

INDIA IN G7

India's presence at the G7, though not as a member, holds significant implications for global dynamics. As the world's largest democracy and a rapidly growing economy, India's participation in the G7 meetings has become increasingly crucial in addressing global challenges and shaping the international agenda. Firstly, Despite not being a formal member, India's presence reflects its rising influence in global affairs. As an emerging economic powerhouse and a key player in regional and international diplomacy, India's perspective on various issues, ranging from climate change to economic development, carries weight in G7 discussions. Secondly, India's participation in the G7 provides an opportunity for dialogue and collaboration on pressing global issues. Given its diverse demographic, economic, and environmental challenges, India brings unique perspectives to the table. Issues such as climate change, sustainable development, and global health require collective action, and India's involvement allows for a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to addressing these challenges. Thirdly, India's presence at the G7 offers opportunities for bilateral and multilateral engagements with member countries. The G7 serves as a platform for leaders to engage in discussions on trade, investment, security, and other areas of mutual interest. India's participation enables it to strengthen diplomatic ties, foster economic cooperation, and address shared concerns with G7 member states. INDIA'S engagement with the G7 reflects its commitment to upholding the principles of democracy, pluralism, and multilateralism. By actively participating in international forums, India reaffirms its commitment to a rules-based international order and the peaceful resolution of disputes. As the world undergoes rapid transformations and faces complex challenges, India's proactive engagement with multilateral institutions like the G7 is crucial for shaping a more inclusive, sustainable, and equitable world order.

Airwan Temple of Lord Shiva

■ G L KHAJURIA

Airwan or Eravati is a small village or hamlet approachable by train routes: first from Kathua round 14 kms and second from Sakta Chak just after crossing over Ujh river on Jammu Pathankot National highway around 23 kms from Jammu. From Sakta-Chak, Airwan Links about 12 kms.

Through myths and historical recor, it is reported that this temple is as old as that Kedarnath of Uthrakhand and having testimony of shrine Shakti as that of Rameshwar, Purmandal-Utterbahni temples. Annual festival (Mela) is held on Chaitra Chaudish In March every year. The pilgrims from far flung areas to the extent of Punjab, HP, UP, Haryana and Delhi assemble over here. After holy dip in the natural springs, the pilgrims offers nectar clear water with Belpatri, Chandan and saffron on Shilingram. Over the millionaire Airwan or Eravati was prominently known as the superb abode of Lord Shiva.

The sanctum sanctorum had been named as Paspavati with 101 Natural Springs with nectar clear water. The water gushes out with these springs which is deemed to be very spiritual. Every year, during Charitra Chaudish and Baisakhi, the pilgrims from far flung areas as mentioned earlier throng over here. There are two spacious bathing ghats both ladies and gents. They first of all have a holy dip in these bathing ghats and thence offer sacred water on Shiv Lingams within the temple complex of Lord Shiva, Bel Patri, Chandan and saffron are also besmeared on Shiv Lingam which pleases Lord Shiva and shower blessings. It is believed that the nectar clear water that gushes out from the natural springs is having sanctity of the Ganga river. Even in the Nilamatpurana, Airwana water is reported to be sacred and is possessive religious sanctity and is having the merit in the religious scripts of ancient Kashmiri texts described as holiest. It is further believed that a holy bath on 'Charitra Chaudish' and 'Baisakhi' and meritorious as elsewhere at Purmandal and Utterbehni. On the occasions of solar/lunar eclipse, a path in these springs washes out sins and remove many ailments.

The historical record has it that this temple complex has been constructed by the king Vikramaditya around the 4th century A.D. According to another historical belief, this temple is constructed by legendary hero of Airwain in the honour of his beloved wife Erav and that the way place is nomenclaturised as iravati or Airwan. Mythically, it is also reported that river ravi anciently used to flow not far away from this sanctum sanctorum and those times Ravi used to be called Iravati. As per another prominent belief in Hindu texts, devoted Bhramin from Jasroa has had utmost believe in lord Shiva and used to visit Airwan regularly after crossing over Ujh river. He used to conduct prayers of Lord Shiva in the dense forests. One day Ujh river was fully flooded and it was difficult to cross. But the devoted Brahmin jumped into the river eehoonh 'Jai Shiv Shanker' and he crossed the river . Because of arduous penance by the Bhramin, Lord Shiva was very pleased and as such he appeared in his dreams and told him to reach some 3 kms to the west where he used to worship. Next day, when Bhramin woke up he proceeded the spot but could not succeed. The Bhramin gain went to the temple and again prayed to guide him to the proper spot. Next day Lord Shiva again appeared in his dream and advised him that he would find a cow milking over the pebbles and further advised to excavate the spot and find lord symbol. As per the advice of lord Shiva who had told him to excavate the spot. So accordingly while Bhramin excavating with other locals, it was to be utmost astonishment to see some stains of blood and as such further excavation was stopped and a big Shiv Lingam with all hymns and Puja Arehana was erected. Since the day the Shiv Lingam is worshipped by everyone who so ever visits Airwain.

Within the bigger temple complex, there is a big earthen Diya (Deepak) which remains glittering in mustard jyote round the clock.

It is the ritual of the locals of Kathua and ever from far way places to offer 2 kgs or its denominated quantity of mustard oil after the death of the related person in the locality.

The people have the utter faith that offering the mustard oil showers to the departed soul. The writer has had at most of occasions visited the sanetum sanctorum and has interaction with Shriupendra-Giri head pujari along with his associated Pujaris. He deplorably explained that many authorities frequently come over the historical famed sanctum sanctorum and promise for the improvement of the temple complex but apathetically no headway made till end.

It is, therefore, enjoyed upon the government and the local administration authorities to boost this historical sanctum sanctorum so that this centuries oil heritage of temple tourism is given the face lift.

Apart from the main temple complex there are also various small temples having images of various Gods and Goddesses which warrant their beautification. The area around the sanctum sanctorum need to be afforested with Mulberry trees, Wood apple (Bel Parti), other flowering plants so that the area gives picturesque outlook. A mini recreation park also need to be created under district plan apart from other development incorporated activities. The road links are in a dilapidated conditions which warrant up gradation for sufficient allocations are required to be allocated under district and state plans so as to ensure and facilitate the locals and other visitors and pilgrims alike.

Enhancing Water Resources Management

■ DR. BANARSI LAL

India has the world's 2.45 per cent area and 4% of the world's fresh water resources while India's contribution to the world's population is around 17.31%. India uses about 230 cubic kilometers of groundwater annually which is more than a quarter of the global total, making it the world's largest user of groundwater. We don't realize that water is the scarcest natural endowment in the world. About 90 per cent of the groundwater extracted is used for irrigation and over 60 per cent of the irrigated land in India is supported primarily by groundwater supplies. Out of the total water available on the earth, only 0.007% is available for human consumption. The per capita availability of water in the Asian countries is the lowest in the world. There is a need of overall policy approach to conserve this precious resource. The National Water Policy has allocated the supply of water for drinking, irrigation, ecology, hydropower, agro and non-agro industries and many other uses. The net sown area of the country is around 142 million hectares while the per capita availability of water is declining. Now the alternative left to increase the productivity through improved irrigation methods. The farmers are being educated about the prudent use of irrigation water and metered irrigation water supply. There is a need to recycle the water used by the industries to take care of the continuous increasing demand of industrial water. The agricultural scientists also suggest for reducing the evaporation. There is also the need to tackle the sedimentation of reservoirs. The per capita availability of water varies in the range of 300 to 13754 cubic meters per year with the average per capita availability is 1545 cubic meter in 2011 which was 1829 cubic meters in 2001. The per capita availability of water is reducing due to increase of population pressure. The conditions will go on worsening in future and by 2050 the projected per capita availability of water of 1121 cubic meters would bring the

country on the threshold of water scarce conditions. It is estimated that by 2050 about 76% of population and 70% of area of the country will be on the verge of affected health and economic activities with water availability of less than 1000 cubic meters. It is also estimated that by 2050, 17% of the country population and 22% of the geographical area will be under absolute water scarcity conditions.

Agriculture is the backbone of our country. Rigorous efforts are needed for the agricultural intensification, diversification, value addition, creating employment etc. Irrigation is very helpful for increasing the agricultural production and productivity. Unregulated extraction and non-replenishment has reduced groundwater drastically and deteriorated its quality. The crisis has worsened further due to climate change which causes erratic and intense rainfall. There is need to harness the availability of water. The irrigated area in the country is only around 56 million hectares. As per Metrological Department of India, 76 per cent of the rainfall in India occurs due to Southwest monsoon between June and September except in Tamil Nadu where rainfall occurs in North-East monsoon during October and November. It has been observed that India receives an average annual precipitation of about 4,000 Billion Cubic Meters including snowfall. However because of hydrological, topographical and other constraints, only around 690 Billion Cubic Meters of the available water can be utilized. About 60 per cent of the total water resources comes from the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna system. In fact only 274 Billion Cubic Meters is utilizable from the 1111 Billion Cubic Meters water resource from the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna basin.

There is need of planning for the management of water resources in our country. The demand of water for the industrial and agricultural use is continuously increasing. There

is a need to work out the ways and means for judicious use of water for the industrial and agricultural purposes. The water can be used by recycling system in case of industries. For this purpose the water treatment plants should be established. The evaporation and evapotranspiration losses should be reduced. The mulching material can be used in case of agricultural crops for prevention of evaporation. The agricultural scientists should pay attention on reduction of evapotranspiration. The sedimentation of reservoirs is very important from the water available utilization point of view. The water storage in the dams reduces the intensity of floods. Major, medium and minor irrigation schemes need to be developed. Tank system has lot of scope in case of minor irrigation schemes. There is need for the modernization and renovation of water resources on priority basis. By developing the minor irrigation projects for the farmers, tube wells and bore wells are better options for poverty alleviation. Commercial Banks, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and Co-operative Banks help can be taken for the individual loans for the farmers as well as in cooperatives. Command Area Development Programme can be taken for the achievement of water potential.

Around two-fifth of India's agricultural output comes from ground water and irrigated areas. Rain water harvesting in the rural and urban areas need to be on priority basis. Roof water harvesting is also very helpful in the urban and town areas for water storage. In rural areas rain water harvesting through check dams can meet the local irrigation and drinking water needs of the people. The Government control over the operation and maintenance of irrigation system should be effective. Many external agencies have facilitated both financial and institutional aid in the water sector. Although many initiatives have been implemented but the fact remains that there is no massive enhancement in crop pro-

ductivity. The productivity of crops is still very low even in irrigated areas. The main cause of low productivity is low efficiency in regard to conveyance, distribution and application of irrigation. The irrigated land farmers are not fully satisfied with the irrigation system. Inequality in water distribution is very common. Some fields are damaged due to over irrigation and consequent problem of water logging while some fields lack irrigation. Water drainage is another problem. Sometimes the salt accumulation takes place which comes up to the surface of water causing irreversible damage to the soil. Although the per capita availability of water is gradually declining while the net cultivated area of the country has still remained around 142 million hectares. The only alternative left to increase the productivity of crops is through improved irrigation efficiency. There is need to improve the water use efficiency. It has been observed that if we increase the water use efficiency by 10% then around 14 million hectares more area can be covered under irrigation. Very moderate investment is required to increase the water use efficiency as compared to create the new potential schemes. It is our responsibility to educate and re-educate the farmers about the judicious use of water. Metered irrigation and water audits are required. The harmful effects of over irrigation effects should be discussed with the farmers. Watershed management schemes should be implemented in the rainfed areas to increase the crop productivity. Crop planning and short duration crops should be sown in the areas where there is scarcity of water. The low cost irrigation technologies like simple sprinkler irrigation and drip irrigation system, bio-drainage for controlling water-logging conditions etc. should be implemented. It is hoped that we will be able to mitigate the utilization of water resources.

(The writer is Chief Scientist & Head, KVK, Reasi Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology-Jammu).

Challenges Before Modi Government 3.0

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has a daunting and challenging task of governing the country and managing the contradictions arising out of the coalition government. Modi has to balance the interests and issues facing the government. He has to take all the allies together and keep the flock of coalition partners in unison so as to realize the priorities of the coalition government 3.0. The task of governance is this time tough but not insurmountable but it is expected that Modi will remodel himself according to the new circumstances and changing conditions.

Modi has to manage conflicting interests of the alliance partners for realizing the goals of the new government. The task before the new government is herculean and Modi has to ensure coordination and cooperation of all the alliance partners in order to carry the government for meeting the interests of the people.

Since BJP has fallen short of the simple majority and has only secured 240 Lok Sabha seats which are 32 seats less than 272 seats to form the government on its own. Thus BJP and Modi were constrained to seek the support of its pre poll allies to cobble a coalition of NDA government. Modi has particularly to keep his two coalition partners Nitish Kumar of JD[U] and N. Chandrababu Naidu of TDP who have performed the role of kingmakers happy and contented so that they should not become a headache and problem for the Modi third government.

But the fact is that Nitish Kumar is very uncertain and Chandrababu Naidu is most undependable and there will always be the chances that they will turn coats and switch sides. But one thing is satisfying that Modi is the master strategist and a hard task master and he has mastered the art of managing coalition governments for the last ten years. However in this third inning of Modi, the conditions and circumstances are altogether different. As in his earlier coalition, Modi

had 303 seats with him and he was hardly dependent upon the allies. But presently, Modi has to manage, direct and control a coalition which depends on the pleasure of its two partners who have assembled the necessary majority mark of 272 seats for the government. Modi has to manage a difficult task of keeping the flock of allies together to carry on the work of governance so as to fulfill the aspirations of the people.

Narendra Modi was sworn as the Prime minister for the record third time on Sunday, a rare feat that also came with new challenges as the populist leader was forced to rely on allies to form a government. In the near time, Modi government, may need to spend more, to meet the demands of allies, that helped him secure a majority in parliament, testing the governments purse. Regional parties in Modi's alliance have already demanded more funds for their states, and federal cabinet positions, during negotiations on forming a new coalition government. Andhra Pradesh state's Telugu Desam Party, and Bihar's Janata Dal United, are also pushing longstanding demands to grant special status to their states, which would allow the states to receive more federal development funds on simple terms.

This special status demand by Nitish Kumar to Bihar and such demand by TDP's Chandrababu Naidu will give birth to Pandora box and more and more states will demand special status which will not be in the interests of Indian federation.

The economy has jumped five places to be the fifth largest in the world, in the past decade, under Modi's rule, and he has said he will lift it to the third position. However, the country's per capita income still remains the lowest among G20 nations. "Middle class is the driving force of the country," Modi said at an alliance meeting on Friday.

"In the coming days we will work on increasing middle class savings, improving their quality of life, and seeing what needs to be changed in our

rules to achieve that." Economists believe that Modi 3.0 will not slow down the reforms and to achieve the goal of Vikshit Bharat by 2047, economic reforms and policy reviews need to be continued across multiple sectors, including infrastructure, labour, and manufacturing. After a decade of full majority governance, Modi will now run a coalition government, with the TDP and JD[U] as key partners. Despite being in coalition, experts feel that there won't be much change in new governments economic agenda. Modi government should be committed to bold reforms for realizing the objective of developed India by 2047. These reforms are deemed essential to drive economic growth and development in India. "The often repeated target of becoming a developed country by 2047 requires far-reaching reforms in the factor market, opening up economy and infrastructure development and a thrust towards labour intensive manufacturing to solve the unemployment problem to some extent. PM Modi should not make any compromise on continuance of bold economic reforms with the coalition allies. New government will face real pressure to perform and show results, says International Crisis Group analyst Praveen Donthi. Unemployment has been one of India's biggest problems since the pandemic and rising prices also is a challenge to be encountered by Modi dispensation.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has to lead the world's most populous country for a third straight term, but things could be quite different for him this time. Modi has this time to work in different situation and setting, where he has to adjust himself to the conflicting interests of his allies. His electoral alliance may have come out on top in the weeks long parliamentary polls, but his own BJP fell short of its ambitious targets, forcing Modi into the undesired position of having to rely on coalition partners. This is a reflection of BJP's failure to address key issues in India, according to analysts, who say the new

government faces a number of challenges, including spiking unemployment and inflation, that requires a shift away from "Hindu nationalist policies" and more focus on delivery. "There will be real pressure to perform and show results," Praveen Donthi, a senior analyst for India at the International Crisis Group. He said there will now be pressure on the government to "sort of moderate" and "fine-tune" some of its policies, "stressing the results have shown that" empty rhetoric —communal rhetoric alone won't work. "It has to be backed by performance," he said. Modi has to steer the coalition under tremendous pressure from its allies. Rhetoric aside, even a prime minister cannot argue against hard data that paints a bleak picture of joblessness and inflation in India and new government has to tackle these problems as the allies will want so to remain in politics and for showing their presence in the new government. The new government will have to address the economic challenges, take care of the unemployment, because there could still be growth without job creation, so that is one trap that India will have to avoid. On strategic and geopolitical challenges, India's issues have grown manifold due to its strained ties with China. The biggest security and strategic challenge for India right now is China, relations between the two Asian giants is at their lowest since war of 1962. Modi 3.0 government will be under pressure to break the deadlock and make progress on this front. Another issue for the new government will be to control and contain ethnic violence in Manipur. To cut a long story short it can be argued that Modi's new coalition government will have to work under the pulls and pressures of its allies and Modi also will have to address a number of issues and the governance this time will not be a cakewalk for Modi.

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

Foods to avoid when eating on an empty stomach

■ SURJIT SINGH FLORA

In today's world, everyone gives advice on what to eat and what not to eat. One of the most common suggestions is to eat a bowl of yogurt, glass of smoothie or a banana on an empty stomach in the morning. However, it is good to know that something should not be eaten on an empty stomach, during hunger. But let us share what doctors and science have concluded:

Banana : Introducing the revolutionary "Morning Banana Diet!" Discover the power of starting your day with the delicious and nutritious banana. While it's true that this diet suggests enjoying one or more bananas for breakfast and nothing else, it's important to consider that consuming bananas on an empty stomach may not yield the optimal results you desire. Discover the incredible power of bananas, packed with an abundance of magnesium and potassium. However, it's important to be mindful of maintaining a healthy balance of these essential nutrients in your blood. Discover the tantalizing allure of bananas, a true testament to the art of indulging in the perfect food at an unexpected moment.

Yoghurt : Because of the high acidity of the stomach when it is empty, the advantages of the lactic acid bacteria that are present in yogurt are made useless. This is the major reason why it is best to avoid taking yogurt on an empty stomach. The consumption of yogurt first thing in the morning results in a negligible increase in the health advantages associated with this food.

Pre-mixed oatmeal : If you are looking for a nutritious breakfast option, oatmeal is a good choice since it is rich in fiber, vitamins, and protein, and it does not contain gluten. The quick

oatmeal containers, on the other hand, include a significant amount of added sugar, salt, and artificial coloring. If you do not have the time to cook conventional oats, you should only choose the quick oats that are simple and unsweetened, and you should pay attention to the amount of fiber and preservatives that they include.

Raw green vegetables : In spite of the fact that vegetables are typically considered to be healthful, eating them on an empty stomach may cause discomfort in some individuals and potentially result in gastroesophageal reflux disease, bloating, and abdominal pain. This is due, in part, to the presence of insoluble fiber in the majority of greens, which is something that those who have issues with digestion should steer clear of in particular.

Tomatoes : Discover the incredible benefits of tomatoes - a true powerhouse of vitamins, with a low-calorie count and an abundance of nutrition. Discover the secret to enjoying these delightful treats without any tummy troubles! While these delectable delights are a must-have, it's important to savor them after a satisfying meal. Indulge in the ultimate gastronomic experience by avoiding any unwanted stomach aches or discomfort. Your taste buds will thank you! Discover the incredible benefits of tomatoes, nature's own powerhouse. Just like those vibrant green vegetables, tomatoes are packed with soluble astringents that work wonders when they come into contact with gastric acid.

Citrus fruits : It is recommended that those who have been diagnosed with diabetes or those who have stomachs that are sensitive refrain from eating citrus fruits on an empty stomach. Oranges, lemons, limes, and grapefruit are examples of fruits that have a high amount of acid, which may

have a negative interaction with our digestive juices and lead to irritation, heartburn, and other digestive issues. Furthermore, fruits that are strong in carbs have the potential to induce an increase in blood sugar levels, which may be hazardous for diabetics. You should include walnuts into your morning routine if you want to increase the health of your digestive system.

Cold beverages : When consumed on an empty stomach, cold beverages of any kind have the potential to cause discomfort in the bowels and stomach. You should be particularly worried about cold carbonated drinks since they cause bloating and a general unpleasant sensation in the stomach. This is something you should be aware about. As a result of its ability to enhance digestion and circulation, as well as its ability to assist with weight reduction, drinking a glass of warm water first thing in the morning before eating breakfast is of greater recommendation.

Pears : If you want to avoid eating pears for breakfast, it is best to avoid doing so. Pears are a usually nutritious snack that are rich in vitamins and potassium and are low in calories. When consumed on an empty stomach, pears contain crude fiber, which has the potential to cause harm to the sensitive mucous membranes that line the stomach. When it comes to hard pears, this is particularly true. However, this does not imply that you should completely abstain from eating pears. In point of fact, a number of studies have shown that those who consume pears have a lower risk of becoming obese and tend to have a diet that is of higher quality.

Cereals : To have a bowl of cereal for breakfast may be a handy meal to consume, but the high quantity of sugar and processed carbohydrates

that it contains is detrimental to your health. Cereal will cause a surge in both your blood sugar and insulin levels, despite the fact that eating at first seems to fill you up. You will begin to feel the need for food a few hours later, when your blood sugar levels begin to drop. Within the context of a research conducted in 2013, a comparison was made between obese people who skipped breakfast and those who had cereal or eggs for breakfast. Compared to the other two groups, the individuals who had a breakfast consisting of eggs and high-protein foods felt satiated for a longer period of time and sought snacks less often. Take this into consideration the next time you are trying to choose between eating cereal or fried eggs for breakfast.

Smoothies : The consumption of a smoothie for breakfast is not in any way inappropriate; however, this is only the case if the smoothie is well balanced and mixed with other items. It is possible that your smoothie will wind up being too low in calories and protein since it solely includes carbohydrates, the majority of which come from sugar. This is the case the majority of the time. If you want to remedy this issue, you should do away with sweetening your smoothie and instead look for methods to include protein and fat into it, such as by using yogurt or avocado.

For an additional option, you might have your smoothie in conjunction with scrambled eggs. In spite of the fact that vegetables are typically considered to be healthful, consuming them on an empty stomach might cause discomfort in some individuals, as well as contribute to gas and bloating.

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