tourism potential in Jammu in some other locations like Rajouri and Poonch districts too is also available, where enough of tourism development potential is available in spots like Dera-ki-gali, Noori-Chamb, Kotranka etc. All these spots can provide good opportunities for adventure tourism of sorts. Adventure tourism offers an excellent option for undertaking a large number of activities such as, mountaineering, trekking, skiing, rafting, canoeing, mountain biking etc. The aspect of development of adventure tourism destinations shall have to be the main thrust in the areas as mentioned above as these locations are the choicest locations for such a kind of tourism in Jammu division. The most popular and best established among these are trekking, mountaineering and river rafting. Chenab River offers a best choice for river rafting in Jammu division. With the coming up of Dr. Shiyama Prasad Mukherjee Tunnel, at Chinnai linking Jammu to Srinagar and Doda district etc, an easy road access is now available to reach these spots quickly and safely. The existing Patnitop tourist resort is a perfect place to experience nature at its picturesque best and widest. It is a famous hill station in the Udhampur district of Jammu & Kashmir. It is a well developed tourist spot presently in the Pir Panjal range. In mid winter this tourist spot is covered with snow, thus providing opportunities for various winter sports etc. Terrorism in Kashmir has become a big bottleneck in names sake only for the development of the areas of vast potential tourism development in the areas of Jammu as mentioned above. It is expected that terrorists acts in Kashmir or the borger escalations will not become the excuses for the development of tourism sector in Jammu. Simultaneously sufficient and adequate steps need to be taken to eradicate the Terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir by adopting a tough posture towards Pakistan and its ISI wing though military actions. Enough is enough now.

(The author is a Chartered Consultant Civil Engineer, professionally attached and devoted to his motherland - Jammu & Kashmir).

Progressive farmers of J&K

Budgam woman Rubina Tabasum's 'fragrant' success

Rubina Tabasum of Chadoora Budgam takes pride in being a successful florist and an inspiring face of Kashmiri woman. Rubina got married at a very young age and completed high school from her in-laws home and later she did her graduation from the District College and MBA through IGNOU.

In 2006, Rubina acquired training in cut flower business from JKEDI and started her venture of growing variety of flowers, vegetables and aromatic plants in two farms in 2006 with support and assistance from

Floriculture department. 'The department provided 50 per cent assistance for raising the structure for my farms besides facilitating me with varied species of high value plants', said Rubina. "I am extremely happy with my employment generating venture and it is my fervent appeal to all unemployed youth to start their own small business units by optimally utilizing the abundantly available agriculture resources," she asserted.

Initially, Rubina started her business with growing

flowers in her own patches of land and sold cut flowers in Delhi flower market. Now, she has expanded wholesale dealer network in local markets and Jammu as well. She added that the Technology Mission of Floriculture Department encouraged and enabled her to start a new project on essential oils on hundreds of kanals at Bugroo Budgam.

She now wants to help other unemployed youth particularly women to grow essential oil flowers on their lands and she will provide free of cost planting materi-

al and technical help to marginalized farmers. After many years of hard work and tough toil, Rubena now preparing essential oils including lavender oil, rose oil, rosemary oil, geranium oil, thyme and clary sage oils. Rubena with support from the government has forayed into growing exotic vegetables to produce seedless cucumber and other vegetables in poly green houses through high tech technology. She has also adopted organic vegetable farming which is receiving good response.

Decades old Basohli waiting for district hood

■ SHIV KUMAR PADHA

Perhaps Basohli is the rarest of the rare case in Jammu and Kashmir where an oldest tehsil of the state is still a tehsil even after its successive divisions into six tehsils and four sub divisions from time to time in the past.

Many tehsils which started their journey long after Basohli, the largest duggar state, attained district hood quite early because of their proper representations by their local and capable MLAs.

Had the local representatives advocated in favour of district hood for Basohli and the jammu and Kashmir government had implemented the wazir commission recommendations on merits, with transparency, honesty, without prejudice or ill will Basohli would have got district hood much earlier. But the non local MLAs, who considered Basohli as their colony and launching pad for their flights, always sabotaged its ally speaking, Basohli was one of the vast and most prosperous among the 22 duggar states.

There was a time when Basohli was considered as a hub of trade between the adjoining states of Punjab and Himachal Pardesh and has contributed a lot towards the cultural horizon of the state.

According to an agreement between the Sikh rulers of Lahore and the East India Company in March 1846 Maharaja Gulab Singh was recognized as independent and sovereign ruler of Jammu and Kashmir. According to the conditions laid down in the agreement, Basohli lost its entity as a

separate Duggar state and was merged with jammu and Kashmir spread over 84 thousand square miles.

There were 74 vllages in the erstwhile Basohli state before its merger with Jammu.

After the merger of Bhaddu, Sumrata and Ram Nagar the erstwhile Duggar state Basohli was made a full-fledged tehsil of Kathua district much before 1920 which was spread over 144 villages and ts territories touching Bhadarwah in the north, Chamba HP in the east, Ram Nagar in the west and district Gurdaspur in the south. With the passage of time the process of division and sub division of this vast tehsil started resulting into the formation of tehsil Billawer in 1965, Bani 2007, Mahanpur, Mlahar , and Ram Kot in the year 2018.

Owing to the disproportionate divisions many niabats, CD blocks, and Panchyat Halqas which had been once part of tehsil Basohli were merged with the newly created tehsils. During the last up gradation of tehsils to district hood, in the light of Wazir Commission recommendations, the case of Basohli tehsil was neither pleaded nor was represented properly at the political as well as at the administrative level with the result this tehsil was kept off the panel, where on the contrary new districts, like the one Samba were framed in Jammu division with their headquarters falling hardly within 20 Km.

Radius where a person can travel throughout the two districts in 3 hours on

personal car or motor bike. It is pertinent to mention here that some powerful and influential MLAs/ ministers from Kashmir division managed converting their tehsils into complete district without joining any other tehsil or Niabat whereas other MLAs from Kashmir created new districts by joining only one Niabat with their tehsil.

Kathua is the district head quarter of Bani, Basohli, Billawer, Mahanpur, Machhedi, Ram Kot, Kathua and Hira Nagar tehsils. In the case of tehsil Heera nagar and Kathua, any person from the farthest corner of these tehsils can reach district head quarter at kathua maximum in one hour on the personal vehicle and two hours by bus. whereas a man from far off villages of Bani and Malhar needs at least four days to attend the offices at the district head quarter with two intervening nights either at Basohli or at Kathua which tells badly upon the pocket of the poor people due to the sky high rates of transportation, accommodation and meals. Geographically, , 75% of the total area, of the kathua district, is occupied by Bani, Basohli , Billawer, Ram Kot, Malhar , Dugan and Mahan Pur tehsils (all carved from the old Basohli tehsil) alone. According to the topography Basohli, Bani, Machhedi and Mahanpur have scattered population which lives in the isolated habitats.

For ensuring speedy development, social justice, taking administration to the portals of the masses, providing health, education facilities and employment opportuni-

ties to the present number of newly created tehsils of Kathua district there is a need of creating at least one new hilly district at Basohli the most suitable, accessible and acceptable to all because;

- Basohli is a tehsil which came into existence after it was merged with Jammu and Kashmir state under an act between the East India Company and Lahore Durbar in 1848 along with 144 villages.

- With the Passage of time Basohli had to pass through divisions and sub divisions with the result the single tehsil has been broken into six tehsils and four sub divisions.

- The non local MLAs, who have been representing the Basohli constituency since independence, have always considered it as their colony who did never spare any moment in sabotaging the genuine causes of Basohli.

- Basohli is situated on the historical trade route between India and Jammu and Kashmir during 17th century.

- The Completion of Atal Setu, a bridge over river Ravi, has changed the whole geographical scenario of Basohli Because it has not only emerged as a geometrical centre of the newly created 8 tehsils (out of Basohli) but Basohli has got good connectivity with all the 8 off shoots of Basohli and the entire country by roads. All the roads (life lines) from Udhampur, Bhaderwah, Bani, Billawer, Himachal Pardesh and Punjab converge at Basohli with the result there is no dearth of connectivity within and outside the state.

Owing to the natural beauty and being the confluence of three states UT of J&K, Punjab and Himachal Pardesh Basohli has now become the hub of tourism, Ayurveda, art culture and pashmlna industry in the state. It is pertinent to mention here that on the direction of state administration a feasibility report was sought from ADC Basohli though DC Kathua letter No. DCK/SQ/2019-20/745 dated 30-07-2019 which was stands submitted by ADC Basohli with the recommendations' (Enclosed) on 09-08-2019 vide his No.ADC/BSL/2019-20/574..

- All the district level offices like DIET, ADC,JNV, divisions of forest, PDD, PWD and like others are already functioning here and there is no scarcity of buildings and infrastructure meant for district offices to start with.

Granting district hood to Basohli will be in the interest of both Jammu and Kashmir Government and the people because it will pave the way for the desired, equitable development of the whole area and help develop Basohli into a trade and tourist hub and trade corridor. Moreover the legitimate claimants will get justice which they have been denied since Independence because according to a rule Basohli tehsil is a whole and its fragments are its parts hence before granting distrethood to any of these tehsils It must be born in mind that 'A Part Of Any Thing Can Not Be Greater Than Its Whole'

(The author is a social activist from Basohli).

