

BOOSTING MORALE

Army Chief Gen Manoj Pande's visit to forward locations in eastern Ladakh will go a long way in boosting the morale of troops stationed in the inhospitable terrains defending every inch of the country with indomitable spirit and insurmountable valour. Reportedly, the top commander of the army was in Ladakh for three days to review India's overall military preparedness amid the 'unending' border confrontation with Dragon nation, which is infamous for its expansionist policies throughout the world. To upbeat the energy of the troops the Chief of Army Staff held comprehensive meetings and shared his checkered experience with men on duty to bring out the best among them to show their Chinese counterparts their gallant in the bravest possible manner. Surely, this gesture of the army commander was a much needed one for the soldiers as they are presently facing so many hardships at the same time with difficult terrains and unpredictable climate creating unprecedented hindrances in the line of duty. The visit of the Army Chief was strategically very significant as he was in the middle of a logjam between the Indian army and the Chinese PLA to have first-hand knowledge of the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The place falls under high-altitude region and taking stock of the ground situation holds special importance to steer the operations for countering Chinese maneuvering and other threats which are looming large due to adamant behaviour of the Chinese army and its government. The Army always wanted to re-establish the trust and tranquility between the two sides but the Chinese government seems to have some other plans which India cannot ignore and that is the reason behind uncertainties along the LAC. It is for sure that India's stance is to restore the status quo ante prior to April 2020 in eastern Ladakh and until the same will not be achieved the stand-off is likely to remain on ground with armies of both the nations standing face to face. It is pertinent to mention that India and China have held 15 rounds of military talks so far to resolve the eastern Ladakh row and quite a lot has been achieved from these sessions of dialogue but still there are points of contention leading to logjam between the two countries.

AFFORDABLE
HEALTHCARE SERVICES

The recent assertion of the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha regarding improving healthcare services across the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir is quite true and realistic, as almost every part of J&K is now equipped with a health institute having all latest medical facilities and adequate and efficient manpower, in the service of masses. The LG, while speaking during mega Health camp in Sub-District Hospital Sopore, stated that the administration is committed to provide affordable and accessible healthcare to all segments of society on top priority. He is very much true in his words, as after the formation of the Union Territory, people of every section of the society, even residing in rural and far-flung areas of J&K, can avail the world-class medicare services at their door-steps, without any discrimination. The LG also lauded the healthcare professionals for enhancing liaison to evolve more and more affordable healthcare strategies in coming days. The days are over when the people used to face huge hardships in getting treatment for even minor ailments, as now the administration has ensured provision of latest and hi-tech facilities for them, that too within J&K. Now, people need not go out of J&K for advanced treatment as several serious and life-threatening ailments can be treated in the health institutes of J&K. Moreover, the flagship schemes launched by the Union Government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, like the Ayushman Bharat scheme have made several complex procedures and costly treatments, within the approach of a common man, which earlier were only the domain of influential and wealthy people. The further matter of satisfaction is that the reformative spree in the health sector initiated by the administration, is gaining momentum with every passing day. Recently, for the first time, successful kidney transplant operations were carried out in the premier health institute of Jammu- Government Medical College and Hospital, Bakshi Nagar. As work on a number of significant health institutes of Government is already going on at an expeditious pace, in both regions of J&K, several private players like Apollo have also signed MoU with the Government to set-up multi-specialty facilities in J&K. Looking at these developments, none can deny the fact that Jammu & Kashmir will soon emerge as a prominent hub of healthcare services, that too at affordable costs.

Great
Expectations

Expectations can trip us up when we have strong convictions, not based on facts or analysis, that something will surely happen; that people should behave in a particular way; that the outcome is definitely predictable. We live in a largely uncertain world, consequently this desire for certainty often sets us up for disappointment and pain. While some things might be in our control, many are not.

I recall an old story my grandmother told us about a poor man who lived outside the gates of a palace. The ruler would go in and out but never notice him. One winter day though, the king saw the old man shivering, wearing just a thin shirt. He stopped and asked him why he was so inadequately dressed for such weather, and naturally, the old man said that he had no other garments. The king said that he'd arrange for a warm coat and blanket to be sent out immediately. But the king got an urgent message, went to meet his advisors and somehow forgot all about his promise. The next morning, the old man was found dead; a scribbled note on a scrap of paper beside him said, 'For all these years I shivered and yet survived, but the expectation of warm clothes makes the cold unbearable, and will

Marguerite Theophil

Productive Insects: Source of safe & sustainable livelihood

■ DR R K GUPTA, DR KAMLESH BALI AND DR DEVINDER SHARMA

Insects are the most abundant organisms on earth comprising up to 70 per cent of all organisms. They are an integral part of our ecosystem and contribute in the global food production. Around 35 per cent of global food production benefits from insect pollination. Unfortunately there is a sharp decline in the overall abundance of flying insects by 75 percent over just 27 years. Everyone is witnessing this decline. For instance, we do not find enough glow worm, dragonflies and lady bird beetle that we used to play during childhood. The loss of insect life from the food chain would not just be catastrophic for wildlife. It would also have direct consequences for the human food supply and ecosystem services. Roughly 80 per cent of the world's population regularly consume them, with practice quite common in South America, Africa and Asia, and among the indigenous peoples of Oceania. Pollination alone is estimated to be worth between \$235 Bn and \$577 Bn a year worldwide. Without pollinators it would be impossible to produce anywhere near the 'five a day' fruits and vegetables, we all need. Besides Productive insects which include honeybees, silkworm etc which are being reared for livelihood by millions of farmers in India. The main products obtained from beneficial insect include honey, silk and shellac. The conservation of these insects is generally easy and cost-effective as well as essential for the welfare of mankind. In this regard it has been emphasized to observe the whole week (May 16-22, 2022) as 'Productive Insects Conservation Week' with Lac insect day on May 16, World Bee Day on May 20 and International Biodiversity Day on May 22 for beneficial insects are recently included as fifth input in Agriculture production in India.

Lac insect occurs in most parts of India. Not long ago, cultivation of lac was carried out practically throughout the country. Shrinking economic returns from lac cultivation due to varied reasons and changing socio-economic conditions have, however, eroded the area under lac cultivation. As such its cultivation is now restricted only to certain pockets of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Orissa, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu earlier contributed significantly to national lac production, but now their share is almost negligible. As a result, many species of lac insects reported from these places have either become extinct or are in the 'waiting list' of extinction. There are vast untapped areas, which are ecologically favourable for lac production in the country. These areas possess the potential lac host plants which if exploited properly in scientific and systematic manner will enhance the lac production. Natural occurrences of lac insect, locally called as Korkh in J&K is well established particularly on Ber plants. It is pertinent to mention that lac was found abundantly before 1947 and people used to collect and sell it commercially. Interestingly, this State is bestowed with ample of lac host plants, therefore its cultivation can be

revived for the benefit of farming community of the region by scientific cultivation through systematic intervention. IINRG is actively engaged in addressing the objective of enhancing lac productivity and production through transfer and adoption of proven technologies by interfacing research, development and extension. Small scale multi-location field trials in collaboration with IINRG at Jammu region has indicated that J&K could act as a vital centre for revival of lac cultivation with highest yield of brood lac. Moreover, in view of fast shrinking area of lac cultivation elsewhere in the country, the region has been earmarked as a "green area" for conservation of biodiversity of the lac insect ecosystem. Since, the existing flora and fauna associated with lac are inextricably linked to the fate of lac cultivation, economic importance of host plants which could be exploited for commercial production of lac needs to be realized. Based on ground realities, it has been realized that

Productive Insects Conservation
Week- May 16-22, 2022

the vast area of Jammu region (Jammu, Kathua and Samba districts) i.e., southern plains of Jammu region known as kandi belt (Rain-fed areas) are bestowed with lac host plants viz., Ber, Palas and Ficus. Therefore, it warrants cultivation of lac on commercial scale through large scale demonstration and extensive training programmes for the rural people of the area as well as extension workers at frequent intervals. Mass awareness through on-farm trainings at Zonal or district levels will not only enable the potential growers to take up this venture on regular basis but also upgrade the skill of the existing work force for entrepreneurship development. Similarly honeybees are the most useful insects that preserve the biodiversity through pollination and about 70-80 per cent pollination is achieved by bees only. Because of bee pollination many plant species survive on earth and it also provides best quality fruits and crops to human beings. Some of the most important products from honey bees are honey, bees wax, royal jelly, propolis, bee pollen. Since, bees play a vital role in protecting natural biodiversity, we need to save and conserve bee population by protecting bee habitats by planting more bee-friendly flora to conserve their natural habitat. In cities bees are conserved by avoiding the unnecessary use of pesticides on bee hives.

Sericulture involves the rearing of silkworm, collection of cocoons, reeling of raw silk from the cocoons and availability of mulberry trees from which fresh leaves can be obtained to feed the silkworms. Sericulture is considered as an age old vocation. J&K has enormous potential in sericulture or silk production. Commercial sericulture can really empower the farmers of J&K by increasing their income and employment J&K is one of the leading silk producing territories in India. In J&K there are around 2,800 villages where the sericulture is considered as an important

India: Content hub of World is 'Country of Honour' at Cannes

■ ANURAG SINGH THAKUR



The silent shores of the French Riviera are all set to host the 75th edition of the Cannes Film Festival. As the focus country at the Opening Night of 'Marche Du Films' this year, India intends to give the global audience a flavour of the country's cinematic excellence, technological prowess, rich culture and illustrious heritage of storytelling.

India and France are marking the 75th year of their diplomatic relations; Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Paris and bilateral with President Emmanuel Macron takes even more significance in this context.

It is in this significant diplomatic backdrop that India has been chosen as the first 'Country of Honour' at Marche' Du Film at the Cannes Film Festival.

'Festival de Cannes' has played a significant role in strengthening Indo-French relations since its inception.

The stepping stone was laid by bestowing the Palme d'Or to the prolific Indian filmmaker Chetan Anand's film Neecha Nagar in 1946 and a decade later in 1956; Satyajit Ray's Pather Panchali won Palm d'Or. In year 2013, Amitabh Bachchan was invited to open the festival and over the years numerous members of Indian cinema have served on the Cannes Jury. India's presence at Cannes this year holds significance in many ways.

It will be for the first time that our red carpet line up captures the diversity of our cinematic excellence not only in terms of representation of actors and film makers from various languages and regions, but also OTT platforms, with a strong presence of music composers and a folk artist who have enthralled audiences both young and old.

Indian music maestros will be performing at the India Pavilion to showcase the vibrance and variety of Indian cinema at the festival.

Indian startups from the media and entertainment sector will also be present to showcase their technological prowess and pitch to the best from the world of AVGC along with a strong delegation of animation professionals from the sector.

The world premiere of Rocketry is anxiously awaited along with numerous other films in various regional languages which will be screened for the first time at Cannes.

And in another first, the re-mastered classic of Satyajit Ray's Pratidhwani will be screened at the Cannes Classic section marking his centenary year. The celebration of India at Cannes and the recognition of our cinematic excellence the world over is set to manifest the country into the 'content hub of the world'.

YOUR COLUMN
Filling-up vacant posts in JMC

Dear Editor,

Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) in 2014 issued an advertisement for filling of non-gazetted posts lying vacant in corporation, but nothing was done on ground to fulfill these vacant posts. These vacant posts were required to be filled up in interest of municipal administration and smooth functioning of the corporation, but even after 8

Today the flavour, choice and narrative has shifted from Eden in the west and settled in the east. India's journey has been beautifully captured and narrated through cinema and as we mark 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' we must recall the crucial role it has played and portrayed in our fight for independence, be it through turbulent times and in our triumphs.

Today, the media and entertainment sector is a significant contributor to the Indian 'creative' economy and also for projecting India's soft power abroad. Modi government has envisioned and spearheaded major initiatives over the last 8 years to boost co-productions, film shoots and film facilitations in India. States such as Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh amongst others have taken the lead through film facilitation policies and providing co-production opportunities.

In 2018, we had officially designated audiovisual services as one of 12 'champion service sectors' and recently set up an AVGC task force comprising of industry leaders to prepare a policy roadmap for India to take a quantum leap in this sector and position us as the preferred 'post production hub of the world'.

A few weeks ago, the world's largest digitisation and restoration process of 5900 short films, documentaries, and features was initiated in line with our vision to preserve, protect and promote our cinematic heritage for future generations.

We are seeing that within India and across the world, the nature of the media business and content creation, consumption and distribution has changed.

The advent of AI, virtual reality, immersive technology such as the meta verse, presents immense possibilities to India's IT skilled workforce.

According to reports, the OTT market in India is predicted to grow at 21 per cent annually to nearly Rs 12,000 crore by 2023. Today, Indian platforms outnumber foreign ones and there is a gold rush amongst broadcasters as well as telcos to set up their own.

India is bustling and hustling in its towns and villages. Our tales and talent from the hinterland are capturing the imagination of film makers and movie lovers, both in mainstream cinema as well as OTT platforms - and winning awards on the way! With this in mind we are also focusing more on developing regional film festivals across the country, of which Ladakh, Kashi and J&K have been organised. Looking ahead, one can boldly say, what India creates today is being consumed by the world tomorrow. We are perfectly poised to take another leap as nearly 300 million citizens are set to connect online as India marches ahead in cementing its space in the commerce of the M&E sector. Government policies are aimed at boosting India's media and entertainment ecosystem, which is a sunrise sector expected to generate Rs 4 Trillion annually by 2025. The opportunities India offers to the world to connect, communicate, create and in terms of choice as well as consumption are unlike anywhere in the world. And that is why the land of story tellers is on the spotlight of the cinematic world today.

(The author is Union Minister for I&B, Youth Affairs and Sports.)

years, the posts are lying vacant as nothing has been done in this regard despite many reminders. The unemployed youth who are trained and qualified are awaiting recruitments and job for their livelihood. It is pertinent to mention here that JMC is in requirement of sufficient staff and is still not filling vacant posts. Through your esteemed daily, we request the administrative department to grant permission on priority basis so that selection process can be initiated and vacant posts can be filled without further delay.

K K Verma

activity for the farmers. In J&K there are around 7 lakh mulberry trees out of which 53 per cent are available in Jammu region and 47 per cent in Kashmir region. Approximately 6,680 quintals of raw silk worth about Rs.50 crore is produced annually in J&K. J&K is the only territory in the country which is at the same altitude in which leading bio-voltine sericulture countries of the world lie. J&K is bestowed with the conducive atmosphere to produce the bio-voltine silk. Sericulture is the traditional cottage industry in J&K. J&K produces high quality bio-voltine silk comparable to the international standard. Sericulture can help to improve the economic condition of the rural people of J&K. The conservation of these productive insect is essential for the maintenance and protection of the natural biodiversity. Many lac insects and associated fauna have become endangered where lac cultivation has been abandoned or habitat destroyed. Promoting and encouraging lac culture will not only check environmental degradation but also conserve associated fauna and flora for posterity. In honeybees Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) is the sudden die-off of honey bee colonies. CCD threatens not only pollination and honey production but, much more, this crisis threatens to wipe out the production of crops dependent on bees for pollination. So conserving bees includes land management activities such as allowing wild species of plants to grow at field margins, building of natural habitats for various invertebrate species. Silkworm genetic resources conservation team is conserving more than 540 races of genetic resources. We have already lost the gene pool of silkworm to an extent of 30 percent.

There are so many reasons why we need to conserve the wealth of insect species which are sharing our planet, some of the reasons are as our own survivability and our economy totally depends on the insect species. Most of the insects require a little space to survive, so by converting 10 per cent of the lawns as insect habitat could significantly results in insect conservation. By growing native plants we should conserve the native insect species as they get their natural food as well as habitat. Pesticides often harm non target species so these should be used in such a way that they do not leave any toxic effect to the natural insect species. Use species specific pesticides only. For example pesticides sprayed on mulberry leaves will deteriorate the leaf quality which when fed to the silkworms cause toxicity. Most of the people are unaware of the beneficial insects so they have negative perceptions of insects. Efforts should be taken to spread awareness about the benefits of insects as they are pollinators, physical decomposers, bio-control agents etc. Majority of the nocturnal insects are attracted to light and it will act like sensory traps for them that can kill insects sometimes. In some cases light also reduces the reproductive rate of insects. To conserve insects, lights should be turned off near insect habitats and people should be made aware about benefits of insects through formal or informal teaching, discussions etc.

JUBILANT J&K
Govt's key reforms brought financial structure of J&K at par with any progressive system across country

Key reforms introduced by Jammu and Kashmir government in its financial structure envisaging added transparency and accountability have brought UT's fiscal system at par with any other progressive arrangement across the country. A departmental official, while elaborating on the subject, maintained that implementation of transformative reforms such as Budget Estimation and Allocation Monitoring System (BEAMS), online submission of bills through J&K PaySys, mandatory administrative approvals, technical sanctions and e-tendering, digital payments, GFR, GeM and related measures have greatly helped the financial systems in J&K to be at par with any other developing financial system in the country.

Publication of pictorial e-compendiums related to projects completed under Back to Village, District Capex, UT Capex and JKIDFC broadly reflects government's commitment towards engaging with the citizens. This is the first time in the Union Territory of J&K that people are able to oversee works being executed in their areas on a real time basis. During 2020-21, more than 18,000 works were available on the empowerment portal for the first time in J&K for public viewing thus bringing in real grass root empowerment.

The sincere initiative of Finance Department to institutionalize prudence in financial management in J&K has truly transformed the Union Territory. The essence of reforms such as online processing of bills through PaySys, streamlining of GST, e-stamping, e-GRAS, e-auction of liquor licences for retail outlets, digital payments, implementation of GeM, path-breaking reforms in J&K Bank, publication of important manuals relating to Budget and Audit, Back to Village and My Town My Pride initiatives besides 100 per cent physical verification of works which was a most vital program to ensure implementation of projects without cost and time over-runs.

Promoting good governance in the financial management has been one of the core objectives of the government. The financial system in J&K is one of the most transparent systems anywhere and is among the key changes that have taken roots in the Union Territory", the official asserted. Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, during a meeting with the Finance Department highlighted major reforms taken up by the J&K government to bring greater transparency in the financial system making it more robust and result oriented. Sinha said that unprecedented levels of transparency have been achieved through empowerment (Enabling Monitoring and Public Overview of Works being Executed and Resources for Meaningful Transparency), which is a web portal that hosts all the works being executed in the UT and allows public oversight over all works under execution. "Our government believes in the Mantra of four Ps-Peace, Progress, Prosperity and People-first, for holistic development of Jammu and Kashmir making the UT Atmanirbhar in all respects" LG maintained.

Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, during her recent visit to J&K said the abrogation of Article 370 brought impetus in financial activities, transparency in administration and growth in UT's economy. "In the past two years, work that has happened in J&K is absolutely stunning. The government procurement, recruitment, government spending of its resources, taxation or deployment of resources, whatever it be, they are now available online 24X7 with all transparency in governance, in terms of being transparent itself tells you that they are accountable for every one rupee which is deployed on ground, she added. "This kind of approach to governance was absolutely unheard of in J&K and for that I would honestly thank the abrogation of (Article) 370. And quickly, please have a look all of you, within the last two years, after the abrogation, the entire administration is now visible for every citizen of J&K to see what's going on here. It cannot be a few families' oligopoly. Money of the people should go to the people and it should be in a transparent process. That is what has been achieved in J&K and I'm very happy to have learnt about it," Nirmala Sitharaman maintained.