

PM GATI SHAKTI

Network Planning Group (NPG) under PM Gati Shakti at its 46th session examined and recommended 4 Infrastructure projects.

The meeting was chaired by the Special Secretary, Logistics Division, DPIIT, Sumita Dawra and saw active participation of senior officials from key member ministries/departments including Department of Telecommunication (DoT), ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, ministry of Railways, ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, ministry of Civil Aviation, ministry of Power, NITI Aayog, ministry of Road Transport and Highways, ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas and ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

During the meeting 4 projects by ministry of Railways were examined by the NPG and recommended. These projects will be developed in tandem with Prime Minister Gati Shakti Principles using the integrated and holistic approach.

These projects will also provide multimodal connectivity, seamless movement of goods and passengers as well as increase logistics efficiency across the country.

A project by the Ministry of Railways for construction of Broad-gauge double line between Sawai Madhopur and Jaipur in Rajasthan state was examined by the NPG.

The project spans approximately 131 kilometers from Sawai Madhopur to Jaipur and is deemed to be a significant infrastructure initiative. Upon completion, the project is expected to improve the line capacity to 71per cent (without maintenance block) and 80 per cent (with maintenance block) by the year 2026-27.

The Jaipur-Sawai Madhopur route serves as a feeder to the Delhi-Mumbai route, and it represents the primary conduit connecting Jaipur, its environs, and Mumbai, southern and eastern parts of India.

The proposed project would help alleviate congestion in the existing single line network, resulting in uninterrupted traffic flow. Further, the National Planning Group (NPG) has evaluated a project proposed by the Ministry of Railways for the construction of a new Broad-gauge line between Anand Nagar Ghughuli via Maharajanj on Northeastern Railway in Uttar Pradesh state.

The proposed project spans approximately 53 kilometers from Anand Nagar and would be constructed as a Broad Gauge (BG) Line. It is anticipated that the project would enhance economic development of the region by providing a direct B.G. route to the project area.

The new line would serve as an alternate and shorter route for trains traveling from Valmikinagar to Gonda via Maharajanj without having to stop at Gorakhpur Junction. Passengers would benefit from this new line as the only transportation currently available in this section is by road.

Additionally, the railway line is expected to facilitate the movement of cement, fertilizer, coal, and food grains, thus providing benefits to the related industries. Moreover, the railway line would enable freight movement to Nepal. Another project by the Ministry of Railways for construction new Broad-Gauge line between Junagarh to Nabarangpur station in Odisha state was examined by the NPG.

The proposed project spans approximately 116 kilometers from Junagarh to Nabarangpur. The construction of this new line is expected to reduce the distance from Bailadela iron ore mines to various steel plants in the Raipur region by 131 kilometers.

Additionally, it is anticipated that the project would facilitate the logistics of steel plant, and goods sheds at Junagarh Road, Jeypure, Koraput, and other goods sheds on the RV line, which are the points of multimodal logistics. This new line would provide an alternative route for the movement of coal from Visakhapatnam, Gangavaram, and Kakinada ports to various steel plants in the Raipur region.

The provision of road-rail intermodal logistics is expected to enhance traffic to goods sheds at Jeypure, Junagarh Road, and Nabarangpur.

Last project by the Ministry of Railways was for Provision of Automatic Block Signaling on Freight Dense high utilization network on Western Railway. The project aims to cover 895 RKM and four major sections of Western Railway in Maharashtra & Gujarat State. The project will bring the balance freight dense High Utilization Network (HUN) Routes under the ambit of ABS, as ABS on High Density Network (HDN) routes of WR has already been sanctioned or exists.

The benefit of the project includes enhanced line capacity and section speed to 130 kmph from 110 kmph that is likely to lead to cost reduction for the Railways and increase the overall logistics efficiency. This will result in a reduction of train detention and travel time, especially in the Udhma - Jalgaon, Ahmedabad - Palanpur, Ahmedabad- Virangam- Samakhiyali, and Virangam-Rajkot sections. Additionally benefits include possible decongestion of road traffic and positive impact on the environment by reducing carbon footprint.

YOUR COLUMN

Provide free parking slots

Respected Editor,

I may bring your kind attention to a very serious problem of parking for several hundreds of people visiting daily in both passport office and govt Hospital Gandhi Nagar.

In absence of requisite parking slot the people are facing a lot of harassment by the traffic police in the name of no parking area and sending online challans to a number of people daily.

The yellow line parking slot is not sufficient in the area for parking a large number of vehicles of the people visiting both in passport office and govt Hospital. Therefore, It is humbly requested to make the parking in the said area free like outside the Super Speciality Hospital Road, Bakshi Nagar and save the helpless public from being harassed by the said agency in the name of no parking area.

It is important to consider and review the said problem on humanitarian grounds and also on basis of help-less of both concerned agencies and the public to provide requisite parking in the area in absence of available space for the said purpose restricted to yellow line parking slots where only few vehicles can be parked.

Yours sincerely,
Dhian Singh.

■ DR SATYAWAN SAURABH

The health of the country is struggling with the shortage of doctors and medicines. There is only one allopathic doctor available for every 10,000 people and one government hospital for 90,000 people. Innocent and illiterate patients or their relatives are exploited. Most centers are run by unskilled or semi-skilled paramedics and doctors are rarely available in rural setups. Patients when in an emergency are referred to tertiary care hospitals where they become more confused and easily duped by a bunch of health workers and middlemen. Non-availability of basic medicines is a persistent problem in India's rural healthcare. In many rural hospitals, the number of nurses is much less than required. World Health Day, April 7, provides an opportunity to focus the world's attention on a health problem or issue that deserves special attention. There is an acute shortage of medical staff, infrastructure, and last-mile connectivity in rural areas in the country. 78 per cent of doctors serve urban India (30 per cent of the population). made worse by severe shortfalls in the supply of services (human resources, hospitals, and diagnostic centers in the private/public sector) and grossly unequal availability between and within states. For example, even a well-positioned state like Tamil Nadu has a more than 30 per cent shortage of medical and non-medical professionals in government facilities. 61 per cent PHCs have only one doctor, while about 7 per cent are functioning without any, 33 per cent PHCs do not have a lab technician, and 20 per cent do not have a pharmacist. Nearly 50 per cent of all government doctors' posts are lying vacant in many

states. India's expenditure on the health sector has increased from 1.2 percent of GDP in 2013-14 to 4 percent in 2017-18. The National Health Policy 2017 had targeted this to be 2.5 per cent of GDP. There is neither a real increase in the health budget nor a policy to strengthen the public/private sector in deficit areas. While Ayushman Bharat provides portability, one should not forget that it will take time to set up hospitals in areas with shortages. This in turn may attract patients to the southern states, which have a comparatively better healthcare infrastructure than the rest of India. As seen recently, there are doubts about the capacity of India's infrastructure to handle the additional load of patients during a pandemic like COVID-19.

Medical tourism (foreign tourists/patients) is on the rise as a policy promoted by the government, and so are domestic patients, both insured and uninsured. Only 11 per cent of sub-centers, 13 per cent of primary health centers, and 16 per cent of community health centers in rural India meet Indian public health standards. There is only one allopathic doctor available for every 10,000 people and one government hospital for 90,000 people. Innocent and illiterate patients or their relatives are exploited. Most centers are run by unskilled or semi-skilled paramedics and doctors are rarely available in rural setups.

Patients when in an emergency are referred to tertiary care hospitals where they become more confused and easily duped by a bunch of health workers and middlemen. Non-availability of basic medicines is a persistent problem in India's rural healthcare. In many rural

hospitals, the number of nurses is much less than required. Given the country's crumbling public health infrastructure, most patients are forced to go to private clinics and hospitals. There is a shortage of PHCs (22 per cent) and sub-health centers (20 per cent), while only 7 per cent of sub-health centers and 12 per cent of primary health centers meet the criteria of the Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS).

The northern states hardly have any sub-centers and primary health centers are practically non-existent. The connectivity of the first mile from the primary health center has been broken. For example, in Uttar Pradesh, there is one PHC for every 28 villages. About 70 per cent of health services in India are provided by the private sector. If private healthcare collapses due to economic constraints or other factors, India's entire healthcare system could collapse. More than 70 percent of the total health expenditure is done by the private sector. However, there is not enough presence of private hospitals in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities and there is a trend towards super specialization in Tier-1 cities. The lack of a level playing field between public and private hospitals has been a major concern as public hospitals will continue to receive budgetary support.

This will prevent the private sector from actively participating in the government scheme. Patients bear a major portion of the health expenditure, which is 61 percent of the total health expenditure. Even the poor are forced to opt for private healthcare, and hence, pay from their pocket. As a result, an estimated 63 million people fall into poverty due to health expenditures annually. Inequalities in the health sector exist

due to several factors such as geography, socioeconomic status, and income groups among others. Compared to countries such as Sri Lanka, Thailand, and China, which started at roughly similar levels, India lags behind its peers on healthcare outcomes. India is one of the countries with the lowest per capita healthcare expenditure in the world. The government's contribution to insurance is roughly 32 percent, compared to 83.5 percent in the UK. The exorbitant cost in India stems from the fact that 76 percent of Indians do not have health insurance. Fake doctors: Rural medical practitioners (RMPs), who provide 80 per cent of outpatient care, have no formal qualifications for the same. People fall prey to quacks, which often results in severe disability and loss of life. The government has launched several policies and health programs but the success has been only partial. The National Health Policy 2002 proposed to increase government spending on health to two to three percent of gross domestic product (GDP) by 2010, which has not happened yet. Now, the National Health Policy 2017 proposes to take it to 2.5 percent of GDP by 2025. The overall situation with India's flagship program in primary health care, the National Health Mission, remains dismal. The share of NHM in the health budget fell from 73 per cent in 2006 to 50 per cent in 2019, as there was no uniform and substantial increase in health spending by states. There are many determinants for better health such as better drinking water supply and sanitation; improved nutrition outcomes, health, and education for women and girls; Better air quality, and safer roads that are outside the purview of the Ministry of Health.

Forest Fires- Causes, control and preventive measures

■ G L KHAJURIA

According to the Forest Survey of India (FSI) 2019 report, about 21.40 per cent of forest cover in India is prone to fires. The Forests in the NE-region and central India are most Vulnerable. The finding has emerged from a study carried out by the FSI along forest fire points across the country from 2004 to 2014.

Fire-Prone Extremely fire-prone areas account for 3.89 per cent of total forest cover, Very highly fire prone areas account for 6-01 per cent and Highly fire prone areas for 11.50 per cent. In J&K, the fire most commonly engulf periodically the ' the shivalik ranges' from Lakhampur to the last tip of the border touching Poonch comprising mostly of scrub forest with chirpine as the most economical species.

Nature has itself provided chirpine with thick bark for its susceptibility but it is more prone to fire. Admittedly man made big strides in modern days information technology and other allied fields, yet so far no fool proof method could be devised to counteract this malady which strikes very year with the onset of summer spells.

In the higher stretches of forest where chirpine, blue pine, deodar, and spruce exist, the incidence are far lesser but once it engulfs those forests, it is havoc. The ground flora is burnt to cinder, off shooting crown fire which spreads swiftly thus making the situation grave and uncomfortable.

Forest fire-it nature: Though the modern days man has made scrupulous advancement in science and technology, construction of road bridges, hydel projects and the like and all these factors such as road links provide a smooth ground for the movements through forest and the unmindful man, in, his pleasuring travels throw cigarette which ignites the dry needles of springing wild fir which uncontrollably engulfs big chunks of forest. Man by virtue of nature has born with greed as the saying goes, nature can fulfill man's need but not its greed' goes true .

So does the man and in almost 80 percent cases, he is responsible by putting the forest ground fire for the yield of the rich and flourishing grass to fulfill grass

requirements for cattle. A man in the street raises accusing a finger towards forest department which is not so. This is baseless, unfounded and uncalled for as the forest department over the years has by all dints protected and preserved the forest at the cost of their life. There are glaring examples on record where in most of cases the forest officials had to play with their lives in encountering forest fires.

It does not go without saying that a poor forester is helpless and ill-equipped to counter the menace without local cooperation whereas the forest laws provide that in the event of forest fire, it is obligatory on the part of locals to render all possible assistance under law.

They are supposed to assemble at the site of fire give/ record their attendants in extinguishing forest fire and make all efforts with forest officials.

However, invalids, old persons and female have been exempted from this purview of law and that's why, the local inhabitants are granted concessions in the issuance of concessions of timber/ other within the concession zone besides the glazing of domestic animals in the open forest except those prohibited under law en vogue.

But ironically, the case is otherwise as the local response is very poor and it becomes cumbersome to face the situation by the department single handedly.

Debris burning. All the dead dying and diseased fallen material left after the exploitation by the state forest development cooperation agency are breeding grounds for spread of fire whereby healthy crops are inflicted and more so with the unset of dry spell, this material provides empties for further inflammation to the fire. The solution, therefore, lies in the disposal of such remnant material by debris burning under the close surveillance of the department or to issue such timber to the local concessionist.

Fire lines: In forestry parlance a wild strip is being laid down in the forest most vulnerable to fire, the nature/ density of the crop and the extent of vulnerability. All unwanted bushes, poles and even trees are cut and removed to make it into a wide passage so that in the eventually of fire it does not get an occasion to cross adjoining part of forest. The fire lines formations

are warranted.

Control burning with the onset of autumn there is leaf litter fall particularly both in the deciduous/ conifer forests which almost cover the forest floor with inflammable material.

In order, therefore, to safeguard the forest from fire, it becomes imperative to collect all such leaf litter and remove to safer places for control burning under the supervision of forest department.

Fire-fighting equipment. As is in vogue with the fire service department, necessary infrastructure such as fire beaters, pick axes, bill-hooks, fire proof jackets, hats and other infrastructure needs to be kept at the Disposal of the department. This is imperative and warranted.

Construction of watch towers this is most helpful aspect and the watch towers need to be constructed at equidistance for close surveillance and regular monitoring so that as an where fire occurs, rapid action can be taken instantly to combat and control spreading.

Firefighting squad. Forest protection force is an independent wing provided with wireless sets and all communicative infrastructures. This wing has a long role to play with to combat fire hazards.The force further needs to be invigorated and fortified to safeguard the green wealth.

Construction of water ponds such constructions help in extinguishing forest fires in much needed areas besides fulfilling multi purposes and can go a long way-in combating the fire hazards with the advancement of modern technology, most of the European/advance countries are pressing into the use of foam gaswhich grips/ control the fire, the CFC (Chloroflouro Carbon) and halogen gases are further he most useful gases in extinguishing fire.

These technologies as well need to be introduced in our country. Conclusively, therefore, it is quite pertinent to work out fool proof strategies if at all we humans have to live over this precious mother earth which has bestowed upon us by the almighty God and let us be fear of him.

(The author is former Deputy Conservator of J&K Forests Department).

Everyone should know law being a responsible citizen

■ MAHADEEP SINGH JAMWAL

The taglines of the article are the words of Honorable Chief Justice for common courts of Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh High Court spoken at an awareness programme held on "Expanding Horizons of Access to Justice and Role of Legal Services Authorities". The words of Chief Justice carry us to the core principle of the modern legal system that ignorance of law is no excuse. We can't defend our actions by arguing we didn't know they were illegal. No lawbreaker can be heard to say that he/she was not aware of the law. Provided the law is published in writing. In compliance with this requirement, primary legislation (statutes) and secondary legislation (rules, regulations, notifications, governmental orders etc.) are traditionally published in the Gazette, which is an official publication of the Government. The principle has some intuitive appeal; if ignorance of law were an excuse, every lawbreaker would invoke it, and the law would lose its deterrent value. A duty is cast on individuals to educate them about the law. Once the law is published, however, the citizen is deemed to know it. To demand regular and updated knowledge of law from citizens spanned over to more than 130 crore population is to demand the impossible. In India, the 2011 census guidelines defines a literate as a person above the age of seven years who can read and write with understanding in any language. We take education through the process of acquiring knowl-

edge, skills, values, morals, habits, and beliefs. So there is no doubt that to be aware with any publication in the Government Gazette about any primary legislation (statutes) and secondary legislation (rules, regulations, notifications, governmental orders etc.) one must be educated to acquire knowledge of such publications.

Here we can argue that those who are illiterate or otherwise not equipped with the know-how to find, read and understand the law, and to whom even the most well-published law is inaccessible, how they are to be treated? Neither are the educated always in a position to stay updated with the law.

A cursory knowledge about prevailing laws in India updates us that there are 5 types of legal system i.e. civil law, common law, customary law, religious law and mixed law. Indian Penal Code sub-divided into 23 chapters has 511 sections, and 839 Central Laws (As per the online repository hosted by the Legislative Department, Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India) as on July 2022 excluding many state laws for each state. Our drafted laws are the outcome of Legislature of the Union, which is called Parliament, consisting of the President and two Houses, known as Council of States (Rajya Sabha) and House of the People (Lok Sabha) are in such a web of lawful lexicon that it makes even harder for the layperson to understand them. Therefore, to desist from the hammer that 'ignorance of law is no excuse' every lay person then has to

hire a lawyer to regularly understand and stay updated with the laws. Is it possible, it is a million dollar question and plainly speaking never possible? It is a principle of natural justice that no person shall be condemned under a law which he was not made aware of.

Under these circumstances, we have to ponder upon, how we can make every citizen spanned over a population of more than 130 crores, aware of laws and to keep them updated about any such provisions handed down from Parliament or any state legislature, and even District Magistrates (in their jurisdiction) and Apex Court judicial decisions that are inaccessible in ordinary course to common citizen (Article 141 of the Constitution stipulates that the law declared by the Supreme Court shall be binding on all Courts within the territory of India.

Thus, the general principles laid down by the Supreme Court are binding on each individual including those who are not a party to an order, makes Supreme Court judgments binding as law) whose violation can land them behind the bar or subject them to unpleasant consequences.

Here comes the dire need of educating the citizenry about the legal world that will help to promote consciousness of legal culture in a common man. This is because laws exist as part of a larger organizational set up in the society. But how, it is a matter to be taken care of by the government and we can look towards the legal fraternity for suggesting the

ways and means. Legal awareness, sometimes called public legal education or legal literacy, is the system of sensitizing the individuals that helps them to promote consciousness of legal culture and to the adaptability of the rule of law to make a society crime free.

We can rely for public legal education on a number of tools to achieve this objective such as: conducting seminars, lectures and by way of distribution of pamphlets. We can think of the Television world to create engaging, interesting and influencer content on law to educate the viewers about the legal world. Television (TV) is the largest media platform in India, both in terms of reach, as well as consumer engagement in terms of time spent. The government can make it mandatory for media platforms to broadcast at least a half hour bulletin both in the morning as well as in the evening to aware the viewers regarding the various laws and daily development on new laws and Apex Court judgments'. The Ministry of Law, Justice We can think of constituting 'Legal Awareness Committees' to interact with common people, with retired fraternity from Police and Revenue department on committees panel that have the ability not of awareness only but also well versed with the Law. We can think of mobile multi-utility vehicles to create legal awareness. We can think of displaying boards and hoardings at Strategic locations in public places that can help the public to understand the spirit of law.

