

STRENGTHENING BSF

The neighbouring nation Pakistan, right from its inception, has always shared a hostile relationship with the country. It is really surprising that during the last more than seven decades, the attitude of the country towards India has not changed even a bit, despite being ruled by different Governments from time to time. No matter who is in the Chair, the rogue nation has always tried to hurt the nation, in one way or another. Even after facing humiliating defeats in face to face conflicts, when the country has realised that it is not possible for it to face an emerging force like India directly, it launched a proxy war against nation, thereby feeding the terrorists and other anti-nationals for carrying out attacks in country in order to disturb the peaceful atmosphere and communal fabric. The pouring-in of huge quantity of drugs, is also a part of the ongoing proxy war, with a motive to destroy the younger generations by making them addicts besides raising money for supporting the terrorism. It is really due to stern vigil of our brave personnel of border-guarding force, the Border Security Force (BSF) that a significant check has been ensured on all various infiltration attempts by terrorists and other anti-social elements, made with the support of Pak Army. But few years, back the situation was not so and infiltration was a common thing, as force was lacking several necessary equipment to keep a watch on movement of the terrorists, who taking advantage of several things like weather conditions etc, used to sneak into the country. As the present Government is really considerate towards strengthening the defence sector, necessary support and budgetary allocations have been made available for the forces so that they can procure more and more latest equipment and weaponry, as per requirement. Now in as per latest reports, it has been informed that with an aim to further strengthen its vigil, the BSF is working to put in place an effective counter-drone and anti-tunnel technologies, to keep a check on cross-border drugs and arms smuggling and terrorist infiltration, especially along Indo-Pak border. At a time, when several drones were intercepted trying to violate the borders and a cross-border tunnel was found in the recent past, such initiatives will provide the much-needed support to the force for securing the territories.

NURTURING SPORTS TALENT

After the independence of the country, the much-needed attention was not paid to the sports sector by the earlier governments due to which the name of the country was always missing in the 'medal tallies' of international events, leaving a few exceptions. The condition of sports sector, just few years back, was so miserable that what to talk of reputed international events like Olympics, the country was even unable to secure a berth in other less important events held across the globe, despite having immense talent, which used to get wasted in lanes and local grounds, without any recognition. But soon after coming to power, the ruling Government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, understanding the importance of the games and sports, initiated several significant measures for the development of sports and players. Besides directing the concerned authorities for creating necessary infrastructure and providing requisite kits to players, the Government organised several competitions at various levels for providing platforms to budding players, so that they can excel in their game. It is only due to the concrete efforts of the administration that at present the India players are giving a tough competition to their counterparts from other countries besides winning medals and applauds at numerous championships. Even during the last Olympics, despite facing a hard situation due to a pandemic outbreak, the Indian contingent brought home a number of medals. One can easily guess about the Government's support to the sports sector, that now every talented player is not only identified, but also provided all necessary guidance and coaching to represent his or her State and country, in various competitions. Selection of son of the soil, Umran Malik in the national Cricket team in a latest example showing that now the Government is very much serious towards sports. Taking a step further, the Government is going to hold Khelo India Youth Games in Panchkula, which will be inaugurated by the Home Minister. As per reports, almost 8,500 players, coaches and support staff from different parts of the country will participate in the fourth edition of games. With such a serious approach of the government towards the sports sector, the day is not far when the nation will top the medal tallies of every championship, across the globe.

■ DR BANARSI LAL

Every year 5th of June is celebrated as the World Environment Day across the globe to mark the environmental awareness among the people. It is the biggest international day for the environment. The major objective of the event is to protect the nature and contemplate on growing environmental issues. On this day various government and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), individuals, communities, charities, institutions etc. create awareness on environmental issues. It is celebrated by organizing various seminars, webinars, lectures, conventions, campaigns, concerts, tree plantation, essay writing, painting competitions etc. The theme of 2022 World Environment Day is "Only One Earth" and Sweden is the host country for it. This day provides us an opportunity to take responsible steps to preserve our environment. This particular day is dedicated to spread the awareness and message among the people to save the environment and planet Earth. In 1972, the United Nations Conference on the human environment was held from 5th June to 16th June. After that, every year 5th of June is celebrated as the World Environment Day.

We have 7 continents on the planet Earth. Every human being has only one dream which is to live better, to eat better and to consume better. But majority of them never care for the environment and planet Earth. Present population is more than 7 billion in the world but we have only one planet to live and survive. We have limited food, limited place and limited shelters. If we keep on using natural resources as we are doing every day, a day will come when our own grand children shall be forced to live homeless with full of hunger. So it's better to consume the natural

resources with care and responsibility. So, we should stop the wastage of natural resources and use them according to our need not on our greed. Each of us knows the importance of nature. It consists of all the living beings on the earth, which are mutually interdependent on each other. But due to the excessive pollution caused by human beings, many species are becoming extinct and the global climate is also changing at a very rapid rate. The changing climate is inversely affecting our health and also going to give a long term effect on our future generations. We know that millions of people on the Earth depend on forest for their livelihood. Every living being is dependent on plants and trees. Only the plants and trees can make our food. But, we people are degrading the forests in a rapid rate.

The concept of environmental protection and sustainable development of material resources represent at present a preoccupation of all the states of the world. This concept has made society conscientious and on the same time, recognised importance of environmental factors. The situation regarding the environmental protection and durable development is one of great actuality and importance. Durable development has to be made in such a way as to reduce the negative outcomes of the artificial structures, simultaneously satisfying some of the needs of the people and guaranteeing the liveliness of the future generations. Presently about one million species are facing extinction. There is dire need to re-examine our relationship with nature. Although we are having numerous technological advancements but still we are completely dependent on healthy ecosystem for our food, clothes, shelter, health, water, medicines, fuel, energy etc. It is fact that nature acts as the solution of our many prob-

lems. Nature is closely associated with the climate change, food security and health. Biodiversity is badly affected due to our short-sighted activities including infrastructure development, chemical farming, deforestation, mining etc. All these activities have degraded the ecosystem and have created the pandemic like situations. There is urgent need to work together for the resilient and sustainable global economy. The exploitation of renewable and non-renewable energy resources and rapid increase in the urbanization are severely affecting the biodiversity. Sustainable development is the only way to mitigate the needs of our present and future generations. It also ensures the health of the planet Earth. It has been observed that around 25 per cent of all animals and plants species are threatened with extinction. On this particular day we should create awareness on preserving the endangered habitats among the people. We should also make efforts for the natural farming to minimize the soil pollution and produce the safe food for the mankind.

Biodiversity is the foundation for the life and for the essential services provided by ecosystems. It plays as a key catalyst to transform our food system system and thus improves the human health. It is the foundation for our food and health and plays a key catalyst to transforming food systems and improving human health. A wide range of events are organized globally to increase the understanding of the important role of biodiversity for our present and future generations. The biodiversity we observe today is the outcome of over 3.5 billion years of evolutionary history, shaped by the natural processes. It underpins peoples' livelihoods and sustainable development in all realms of socio-eco-

nomical activity, including agriculture, forestry, fisheries, tourism etc. Biodiversity is a global asset. Biodiversity forms the web of life of which we are an integral part and upon which we are fully dependent. Biological diversity is the natural biotic capital of the earth which affects all of us. Human beings derive the supply of food, medicines, energy and many industrial products from biological resources. The environmental crisis is an existential threat. Pandemics are related to the environmental crisis, helping to nurture and host novel germs. Even in present era many people are not aware about some serious environmental issues-from air pollution to toxic dumps to pesticides to loss of biodiversity. There are enormous challenges but there are also vast opportunities on environmental action. Environmental protection is considered as the biggest challenge for the mankind. India is one of the richest nations in the world in terms of biological diversity. India has about 15,000 species of flowering plants, 969 species of birds, 389 species of reptiles and 317 species of mammals. India has relatively large number of frogs, salamanders and their kiths and kins. Brazil is the most biologically diverse nation in the world. India stands 10th in terms of biological diversity. Some parts of the country are very rich due to a variety of natural causes in biological diversity and some are less. The Loss of biodiversity across the globe has increased alarmingly and many wildlife and plant species are on the verge of extinction. We all need to understand that biodiversity is the foundation for our life and ultimately it ensures our livelihoods and sustainable development. Strenuous efforts are needed to protect the planet Earth.

(The author is Head, KVK Reasi, SKUAST-J).

Recurrence of targeted killings

■ MAHADEEP SINGH JAMWAL

Kashmir valley is witnessing recurrence of targeted killings, including police officials, teachers, and members of PRIs, laborers, artists, from both genders and from all religious communities since January this year. The episodes of targeted killings spiked after February 2021, when the son of the proprietor of Krishna Dhaba in Srinagar was shot dead inside his restaurant. Attack on members from different parts of the Valley and from different sections of the society, alarms us that presence of the terrorists across Kashmir valley with its tentacles in Jammu also (Katra Bus blast, Sunjwan attack, episode in Udhampur) are serious in nature and recorded statements that killers will not go scot free and killings by terrorists will be revenged, are political in nature with no serious results. Over the last nearly three years, the administration has silenced anti-government dissent not only in the Valley but Jammu also to such an extent that voice of those employed by the government in the Valley and living in transit camps in various districts, went to a deaf and dumb government, resulting administration's failure to protect members of the community. A spate of killings of civilians in recent days in Indian-administered Kashmir has again led to widespread unease, particularly among region's religious minorities. It's not just Kashmiri Pandits who are anxious - fear and uncertainty has gripped the entire valley. If we have to speak two lines on target killings, my assertion will be that every killing of innocent, strikes at

the heart of civilization; it is an attack on all mankind. It is a real world that when the target is a Kashmiri Pandit, it gets the focus of the entire nation, whole media and across political parties. In my opinion attention by entire nation because the community belongs to majority community of the country but it is in minority in valley (large number have already faced exodus), media because it is a good recipe to earn TRP and for political parties, a game to blame each other and it is for the purpose of vote bank nothing beyond that. Many crop up like frogs in the seasonal ponds to register their presence by delivering dramatized speeches and burning effigies projecting them as to be born from the same womb as the twin brother of the victim of target killing. Tracing to 1990 migration of Kashmiri Pandits and the ongoing unchecked target killings, plainly speaking we can conclude that right to residence in Kashmir is questioned by terrorists. But at the same time they forget that they are creating an atmosphere for Kashmiris (Majority in valley but in scanty presence in many other states) to be attacked outside the UT. The environment in the Valley is fraught, and administration must not add (Kashmiri Hindu demonstrators participation from government employees and families of Kashmiri Pandits lathi-charged and attacked with tear gas shells during protests demanding justice) to it, even if it can do nothing to provide a healing touch to those affected by the violence.

If we roll back to the much propagated measures to curtail terrorism and to bring back nor-

malness by present dispensation, we have to visit the pages of election rallies in 2014, when Prime ministerial candidate from BJP, Narendra Modi has roared in the rallies that lack of development is the major cause of terrorism and all that is sent to J&K by the center is plundered by 'Abdulla' and 'Mufti' families only and he will not allow this to happen. But after elections, BJP formed the government with Mufti's party PDP. The intentions of PDP were very clear about terrorist organizations, when late Mufti praised the terrorist organizations operating from across the borders for smooth sailing of elections in Jammu Kashmir, while swearing in as Chief Minister and Prime Minister of the country sharing daivs was mute spectator. Immediately after the formation of the government in J&K thousands of stone-pelters were set free by this coalition government. Then 'Demonetization' came with the assurance to curtail foreign funding pumped into Kashmir to keep terrorism alive. But nothing changed on the ground. 'Balakot' air strike carried after attacks on forces failed to impact the terrorist organizations operating from across the border. It was followed by abrogation of Article 370 with much fanfare and much bro ha-ha that it will prove a milestone in curtailing terrorism with the settling of many in the valley from outside the JK territory. But not even a single soul turned up to settle in the valley. Many political leaders having mass following in the valley and few from opposition in Jammu were detained and put to house arrest to suppress their voices against the present dispensation. After their

much awaited release by valleyties, 'Gupkar Alliance' came into existence with synchronized policies and ideas. This was followed by bifurcation of the erstwhile princely state into two union territories, J&K and Ladakh, with false assumption of governing closely the state to curtail terrorism. But nothing moved on. The policy of Congress to settle migrated Kashmiri Pandits back in the valley was pushed bluntly by the present dispensation to gain echelons from the international community in spite of protests from the Pandit community with the request to normalize the situation in the valley before they are pushed back to the valley. The Kashmiri Pandit employees', beneficiary of the employment package, was kept on hold with regard to their postings in the valley by the Congress government but they have to move to the valley by the blunt orders of the present government, claiming that the valley has limped back to normalness. The visionless moves have shown its results in almost every day target killing. Million dollar question now when the pro-separatist leaders are not on the horizon in the valley then who are the minds spearheading the targeted killings? We cannot shed our responsibility just by blaming Pakistan only, which has become every minute phrase for the present government as an escape from its failures. The participation of people through their political representatives is the only viable solution that can stand as a repressive force between the distorted minds and their lieutenants that are working force on ground to splash the blood of innocent people.

Progressing J&K

Farmer-centric reforms empower community socially, economically

'Centers of Excellence' established in Jammu, Srinagar; 18,880 beneficiaries get subsidised farm machinery in Valley

The farmer-centric reforms launched by Jammu and Kashmir government in past two years have empowered the farmer community socially and economically by increasing their income manifold making them Aatmanirbhar.

J&K is now among the top five states and UTs in terms of farm income with a monthly income of Rs 18,918 per farmer. The UT government is constantly striving to provide farmers with direct access to modern technologies and credit facility besides encouraging natural farming to improve profitability and sustainability in agriculture and allied sectors.

J&K Agriculture department has launched aggressive marketing and branding of local agri-products, mechanization in Agriculture and Horticulture sector. In this regard, High Density Plantation, diversification, better quality seeds, capacity buildings, GI tagging, expansion of banking facilities, micro-irrigation has achieved rich dividends for farmers and have brought a structural change in agriculture and horticulture sector. More than a million beneficiaries from J&K received direct financial support of Rs. 1983.29 crore during past three years under PM Kisan scheme. Besides, 12 lakh farmers have been issued Kisan Credit Cards (KCC), out of this, 9.46 lakh KCC are live/operative in the UT.

The J&K government is providing 50 per cent capital support up to Rs 22.15 lakh per hectare under high density plantation scheme. A common farmer used to find it difficult to arrange another 50 per cent capital due to the high interest rate. The inclusion of HDPS under Agriculture Infrastructure Fund Scheme has made available the credit on interest subvention of 3 per cent per annum for 7 years. The credit guarantee coverage made available under credit guarantee fund trust offers loan up to Rs. 2 crore for micro and small enterprises schemes. Besides, promotion of 'Vocal for Local' has opened up a plethora of opportunities for everyone associated with the Agriculture & allied sectors to grow and prosper.

The government is bringing National and International players on board for enhancing the knowledge expertise and providing global market linkages to J&K's farming community, an official said. Lieutenant Governor; Manoj Sinha, after inaugurating the five-day long 'Kisan Mela' at SKUAST Jammu, asked Agriculture Universities of J&K to work on mission mode to connect more farmers with organic farming and horticulture and make them acquainted with the latest scientific knowhow. Bridging rural gap is among the top priorities of UT administration. In this regard, a strong frame-

work is being developed to increase employment and connect rural youth with the agriculture and horticulture industry. The administration will extend all possible support to Youth involved in agricultural start-ups, LG asserted.

Notably, J&K government is handholding 500 enterprising farmers with knowledge based intervention every year to harness the potential of organic produce. The officers of agriculture department are continuously focusing on strengthening economic relationship between farm and market to benefit the farmers and rural population. The farmers are informed and motivated about the benefits of innovation and technologies for welfare of agrarian society. The steps taken by the government will integrate rural areas into modern economic units and increased business opportunities in agro and rural industry can transform the rural economy. Horticulture has now become backbone of economy of Jammu and Kashmir. From state-of-the-art machinery to new plants, water supply resources for farming, training, expansion of the area of high density plantation, many innovative measures have been taken in the past one year and many more are in the pipeline for future deliverables aiming at growth of the farming sector. With special emphasis on promoting best practices in the horticulture sector, significant improvement has been registered in farm productivity and production quality due to exchange of knowledge and ideas. Due to excellent synergy between farmers and concerned departments, J&K has become one of the top 5 performers in the country in the 'One District One Product' campaign.

Central government through its 64 schemes in the field of horticulture is providing subsidies up to 50 to 100 per cent to the farmers under different components. With an aim to promote farm mechanization for easy and better produce, 18,880 beneficiaries were provided tractors, tillers, MPS, Irrigation pumps and related agricultural tools in J&K. Similarly, about 3666 small and mega awareness programmes were organized in J&K to create awareness about various schemes for development of Horticulture. A first buyer-seller meet was organized successfully at Srinagar to promote marketing of fruits at national and international level. Two Centres of Excellence with a total project cost of Rs 1708.85 lakh have been sanctioned at Zawoora Srinagar and Udhayavalla Jammu by Government of India under MIDH scheme in the Indo-Dutch work plan. These centres will serve as demonstration and training institutes as well as source of planting material for farmers. Besides, 12,000 Kanal of land has been brought under new fruit plantation.

Sports Tourism gains momentum with J&K Sports Policy 2022

Jammu and Kashmir offers the potential to woo domestic and international travelers by organizing national, international sports tourism events like golf tournaments, rafting, snow skiing, rock climbing and motor racing. Travelers combine their love for travelling and sports by planning their holidays around popular sports events thus boosting sports tourism in the UT. Notably, J&K Sports Policy encourages promotion of UTs natural splendid resources such as lakes, rivers, springs, canals and mountains to boost sports tourism. The policy accords special focus on golf, winter sports, adventure and water sports activities besides creation of hubs and sports tourist centers which would in turn provide additional job opportunities.

As per the policy document, the 'Public Private Partnership' (PPP) along with foreign mission support for knowledge and technology transfer will help take sports and adventure tourism to the higher level. Accordingly, sports tourism and specialized snow adventure sports training courses at certificate/ diploma level will become the new modus for making such sports tourism models to become self sustaining. The department of Youth Services & Sports encourage PPP mode to promote winter sports and adventure tourism. The existing skiing facilities for training as well as leisure games at Gulmarg are being developed at par with inter-

national standards. Apart from this, specific focus for skiing infrastructure development is a thrust initiative at Pahalgam and Sonamarg as these are also a high snowfall receiving regions. Regions like Gurez and other smaller villages with several scenic spots can be developed as nature walk, trails, rock climbing with single focused sport activity. It will enable creation of experience destinations and boost the economy alongside providing employment opportunities. Besides, up-gradation of training facility and curriculum in mountaineering related courses is being done using upgraded techniques, infrastructure and methodology. JK Sports Council in collaboration with tourism department encourages international golf competitions so that golf tourism is given a spurt. Other districts in the UT are being explored for developing golf as a sport. The Directorate of YSS in collaboration with the Golf Development Authority and tourism department is working to involve school children as well. The aim of Jammu & Kashmir Sports Policy 2022 is 'to create a dynamic, inclusive, competitive and innovative environment that enables and empowers the citizens of Jammu & Kashmir to experience and benefit from a strong sports culture. Besides, it will facilitate creation of a self-sustaining and participative sports ecosystem that makes sports affordable, enjoyable and sustain-

able for all who wish to play and for those who wish to excel on global level.'

'It has been seen that Sports tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in tourism. More and more tourists are interested in sport activities during their trips whether sports are the main objective of travel or not', a travel consultant said. Various reports suggested that Indians are now travelling more both within and outside the country to attend their choice of sports event, thus having accelerated the sports tourism industry.

Many people use these trips as an excuse for a longer holiday, combining their sporting passions with a general love for travel, a tourism department official said. "On the other side, many in the tourism industry have also begun to realize the value of wooing these tourists, many of them fall into the high spending category, stay longer than other tourist categories, are high caliber tourists," he added. In a significant achievement, Jammu and Kashmir is scheduled to host international level sports championships in Srinagar and Jammu soon. This will be for the first time that J&K is hosting two international sports events of which the junior Asian Pencak Silat championship will be held in Srinagar from September 1, 2022 to September 4, 2022 and international chess festival will be held at Jammu from August 20 to August 28, 2022.

