

ORGAN DONATION

Organ donation is very important in the country. Organ donation saves many lives. The people of the country have not yet become aware about organ donation, but it is very important to make the public aware about it. People in the country are afraid to donate organs. It is very important to remove this feeling of people.

The donating organs of a dead person come forth as a new life for many people so people should decide about organ donation while they are alive.

In today's time, people can fill the form for their organ donation even when they are alive, so that after their death, the living organs can be transferred to another person's body and people's lives can also be saved.

Although the population of all countries is increasing almost, but if compared, the demand for body parts is very high here and the supply is very less. There are many such patients in the world, who lose their lives in the hope of donors, but they do not find anyone to donate their organs. According to a figure, there is a demand of about two lakh kidneys in India.

Organ donation is the greatest work in the world, because if one person's life is saved by your organ donation, then there can be no better work than this. It is very important to spread awareness among people about organ donation. Presently there is a dire need of organ donation in the country. Everyday hundreds of people are dying due to failure of body parts, because they are not able to get other organs in time.

Significance of Vyas Purnima

■ PURAN CHAND SHARMA

Vyas Purnima or Guru Purnima is the most significant and extraordinarily special event which enlightens the whole world about the importance of Guru and highlights his phenomenal role in architecting his disciple's personality to lead a purposeful worldly life. His contribution in laying down the rock solid foundation of universal Sanatan Sanskriti has been tremendous and unprecedented. Sage Vyas's birthday happens to be on Purnima of Ashad Maas every year as per Vikrami Samvat and this year it falls on 3rd July according to Gregorian calendar. Therefore, it is also called as Vyas Purnima. I deem it imperative to narrate a brief account of Mehrishi Vyas with a view to apprise the valuable readers about his outstanding achievements in the field of ancient culture and Literature. Even in today's scenario Indian people in the country and people living abroad do celebrate this auspicious occasion as Guru Purnima by paying obeisance to their respective Gurus and Teachers and also offer them hearty thanks and regards for knowledge, invaluable life lessons, shaping and developing their personality on the desired spiritual path.

Guru Purnima gains added significance because of Gautam Buddha having delivered his first spiritual sermon among his devotees on the day of Ashad Purnima at Sarnath. This day is also famous for Lord Shiva having imparted knowledge to Saptarishis as Adi Guru. The word Guru has distinct meaning GU means Ignorance and RU means Remover e.i. Guru means a person who is instrumental in removing ignorance from our life. Devotees treat it as very special day to praise and glorify the selfless contributions of a Guru or Teacher in the ancient times and pray from the core of their hearts that modern Gurus and teachers also draw inspiration and get transformed thinking with the positive mindset that prayer is answered at the appropriate time. Vyas Purnima also reminds us about the Guru Shishya bonding in the earlier times. This is a kind of pure relationship that helps the students achieve greater heights in life and symbolizes the unique Guru Shishya Parampara in our great country. Legendary sage Ved Vyasa also known as Krishana Dwaipana was born to ascetic Prashara and Satyawati. He is credited with the composition and compilation of epic of Mahabharata for which Shree Ganesh, elephant God acted as his scribe. Further the credit of dividing the Vedas, the divine scriptures into four distinct traditional collections namely 1.Samveda 2.Rigveda 3.Yajurveda 4. Atharvaveda. He also painstakingly composed Puranas which are the epitome of our everlasting supreme spiritual knowledge. In true sense of the term Mehrishi Ved Vyasa played a very effective and leading role in establishing India as Vishav Guru in the world. While discussing and deliberating upon the added significance of Vyas or Guru Purnima we draw the inference that it was largely concerned with basic and very essential moral education. At that point of time Education of the entire country was in the safer and holy hands of enlightened sages and Gurus who imparted holistic education inclusive of religious, spiritual, social and complete military training irrespective of caste, creed and colour.

The ruling class had no stakes or special role in working of the Gurukulas. However, they were obliged to obey the commands of sages for rendering needed services to their disciples and the society as a whole. Guru Purnima or Vyas Purnima always occurs on Ashad Purnima which heralds the rainy season, therefore, during this period of time, the ascetics had evolved a tradition to move out of their hermitages in this bit unfavourable season in the forests and plan scheduled visits to the common masses in the rural areas for offering religious, spiritual and value based practical guidance for leading an ideal and meaningful life in this temporal life. They used to do this by way of living in the families of their devotees, having hassle free interaction with the members of the family, patiently listening to their prickly experiences and enlightening them to wriggle out of the self woven worldly cocoon. It was, therefore, a well thought out strategy and proactive constructive thinking to utilize this lean period for keeping the society together and fully updated with the needed knowledge and general awareness coupled with their duties and obligations in respect of safety and security of all fellow citizens and the country as a whole.

This kind of system and mutual arrangement functioned effectively and efficiently for centuries together despite many upheavals and tornados and still serves as a rich source of inspiration and motivation for the upcoming generations and is quintessential for survival of our Sanatan Sanskriti which is capable of rejuvenating the dwindling world order with perfection in these hard times. Our commitment and determination to keep alive such age old traditions and enlighten our Indian brothers and sisters to vigorously observe and celebrate these cultural events with enthusiasm would be a great national service in our line of duty as a responsible and dutiful citizen. The most remarkable inference drawn from ideas and thoughts expressed herein above on Vyas Purnima deliver a great message for the dispensation and Indian masses that we must diligently not only preserve our cultural heritage as well as knowledge churned out by our learned sages but also pass it on to our upcoming progeny and keep the Nation progressive and vibrant. At this crucial juncture we have allowed Education to be grossly commercialized. Moral and Yog education does not find reasonable space in the curriculum. Accordingly products of modern educational system are half baked, imperfect sans moral values and discipline. They happen to be self centred and too possessive. The present system is producing Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers, Leaders, officers, teachers and administrators but not responsible and dedicated citizens. Corruption is ruling the roost. Teaching is a highly specialized profession. Every Tom, Dick and Harry can't be a teacher. The Govt. of the times must evolve a fool proof system of selection of specialized teachers to bring about sweeping changes in the education system for the best of results in every walk of life. If man is cultured and properly educated, he can successfully handle any assignment with fruitful end results in any sphere of life. We can imbibe desired motivation and inspiration from our revered Gurus on the festive occasion of Vyas Purnima to take our Nation to the zenith of glory.

Combat the crisis of food wastage

■ DR. BANARSI LAL

India is at first rank in milk production and second in fruits and vegetables after China in the world. But India is the world's biggest waster of food and a high proportion of the food that India produces never reaches to the consumers. India is already struggling to feed its increasing population and if wastage of food is not prevented then its current food crisis can worsen significantly in the coming years. One-third of the world's malnourished children live in India. 35.7% of children in India are underweight. Almost half of all childhood deaths are attributed to malnutrition. Food is wasted from the point of production to the final consumption. The food wastage represents wastage of various resources used in production such as soil, water, seed, fertilizers, labour etc.

Food wastage has various socio-economic and environmental impacts. Food is very scarce for the many poor people but luxury for many rich people. A good amount of wasted food can be fed to many hungry people. 14 per cent of India's population is undernourished. Child malnutrition is a chronic and longstanding problem in India. The bane of child and maternal malnutrition is responsible for 15 per cent of India's total disease burden.

37.4 per cent of Indian children are stunted and 21 Per cent are wasted. Stunted children are those who have a low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition.

The crisis of child malnutrition in India has often been attributed to historical antecedents such as poverty, inequality and food shortage. India launched the Poshan Abhiyan, a flagship national nutrition mission to improve the nutrition

among the children, pregnant women and lactating mothers in 2017.

Poshan Abhiyan aims to reduce the malnutrition among the children by facilitating inter-departmental convergence, real-time monitoring, intensified health and nutrition services for the first 1000 days. Children malnutrition in India is a complex problem that needs a systematic overhaul of the public administration and service delivery system. Some innovative interventions are needed to address this issue.

Food wastage is not less than a social delinquency. Between 33-50 per cent of all food produced globally is never eaten and the value of this wasted food is worth over \$ 1 trillion. 1 person out of 9 on the planet are malnourished or starved. Each of them can be fed sufficiently if we can avoid the wastage of food. It is estimated that every year around 21 million tonnes of wheat is wasted in India and only 10 per cent of food is kept in cold storage in India. There is poor supply food chain management in cereals, pulses, oilseeds, vegetables etc. resulting in the huge amount of wastage. With the wastage of food various inputs and natural resources are also wasted. For example, 25 per cent of water is wasted even as millions of people still don't have access to drinking water and 300 million barrels of oil is also wasted to produce the wasted food. Moreover, manpower and electricity are also wasted. Food wastage also causes land degradation by 45 per cent due to deforestation, unsustainable farming practices; excessive ground water extraction etc. Food wastage is the national economic loss. According to the sources, India loses around 58,000 crores due to food wastage annually.

Food decay also causes emission of

harmful gases. For instance, decaying of paddy causes methane production. Food wastage has a major impact on the climate change.

Food wastage should be avoided in order to provide the food to the poor people. The initiatives like India Food Banking Network are assisting to provide the food to the poor people. There is a need to play the pivotal role in the prevention of food wastage in India. A proper strategy should be framed at the national level so that the surplus of food can become an advantage for the poor people. Hunger and food wastage are the two sides of the same coin. The cycle of food cannot be broken without channelizing the wastage of food. By preventing the wastage of food we can do justice with the hungry people, our economy and planet Earth. We need to plan out our meal and should purchase the food items which we actually need during the week. About 20 per cent food items purchased in the urban areas are thrown away. A list of family weekly consumption should be prepared. One should have the clear cut idea how much one buys and how much one consumes. The food at home should be cooked in such a way that there is no excess.

To cook the extra food to keep in the refrigerator is not a healthy practice. Items should be purchased according to their shelf life. Vegetables should be cooked on priority basis because they are perishable in nature. Canned and bottled food should be consumed before the expiry dates. Spoiled food can be used for the compost making. Vigilance should be kept on canteens, hotels, NGOs etc. who deal with the food. If 40 per cent of food is left to rot then India will be unable to provide enough food to the increasing population. The problem of food wastage has been a

problem for decades and is worsening with time. It was only when the COVID-19 pandemic came along in 2020 that many of us taking note. The pandemic not only exposed the problems of food waste but also compounded them. Government-led mechanism is needed to eradicate this problem and a comprehensive strategy should be framed by involving the civil society and private sectors to overcome this grave problem. By managing this gigantic issue we can handle social, economic and environmental ill-effects. It is estimated that the Indians waste as much food as the whole of United Kingdom consumes. Food wastage is a burning issue in India. Indian streets, garbage bins, landfills etc. have sufficient proof to prove it. Weddings, households, social and family functions, canteens, hotels etc. spew out so much food. It has been observed that around 40% of the food is wasted in India. About 21 million tonnes of wheat is wasted in India and 50% of all food across the world meets the same fate and never reaches to the poor people. Food wastage is not an indication of hunger or pollution only but also has many economic problems in the country. Only government policies are not only responsible for the wastage of food but our culture and traditions are also playing a major role in this case. In India, the bigger the party, the more wastage of food is observed. Food wastage is a critical problem. The food which is being wasted annually can be processed, mean it can be available in raw form or in bottled form at a reasonable price. By the transportation, cold storage and food processing facilities food wastage can be avoided. Wastage of food at individual level should also be avoided.

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

National Research Foundation: a strive towards creating ecosystem of research, innovation & creativity in accordance with NEP-2020

■ DR. VISHAL SHARMA

This article is based on the recent decision of the Union Cabinet which approved the National Research Foundation (NRF) Bill, 2023, in Parliament on Wednesday, June 28, 2023. This bill establishes the National Research Foundation (NRF) as the apex body responsible for providing "high-level strategic direction" to scientific research in the country, in line with the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP-2020). (https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1935895)

Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, during the inauguration of the 106th session of the Indian Science Congress-2019, delivered a momentous speech and recalled the famous slogan coined by former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji (Hail the soldier, hail the farmer, hail science). Further, he said that it was now time to take a step further and emphasize the need to further progress by focusing on research and development in the country. He added the new word "Anusandhan" (research) to the slogan, and introduced an expanded version of the slogan. (Hail the soldier, hail the farmer, hail science, hail research). In addition to this significant statement, the Prime Minister also introduced the historic National Education Policy-2020 (NEP-2020) with the vision of restoring India's past glory as the "Vishva Guru" (world leader in education & Research).

To advance further in this direction, the Union Cabinet approved the National Research Foundation (NRF) Bill, 2023, in Parliament on Wednesday, June 28, 2023. This bill establishes the National Research Foundation (NRF) as the apex body responsible for providing "high-level strategic direction" to scientific research in the country, in line with the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP-2020). The NRF will be established with an estimated total cost of ₹50,000 crore over the period 2023-2028. The bill also repeals the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), which was established by an act of Parliament in 2008, and incorporates its functions into

the NRF, which has an expanded mandate covering activities beyond those of the Board.

As per the press release by Press Information Bureau, Government of India (https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1935895), the Department of Science & Technology (DST) will be the "administrative" department of NRF. The NRF will be governed by a Governing Board consisting of eminent researchers and professionals from across disciplines. The Prime Minister (PM) will be the ex-officio President of the Board and the Union Minister of Science & Technology and Union Minister of Education will be the ex-officio Vice-Presidents. The NRF's functioning will be governed by an Executive Council chaired by the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India.

How NRF will be a game changer for research and innovation in the country:

NRF will play a crucial role in initiating, developing, and promoting research and development (R&D) activities to foster a culture of research and innovation across colleges, universities, research institutions, and R&D laboratories throughout India; The NRF is designed to ensure equitable conduct and funding of scientific research among all stakeholders involved; Currently, there are limitations on private sector collaboration and funding for R&D projects in educational institutes, with only a few prominent institutes and IITs enjoying such opportunities. The NRF aims to streamline the process of investment in R&D and encourage academia to collaborate with private research organizations; The NRF will facilitate greater private sector participation in research funding, with an anticipated investment of up to ₹36,000 crore from the private sector over a span of five years. This will help to boost India's R&D ecosystem and create new opportunities for innovation; The NRF will also provide easy funding access for innovative projects and startups, ensuring that even innovators from remote and far-flung villages of the country receive assistance for their innovative endeavors. This approach will foster an innovative and startup culture nationwide; The NRF will foster collab-

orations among industries, academia, government departments, and research institutions. It will establish an interface mechanism that allows industries and state governments to actively participate and contribute alongside scientific and line ministries. This will help to pool resources and expertise, and will facilitate the transfer of technology from the lab to the market; One of the key focuses of the NRF will be to create a policy framework and putting in place regulatory processes that encourage collaboration and increased spending by the industry on R&D. This will help to make India a global leader in research and innovation.

In conclusion, the establishment of the National Research Foundation (NRF) is a significant step in India's efforts to become a global leader in science and technology. The NRF will provide the much-needed strategic direction and funding for research and development in India. This will help to foster a culture of innovation and creativity in the country and contribute to India's economic growth and development. The Bill seeks to ensure equitable funding and conduct of scientific research, with a particular focus on encouraging private sector collaboration and investment in R&D projects. This initiative will not only facilitate greater industry participation but also create opportunities for startups and individuals from diverse backgrounds to receive funding and support for their innovative projects. The NRF will serve as a catalyst for collaboration among academia, industries, government departments, and research institutions, facilitating knowledge exchange and driving progress in various sectors. NRF will provide an excellent opportunity for academia, industry, and research institutions to work together on the most pressing challenges of our country to make India the frontrunner in research and innovation. With the NRF's establishment, India is poised to foster a vibrant ecosystem of research and innovation, paving the way for scientific advancements and socio-economic growth in the country.

(The writer is HOD Electronics, Govt. MAM College Jammu and Fulbright Climate Fellow, USA, Commonwealth Fellow, UK).

Poonch Fort: A Heritage Site of Historical Significance

■ SHAHNAZ KOSER

A glimpse of history: The majestic Poonch Fort standing tall since the 16th century. Poonch Fort, also known as Qila Poonch, is a Historic Fort located in the Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir. The fort was built by Raja Rustam Khan in the 16th century and was later rebuilt and expanded by various rulers, including the Mughals and the Dogras. The fort is a testament to the region's rich history and cultural heritage and is a must-visit destination for anyone interested in history and architecture.

History and Significance of Poonch Fort: Poonch Fort has a rich history and cultural significance in the region. The fort was built by Raja Rustam Khan in the 16th century and was later expanded by various rulers, including the Mughals and the Dogras. The fort was strategically located on a hilltop overlooking the Poonch River and served as a defensive structure to protect the region from invading armies. The importance of this Fort was many fold when Poonch was a separate state which was ruled by the Raja's of the time it may be noted that the Poonch was a separate state before 1947 and it's boundaries were expanded including District Bagh, District Sudhmatti, District Rawalakote, District Pallandri and the area of Poonch state was touching to Mirpur District, Muzaffarabad District of J&K occupied Kashmir one side and district Reasi and present district Rajouri was also falling under the jurisdiction of Poonch state.

Over the years, Poonch Fort played a key role in the region's history, including the Anglo-Sikh Wars and the Indian Rebellion of



1857. The fort was also an important center of culture and learning, with several poets, scholars, and musicians visiting the fort to seek patronage.

Architecture of Poonch Fort: Poonch Fort is an architectural marvel, with its unique blend of Mughal and Dogra architectural style and its walls are very thick in meters and the material used in it's construction was sophisticated. The fort is spread over an area of 4 acres and is built on a hilltop, offering stunning views of the surrounding mountains and valleys.

The fort has several features that reflect the

region's cultural heritage, including the Sheesh Mahal, a room with beautiful glass-work; the Divan-i-Khas, a hall for private audience; and the Rang Mahal, a palace for the royal family. The fort also has several temples and mosques, including the Jama Masjid and the Noori Chamb.

Challenges and Opportunities: While Poonch Fort is a testament to the region's rich history and cultural heritage, it also faces several challenges and opportunities. One of the biggest challenges is the lack of maintenance and conservation of the fort. The fort is in a state of disrepair, with several parts of the

fort crumbling or damaged due to neglect and lack of maintenance.

However, there are also several opportunities for the development of tourism in the region. The fort's historical significance and architectural beauty offer immense potential for the development of cultural tourism in the region. The development of infrastructure and facilities for tourists can also provide employment opportunities for the local population.

Conservation Efforts: The conservation and restoration of Poonch Fort is a priority for the authorities and the local population. The Department of Archaeology and Museums, Jammu and Kashmir, has initiated several conservation and restoration projects for the fort. These projects include the restoration of the Sheesh Mahal and the Divan-i-Khas, the conservation of the fort's walls and gateways, and the development of a museum to showcase the fort's history and cultural significance.

Poonch Fort is a heritage site of historical significance, reflecting the region's rich history and cultural heritage. While the fort faces several challenges, including neglect and lack of maintenance, there are also several opportunities for the development of tourism in the region. The conservation and restoration of the fort are a priority for the authorities and the local population, and with its unique blend of Mughal and Dogra architectural styles and historical significance, Poonch Fort is a must-visit destination for anyone interested in history and architecture. To boost tourism in the region special attention of the authorities is required for the maintenance, renovation and protection of this Historical Fort.