

Carbon-neutral and resource efficient Ladakh development

Ladakh is top priority of Gol as is evident from development projects completed or in pipeline as mentioned in annual report of MHA. For seventy years, one of the highest and toughest place to live, became accustomed to minus temperature with roads closed, almost no electricity, virtually no air connectivity, no university, no Government Medical College to name few of the basic things essential for day to day life but were missing for decades in Ladakh. It is beyond one's imagination to live without electricity in minus 40 degrees temperature. Hats off to brave people of Ladakh who faced it but the present Gol has totally changed the discourse now. Development has been ushered in unprecedented way after Ladakh became a separate UT. Gol has analysed the situation and special requirements of the region and skew of measures taken are a testimony to Government's commitment to develop Model Ladakh at the earliest. Connectivity has been a prime handicap in the past and even at present for a place which is cut off by road from rest of world for almost six months. Only connectivity for these six months is air connectivity to Srinagar, Jammu, Chandigarh and New Delhi via Leh airport but inter-district and other roads also remain blocked meaning no access to even hospitals even during emergency. Construction of forty helpads in record time for a UT of such small population speaks about the focus of Gol for Ladakh's day to day problems and army requirements. Thousands of people, especially patients, have availed subsidised helicopter services in last one year. Gol's aim is ultimately to have Carbon-neutral and resource efficient Ladakh and all new projects are in this direction only. Solar plants, in addition to 5.0 GW Solar Project at Pang in Leh and 2.50 GW Solar Project at Zanskar in Kargil, at various other places are operational now replacing carbon emitting diesel gensets along with new transmission lines with a target to have 24x7 electricity at inaccessible as well as remotest area. Solar powered lift water projects are conceived to provide drinking as well as day to day use water by using submersible pumps running on solar power for use of clean energy in the agriculture sector as well. First ever Geo-Thermal Field Development Project has been sanctioned which will generate 24x7 power from the heat emerging out of Earth's interior with 80% less greenhouse gases emission than oil or coal. Natural hot water so emerging will be used for space heating as well as swimming pools to attract more tourists. This is unlimited 24x7x365 renewable energy unlike hydropower dams which shut or work at much lower efficiency during winter months. Zero carbon emission is the ultimate aim, as electric buses are operational and hydrogen buses are to be introduced by next year with in-house facility for generation of hydrogen using solar power at Chuchot, Leh.

LG administration of Ladakh is focusing at grass root level development and with every passing month more panchayats, more BDO offices, more Common Facilities Centre with ultra internet connectivity have been provided at panchayat level to assure people get benefit from each and every Government welfare scheme. Road connectivity is on top priority now as motorable roads even at remotest village is no more dream but reality. People of Ladakh are now reaping and enjoying true fruits of freedom and democracy. Indian Government has assured Ladakh's get their long pending dues with interest now as dream projects assigned nowhere in India have been allotted to Ladakh as first priority. Basic infra facilities, education and health facilities are development parameters for any area and Ladakh is on jet-speed mode to achieve all this in shortest interval of time. Intent and sincerity to serve people is there, no doubt in no time Ladakh will be among top performing UTs.

Grievances redressal of 'Veer Naris'

Indian Armed Forces are epitome of sacrifices, courage and love for country. It's beyond words to express gratitude to the supreme sacrifices of our forces to secure our borders. All wings of forces stand by country be it a hurricane, a natural calamity like floods, any tragic accident or air lifting of injured or relief material, they are always there to lead from front, unmatched valor, dedication and sacrifices. Armed forces take extra care of families of our 'Fallen Soldiers' with various one time benefits like Central Ex-Gratia monetary relief, official accommodation retention, pension, gratuity, group insurance benefits, medical assistance and addition benefits like scholar ship for children, penury grant, loans, house repair grants, marriage grant to name few. In earlier years all said and done these were herculean tasks to get despite best army efforts to deliver at doorstep due to lack of communication modes and it used to take months to set things right. Even in this Digital India age few teething problems are there due to secrecy in Army matters. Veerangana Sewa Kendra have been setup to mitigate problems of 'Veer Naris'(wives) and children, factually an effort to cut short time and energy taken to approach various centers from far off places. A Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software has been put in place to address grievance through SMS, WhatsApp, e-mail and the families will get time to time updates via these methods. Indian Armed Forces are matchless in taking care of their soldiers and the families in every aspect and has unblemished record over the decades about this. The President of Army Wives Welfare Association is herself involved to share the loss of family and assures timely redressal of their grievances if any. Flexibility and adaptability are both crucial to deliver on ground and with these kind of facilities and infrastructure in place, honour of families and delivery of various benefits have been assured at their doorsteps now, just a click away, a small tribute to our brave ones who made supreme sacrifices for the country.

D K Pandita

In 2021, 134 million babies were born worldwide. In the future, the number of newborns is expected to slightly increase to reach 138 million annually between 2040 and 2045, despite the continuous decline in the average number of births per woman. In 2021, most births worldwide occurred in the two most populous regions - Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. The population on the earth is now marching to more than eight billion. In the early periods population of the world grew very slowly. It is only during the last few hundred years that population has increased at an alarming rate. The global population will reach 8 billion on November 15, 2022, more than three times the population of 2.5 billion in 1950. It took 123 years for the population to double to 2 billion in 1927. Since then, the number of years taken to add a billion people has only dropped. The last billion, which will take the population to 8 billion later this year, will be added in just 11 years.

The findings come in the backdrop of a decrease in fertility rates across the globe. The UN report finds that in 2020, for the first time since 1950, the rate of population growth fell below 1 per cent per year and it is projected to continue to slow in the next few decades and through the end of this century. In 2021, the average fertility of the world's population stood at 2.3 births per woman, having fallen from about 5 births per woman in 1950. Global fertility is projected to decline further to 2.1 births per woman by 2050. The latest UN projections suggest that the global population could grow to around 8.5 billion in 2030, 9.7 billion in 2050, and 10.4 billion in 2100.

The population of China was 1,144 million in 1990 compared with India's at 861 million then. The UN projections say that by 2050, India's population will reach 1,668 million, far exceeding China's declining population at 1,317 million. The global population by 2050 would have touched 9.7 billion. The world's two most populous regions in 2022 were Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, with 2.3 billion people, representing 29 per cent of the global population, and Central and Southern Asia, with 2.1 billion (26 per cent). China and India accounted for the largest populations in these regions, with more than 1.4 billion each in 2022, says the report. Central and Southern Asia is expected to become the most populous region in the world by 2037.

The 2019 World Population Prospectus report had said that India would overtake China by 2027. So, we knew that India was going to overtake China in a matter of a few years. If we look at it over the last 50 years, India's growth rate stood at 2.3 per cent in 1972, which has dropped down to less than 1 per cent now. In this

People V/s Population

period, the number of children each Indian woman has during her lifetime has come down from about 5.4 to less than 2.1 now. This means that we have attained the Replacement Fertility Rate, at which a population exactly replaces itself from one generation to the next. Usage of modern contraceptives is rising across the country and the desired fertility rate for all communities in India is less 2, according to the latest National Family Health Survey data. Increasing rates of migration also contribute to changing population patterns across countries particularly South Asia clocks some of the highest emigration trends, according to the report with India seeing an estimated net outflow of 3.5 million between 2010 and 2021.

World Population	Indian Population	Year	Years it took to double
100 crores	16.9 crores approx.	1804	
200 crores	25.20 crores approx	1927	123
300 crores	43.59 crores	1959	32
400 crores	60.88 crores	1974	15
500 crores	81.97 crores	1987	13
600 crores	101.95 crores	1998	11
700 crores	125.03 crores	2011	13
800 crores	141.19 crores	2022	11

Source : United National Population Fund

About 9.4 per cent of Indian women have an unmet need for contraception, which means that approximately 22 million women want to stop or delay childbearing but do not have access to a method of contraception. Our focus should be on providing women of all communities' access to family planning services. We should also capitalize on our large young population; about 30 per cent aged between 10 and 24. The government needs to play a pivotal role and invest in education, health and creating economic opportunities for young people, which would help us harness what economists call demographic dividend.

The people of a country are its real wealth. It is they, who are the actual resources and make use of the country's other resources and decides its policies. Ultimately a country is known by its people. It is important to know how many women and men a country has, how many children are born each year, how many people die

and how? Whether they live in cities or villages, can they read or write and what work do they do?

India has many places where there are fewer people and many places where there are many people, giving our country a very complicated agglomeration of highly dense cities in a span of hundred kilometers and swathes of less densely populated villages between them.

The root cause of Indian poverty, pollution and corruption are alleviated by India having the second highest density of population with 464 persons per sq.km. with absolute outliers on both sides of the curve, case in point: Bihar and Ladakh. The reasons are ; (i) Availability of water as people prefer to live in areas where fresh water is easily (as is the case with Punjab and the Gangetic plain) (ii) People prefer living on flat plains and gentle slopes, so these areas tend to be more populated (as is the case with the plains in general) (iii) An extreme climate such as very hot or cold deserts are uncomfortable for human habitation having very low population. And finally, (iv) Historically continuous habitation (Example the Andhra region, Tamil Nadu and again, North India in general)

The population growth or population change refers to the change in number of inhabitants of a territory during a specific period of time. This change may be positive as well as negative. It can be expressed either in terms of absolute numbers or in terms of percentage. Population change in an area is an important indicator of economic development, social upliftment and historical and cultural background of the region.

A small increase in population is desirable in a growing economy. However, population growth beyond a certain level leads to problems. Of these the depletion of resources is the most serious. It indicates that resources that had supported a population earlier are now insufficient to maintain the population. Access to family planning services is a significant factor in limiting population growth and improving women's health. People across the Country are already living with the devastating consequences of changing climate, intensifying and increasing the frequency and impact of extreme weather events. Rising level of rivers particularly during rainy seasons and changing weather patterns threaten the livelihoods and land of millions. Even as we work tirelessly to reduce emissions, further change is inevitable. We know that the most vulnerable are at the greatest risk from climate change, and that they have done the least to cause it. India is committed to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 in its "Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use" and reduction of Carbon footprint by 2050.

COP 27

Developing nations and climate change costs

Dr. Soma Marla

Mia Mottly, Prime Minister of Barbados, speaking at the ongoing COP27 UN climate summit in Egypt attacked the rich nations for their historical criminal past for present climate crisis and demanded 1 trillion US Dollar compensation to low income countries to tackle natural disasters. The prime minister from a tiny Caribbean nation is known for her bold speeches in world forums in advocating interests of developing South.

Her demand is justified. In the past centuries, the West colonized the South and plundered its resources, labor force and used them in industrial revolution. Prosperity and high carbon emissions were achieved at the expense of the developing nations and now they are being forced to pay again as victims of climate disasters. Only recently Pakistan witnessed disastrous floods from melting of Himalayan glaciers. Rise of green house gases and global warming are responsible for high temperatures in California, Europe, drought in Africa and unseasonal excessive rains that flooded Bengaluru, Kerala and Chennai recently. In away, the developing world is facing a double jeopardy by having to pay the cost as result of high green house gases from the industrial revolution and this is quite unfair.

The gory climate disasters in this year's sum-

mer and autumn and the brunt forced by the rich West though partly to admit the moral responsibility for high carbon emissions from current and recent past. Eventually compensation fund became a major agenda item in the ongoing COP27 attended by nearly 100 nations. Most of the growth in energy infrastructure, switch from fossil fuels comes from emerging markets in developing South.

Funding low carbon economic growth, technology for shift to renewable energy production needs nearly a trillion US dollars annually. The money is also required by disaster affected nations to rebuild storm water infrastructure, restore lakes, grow mangroves, building seawalls and disaster early warning systems. Poor countries have been promised since 2009, through Paris and Glasgow, 100 billion dollar a year to cut emissions and cope with extremes of weather. For more than a decade, wealthy nations have rejected official discussions on what is referred to as loss and damage, or funds they provide to help poor countries cope with the consequences of global warming.

Till recently Western nations vehemently denied responsibility for historical emission of Greenhouse gases and current global warming. Eventually, the rich nations had to accept moral responsibility. The focus on addressing loss and damage discussion in COP27 will help in mitigation and adaptation to present climate crisis. In real

world the climate justice funds did not reach needy Southern nations.

Investments of trillions of US Dollar would cover disaster risk knowledge, observations and forecasting, preparedness and response, and communication of early warnings to all across the globe. The plan, drawn up by the World Meteorological Association and its technical partners, was supported by 50 countries including India.

The Rio+20 summit will build on the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) initiative for the green economy, seeks to assist governments in reshaping policies and investments in a range of sectors, including clean technologies, renewable energies, water services, green transportation, waste management, green buildings and sustainable agriculture and forests.

Currently, half of the countries in the world lack these facilities, leaving a large number of people with no advance warning to save lives and properties from impending disasters. The Global Commission on Adaptation found that spending just 800 million US Dollar on such systems in developing countries would avoid losses of 3 to 16 billion dollar per year.

Implementing neoliberal economic reforms governments around the world are rapidly transferring public sector institutions including community owned assets such as forests, mines, rivers and others. Profit greed of capitalism with no

regard to nature, cut forests, polluted rivers, soil and environment. In Europe forest cover shrunk to single digits and most of the rivers are severely polluted and became unfit even for fishing. Besides a price tag is attached to rivers and forests. Today more sectors are turning green replacing coal and other renewables. Green capitalism started budding. Adani Greens holds a bulk share in solar energy production, Elon Musk, Toyota, Ford, Hyundai are major players in manufacturing ge-automobiles.

Only a minor part of promised Climate Justice fund (nearly 20 billion Dollar of the annually promised 100 billion dollar) reached Developing nations. Irony is that the fund never reached to tackle disaster affected needs of people. Instead bulk of these limited funds were transferred to renewable energy and e-automobile manufacturing companies. Even the proposed carbon credits are being monopolized by green manufacturing industry monopolized by the major players named above. Even the IMF released funds are not grants but interest paid loans to developing nations for rebuilding sea walls and other disaster mitigation activities.

The historical polluters should bear full responsibility and justice should be maintained while delivering climate funds to the needy to take up adaptation and disaster repair activities and installing early warning systems. (IPA)

Dr Pradeep Kumar Singh

It is well known that the farmers of Punjab-Haryana are very prosperous, use modern technology in farming, possess larger land holdings, and that the government facilitates them a lot in farming. With use of modern technology (harvesting by machines), crop residues remain in the field. The paddy straw can also be collected by machines to be sold to briquette (fuel) producing industries @ Rs.150/- per quintal. But due to lack of attractive profit for cost involved in collection and transportation of paddy straw, most of the farmers of Punjab-Haryana (especially Punjab) burn the stubble in the field itself. Thus Punjab, Haryana and Delhi all get exposed to the poisonous pollution for 40-45 days due to smoke. The media, while reporting on stubble-combustion, normally comments on effect of pollution especially in Delhi-NCR and the helplessness of the farmers, but hardly attempts a serious analysis considering the paddy crop being grown in other parts of the country. This has been in practice for decades, the state administration, police system and pollution control board seem helpless. Now some prosperous farmers of neighboring states have started doing the same.

The air pollution caused by stubble-combustion in Punjab-Haryana has been a very hot topic for discussion in Delhi. In previous years, the Chief Minister of Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal, blamed stubble-combustion in Punjab for pollution in Delhi. There was a provision to control stubble-combustion in the three Agriculture-Reform Laws enacted by Parliament in the year-2020. But many non-ruling parties at the Centre supported the farmers of Punjab-Haryana for agitation to get political score. Even dur-

Period of deadly air pollution

ing agitation, these laws could have been improved through discussion held between the government and the peasant leaders, but the politicians backing the agitation did not allow it to succeed, and the laws were finally repealed. There was a lot of disappointment when Arvind Kejriwal, played an important role in the agitation by providing necessary facilities to the agitators to continue the movement.

The deadly pollution has been going on for past few weeks. Not only the people of Punjab, Haryana and Delhi, but also the animals and birds forced to live in the open are facing the threat to life. The Aam Aadmi Party is the ruling party in both the states - Delhi and Punjab. The most incidents of stubble-burning have also been reported in Punjab, but the party has been blaming the central government for pollution.

Several steps have been taken to reduce the impact of pollution in Delhi. Ban on sale of firecrackers on Deepawali, ban on construction activities, ban on diesel cars below BS-VI standard, partial ban on entry of trucks, work-from-home for 50% employees in government offices, issuance of similar advisory private sector, etc. are a few such steps. In addition, closing primary schools and ban on outdoor activities in schools of elder children are undoubtedly necessary steps taken in a timely manner. Closure of schools in Delhi due to pollution was perhaps first-time implemented in November-2021. Now it seems that after Dussehra and Deepawali, the annual pollution holidays will also become a part of the academic calendar. This is the new normal system of

demanding an incentive of Rs.5,000/- per acre for the government for the paddy growing farmers. Arvind Kejriwal claims to have persuaded the farmers on the incentive amount of Rs.2,500/- per acre, and has also proposed the formula of 500 + 500 + 1,500 for the partnership of Punjab, Delhi and Central Government. Prima facie this seems to be an achievement and solution to the problem, but all that glitters may not be gold. The provision of incentive and the complication of the financial share to states need a thorough discussion among public representatives from all parts of the country.

It is important to note that the paddy is cultivated in other parts of the country (West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Orissa, Bihar and Chhattisgarh etc.) as well. In some states, farmers have to bear heavy losses due to crop damage caused by floods. The farmers of these states also have the right to get incentive for growing the paddy, even if they do not burn the stubble today. Farmers growing other crops instead of paddy may feel attracted towards paddy cultivation for the incentive, even if the climate is not conducive to it. In fact, all the farmers of the country have equal rights on the free grant, who grow food-grains, fruits or vegetables or other crops on agricultural land. Will Delhi Government accept a share of Rs.500/- in the incentive for these farmers as well? Will Delhi Government accept a share of Rs.500/- in the incentive for the farmers of Haryana? Will other state governments accept a share of Rs.500/- in the incentive for paddy growing farmers? Is Government of

India prepared to pay a share of Rs.1,500/- to all the farmers in the country? After all, how much burden will the Governments impose on the taxpayers? The important issue is Punjab-Haryana region does not receive sufficient rainfall for paddy cultivation. The cultivation is done exploiting ground water resources using free electricity. This paddy cultivation is not eco-friendly, and encouraging it by the government cannot be considered appropriate.

The pollution caused by stubble-combustion is a big problem. It has been in practice for decades. But now the politics has also added fuel to fire. The helplessness of the central government during the opposition-supported agitation against the agricultural reform laws in the year 2020-21, which led to the repeal of the laws, has got recorded in Indian history. This serves as booster to the confidence of the stubble-burning farmers, removing the fear of state administration and police system in the society. The expectation of incentive also remains a problem. The provision of incentive may raise other complications instead of giving a solution. The political parties should rise above party politics and hold discussion with union leaders and village representatives to counsel the farmers and motivate them for (i) eco-friendly stubble management and (ii) alternative crops (instead of paddy), to protect the environment. Public representatives and other popular personalities associated with agriculture should themselves set an example before the society by adopting alternative crops. Protection of natural resources is the social responsibility. Every citizen has to play a role sincerely and efficiently.

(The author is Professor & former Dean (Research & Consultancy) Sant Longowal Institute of Engineering & Technology, Longowal)

Woes of oldies

Sir,

Like the autumn after the spring season, so is the old age after the youth. When the evening of the life comes, one feels and finds itself in isolation and bewilderment. The kith and kins and intimate friends who used to be around him in all good seasons, appear deserted. Own progeny (sons and daughters) for whom one spares sweat of brows, for nourishing them, also do not care much. Even the death of an oldy isn't much mourned, saying that it was his time to go. Keeping the parents with, is an other big problem.

Ladies generally do not prefer to put up with old fossils. They certainly feel better to live in a hut near a cremation ground than to enjoy a big building with oldies. Burdened by the oldies, a phenomena of uneasiness exists in youngsters. In short, life of an older person with exceptions, is always melancholous. Morality cries when an old man stands in queue or travels without seat or feels humbled when stands marginalised in own family, as hardly any one takes notice of his presence.

One can see God on the earth in the shape of his parents. Even the society is obliged to take care of oldies. The Old Age Homes where such distressed and neglected souls reside, are really temples on the earth. Here only one feels that it was a mire of delusion/ignorance, which kept one always engaged in worldly activities leading to utter deception and repentance at the end of the day. Since the last journey of the life has to be singly and empty-handed, accumulation of wealth or maintaining so-called relations, isn't much significant.

Keshava Nand Sharma
Salehari (Sunderbani)

Festive season and traffic rules

Sir,

We are passing through festive season since last over three months. The biggest festival of Deepawali was celebrated some weeks ago with lots of love and fervour coupled with colourful illumination of lights, extensive cleanliness drive and plenty of sweets and decorative earthen lamp in markets. But on the other hand, a huge and long traffic jams were spotted that deterred smooth movement of vehicles to do shopping and visit relatives for distribution of festive gifts. Though good number of traffic officials were deployed to ease out traffic congestion, we need to co-operate with traffic officials by following traffic guidelines. It is obvious that ever-increasing vehicles on roads may lead to gradual upward trend of traffic jams in future.

In light of this fact, there is an utmost need for commuters to have awareness about traffic rules. The commuters need to develop habit of availing paid parking while shopping during festive season. It will certainly result in smooth flow of traffic and minimize chances of obstructions. I feel by following these traffic rules and extending co-operation to traffic regulating agency, we all can celebrate hassle-free festivals with fervour, love, harmony and togetherness.

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(The views expressed by the authors are their personal)

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