

7TH RASHTRIYA POSHAN MAAH

The 7th Rashtriya Poshan Maah (National Nutrition Month) was celebrated across India in September, reinforcing the nation's commitment to improving nutritional standards and tackling malnutrition. Launched by the Government of India in 2018, this initiative aims to raise awareness about the importance of nutrition, especially among vulnerable populations such as children and pregnant women. This year, the theme focused on "Nutrition for Growth," emphasizing the vital role that proper nutrition plays in overall development.

The primary objectives of Rashtriya Poshan Maah are to promote healthy eating habits, improve nutritional practices, and encourage community participation in nutritional awareness programs.

The initiative seeks to educate people about the significance of balanced diets and the adverse effects of malnutrition; Encourage families to adopt healthy cooking and eating habits; Foster community engagement through local events, workshops, and awareness campaigns; Assess the nutritional status of different populations and implement corrective measures where necessary.

Throughout the month of September, various activities were organized at multiple levels-national, state, and local-to engage citizens and raise awareness about nutrition. Some of the prominent activities.

The government and various NGOs conducted awareness campaigns highlighting the importance of nutrition. This included social media campaigns, workshops, and street plays aimed at disseminating information on dietary choices, maternal nutrition, and child health.

Workshops were organized in schools and communities, focusing on the preparation of nutritious meals. Nutritionists and health experts conducted sessions on the benefits of local and seasonal foods, promoting traditional diets that are often overlooked.

Schools played a pivotal role in the celebration of Poshan Maah. Many institutions incorporated special sessions into their curriculum, focusing on nutrition education. Competitions like drawing, essay writing, and debates on nutrition were also held, encouraging children to engage with the topic creatively.

Local health workers, including Anganwadi workers, conducted home visits to educate families about proper nutrition. They provided guidance on balanced diets, iron and folic acid supplementation, and the importance of breastfeeding. Several states organized food festivals showcasing nutritious foods. These festivals celebrated local produce and traditional recipes, emphasizing the nutritional value of indigenous ingredients. The Rashtriya Poshan Maah has had a significant impact on communities across India. Reports indicate a marked increase in awareness regarding malnutrition and dietary practices.

Surveys conducted post-campaigns showed that a substantial percentage of participants reported improved knowledge about nutrition and health. Many families began to incorporate more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains into their diets, showcasing a shift towards healthier eating habits.

The month-long activities fostered greater community involvement in health and nutrition programs, leading to sustained interest in these critical issues.

POSHAN Abhiyaan program aims to reduce malnutrition in children and women by leveraging technology and community engagement. It focuses on a multi-sectoral approach to ensure comprehensive nutrition support. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program provides food, preschool education, and primary healthcare to children under six and their mothers, addressing both immediate nutritional needs and long-term health outcomes. Implemented in schools, this scheme provides nutritious meals to children, thereby improving their health and encouraging school attendance. The government ensures the availability of essential food grains at subsidized rates, helping low-income families access basic nutrition. Despite the progress made during Rashtriya Poshan Maah, challenges remain. High rates of malnutrition, particularly in rural areas, underscore the need for continued focus on education and access to nutritious food. Additionally, cultural practices and economic constraints can hinder the adoption of healthy dietary habits. The 7th Rashtriya Poshan Maah has successfully highlighted the critical importance of nutrition in India's development agenda. By fostering awareness, promoting healthy practices, and engaging communities, the initiative has made significant strides toward combating malnutrition. However, the journey towards achieving optimal nutrition for all requires sustained efforts, collaboration across sectors, and continuous monitoring. As India moves forward, the lessons learned during this month will play a pivotal role in shaping a healthier future for generations to come.

SUBHADRA: Empowering Women

Launched with the vision of empowering women across the nation, the SUBHADRA scheme stands out as the largest women-centric initiative in India. The name 'SUBHADRA,' symbolizing auspiciousness and prosperity, encapsulates the essence of the program, which aims to uplift women by providing them with the necessary tools and resources to lead empowered lives. This initiative recognizes the pivotal role women play in society and seeks to address various socio-economic challenges they face. The primary objectives of the SUBHADRA scheme are multifaceted, focusing on enhancing the socio-economic status of women while fostering gender equality. The key objectives include:

The scheme aims to provide women with access to financial resources, enabling them to start their own businesses, pursue education, or invest in their health and wellbeing. SUBHADRA emphasizes skill enhancement through vocational training programs tailored to market demands. This equips women with the skills needed to enter diverse sectors, thus increasing their employability. Acknowledging the importance of health, the scheme promotes access to healthcare services and nutrition awareness, ensuring women maintain good health, which is crucial for their productivity and quality of life. The initiative also focuses on raising awareness about women's rights and legal entitlements, empowering women to advocate for themselves and challenge social norms that hinder their progress. By encouraging women to become entrepreneurs, the scheme aims to stimulate economic growth and foster innovation, creating a more balanced and inclusive economy. The SUBHADRA scheme incorporates various components designed to address the unique needs of women. Women can access low-interest loans, grants, and micro-financing options, enabling them to invest in their businesses or education without the burden of heavy debt. Collaborating with various industries, the scheme offers training programs in sectors such as IT, healthcare, textiles, and agriculture. These programs are designed to equip women with practical skills that meet current market demands. The scheme includes provisions for regular health check-ups, maternal health services, and nutritional programs. These services aim to improve women's health outcomes and ensure they have access to necessary medical care. SUBHADRA organizes workshops, seminars, and campaigns to educate women about their rights, health issues, and financial literacy. This knowledge empowers them to make informed decisions. Networking Opportunities: The scheme promotes networking among women entrepreneurs through community-building initiatives and mentorship programs. This fosters collaboration and support, helping women share resources and knowledge. The implementation of the SUBHADRA scheme involves collaboration between government agencies, NGOs, and community organizations. This multi-stakeholder approach ensures that the initiative reaches its target demographic effectively. The scheme has led to increased participation of women in various sectors, particularly in entrepreneurship and skilled professions. Many women have reported enhanced economic stability, contributing to their families and communities. Financial independence has fostered a sense of confidence and self-worth among beneficiaries.

Tourism for Viksit Bharat: Vision of our First 'Incredible India'

■ GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT



Before a decade ago, it was very common to hear about Indian tourism needing a brand ambassador to position itself at par and above other nations in tourism. Much like how other countries were spending advertising money on attracting the most famous of film-stars and the best of sportspersons to promote tourism in their country, it was also felt that Incredible India needed a facelift.

Over the last decade and having heldcharge as the Union Minister for Tourism in India over the past 100 days, I have only heard everyone sayhow for the first time in the history of this country, that we have a Leader who is not only our Prime Minister buthas also been Incredible India's biggest Global Brand Ambassador and champion.In every role that he plays for the betterment of Bharat, I have been amazed and inspired to see the extent to which the Hon'ble Prime Minister goes to ensure that tourism never takes a back seat.

As the Hon'ble Prime Minister, he constantly reminds us to work in a 'Whole-of-Government' for the overall growth and development of tourism in the country. As a result of around 1,50,000 kilometres of road network laid, ~500 new air routes& ~150 airports having opened up air connectivity,high speed Vande Bharat trains introduced, and completion of around 100 tourism infrastructure projects, India registered Domestic Tourist Visits (DTV) of 250 crores, almost double of the 128 crore Domestic Tourist Visits (DTV) India registered in 2014.

As the Nation's global representative, he never misses an opportunity to showcase the wonders of Incredible India to the world. Under his leadership, India's G20 Presidency was unique to the aspect that meetings were

conducted at 60 different locations across the country. It was the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision to ensure that tourism offerings at these 60 destinations, along with their cultures, cuisines, and crafts become globally visible through the lens of India's G20 Presidency. Owing to the tourism boom set in by G20last year, it is heartening to know that the tourism sector in India saw the highest amount of new hotel rooms added in 2023.

As the People's Leader, he has inspired the nation to Dekho Apna Desh - to explore and discover our very own Bharat before exploring the world. He has ensured that responsible tourism becomes second nature to all of us by instilling the importance of Swachhatain our minds. On every occasion, he constantly reminds the global Indian diaspora on their role in becoming Ambassadors of Incredible India by making their foreigner friends and acquaintancesaware of how memorable a trip to India could be.As one of the most followed global leaders on social media, just the act of him visiting places like Lakshadweep, Kaziranga, Kanniyakumari, Srinagar, and many others - have led to record-breaking interest amongst domestic and international tourists to visit such destinations and experience India's lesser-known tourism offerings.

To draw more light to the Hon'ble Prime Minister's personal interest and involvement in tourism, I fondly recall him saying that he was giving a piece of his heart to me, while giving me an opportunity to serve in the 'Tourism portfolio of his Cabinet.Since then, it has been my constant endeavour that we must develop a business plan for the tourism sector in India, while recognizing its importance in being a driver for inclusive socio-economic growth and development.

One of the most important components of this business plan is the aspect of developing new tourism destinations, by taking advan-

tage of the rapid strides India is making in infrastructure growth. By representing New India and taking inspiration from our incredible past, these new destinations are envisioned to elevate the overall experience of tourists in an end-to-end manner.Since our independence in 1947 to 2014, India didn't have a single example of developing a tourist destination from scratch in a holistic and encompassing manner. This changed when the Hon'ble Prime Minister gave to the world Ekta Nagar and the Statue of Unity in 2018.

To develop tourism as a mainstay in Ekta Nagar based on the vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, various steps and measures were taken.Last-mile connectivity was ensured along with setting up of a dedicated Statue of Unity Area Development and Governance Authority to oversee and manage the destination on a day-to-day basis. Skill Development Centres were set up to train locals and youth on tourism related services and tasks. Private investments were grounded to establish quality hotels, resorts, and other accommodation. Several new attractions, activities and experiences across various themes were introduced in PPP mode. Owing to all this and more, footfalls at Ekta Nagar increased from 4.5 lakhs in 2018 to 45 lakhs in 2023 - a 10x increase.Additionally, all these efforts have resulted in creation of new livelihoods for locals at Ekta Nagar through a tourism economy which didn't exist in the area prior to 2014.Through Ekta Nagar, the Hon'ble Prime Minister gave to us a model for tourism development and growth - a model which could be replicated and scaled up across the Nation to create such iconic tourist destinations.

Taking inspiration from the model established by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, through various schemes such as Swadesh

Darshan and Development of Iconic Tourist Destinations, Ministry of Tourism is now spearheading tourism related destination development in the country by converging efforts to develop select destinationsin 'Whole of Government' approach.Efforts are being placed on introducing high-impact interventions which can transform the overall visitor experience in destinations. Special focus is being placed on enabling private investments to complement public investments, so that both can operate as a combined force for tourism related destination development in India.Through various Ministry initiatives in these destinations, actions also being taken onimproving tourism enablers like skilling and digitalization, so that benefits of tourism remain within the destination and accrue to local communities and individuals.

Inspired by the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision for Jan Bhagidari (citizen partnership), the Ministry has launched Dekho Apna Desh People's Choice 2024 - a nation-wide poll for citizens to provide their most preferred tourist attractions and destinations in India across 5 categories. To include the voice of the people in our efforts going forward, destinations which feature onto in the People's Choice 2024 will receive dedicated support and funding to be transformed into global tourism destinations representing the best of Incredible India to the world.

Not a day goes by without the Hon'ble Prime Minister reminding us of his vision of Viksit Bharat. Tourism offers us a way to contribute to that grand vision in ways more than one.On this World Tourism Day, I call upon all of us to play our part in achieving the achievement of this vision, thereby making us worthy of the title 'Incredible Indians', like our Hon'ble Prime Minister already is.

(The writer is Union Minister of Culture and Tourism, Government of India)

UNDERSTANDING SWEEPING CHANGES IN J&K POST 2014

■ PURAN CHAND SHARMA

There is a prominent quote "In democracy the government you elect is the Govt you deserve" Thomas Jefferson. The dictum speaks volumes together at this crucial juncture when we are well poised to take brisk strides to go to the polls to elect a stable, responsible, reliable and the powerful Govt wedded to nationalism and ' Principle of 'Nation First' plus the unshakeable political ethos and ethics. A Golden opportunity is knocking at our door. All segments of society who possess the immense treasure of electorates wisely need to realize the value of their vote and poll it intelligently to elect our representatives who stand for Nationalism, equitable development, perfect communal harmony and ever rising India. Let us point wise deliberate and highlight in nutshell the sterling transformation:-

EDUCATION

EARLIER:- The history of Mughal Invaders and aggressors coupled with British rulers was being taught in the educational institutions of J&K. AT PRESENT :- History of all great men, warriors and social reformers is being pursued and taught in entire Jammu and Kashmir; Prior to 2014 WE had only 02 Medical colleges, 89 Degree colleges and NO AIIMS in Jammu and Kashmir. NOW at this point of time we have 11 Medical colleges, 143 Degree colleges, 02 AIIMS. Prior to 2014 we did not have any IIM but at this crucial juncture we have been blessed with 01 prestigious IIM in J&K. Further there was no IIT in Jammu prior to 2014 but the UT at this critical moment is proud to have one IIT in JAMMU and Kashmir which is effectively functional and productive. There was no existence of any IIMC and Nursing college prior to2014 but at this significant moment JKUT has been blessed with 01 IIMC and 15 Nursing colleges in Jammu and Kashmir. THEN: National Anthem was not being sung in all the Districts but only in some of the schools and also OUR TRI COLOUR was not being hoisted on all festive occasions. NOW: Recitation of National Anthem and hoisting of Tricolour has been made mandatory without any ifs and buts. Accordingly this is being religiously practised without fail in all the schools. LOCAL LANGUAGE: THEN:- In the name

of Local Language, only Urdu was being taught in maximum schools and absence of teachers was quite an extremely nagging issue which called for immediate resolution . NOW: Options of Sanskrit, Dogri and other local languages are available. At the moment Teachers availability is ensured by Biometric system. EARLIER: Jammu Kashmir had only 500 MBBS seats but now MBBS seats have been enhanced to 1347. Other prominent highlights are "The benefit of ICT LAB and Smart classes has been provided to 91 schools. Sanction for establishment of Kendriya Vidyalayas in Jammu Kashmir has been accorded. Union Govt has provided a sum of Rupees 1665 crore to JKUT for the session 2024-25 to ensure holistic success of 'Smaggar Shiksha Abhiyan'. Previously most of the Educational Institutions were named after the local politicians such as SKIMS Medical College etc. At present many Educational Institutions have been named after local martyrs e.g Govt DySP Aman Thakur Memorial Degree College Kastigarh(DODA), Imityaz Ahmad Thoker Memorial Degree College, Shopian, Shaheed Havaladar Raj Singh, Shaurya Chakrya Govt Higher Secondary School, Chakra, Zone, Hiranagar.

HEALTH

Earlier Jammu &Kashmir had no AIIMS , People had to proceed out of STATE for treatment of CANCER and other deadly diseases. Common masses had to suffer a great deal of hardship for treatment of such fatal diseases on account of their non affordability due to severe poverty. In the present times Jammu Kashmir has 2 AIIMS, 2 State Cancer Institutes and masses have been buying their medicines at a nominal price by virtue of Pradhanmantri JanAushadhi Kendras. PREVIOUSLY Health Deptt of J&K had no provision of financial support for their citizens but at present people of Jammu & Kashmir have been availing free treatment under AYUSHMAN BHARAT YOJANA. Earlier facility of Dialysis, ICU and HDU was available only in two Districts. Presently these facilities are available in all the Medical colleges. THEN: DNB (DIPLOMATE OF NATIONAL BOARD), Post Graduate Degree could not be pursued in J&K. Now :- There are 265 seats at present in

Jammu &Kashmir for DNB. Then:- Bone And Joint Hospital existed in Kashmir province only. NOW:- Bone and Joint Hospital has also been established in Jammu and made functional for rendering services to the people.

DEVELOPMENT

THEN:- There was no standard yoga and meditation centre in Jammu and Kashmir. Now:- We have the largest International Meditation Center, Mantlai in JKUT. Then:- We had no Ring Road in Jammu. NOW:- Jammu & Kashmir have two Ring Roads each in Jammu and Kashmir' which have connectivity with 62 villages in Kashmir and 52 villages in Jammu. Then:- Film Makers were least interested to shoot their films in Jammu and Kashmir because of tormenting Terrorism. Now:- In the year2023 shooting of more than 30 films has been completed as a sequel to enforcement of new film policy. Then:- Young players of JKUT were participating in very few games. NOW:- Young players at District level are getting opportunity to prove their talent and skill by virtue of Khelo India initiative of our Union Govt such as Sheetal Devi and Umran Malik. Earlier concrete steps were not being taken with regard to improvement in sports . Now:- M A Stadium has been upgraded, Arun Jaitley stadium in JKUT is third biggest stadium of the country. International Foot Ball Stadium BGSSBU has been built up in Rajouri. Then:- No high speed train was operational in Jammu Kashmir. Now:- Vande Bharat, high speed has been operating in JKUT. Highest in the world Railway Bridge in Reasi is under construction. First ever cable bridge and 12.75 kms long Tunnel in Ramban are also briskly nearing completion. Other scintillating highlights are presented in summary form as under:- 1. In The Year 2023 , 2.11 Crore Tourists visited Kashmir which is a Record. 2. Then:- Wagha Border was the only major attraction for tourists. Now:- Suchetgarh Border Prade in Jammu has beautifully evolved into another principal centre of Tourist attraction. In the concluding comment it is proudly mentioned that the those at the helms have taken pains to bedeck Jammu Kashmir, the crown of Bharat Mata.

Weather God is outraged with Jammu

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

As ill luck has to the people of Jammu that it seems that the Weather God is angry and outraged with Jammuites that he is making the climate in are around Jammu very hot and humid .It is a big and serious concern for the people living in Jammu region that the temperature is very high and in fact the people are experiencing persistent heat wave and humid climate even at the far end of the summer season .It is in fact unprecedented that the climate of Jammu region continues to be very hot and humid at the close of the month of September which otherwise used to be somewhat pleasant and conducive for the people and they enjoyed to living in this autumn season .But at present the story is all together different because the heat wave is persistent and there is no let up in humidity and the people are sweating even at the close of September .

People are enduring the ill effects of extreme climatic and weather conditions so much so that the life in and around Jammu is no less than hell as people are experiencing and tolerating persistent heat weave which has made the life of people very difficult and uneasy and they pray to God almighty to be kind on them and bring rain and showers that the heat wave will be checkmated and people will get some relief from scorching heat coupled with humidity which has made the life of people troublesome .One fails to understand what is in store for the people of Jammu region as they are living a very difficult life in the unexpected climate .

How peculiar is it that in these days which are far from monsoon season ,the humidity remains 99% and the hot and humid temperature resembles Barsat sans rains and this has turned the life of people into a hell .This is the crux of this climate change .The people are cursing

their fate and are also praying to weather god to be kind towards them so that the extreme climatic conditions and weather gives way to pleasant and cool climate and the Jammuites will feel a sigh of some relief from scorching heat and humid temperature .

There are extreme climatic conditions in and around Jammu and extreme climate and weather conditions has become fait accomplie of Jammu and thus the people here are experiencing extreme climatic conditions which has made the life of people inconvenient .The extreme and unexpected weather conditions flow from the problem of global warming and climate change in which has gripped the whole world and humanity is yarning to come out of such extreme climates .It is because of global warming that climates are becoming extreme and putting people to unease and trouble .

In fact the whole world is grappling with global warming and climate change and the people are the worst sufferers of extreme temperatures .The moot question is ,is the Weather God so unkind to Jammuites that he is not allowing little showers of rain which can cool the temperature of Jammu? It is the man himself who is squarely responsible for the emergence of extreme climatic condition which are against the welfare and wellbeing of the people .Men have become so greedy that they have destroyed the nature and environment by felling trees in very large numbers .

The men have also eneroached upon the banks of rivers and rivulets and they are trying to change the course of the rivers .This tinkering and fiddling with the environment, nature and wild life has manifested in extreme climates thus causing difficulty and inconvenience to the people .Saint Sheikh Noor-Ud-Din Noorani called also Shiekhlul Alam had

said centuries before Ann Poshi Teli Yeli Wan Pooshi-meaning the food will suffice only when woods would last long and are protected .Hinduism regards environment in high esteem so much so that Hindu's worship various forms of nature like rivers ,mountains ,trees etc .So Sanatan Dharma from times immemorial had attached much importance to the protection of environment .Even other religions like Islam talk high of the environment and ordain people to protect environment and save it for future generations .

There is mad rush for industrialization and urbanization ,with the result there is imbalance in nature and environment and climate change and extreme weather conditions follow from total disregard for environment .Therefore humanity should realize and understand its responsibility and sincerely try to protect environment .They should make it as their duty and responsibility to plant more and more tree and ensure green revolution in the country in which lies the good of all the citizens .It is our religious ,moral and social duty and obligation to save natural fauna and flora and protect and safeguard the environment for a fuller ,balanced and happier life on earth .If we really want pleasant climate and weather conditions ,we should plant more and more trees which will ensure green environment which is in the interest of society and humanity.

Thus in order to save ourselves from the extreme vagaries of nature ,we should give emphasis on green environment and for that we should make it a habit to plant more and more saplings so that it will have positive effect upon the environment and climatic conditions so that we have a pleasant weather and climate in order to live a peaceful and healthy life free from tension .Therefore instead of

putting blame of environmental degradation on others ,we should look unto our sleeves and stop finding fault on others .

It is our bounden ,moral ,social and even religious duty to protect environment so that the chances of global warming ,climate change and consequent extreme climatic conditions are checked and people experience pleasant ,cool and conducive climate .It is very sorry state of affairs that mercury is steeply rising in Jammu region and as a result there are heat wave conditions in whole Jammu division and even Kashmir this time experiences extreme temperatures which put people to unease and trouble .So it follows that until and unless we take necessary steps to save environment and continue to disregard nature and environment ,we are bound to suffer due to the impact of global warming and consequent climate change .

Hot ,humid conditions prevail and persist in and around Jammu in the close of September month and the people are sweating profusely and it is a cause of serious and grave concern in these days .It is really unprecedented that at the close of the summer season ,the mercury is constantly rising and the hot and humid climate of end of the September resembles the climate of June ,July. Let us pray to God to be kind to us and bring showers of rain to cool the hot climate of Jammu .Almighty is merciful and benevolent and so will not annoy Jammuites any more .

We hope that God will listen to our prayers and bring respite from the heat wave and difficulties associated with it .May we wait and watch and hope for the best to happen and sooth our lives after all heat wave and hot climate is a transitory period and so will end very soon.

(The writer is a columnist, social and KP activist)