

OLYMPIC DAY

The Olympics started in 1894, but Olympic Day was celebrated for the first time on 23rd June, 1948 in which nine countries participated. India, Portugal, Greece, Austria, Canada, Switzerland, Great Britain, Uruguay, Venezuela and Belgium organized Olympic Day for the first time. For the last few years, a lot of improvement has been seen in the programme being held on the Olympic Day. Earlier only one race and few games were played but today it is organized on a large scale. Now three pillars have been made for the Olympic Day, which are proving helpful for all, which are as follows 'go ahead', 'learn' and 'explore'. New games are played according to the strategy of these pillars. And everyone's abilities are identified. Olympics is included in the school curriculum in many countries today. Through which all the students can be introduced to the Olympics. And everyone is taught about the importance of sports.

The Chenab that flows through Indian Civilization

G.L. KHAJURIA

Literally speaking, Chenab acronymises a Persian derivation. Cheen means china and Aab means water, can denoting thereby China's water. But with the revolving wheel of time, the learned school of thought negated it and attributed that the origin of Chenab is from 'Tandi- a small village or hamlet in Himachal Pradesh (HP) adjoining our state. Even in Sanskrit texts, Chenab river finds its mention as a nectar-clear water having its origin from higher reaches of Himachal Pradesh.

According to our great epics, the Mahabharat and the Harivansha Purana, there is mention of the origin of these two mighty rivers- Chandra and Bhaga from higher reaches amidst the Himalayan region of Himachal Pradesh. And after traversing through longer distances ultimately confluence at Atholi, little below Padder (Kishtwar) around 306 kms from Jammu and is named as Chandrabhaga, Chandra literally means Moon and Bhaga Can notates Luck or virtue. The Chenab or Chandrabhaga as well occupies a very significant place in our revered Rigveda, wherein it has been mentioned as 'Askini'.

Apart from, the Greeks have made a mention about Chenab river in more than many ways. Askesines and Chandrabhaga as Sandropagos viz the man eater or Alexandrapagos as the devour of Alexander the great, who attempted to cross this mighty river and had to suffer disastrously.

The Neelmat Purana, a historical treatise of Kashmir mentions about Chenab or Chandrabhaga most prominently. Poster, a well - renowned traveller in 1783 AD extensively journeyed through Kashmir and named this mighty river as Chanan. And Vigne, another traveller- cum-explorer in 1783 AD, extensively travelled the valley of Kashmir and recorded in his travelogue the Chenab's water from Moon.

And very rightly has as such Jean Naudou, a French traveller- cum-author has commented about Chenab as a beautiful, enchanting river having the biggest vibrant, lush green forest in its back drop and explains further regarding the location together with other affiliations as such: To the east and the south-east, Kashmir is in communication with upper valley of Chandrabhaga and at the foot of frontier ridge which separates the basin of Vistasta the Jhellum. Kashavata used to constitute an independent principality mentioned one single time in Rajatranqui (Kalhana) but many times in the modern chronicles.

Downstream, Bhadaravakasa was attached to Champapura, while more to the south and west campa, vallapura was an independent state where Biksaera were taking refuge, and of whom, a princess was forming a part of harem of Sussala, mentioned many times by Kalhana.

The river Chenab or Chandrabhaga after confluence at Atholi sweeps down serpentine taking turns and twists on sharp bends sometimes too narrow and deep and at places often with broader width all along its under lying bed -rocks of sub-Himalayan , pre-cambrian region relatively unchangeable in its entire route. The river, of course, accumulates various rivulets, Nallahson its either side of the catchments thereby enhancing its quantitative flow like fiery flames. The river as such forms a narrow gorge cut out of hard rock filled up with perpetual flow of water and is locked up in the rock forming a dam-like shape. And a mega Dulhasti project generating huge power potential is the first of the formation in the history of the Charming Chenab.

And still down below ,the river has been dammed at Bagdihar hydrometric power project near Batote. The damming of these two hydro- electric projects have provided an ample scope of power generation. But at the same time has indeed lost its natural beauty, its enchanting tones and charming white foaming watery upheavels forever and ever.

The mighty and majestic Chenab or Chandrabhaga is having a nectar-like crystal water with very fast flow spanning its either bank, debouches from hills down and travels hundreds of thousand kilometres in the land-locked mountain oyster rain and the plains down below. The river as such emerges out at Aknhoor after passing through Salal and Sawalakot power project and the river flows to Pakistan inter-mingling Tawi, Ravi, Satluj, Beas and other rivers, rivulets and streams. The river as such confluences other mega rivers, en route, with gushing flow and finally drains down into Arabian sea.

(The author is former Dy. Conservator of Forest, J&K).

Amarnath Yatra best opportunity to showcase Kashmiriyet

O. N KOUL

Kashmir was famous world over for its communal harmony and composite culture and even during partition of the country when whole of India and Pakistan was burning with violence and communal frenzy Kashmiris maintained mutual brotherhood .But some evil force set its eye on Jammu and Kashmir in 1989-90 and the Kashmiriyet was torn into pieces and communal amity was destroyed as the militancy and insurgency took Kashmir into its lap.

Thirty two years of turmoil and militancy now passed into history and the situation is becoming slowly and steadily normal .The yearly and important Amarnath Yatra in the south Himalaya cave of Amarnath continued even in those dark of terrorism but in subdued manner.

Now the people of Kashmir should rise up and grab the opportunity provided by the famous Amarnath Yatra to showcase Kashmiriyet that is composite culture and communal harmony.

The Muslim community which is associated with this Yatra should wholeheartedly participate in Amarnath Yatra and welcome it like the days of yore.

The people of Kashmir should support and facilitate this famous Yatra and provide all help in the shape of men and material for the convenience and smooth yatra.

The Muslims of Kashmir should stand up and show to the world that whole of Kashmir welcomes and participates in the Amarnath Yatra so the world will again know and appreciate the hospitali-

ty of Kashmir and their Hindu-Muslim amity and mutual brotherhood.

Amarnath Yatra is the best and golden opportunity to demonstrate that communal harmony ,composite culture and Kashmiriyet is still alive and continuance of this age old Yatra dedicated to Lord Shiva and his consort Mata Parvati is testimony to the fact that Kashmiriyet is alive and kicking and the Kashmiri Muslims provide all help to the Yatra as in the yester years.

This arduous Yatra through trekking to the Himalayas in south Kashmir is possible with the help ,support and active participation of the Muslim community and the Kashmiris deserve all praise and appreciation for supporting and facilitating the Yatra and there is need to reinforce the trust and faith of the Muslim community in helping and participating in the Yatra.

Though basically a Hindu Yatra, there are no two views about the fact that Amarnath Yatra has become a shining example of communal harmony and mutual brotherhood but there is great need to demonstrate this characteristic about Kashmiriyet viz a viz the age old Yatra.

The Kashmiris should welcome and embrace Amarnath Yatra and show to the whole world that this Yatra is very dear to the Kashmiris and from the past they are anxiously waiting for this sojourn of Hindi-Muslim unity and they are part and parcel of the Amarnath Yatra and in fact the smooth running of the Yatra is not possible without the support and help of the local Muslims.

The labourers, Poniwallas,

Palkiwallas,Gourdawallas ,tourist guides all are local Muslims and again the government employees deputed for facilitating the Amarnath Yatra are by and large Muslims and Kashmiris take great pride in the success of this Yatra as it is the Yatra which is the window to the world which showcases the rich cultural heritage of Kashmir and shows to India and the whole globe that Kashmiris are privileged to welcome ,embrace and facilitate as well as help the Amarnath Yatries with love and affection .Amarnath Yatra is the living example of communal harmony and Hindu-Muslim unity and amity and all Kashmiris respect ,revere and uphold the composite culture of Kashmir .The ex chief minister and president of PDP Mehbooba Mufti is right in emphasizing upon the Kashmiris that they should seize the opportunity provided by the Amarnath Yatra and showcase to the India and the whole world the composite culture and Hindu-Muslim amity and last but not least the Kashmiriyet which is so dear to all Kashmiris and they like to protect ,preserve and fructify it and annual Amarnath Yatra is the best and unique opportunity to show to the world the composite culture and communal harmony of Kashmir for which this land of sufis and Rishis is famous throughout the world .The people of Kashmir should rise above narrow considerations and welcome ,embrace and facilitate Amarnath Yatra so that smooth and hassle free Yatra is possible .People of Kashmir should conduct themselves in such a way while providing a helping hand to the Amarnath Yatra so that a

positive and encouraging message of communal harmony and composite culture is given to the world .The message of total changed atmosphere in Jammu and Kashmir should be brought home to the people in India and abroad that normalcy has come back to Kashmir and the people of Kashmir are jostling that the time of annual Amarnath Yatra has come and they will cooperate with the Yatries for the successful culmination of the Yatra .The annual Amarnath pilgrimage is a big source of economy for the UT's people and thus all those associate with the Yatra are economically benefitted .A large number of the Yatries also visit the scenic and tourist spots of Kashmir and so the people connected with the tourist economy gain from this Yatra. .Tour and travel agents ,tourist guides ,Shikarawallas ,houseboat owners ,traders ,handicraft shop owners ,taxi operators et al are benefitted by the Amarnath Yatra and all such people and others as well are anxiously waiting for the annual Amarnath Yatra and take great pleasure in the Yatra .It is pertinent to mention here that the some percentage of the donations which are offered to the Lord Shiva are distributed to the Mallik family which is believed to have found the cave of holy Amarnath in the old times .Thus Amarnath Yatra is a shining example of Hindu-Muslim amity and the Kashmiris should seize the opportunity of Holy Amarnath yatra and showcase the rich cultural heritage of Kashmir and also impress to the countrymen that the people of Kashmir will warmly welcome the Yatra.

(The author is a columnist, social and KP activist) .

Progressing J&K

Mission Youth: Boon for enhancing skills, promoting youth entrepreneurship

J&K Mission Youth gets PMs' award for Excellence in Public Administration

Mission Youth, a comprehensive youth development program, launched by Jammu and Kashmir government, has proved boon towards enhancing skills and entrepreneurship among youth of the region.

The initiative has been successful in addressing the socio-economic issues faced by the youth of the UT by providing them a platform to optimally harness their skills in different potential entrepreneurial prospects, thereby contributing towards growth and development of the region.

One of the primary objectives of Mission Youth was to address the issue of unemployment among youth which has been successful in creating employment opportunities by providing requisite training and support for entrepreneurship. Under the initiative, the government has established incubation centres and provided financial assistance to young entrepreneurs to start their own business ventures. This has not only created jobs but also boosted economy of the region.

Muzafar Wani of Ramsoo, Ramban, always dreamt of owning a vehicle as he wanted to secure a respectable livelihood that could fulfill the needs of his family for a better tomorrow. Wani, who was working as driver couldn't bear expenses of his family including his two daughters with that meagre salary.

"Sometimes I would not get work for many days. Many times I decided to stop my daughters from going to school. I always wanted to educate them but financial constraints always forced me to look another way", Wani said as he was revealing his struggle of 12 years while working for different vehicle owners on daily basis.

Wani couldn't save enough money to purchase his own vehicle and the unfulfilled needs of the family had left him in an devastating feeling of frustration and depression. That is when the Mumkin scheme started by J&K Government through Mission Youth came to the rescue of Wani.

"In October last year, a friend of mine informed me about the 'Mumkin' livelihood scheme for unemployed youth and asked me to contact Mission Youth officials, Wani asserted. It was like a dream come true when I was informed about the benefits of the scheme, he said". An elated Wani said that he is satisfied being the happy

owner of Tata Yodha and is earning enough to feed his family and educate his daughters.

In the present financial year, 4482 youth have been facilitated for self-employment under the scheme with a total financial support of 165 crore through scheme banking partner and 16 crore as government contribution towards subsidy. Self-employment avenues created under this scheme have instilled a sense of self-reliance and positivity among youth.

Similarly, Tejaswani scheme is a specially tailored self-employment programme for empowerment of young women of Jammu & Kashmir aimed to promote entrepreneurship among them.

This scheme helped them in attaining economic independence and improved their social status. All women entrepreneurs covered under the program have been given Entrepreneurship Development Program trainings through Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), for attaining proper market skills and technology knowhow for making their business viable.

Afshana of Ganderbal always dreamt of securing a respectable livelihood that could fulfill her personal and family's financial needs. She, before opting for Tajesswani, used to give home tuition to small children in her neighbourhood. However, that was not sufficient to bear her personal expenses.

"Sometimes I would feel very distraught. I always wanted to serve my family and society but financial constraints always forced me to look another way", Afshana said as she was recalling her past.

Afshana established a poultry farm with the assistance provided under Tejaswini scheme and now she is providing employment to five more fellow girls.

This financial year, assistance to more than 1588 women entrepreneurs has been provided under the scheme with a resultant employment generation of 3615. Total financial assistance to the tune of Rs 102 crore has been sanctioned along with an amount of Rs 12 crore as government contribution towards subsidy.

Likewise, the Mission Youth started Youth Volunteer Program for youth engagement at grassroots level and rolled out a special volunteer program in the name of Youth Clubs. The initiative was approved by the

Governing Body of Mission Youth, headed by Lieutenant Governor. The volunteer program was made fully operational on the eve of International Youth Day 2021 and 4500 youth clubs have been constituted under the program across the UT.

More than one lakh youth have been involved in volunteer activities through the program who got opportunity to work through real challenges and make meaningful change in the society. Youth have been enabled to learn new social skills like collaboration and problem solving that are vital to succeed in academics, workplace, and their personal lives.

An amount of Rs 7.25 crore has been provided as grant in aid for specified activities of the youth clubs in present financial year.

"We always felt alienated from the system but after joining Youth Volunteer Program of Mission Youth, we are feeling part of policy making and governance", said Aqib from Pulwama.

The youth volunteer members of Pulwama organized a month long drug de-addiction campaign in every Panchayat of the district recently. "We will make Pulwama a drug free district within next few months", said an enthusiastic Youth volunteer.

Mission Youth has been a game changer for the youth of Jammu and Kashmir. The initiative has provided the youth with the necessary resources and support to enhance their skills and promote entrepreneurship, thereby contributing to the socio-economic development of the region. The success of Mission Youth serves as an inspiration for other states to implement similar initiatives for the development of their youth.

Mission Youth' has succeeded in turning J-K youth into ambassadors of innovation, peace and development through systematic interventions for youth engagement and outreach under six domains including livelihood generation, education/skill development, financial assistance, counseling/theory, sports and recreation.

Remarkably, tremendous work performed by the Mission Youth during past few years bore fruit when the Mission Youth was awarded with Prime Minister's award for the Excellence in Public Administration 2022, under the Innovation (State) category on 16th Civil Services Day this year.

Scourge of Plastic Pollution

DR. BANARSI LAL

Many drastic changes have occurred in the human life during the last half century and one of the most instantly observable is the abundance of plastic based products. Plastics continue to help society in innumerable ways but recently they are observed as environmental threats. Plastics are derived through reinforcing fillers, antioxidants with synthetic polymers and colourants. Plastics manufacturing require less energy as compared to metals and glass. Plastics meet large share of the modern society due to their low cost, light weight, high strength, environment stability, ease to carry etc. Plastics have imprints on environment and human health due to their hydrophobic and inert nature. Plastics disadvantages prevent them from becoming universal building block of human civilization. Governments strictly control their use and impose laws governing their manufacture, disposal and recycling. Social need of plastics is well recognized and it is extremely difficult to select the alternatives of plastics.

Plastic is a necessary evil. It is estimated that every year the amount of disposed plastics can four times circle the earth. We can't live without plastics as every day we come across plastic in various forms such as bottles, grocery bags, food containers, computer keyboards, plastic mouse, coffee

cup lids etc. It is startling to note that billions of tons of plastics are ending up in the oceans. Plastics take thousands of years to decay. Plastic is an incredibly useful material but it is made up of toxic compounds known to cause illness as it is non-biodegradable. Plastics negatively impact the natural environment and create problems for plants, wildlife and human beings. Plastics received social acceptance in 1600 BC. Ancient Mesoamericans firstly processed natural rubber into rubber bands, boots, coverings etc. Until 19th century man was relying on plastics, rubber and resins. The first plastic was developed by Belgium born American chemist Leo H. Baekeland called Bakelite. Alexander Parkes, a metallurgist from Birmingham developed man made plastic. Throughout his life he made lot of discoveries and secured 66 patents. In 1950 he produced flexible transparent material called as Parestine by blending Camphor and Nitrocellulose. Presently versatility of plastics has led to a great increase in their use. Environmentalists have denounced man made plastic as a long lasting pollutant which does not fully break down. It is very difficult to measure the pollution caused by the plastics.

There are more than 20 different types of plastics which cause pollution. Many parts of the world excessively use the plastics. The per capita consumption of plastics in

India is 4%. It has been observed that the disposed plastics based consumer products and infrastructures are the major source of pollution from their manufacture. Plastic waste in big Indian cities averages just50-100gm/capita/day as compared to 1-2Kg in the Western world. In Delhi the highest plastic waste is piles as 690 tons/day. Generally, plastics are thrown away after the use but because they are durable, they persist in the environment. Improper disposal of plastic generates litters that drains into the rivers, streams and ultimately pollute the environment. Plastics laced with the chemicals are ingested by the animals that lead to infection and death. Polyolefin constitute the group of non-degradable plastics comprising low density polyethylene, high density polyethylene and polypropylene. They are used for the manufacturing of containers, bags and laminates. Their decomposition evolves carbon monoxide, furans, carbons and dioxins that cause the breathing problems. In order to incorporate certain characteristics several chemicals are added in the plastics. These are Bisphenol A, Phthalates, flame retardants etc. Styrene migrates significantly from polystyrene containers into containers contents when oily foods are heated in such containers. Styrofoam from tea cups, food containers and cutlery leaches styrene, an endocrine disrupter mimicking the female hormone estrogen and causes cancer, repro-

ductive disorders, asthma and multiple organ damages. Their long time use causes ill effects on the nervous system and red blood cells. Antimony trioxide and Phthalate from Polyethylene terephthalate and Polyvinyl chloride affects the female hormone estrogen and allergies in the children. Cadmium leached from the plastic bags accuses vomiting and heart enlargement. Lead exposure for long time causes degeneration of brain tissues.

Disposal of plastics through land filing evolves noxious additives, colorants and antioxidants are leached off from buried plastic waste that spread into groundwater and impose potential human health hazards. Contamination of plastics in the soil effects agricultural production. Thermal degradation of plastics releases noxious monomers, additives, halogenated hydrocarbons and oxides that adversely affect the human health. The global plastic production and consumption have increased from the last five decades but their actual role as pollutants is uncertain. It is not certain that what level of exposure is caused by plastic waste and mechanism of their effect on human health is still not clear. Recycling of waste plastics can be done to reduce the hazardous impact on the environment. Recycling of the plastics helps to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Plastics picking and their recycling is an old business in India. Now this is a well-established urban-survival tactic in mega-cities that supports

up to 0.5% of the poor population in many cities and saves the 10-15 per cent of the total waste management costs through the volume of plastic waste. Many small scale industries create job opportunities for many people for collection and recycling of plastic waste. Cottage industries recycling is still considered as unauthorized as the process often is done in closed doors and windows.

The jute or cloth bags can be promoted as the alternatives of plastics bags. It should be noted that in order to make paper bags we need to cut trees which ultimately can affect our lives. Toxic plastic such as polyvinyl chloride can be replaced with relatively less toxic polyethylene or metalloene polyolefin which have little effect on the environment. Biodegradable plastic bags can be used and advance research is required to develop biodegradable plastics. Bioplastics are biodegradable, non-petroleum in feedstock and supportive for farm sector. On this particular day, let us pledge to do whatever we can to do to protect our environment. We can avoid using our car on this day and save petrol and free the atmosphere from some pollution. We can recycle the papers and stop using plastic bags. We should make collective efforts to protect the environment. Proper legislation and the enhancement of ecological consciousness through education are the best ways to solve the problem of plastic pollution.

(The writer is Sr. Scientist & Head of KVK, Reasi, SKUAST-J).