

CLAMPDOWN ON TERROR ECOSYSTEM

India's security apparatus has intensified its efforts to dismantle the terror ecosystem operating within and beyond its borders. In recent months, there has been a concerted push by security agencies, investigative bodies, and state governments, backed by strong political will, to neutralize not just individual terror operatives but also the intricate web of support systems that sustain terrorism. This "ecosystem" includes recruiters, financiers, sympathizers, logistical supporters, radicalized influencers, sleeper cells, and even digital propaganda tools. The clampdown is comprehensive, targeting not only violent actors but also those who create fertile ground for extremism to grow.

A critical pillar of the terror ecosystem is financial support. The National Investigation Agency (NIA), Enforcement Directorate (ED), and Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) have significantly ramped up their operations against hawala networks, charity fronts, and shell companies that channel funds to terror groups. The recent seizure of properties and freezing of accounts linked to terror financing in Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, and parts of Delhi has sent a strong message. Individuals with alleged links to cross-border terror outfits like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), and Hizbul Mujahideen have been booked under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA).

In particular, Pakistan-based handlers and their local operatives have been under the scanner, with multiple modules busted that were using encrypted communication channels to receive instructions and funds. Crypto-currency channels and darknet transactions have also come under surveillance.

In today's digital age, radicalization no longer requires physical contact. Online propaganda - through social media platforms, encrypted apps, and video-sharing services - plays a key role in influencing vulnerable minds. Agencies like the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and NIA are closely monitoring digital content and cracking down on radical influencers. Several accounts spreading extremist ideologies or glorifying terrorism have been blocked, and individuals running them have been identified and interrogated.

Cyber cells are working round-the-clock to track suspicious activity, decode messages, and infiltrate digital groups that encourage hate speech or promote separatist ideologies. With artificial intelligence and machine learning tools, the authorities are improving their capability to detect early signs of radicalization.

Jammu & Kashmir remains a focal point in India's anti-terror strategy. While security forces continue to conduct anti-infiltration and counter-terror operations, a parallel and equally important strategy is being implemented to curb the broader ecosystem. Government jobs and passports have been denied to individuals involved in stone pelting, terror-related activities, or those seen as overground workers (OGWs) supporting militancy. Recently, several employees were dismissed under Article 311 for their alleged links with terrorist organisations.

Additionally, religious seminars, NGOs, and schools under suspicion of promoting extremist ideologies are being scrutinized. Police and intelligence agencies are focusing on rehabilitation programs to bring misguided youth back into the mainstream through counselling and skill-building.

Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan: Reflections from the Grassroots

■ DR. PARVEEN KUMAR

Continuing with its pro-farming endeavour, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India started the 'Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan 2025 (Pre-Kharif)' with an aim to reach out to about 1-1.5 crore farmers through more than 2000 dedicated teams comprising of scientists, officials and farmers'. All this was to be accomplished within a fortnight (May 29-June 12). The campaign ran simultaneously in more than 700 districts of the country. Each day, each team conducted three meetings in different Panchayats covering cluster of villages and engaging about 10 to 12 lakh farmers on a daily basis. Prime Minister launched the campaign from the holy city of Puri in Orissa in a virtual mode. Shiv Raj Singh Chauhan Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare himself visited 20 states in the 15 days Campaign.

The basic philosophy behind this 'Pre-Kharif Abhiyan' was Lab. to Land; i. e to bridge the gap between laboratory based research and field level practices by sensitization of farming communities regarding scientific cultivation of different crops to be grown in the Kharif season, awareness of various government schemes, promotion of sustainable practices and technologies so as to boost crop productivity, sharing monsoon forecasts and documentation of best practices & success stories emanating from farmers' fields. The Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shiv Raj Singh Chauhan also gave the mantra of 'One Nation, One Agriculture, One Team' emphasizing upon the need for a unified connect between Agriculture and allied ministries at central as well as state/UT level, all institutions of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) as well as State Agricultural Universities (SAUs), Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), progressive and innovative farmers' and all such agencies involved in socio-economic upliftment of the farming community.

In district Ramban, VKSA started on May 29 along with the whole country, but concluded on May 15 (excluding three days w.e.f June 06-08) along with the UT of J&K. As the Abhiyan was designed to include all the departments related to agriculture, a single team consisting of both the scientists from KV-Ramban along with the officers/officials of line departments was made. The team included functionaries from Horticulture,

Sericulture, Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry, Apiculture and Crop Insurance. The team daily conducted three meetings with a cluster of villages at Panchayat level. During the entire campaign, it traversed through plain as well as hilly terrains ensuring that no corner of this district is left unreached.

One of the key objectives of the Abhiyan was sensitization of farming communities regarding scientific cultivation of different crops to be grown in the Kharif season. District Ramban has agriculture sub divisions; Ramban, Gool and Banihal. Maize and Paddy are grown in Kharif season of which Maize is a key crop with substantial area under its cultivation. This is because Paddy is grown in upper reaches with temperate conditions mostly in Gool and Banihal Subdivision. By the time, VKSA started Maize in most of the places was already sown and in some places first Intercultural (30 DAS) was going on. Similarly Paddy transplantation was almost complete in upper reaches where it is cultivated. VKSA thus was late in district Ramban as far as sensitization of farming community about scientific cultivation of Kharif season crops; is concerned. It would have been more effective, had it started a month earlier. The use of traditional methods of cultivation like broadcast and fertilizer application is still prevalent.

The indiscriminate use of fertilizers was also reported from certain Panchayats in the district. Farmers also complained of poor quality of maize seed purchased by them. Another major issue having a catastrophic effect on the farm sector particularly maize cultivation is the monkey menace in this district. Such is the menace that in many villages farmers' keep their land fallow and do not grow maize. Monkeys not only destroy maize but also have ruined orchards of farmers. The insect/pest attack on Maize is also very frequent. The crop is eaten by insect pests. Insects start eating young tender leaves and stem of the plant ultimately destroying the whole crop. Pea crop was also reported to have been attacked by insect/pests. In Rajmash, farmers also reported of attack from a white colour nail like insect. This insect which used to come late in the growing season of crop now appears earlier and results in damage to the crop. Farmers in certain pocket of the district

also reported about a disease on paddy which seems to be Bacterial Leaf Blight. This also results in huge yield losses to the farming community.

Regarding the impact of different government flagship schemes, the flagship scheme of the government Primeminister Kisan Samman Nidhi (PMKISAN) has percolated deep down to the last farmer. This financial assistance scheme that provides for rupees six thousand annually in three equal installments of rupees 2000 each coinciding with the start of each cropping season has been widely acknowledged by the farming community. Another ambitious programme of the government aimed at Soil Health Management is the scheme of Soil Health Card (SHC); department officials have taken the soil samples of selected farmers, but the Soil Health Cards have yet to be provided to most of the farmers as the results of soil samples are awaited. There is a need to work more with a renewed focus on this scheme. Regarding Primeminister Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), in district Ramban, insurance is only available for Maize and Paddy in the Kharif season and Wheat in the Rabi season. There is no insurance for Horticultural crops which results in great loss to the farmers engaged in fruit cultivation. The untimely rainfall, fast blowing winds along with hailstorms result in premature fruit drop, uproots the fruit plants resulting in a considerable economic loss to the farmers. The Kisan Credit Card facility has been availed by farmers, but many farmers' showed their resentment against the bank officials who despite providing them all the related documents are reluctant to grant KCC loans to them. Government is now promoting Natural Farming. Natural Farming is still unknown to the vast majority of the farming community in the district, but the encouraging thing is that they showed great interest in adopting Natural Farming. They are quiet aware of the negative effects of chemical intensive farming. Youths of the region lack specific skills and are unaware of various Skill & Entrepreneurship development programmes of the government.

There is an acute shortage of staff in every department which is seriously affecting the performance of the department. Many schemes/advisories and other relevant information does not reaches out to the farming community in time. Farmers having milch

cattles and those rearing sheep and goats become the victim of this shortage of staff. Many times their animals die because of lack of proper treatment. Similarly, the farmers cultivating fruit crops even do not have the basic knowledge of training and pruning, grafting and other methods of propagation. Horticulture is an important livelihood source for farming community of this region. In the absence of any insurance product for horticultural crops in this region, farmers feel insecure. So crop insurance should also cover fruit crops too. Department should ensure that Maize seed being provided to the farmers is of good quality. Monkey menace has to be checked. Special efforts have to be made for this purpose. Farmers have to be familiarized about various products or change in their cropping patterns to escape disaster from monkeys. Some farmers' are practicing natural farming and are producing good quantity of vegetables on a daily basis. Such farmers need to be identified and provided with adequate marketing support. District administration should also take up with the Banks the issue of not sanctioning KCC loan to the farmers.

Focus on skill development of youths in allied sectors like sericulture, fisheries, floriculture, seed production, mushroom, processing and value addition etc can result in entrepreneurship development and employment generation. Farm mechanization should be promoted to enhance efficiency and timeliness of various farm operations. Under HADP, farmers can be encouraged to avail benefits of different schemes related to farm mechanization. Diversification based on an Integrated farming system approach should be promoted. This would ensure that farmer at least gets compensated from another enterprise in case of failure of one enterprise.

Coordinated and targeted efforts involving all stakeholders' engaged in the socio-economic upliftment of farming community with the active participation of higher hierarchy can bring about radical changes in the agriculture sector in this district. SKUAST-Jammu under the leadership of Prof. B .N. Tripathi and Prof. Amrish Vaid, Director Extension has been pro-active in leading this Abhiyan in all the districts of Jammu Division; by leading from the front as well as providing all the necessary support to KVKs.

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■ NANCY SHARMA

Are you also among those who check their phone as soon as a notification beeps? In today's era where everything depends on a click, keeping quiet has become a luxury. This dependence has increased so much that we wake up in the morning with its alarm and fall asleep at night with the soothing music playing on this phone. While on one hand these technological devices promise to keep us comfortable, productive and connected, on the other hand they are snatching away a very precious thing from us and that is our comfort and our peace. Just like our phone stays awake, our mind is also not able to rest. So now the time has come for us to think and understand what price we are really paying for staying connected with people through the internet.

Social media, apps, websites and emails are some of the means with the help of which we can talk to our loved ones sitting miles away. There was a time when we had to resort to letters even for very important things, earlier those letters used to take time to reach and then we had to wait for the reply. But in today's digital age, not only can we hear the voice of our friends, relatives and close ones sitting far away, but we can also see them through video call. And. If we want, we can explain humor and sad events without speaking by

sending new emoji's using messages.

One evening I was sitting with my friendSonika, drinking tea and finally ready to read some literature books. Just five pages in - ping! A WhatsApp message. She replied quickly. Back to reading. Ding! Instagram like. She smiled. Then another buzz email from work. Her tea went cold, the book was forgotten, and she didn't even notice.

This isn't just Sonika's story. It's all of us. We are living in the age of constant notifications, and whether we realize it or not, our brains are struggling to keep up. This incident gave me an idea to write about it.

The passage takes us back to a time thousands of years ago. The forest and cave environments served as home for our ancient human predecessors. The human brain evolved to detect abrupt environmental modifications such as moving bushes and unusual sounds or wind changes. These signals served as essential survival tools for our ancestors.

Nowadays, any kind of notification is a source of rustling of the bushes for your brain. A ping sounds: "Something's happening!" But now, it is not an actual threat-it could be a meme, a sale, or someone just typing "lol."

The brain still operates as if the ping is of utmost importance, so it hits you out of a deep thought and showers you with dopamine-a chemical that is associ-

ated with happiness-and leaves you craving for more. With time, this destroys your capability to concentrate, ponder, and stay calm.

What really Happens

Every time a notification pops up, the brain goes into something called "task switching." Now, this translates as:

1. Cease what you are doing at the moment (could be reading or writing),
2. Take the attentions away into the notification,
3. And then try to actually turn back into the task again.

Here's the catch: the brain has very poor switching skills. Research indicates that it takes up to 25 minutes to really regain focus after being interrupted. If you multiply this with the 80-100 notifications your average person receives a day, that creates a recipe for feeling tired but unproductive.

You think you've got multitasking down, but, no, actually, what you're doing is task switching so fast that it's unlikely that your brain can keep up. The faster you juggle tasks, the more tired your brain becomes, and the poorer the quality of everything that happens.

Ever heard of "notification anxiety"? It's real.

That red dot on your screen?
That buzzing phone during dinner?
That unread email count ticking up?
Ironically, the more you rely on notifi-

cations to stay "connected," the more mentally disconnected and overwhelmed you feel.

Illusion of Urgency

Reality is: Most notifications aren't that urgent.

Historically speaking, do you really have to know at this moment that somebody liked your photo? Or that some app is having a raffle of 10% off for shoes?

Notifications are purposely designed for companies to appear urgent. Why do we say this? Because your attention is money. The more time you spend on apps, the more ads you view; the more you spend-quite simple.

Tricks of behavioral psychology are taken from such devices: red badges, bold fonts, even a buzz, all designed to hijack your attention. You're not in control; your phone is.

In the world of dings and buzzes, slowly drifting away is: Deep Thinking

If your mind is being interrupted all the time, complex problems cannot be solved, meaningful writing cannot be done, and deeper thoughts cannot be entertained.

Memory

Anytime you are distracted, your brain cannot hold information in there Long enough; that is why sometimes you can just read a paragraph and forget it.

Conversations

How many times have you been talk-

ing when the other person pulled out their phone? So many moments destroy connection and make relationships shallow.

Peace

Remember back when boredom fed creativity? Now even 30 seconds stopping at a red light seems eternally long without scrolling. We have forgotten how to just be.

How to Take Back Control

Your brain isn't built for 24/7 alerts - but the good news is that finally, you can retake control of your life.

1. Turn Off Non-Essential Notifications

Go to your settings and switch off notifications from apps that are non-urgent, most important being social networks, shopping apps, and game apps.

2. Use "Do Not Disturb"

Set certain blocks of time during the day when notifications will not be ringing. One practical use could be "Focus Mode", when working or studying.

3. Batch-Check Messages

Rather than responding immediately to messages or emails, check them just two or three times per day. Inform people of your working hours.

4. Keep Phone Out of Reach During Key Moments

Be it mealtimes, walking, meetings, reading, or spending time with the kids - these are moments to be cherished and shielded from digital cacophony.

Breaking Free from Negativity: A Path to Happiness

■ VINOD CHANDRASHEKHAR DIXIT

Negative thinking creeps into our mind and disrupts it's working. If one is positive the effect on others may or may not be positive and the environment may not necessarily become positive. But when a person is negative the effect definitely rubs on others and the environment becomes negative. Each one of us is negative or positive at some point in our life. How can we control negativity? It all starts again with the mind. Once mind is under control all is well. Basically, we need to train our mind to think positively. We can tune our minds and repeatedly think positively to break free of the negativity and its vicious circle. Letting go of negative people doesn't mean we hate them, it just means that we care about our own wellbeing. Every time we subtract negative from our life, we make room for more positive. The mind is neutral energy and because of this the way we think determines whether the results are positive and beneficial, or negative and harmful. It is the same energy acting in different ways. There are times when we want to think positively but our mind does not want to open to receive positive and we are angry. Anger is one emotion that can destroy everything one

builds throughout one's life. If we are able to control our anger consciously we can move ahead in life. We can open our minds and accept what life has to offer with open arms. One must remember that the more negative energy we create, the more negative energy we attract. Quite simply, no matter how positive of a person we are, negative people can affect our life, unless we take the right precautions. Life is full of highs and lows, but you don't have to go up and down with them. We develop from the negatives when we accept them and learn from them. Negativity can have a profound impact on our mental well-being, weakening our minds in several ways. It can reduce focus, attention, and decision-making abilities. Chronic negativity can lead to heightened stress levels, anxiety, and even depression. It can make it more challenging to cope with challenges and setbacks and can damage relationships and lead to social isolation. It also creates a vicious cycle of pessimistic thinking, making it harder to break free.

Often, the mind does not judge or examine thoughts and opinions before accepting them. If what it hears, sees and reads is always negative, it accepts negativity as the stan-

dard mindset. When the tiger crosses your path, for example, you run. The rest of the world doesn't matter. You are focused entirely on the tiger; the fear it creates, and how you can get away from it. In other words, negative emotions narrow our mind and focus your thoughts. Doing simple things like talking about positive daily events, common friends, hobbies, happy news, make for light conversations with negative people. Negative emotions prevent our brain from seeing the other options and choices that surround us. President Obama said that "If you go out and make some good things happen, you will fill the world with hope, you will fill yourself with hope." Erasing negative thoughts and influences can be challenging, especially when we are surrounded by negative individuals or if we have established a base of negative habits. However, through awareness and perseverance we can turn the tide and begin to focus on living positively. It's never too late to make alterations or transitions in your life. It is said that there is little difference in people, but that little difference makes a big difference. The little difference is attitude. The big difference is whether it is positive or negative.

One Man in Space, A Nation in Orbit

■ MAHADEEP SINGH JAMWAL

Above the world, where Earth blurs into blackness and silence reigns, an Indian voice now echoes - not as a visitor, but as a vanguard. Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, a fighter pilot turned spacefarer, has become the first Indian to step aboard the International Space Station - a singular leap for one man, and a seismic shift for a billion-strong nation.

This is more than a milestone. It's the moment India touched the sky not with dreams, but with discipline. Not with imitation, but with intent. And not as a supporting act, but as a lead voice in humanity's next frontier.

Aboard the spacecraft Grace, launched in partnership with SpaceX, NASA, ISRO, and Axiom Space, Shukla rose into orbit - not merely as a passenger, but as mission pilot.

He now commands advanced systems, executes critical protocols, and carries the quiet weight of generations who dared to believe India could rise among the stars. When he entered the ISS, he didn't walk into a laboratory - he walked into legacy.

Yet Shukla isn't just floating in zero gravity.

He is anchoring India's presence in the heavens.

He is conducting a suite of eight cutting-edge experiments designed by Indian scientists - unlocking answers to how plants grow without soil, how human bones react to weightlessness, and how life might adapt to the unforgiving void.

These are no abstract studies. They are blueprints - for India's Gaganyaan mission, for the planned Indian space station, and for a future lunar landing under the national flag.

His personal journey mirrors the nation's own arc of ascent. Born in the heart of Lucknow, trained at the National Defence Academy, and refined in the halls of IISc Bengaluru, Shukla mastered the skies long before he crossed into space.

With over 2,000 flying hours on aircraft like the Su-30 MKI, he embodied excellence long before he wore a space suit. His selection wasn't luck - it was the triumph of quiet capability.

Back on Earth, his mission has stirred something powerful - not just admiration, but aspiration. Schoolchildren tune into his transmissions with wide eyes, teachers

pause their lessons to discuss orbits and oxygen, and ISRO bridges the cosmic gap by turning a space mission into a national classroom. In Shukla, millions of young Indians see possibility - not as fantasy, but as future.

This is not just about technology. This is about identity. India, once seen as a rising power, now positions itself as a cosmic partner - confident, capable, and contributing. From sounding rockets launched on bicycles to astronauts reaching the ISS, the journey is no longer symbolic.

It is strategic. It is sovereign.

As Shubhanshu Shukla orbits Earth, witnessing sixteen sunrises every day, he carries with him more than data and instruments.

He carries memory and momentum. The memory of those who imagined this moment decades ago, and the momentum of a nation now in motion - upward, outward, unstoppable.

His return will mark the end of a mission.

But it will also mark the beginning of something far greater - a new era where Indian astronauts, science, and spirit will not only reach space, but reshape it.

