

POSHAN PROJECT

The Poshan Abhiyan, also known as the National Nutrition Mission or Poshan Project, is a flagship initiative of the Government of India aimed at addressing malnutrition and promoting holistic development, especially among children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers. Launched in March 2018, the project operates under the Ministry of Women and Child Development with a vision to ensure a malnutrition-free India by 2022. At its core, the Poshan Abhiyan seeks to reduce stunting, undernutrition, anemia, and low birth weight among children. It adopts a multi-sectoral approach, integrating various departments such as Health, Education, Rural Development, and Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) to tackle malnutrition comprehensively. The initiative emphasizes the convergence of services and schemes to maximize impact and reach. One of the key strategies of the Poshan Abhiyan is behavior change communication, which involves raising awareness and promoting positive nutrition practices at the community level. This includes educating caregivers about the importance of breastfeeding, complementary feeding, proper nutrition during pregnancy, and the utilization of available government schemes such as the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and the Mid-Day Meal Scheme.

Another crucial aspect of the Poshan Abhiyan is the use of technology for real-time monitoring and tracking of nutrition-related interventions.

Blood donation saves lives

■ SURJIT SINGH FLORA

Blood Donor Day is celebrated on June 14 every year to recognize and appreciate the wonderful contribution of blood donors across the world. This global event initiated by the World Health Organization (WHO) aims to create awareness about the importance of voluntary blood donation and its life-saving impact on those in need. World Blood Donor Day serves as a platform to thank individuals who selflessly donate their blood, thereby playing a vital role in saving lives and improving healthcare systems. It aims to encourage more people to donate blood regularly and address the ongoing challenge of blood shortage in many countries. Every year, World Blood Donor Day adopts a special theme to focus on different aspects of blood donation. In These themes often highlight the importance of diverse blood donors, such as young people, women, or specific communities, in ensuring a stable and safe blood supply. Through various events, campaigns and educational programs, World Blood Donor Day aims to The aim is to create awareness, dispel myths and misconceptions about blood donation, and motivate individuals to participate in this noble act of giving. 2024 theme is " 20 years of celebrating giving: thank you blood donors! The 20th anniversary of World Blood Donor Day presents a valuable occasion to express gratitude to blood donors worldwide for their life-saving contributions throughout the years and acknowledge the significant impact they have had on both patients and donors. Now is an opportune time to tackle ongoing obstacles and expedite advancements towards a future where safe blood transfusion is accessible to all.

World Blood Donor Day: A Historical Perspective

World Blood Donor Day: World Blood Donor Day was officially established by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2004. It was recognized as an annual global event during the 58th World Health Assembly in 2005, which aims to promote awareness of the importance of blood donation. The roots of blood donation can be traced back to ancient times, with important contributions from individuals such as Richard Lower, an English doctor.

Lower's pioneering work on blood circulation and the functioning of the cardiopulmonary system, as documented in his book Tractatus de Corde, had a profound impact. He was the first to explore the scientific aspects of blood donation and successfully transfused blood between two dogs, with no significant side effects. Lower's fundamental discoveries laid the foundation for our understanding of blood circulation and paved the way for advances in the field of blood donation.

World Blood Donor Day: Purpose

World Blood Donor Day: The objectives of World Blood Donor Day are to appreciate and honor blood donors, inspire new donors, encourage regular donation for better patient outcomes, ensure a reliable blood supply worldwide, voluntary non- Emphasizing the importance of for-profit donations, and advocating for investment and support. In national blood programs at all levels of government. These efforts aim to improve the quality of life for people who depend on blood transfusions, promote universal access to safe blood products, and build sustainable blood donation systems globally. Celebrating and thanking life savers: It highlights the importance of honoring and thanking blood donors and encourages more people to get involved in this noble cause.

Regular Blood Donation: Emphasizing the transformative impact of regular blood donation on the quality of life for blood donation-dependent patients and the need to create a safe blood supply globally. Voluntary Unremunerated Donation: Highlighting the important role of voluntary, unpaid blood and plasma donation in ensuring safe blood products for everyone, regardless of their circumstances.

Promoting Blood Donation: World Blood Donor Day seeks to motivate more individuals to engage in voluntary blood donation. By emphasizing the indispensability of blood and its potential to save lives, the day is a reminder of the power of individuals to make a meaningful impact through the act of donating blood.

Awareness Raising: The day plays an important role in raising awareness about the global demand for safe blood and its importance within healthcare systems. This underscores the need for safe access to blood for emergencies, medical procedures, and individuals with life-threatening conditions such as anemia and bleeding disorders.

Honoring Blood Donors: World Blood Donor Day serves as an opportunity to express gratitude to the countless blood donors around the world who generously contribute their blood to save lives. It acknowledges their selfless and unpaid efforts, while also highlighting their vital role in healthcare and the profound impact they have on individuals, families and communities.

World Blood Donor Day: Finally

World Blood Donor Day: Finally, World Blood Donor Day is an important global event that highlights the importance of voluntary blood donation. It serves as a platform to encourage more individuals to become blood donors and to recognize the selfless contribution of existing donors. By promoting regular blood donation, World Blood Donor Day plays an important role in ensuring a sustainable and safe blood supply worldwide. This day is a reminder of the power that every individual has to make a positive difference through the act of donating blood. If you consistently donate blood, you will have the opportunity to feel good about assisting your fellow humans when they are in need of assistance. Due to the fact that it is divided into packed red blood cells, platelets, plasma, and occasionally white blood cells, a single unit of blood may be of assistance to several individuals. This is because each of these components can be sent to various individuals who need just that particular component. Additionally, the act of donating blood serves as a reminder that at some point in the future, we could be the one who needs it, and we can be thankful that we have "awarded the favor." And if we never have a need for it, we may be content with whatever happens.

Donating blood is a simple but effective method of making a positive impact on the lives of other people and making a contribution to the overall health and happiness of society as a whole. Consider donating blood on a regular basis if you are qualified to do so in order to assist in the saving of lives and to provide assistance to those who are in need.

(The writer is a veteran journalist and freelance writer based in Brampton).

Tulmulla-An Abode of Mata Kheer Bhawani

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

This year Mela Kheer Bhawani falls on 14th of June Friday 2024 and it is expected that on this occasion, people in large numbers will throng Tulmulla, offer prayers and seek blessings from the goddess and people will pray for world peace and welfare of humanity. Tulmulla is rightly an abode or dwelling place of Mata Kheer Bhawani and the feminine power resides in this picturesque village. The legend is it, that Mata Ragnya Bhagwati which Kheer Bhawani is also called was pleased on the penance of Ravana the then king of Shri Lanka and he took her to Lanka. But she was dismayed by the demonic works of Ravana and told Hanuman to lift her to Kashmir, where she permanently resides at village Tulmul. Kheer Bhawani, Ksheer Bhawani or Ragnya Devi shrine is a Hindu temple situated at a distance of 25 Kms north-east of Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir's Tulmulla village in Ganderbal district. It is dedicated to Hindu goddess Kheer Bhawani whose temple stands in the middle of a scared spring and it is believed that the color of this spring changes and generally it is milky, but it turns red when some big misfortune falls and thus it has been seen that on the onset of militancy in Kashmir and the resultant exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits, the color of this holy spring turned red and it was the forewarning for the big misfortune that happened in the paradise of the world. As is the custom with Hindu deities, the goddess has many names including Ragnya or Rajna, along with variations in honorifics such as Devi, Mata or Bhagwati. The term Kheer refers to a milk and rice pudding which is so dear to Mata and it is offered to propitiate the goddess .Kheer

Bhawani is sometimes translated as Milk Goddess .The worship of Kheer Bhawani is universal among the Hindus of Kashmir and most of them worship her as their protective patron deity Kuladevi. The sacred spring here has its own attached belief and the Kashmiri Pandits hold this shrine in great reverence and veneration and it is believed that Mata Kheer Bhawani fulfills the desires of the devotees who worship her with great dedication. An yearly mela is held on the occasion of Zvishta Ashtami which falls in the Hindu month of Zaishta in the second fortnight of the month called Shukal Paksh Ashtami.

On this auspicious day ,people from far and wide visit this shrine, offer Kheer, milk, flower, water and seek blessings of goddess. On this pious occasion, KP's and other Hindus from Delhi ,Jammu and other places visit Tulmulla and seek blessings of goddess Ragnya Bhagwati. J&K government should be commended and praised for arranging free buses, boarding and lodging for the yatris .There is great hustle and bustle on the occasion of Zvishta Ashtami and Kashmiri Pandits observe fast on this day to propitiate goddess .Kashmiri Pandits also observe fast on every Shukalpaksh Ashtami and it is peculiar that Kashmiri Pandits only observe fast on the Ashtami of Shukalpaksh throughout the year and there is a great legend associated with the fasting. The observance of fasting on Shukla Paksha Ashtami by Kashmiri Pandits is a testament to their unwavering faith and devotion to Mata Kheer Bhawani. The fast by Kashmiri Pandits is on the Shukla Paksha Ashtami of every month is not only a religious ritual ,but a proof of their unwavering faith ,devotion and communion with the goddess.

.The KP's where ever they are abstain from eating mutton ,fish ,eggs chicken ,onion ,tomato and, carrot on this auspicious day .The Kheer Bhawni mela is the largest gathering of Hindus in the region following the Amarnath Pilgrimage .Maharaja Partap Singh of Jammu and Kashmir and Maharaja Hari Singh contributed to building and renovation of the temple .Dr Karan Singh has unflinching faith and belief in Ragnya Bhagwati and he usually pays visits to this shrine off and on .There are other temples/shrines dedicated to Kheer Bhawani in Kashmir,such as Mata Kheer Bhawani temple at Tikker , Kupwara, Manzgam in Kulgam district and a shrine of Tripur Sundari at village Devsar also in Kulgam district and at all these shrines mela is held on Zyastha Ashtami and large number of devotees offer prayer at these sacred places. The Kheer Bbhawani mela or festival sees the annual congregation of Kashmiri Hindus, other pilgrims and tourists .The mela is called as Jyeshtha Aahtami mela or popularly known as Kheer Bhawani mela .It is a public holiday in Kashmir division. Kashmiri Pandits celebrate this Mela with great enthusiasm ,fervor ,devotion and dedication to Mata Kheer Bhawani .In every Kashmiri Pandit household Kheer is prepared on this day and offered to goddess and then its Prasad is taken .The mela was threatened during terrorism and Hindu exodus of 1990.Mela was restored with dedicated efforts of Indian army contingent placed at Ganderbal .Now contingent of 115 BN CRPF is deployed at temple complex for so many years. This shrine is one of the few exceptions where Hindu priests never left the Mandir despite serious terrorist threats .The

mention of Kheer Bhawani is found in Kalhana's Rajtarangini .Kalhana writes that the sacred spring of Tulmula is situated in a marshy ground .Thousands of years ago, floods inundated the spring and temple .Kashmir's Yogi Krishana Pandit Thaploo of Bohri Kadal ,Srinagar had a dream in which goddess appeared to him and directed him to the location of the holy spring .It is also mentioned in the Bhrigu Samhita. Abu'l -Fazi ibn Mubark in his book Aini-Akbari mentions the area of Tul Mula extending over a region of hundred bighas of land, which used to sink in marshy lands during summer .Some people are of the opinion that there was a mulberry tree near holy spot of Kheer Bhawani which ,in local language ,is called tul mul .But tul mul is also derived from the Sanaskrit word atulya mulya meaning great value .The horifices of Kheer Bhawani are Maharagya Devi, Ragnya Devi, Rajni, Ragini, Ragniya, Ragnya Bhagwati , Maharagya .After the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits,a replica of shrine Kheer Bhawani had been constructed at Janipur Jammu which is called Bhawani Nagar and annually a mela is held here and the KP's and other Hindus visit this place on Zyashta Astami also on all Shuklapaksh Ashtami's of the year and this Bhawani Nager Shrine is frequented by a large number of devotees .A yearly Hawan is also solemnized on the auspicious occasion of Zyastha Astami and a great number of people take part in the Hawan and partake Prasad. May Mata Ryagna bring peace and prosperity to Jammu and Kashmir and end militancy and bless people.

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

Shifting Dynamics Post Galwan

■ BHARATH NANDA

The Galwan Valley clash on 15-16 June 2020 marked a significant turning point in Sino-Indian relations, leading to profound shifts in the geopolitical landscape and strategic calculus of both nations. This incident, the deadliest confrontation between Indian and Chinese forces in over four decades, has had far-reaching implications for bilateral ties, regional stability, and global geopolitics.

Historically, the Sino-Indian relationship has been fraught with tension, rooted in a long-standing border dispute. The Galwan Valley clash, occurring amidst the backdrop of these unresolved territorial issues, escalated tensions to an unprecedented level. The immediate aftermath saw both countries reinforcing their military presence along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), with India ramping up infrastructure development and China augmenting its logistical capabilities. There has been an overall increase in India's deployment against China in all three sectors- the northern, central and eastern sectors. Prior deployment by India directed towards China included 14 Corps based in Leh, 17 Corps and 33 Corps based in West Bengal, and 3 Corps and 4 Corps in the eastern sector.

India deployed over 68,000 Army soldiers, around 90 tanks and nearly 330 BMP infantry combat vehicles, radar systems, artillery guns and other weapon systems are deployed to eastern Ladakh from across the country along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) after the deadly clashes in the Galwan Valley.India has also rapidly increased the construction of roads, bridges, airstrips, and

other logistical facilities to support military operations and enhance border infrastructure near LAC post Galwan incident.However, it's worth mentioning that deployment numbers are subject to change and can fluctuate based on specific events and circumstances.

China, on the other hand, in total, roughly 20,000 PLA soldiers are assessed to be deployed over the 250-mile front in the Aksai Chin along the LAC. China has rapidly reinforced its military infrastructure which included the construction of new roads, bunkers, and helipads, alongside the deployment of additional troops and advanced weaponry. In the western sector, Beijing deployed one border regiment, backed by 02 divisions from the Xinjiang and Tibet Military Districts, with 04 combined arms brigades (CAB) in reserve. In the eastern sector, 03 light-to-medium CABs were deployed from other Theater commands. Additionally, China stationed 03 more CABs in the central sector, enhancing their overall military presence along the LAC. Key areas of focus included the strategically important regions of Eastern Ladakh, the Pangong Tso Lake area, and the Depsang Plains.

PLA has demanded the creation of an enlarged buffer zone of 15 to 20 kilometres in the Depsang Plains presently under India's control. This is in addition to the 18-20 km of territory from Y Junction/Bottleneck to Patrolling Points 10,11, 11A, 12 and 13, the access to which has been physically denied by the PLA since May 2020. This proposal was reportedly made during the 18th round of Corps Commander level talks held in April 2023.

In response to the Galwan clash, India

undertook several strategic measures to promote its defense posture. This included a significant increase in defense spending, expedited procurement of advanced weaponry, and a focus on enhancing surveillance capabilities. India also sought to strengthen alliances with other regional powers, notably through the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) with the United States, Japan, and Australia. These moves signify a shift towards a more assertive and self-reliant defence strategy.

Diplomatically, the post-Galwan period has been marked by a cautious engagement between India and China. Multiple rounds of military and diplomatic talks have been held to de-escalate tensions, but progress has been slow and often contentious. The trust deficit between the two nations has widened, complicating efforts to achieve a lasting resolution.

The Galwan incident has also reverberated on the global stage, impacting international geopolitics. It has drawn attention to the Indo-Pacific region as a critical arena for great power competition, with the United States and its allies viewing India as a pivotal counterbalance to China. Consequently, the U.S.-India strategic partnership has deepened, encompassing areas such as defence cooperation, intelligence sharing, and joint military exercises. Furthermore, the European Union and other global players have shown increased interest in the stability of the Indo-Pacific, recognizing the broader implications of Sino-Indian tensions for global trade and security. The Galwan clash has thus underscored the interconnected nature of regional conflicts and their potential to reshape global alliances and power structures.

Chinese Fake Narratives & Galwan's Truth

■ SINDHIYA GUPTA

The Galwan Valley skirmish of 2020 between Indian and Chinese forces stands as a significant event in recent geopolitical history. Sparked by territorial disputes along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), it escalated tensions between two nuclear-armed nations and drew international attention.

20 Indian Army soldiers, including the Commanding Officer of the 16th Bihar Regiment martyred and up to 40 Chinese soldiers were killed in the Galwan Valley clash. This attack by Chinese border troops was unprovoked and happened after they had agreed to a de-escalation plan in the area. The plan, which involved both sides gradually pulling back their troops to pre-decided positions, was agreed upon during high-level military talks.

"China can fake everything", Chinese officials try to hide actual number of casualties and blame India for conflict, after eight months of silence, China has revealed the identities of four soldiers martyred in the Galwan Valley clash, packaging the information with a carefully crafted narrative. Published by the PLA Daily, the story depicts

PLA troops as heroic underdogs bravely confronting "foreign troops" despite being outnumbered. This David-and-Goliath tale, supported by interviews and diary excerpts, claims that Indian forces crossed the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and attacked the outnumbered Chinese soldiers. Senior Colonel Ren Guoqiang, Spokesman for the Chinese Ministry of National Defense, stated that Chinese border troops acted heroically to safeguard national sovereignty and peace along the China-India border. He accused Indian troops of illegally crossing the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in June, provoking and attacking Chinese negotiators, leading to the Galwan Valley clash. China exercised restraint post-clash to maintain bilateral relations and criticized India for misrepresenting the conflict. Emphasizing that historical facts and heroes cannot be altered, he urged media to report objectively. He claimed China remains committed to resolving border disputes through dialogue and negotiation to restore peace.

On other side, on the basis of commercial satellite image and evidence from independent Chinese social media researchers suggests that over 40 Chinese soldiers were killed in the Galwan Valley clash in June 2020, according

to Anthony Klan, editor of Australian investigative newspaper The Klaxon. Klan noted that a year-long investigation revealed that a confrontation on June 5 led to an agreement to remove infrastructure by the Galwan River. However, on June 15, Chinese troops attempted to dismantle a makeshift bridge used by Indian soldiers, sparking a violent clash. At least 38 Chinese soldiers reportedly fell into the icy river and drowned, while China officially claims only four fatalities.

Klan highlighted that China swiftly censored social media discussions about the casualties, with recorded accounts quickly removed, reinforcing suspicions of a higher death toll. Conversations with locals and first-person accounts indicated the number of Chinese casualties to be significantly more than reported. One Weibo user, purportedly a former soldier in the area, claimed that the Chinese army violated mutual agreements by building infrastructure in the buffer zone and expanding patrolling limits since April 2020. This censorship and the removal of social media posts suggest China's intent to minimize discussion on the true extent of the clash's casualties.

The main factor of Chinas narrative about

India is China's deep-rooted mistrust of India stems from a perceived superiority and derision of India's democratic system and colonial legacies. China's hostility is amplified by India's asylum for the Dalai Lama and its rising strategic ambitions. This negativity is evident in China's opposition to India's UN Security Council seat, Nuclear Suppliers Group membership, and terrorist designations at the UN opposition to India's UN Security Council seat, Nuclear Suppliers Group membership, and terrorist designations at the UN.

Same negative factor reflect in the border issue remains central to China-India tensions. China's claims on Arunachal Pradesh, refusal to recognize Aksai Chin as disputed, and attempts to alter the Line of Actual Control (LAC) highlight its strategic stance. China views India's infrastructure improvements and assertive patrolling as a 'forward policy,' reminiscent of Nehru's era, increasing face-offs and reflecting India's readiness to use force. This perspective heightens China's insecurity and perception of India's changing tactics, forecasting fiercer confrontations in times to come .

(The author is a Media Analyst based in Jammu & Kashmir).

YOUR COLUMN

DIALOGUE WITH PAKISTAN

Dear Editor,

NC Chief and former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir has been relentlessly advocating dialogue with Pakistan. He asserts that terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir will not end unless talks are held with Pakistan. What has happened in the past is too well known. At the back of the on-going dialogue in the past, the terrorists have perpetrated attack in Jammu and Kashmir thwarting the bid to ensure peace between the two hostile countries. Pakistan on the ground has done nothing to contain terrorism on the Indian soil except saying that it is also the victim of terrorism. The four attacks that have taken place in Jammu recently have prompted Farooq to advocate for dialogue with Pakistan. Does it mean that India can be cowed down by Pakistan-sponsored terrorism? Yes. Peace must be given a chance. India has been consistently main-

taining that dialogue without breaking the backbone of terrorism does not have any significance. Peace talk on the one hand and terrorism on Indian soil on the other cannot go hand in hand. Fall of bus into a deep gorge in Reasi when the terrorists attacked a bus has claimed nine lives and injured 41 people including six security personnel grievously. Whenever the terrorists have attacked India, they have not been allowed to go scot-free. Either the perpetrators of terrorism have been shot dead or they have been apprehended. If Pakistan thinks that it can leave scar on India through terrorism, it is living in fools' paradise. Pakistan is not interested in anything short of dialogue only on Kashmir issue. If Kashmir is given away to Pakistan and Arunachal Pradesh to China, the border problem 'gets solved'. If peace is bought by giving the territories which are integral parts of India, it would be only peace of graveyard. Posterity will not forgive if the Indian administration plays into the hands of China and Pakistan in territorial matters. India has already been fragmented when a separate state was created on religion grounds. Farooq's loyalty to India does not seem to be total. His love

for Pakistan is so transparent that he mined no words to say that Pakistan is not wearing bangles in response to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's statement that Pak-occupied-Kashmir will be merged with India. He has acted as the spokesman of Pakistan government. Farooq has been trying to instil a sense of fear in the Indian government by saying "Pakistan has atom bombs, and unfortunately that bomb will fall on us". He has gone on record as saying that he vows to restore Article 370 even if it means taking the support of China. This is highly objectionable stand taken by Farooq. A dialogue with Pakistan is seemingly not possible without Pakistan taking steps to rein in terrorists. Eye-for-eye and limb-for-limb may not be the answer to mend fences with Pakistan. But initiative should come more from Pakistan with determination to end hostility with India. If that has to happen, Pakistan should give up its claim over Kashmir. Instead, it should gracefully hand over the P-o-K to India. If the border dispute is buried, no other issues with Pakistan can be insurmountable.

K.V. Seetharamaiah