

Red corner notices for terrorists

The Special Investigation Unit (SIU) carried out coordinated raids on the residences of terrorists at various places. These terrorists belong to organisations such as Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Hizbul Mujahideen, and other militant outfits. The intelligence agencies have also determined the approximate locations of these terrorists in Pakistan and PoJK. The police and intelligence agencies have compiled detailed dossiers on all 250 militants, including their addresses in India and their likely operational locations in Pakistan and PoJK. These dossiers have been submitted to the Union Home Ministry, which will approach Interpol for the issuance of Red Corner Notices. The objective is to arrest these terrorists and facilitate their repatriation.

A Red Corner Notice (RCN) is a request issued by Interpol to law enforcement agencies worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest an individual wanted by a member country for extradition or prosecution. When an RCN is issued against a terrorist or criminal operating in Pakistan, it serves as an international alert and increases the chances of their apprehension. Indeed, Pakistan has not taken concrete actions to apprehend individuals like Masood Azhar, Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi, and many others who have been subject to Red Corner Notices (RCNs) issued by Interpol. This lack of cooperation in arresting and extraditing wanted terrorists has been a matter of concern for the international community. Efforts to address the issue of non-compliance with RCNs involve diplomatic engagement, discussions, and negotiations between the concerned countries. It is worth mentioning that the enforcement of RCNs requires a collaborative and cooperative approach between countries, and persistent diplomatic efforts are necessary to ensure that countries fulfil their obligations to combat terrorism effectively.

The security agencies have been closely monitoring the situation and taking proactive measures to counter these efforts. Raids and operations have been conducted to apprehend terrorists and dismantle their support networks. Intelligence agencies have been gathering information and sharing it with relevant authorities to take the necessary action. Efforts are also being made to address the root causes of militancy, including socio-economic development and outreach programmes to dissuade youth from joining militant ranks. Additionally, community participation and cooperation are being sought to identify and report any suspicious activities.

As concluded by intelligence sources, most of these 250 terrorists are trying to revive terrorism by influencing OGWs and UGWs, and as such, the focus should be on those existing in our region. Dismantling the support networks of terrorists, including OGWs and UGWs, is a crucial aspect of counter-terrorism efforts. OGWs and UGWs play significant roles in assisting and facilitating terrorist activities, such as recruitment, financing, logistics, and intelligence gathering. They form the backbone of a terrorist network, providing essential support and resources. These workers often have valuable information about the operational aspects of terrorist organisations, including their leadership, safe houses, hideouts, and communication channels. By apprehending and interrogating these individuals, security agencies can gather critical intelligence that can lead to the arrest of high-value targets and the prevention of future attacks. OGWs and UGWs are normally involved in various criminal activities, such as extortion, smuggling, and illicit financing, to provide financial support to terrorist organisations. By targeting these individuals, security agencies can disrupt the funding and logistics networks that sustain terrorist activities. They are actively involved in the recruitment and radicalization of individuals, particularly vulnerable youth. Dismantling OGW and UGW networks help restore public confidence in the security apparatus. It demonstrates the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies in combating terrorism, which, in turn, encourages citizens to cooperate and provide information, ultimately leading to more successful counter-terrorism operations.

Efforts to revive militancy in the districts of Doda, Kishtwar, Bhandarwah, and Ramban have been a cause of concern for security forces. The collective efforts of the security forces, intelligence agencies, and local administration are focused on thwarting attempts to revive militancy and maintain peace and stability in the affected districts and are much appreciated.

Another milestone in rural sanitation

The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has achieved a significant milestone by declaring 6,000 villages as ODF Plus in the Aspiring category. This accomplishment is attributed to strong leadership and support at every level. These villages have successfully maintained their ODF Plus status and have implemented systems to manage solid and liquid waste.

The construction of toilets under the Open Defecation Free (ODF) initiative has brought about significant changes in the lives of villages. It has eliminated the practice of open defecation, ensuring that waste is contained and properly disposed of. This has led to cleaner surroundings, reduced health risks, and improved overall hygiene. Open defecation is a leading cause of water contamination and the spread of diseases such as diarrhoea, cholera, and typhoid. By using toilets, villagers are better protected against waterborne illnesses, leading to a healthier community. The provision of toilets has enhanced the dignity and privacy of individuals, particularly women and girls. They no longer have to face the discomfort and safety concerns associated with open defecation. Having a toilet at home allows for personal hygiene and provides a sense of security. With toilets in their homes or nearby, it saves time and effort, allowing them to focus on other activities such as work, education, and household chores. Improved sanitation can attract tourists, leading to potential income generation through tourism-related activities. Additionally, better health outcomes and reduced medical expenses can contribute to increased productivity and income generation for villagers. Constructing toilets under the ODF initiative promotes environmental sustainability. It prevents contamination of water bodies and soil, preserving the local ecosystem. Proper waste management systems associated with toilets also facilitate the utilisation of waste as a resource for composting and organic farming.

Overall, the provision of toilets under the ODF initiative has brought about transformative changes in village lives by improving sanitation, health, dignity, convenience, and economic opportunities. It is a crucial step towards creating healthier and more sustainable communities. The Rural Sanitation Department and Rural Department deserve all the appreciation for their consistent efforts.

Aufaq Zargar

Poverty is a dogged fate that stains the very fabric of our society in the midst of the splendour of metropolitan and smart cities. We must act swiftly and resolutely to alleviate poverty - the awful curse that hurts a sensitive soul more than anything else. The affliction of poverty is a disease that does not respect national boundaries. It devours the lives of innumerable people and robs them of their worth, opportunities, and faith. It creates a vicious circle of hopelessness, crushing the dreams of those born into it and condemning them to a life of constant struggle. The existence of poverty in the twenty-first century, despite unprecedented prosperity and unprecedented technical marvels, is a huge tragedy. It's a blot on our culture, proof that we haven't done enough to help those at the bottom.

It is generally accepted now that poverty does not arise from a lack of motivation or hard work. It's the result of a lack of political will to address the underlying causes of social injustice and economic inequality. It exposes the shortcomings of our social and economic systems that have contributed to the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Only a culture without morals can turn a blind eye to the plight of its weakest. Fighting poverty takes more than just feeling sorry for those in need and giving a little money here and there. It calls for a radical change in how we think as a society, one in which we finally accept that poverty is a symptom, not the disease itself. It requires an unyielding dedication to justice and equality, to tearing down the walls that keep this blight alive. Investment in schools, hospitals, and other social facilities is crucial in the fight against poverty. We need to make a place that encourages originality, entrepreneurship, and fairness. We need to tear down the barriers that keep people stuck in a rut and construct the pathways that lead to a life of promise and fulfilment.

Essentially education is the key to self-determination and upward mobility. The cycle of poverty

Poverty is a Curse

can be broken and lives can be transformed through education. However, it is depressing to see the huge gaps in educational opportunity, especially for marginalized groups. This inequality must be remedied by increasing funding, enhancing educational infrastructure, and providing every child with a fair shot at success.

Healthcare equity is just as important as education. When people are poor, they often lack the resources to get the medical care they need. Lack of access to healthcare should never be the cause of someone's suffering or death. To ensure that

education or finding a job. The value of community centres and social support networks in empowering individuals and promoting social cohesion cannot be ignored. They encourage people to band together to solve local problems, acting as a catalyst for social mobilization and collective action.

In addition, people need accessible public transport to reach their desired destinations, such as schools, hospitals, and workplaces. Lack of access to reliable modes of travel can trap people in cycles of poverty by preventing them from mov-

Companies may do more than just focus on making a profit by taking on social responsibility and aiding in the fight against poverty. Fair and ethical hiring policies, funding for community development programmes, and measures bolstering small enterprises and entrepreneurship in low-income communities are all examples of this.

individuals in need have somewhere to turn, we must push for healthcare changes that make clinics, hospitals, and insurance plans more easily available.

Reduction of poverty is also greatly aided by investments in social infrastructure. If we put money into social infrastructure, we can make it such that everyone has access to the tools they need to better their lives. Measures to provide more affordable housing can help ease this burden. When people don't have to worry about where they'll sleep each night, they can put their energy into other areas of their lives, like getting an edu-

ation to areas with better work and social opportunities. Expanding and enhancing public transport networks can help persons in low-income areas gain access to opportunities in wealthier places, breaking the cycle of poverty.

Legislative, executive and judiciary must work in coordination for eradication of poverty. Apart from that, it calls for a change in how people view those with less privilege in society. Instead of looking down on the poor, we should have compassion, understanding, and a sincere desire to help them. Stigmatizing and generalizing about the poor simply serves to widen the gap between classes and

How does a Bot perceive issues affecting Indian Science?

Biju Dharmapalan

Despite tremendous growth made in the field of science and technology, Indian science is beset with a lot of issues at the ground level. Landmark discoveries in science can be made only if it is done with passion. Today there is no room for passion. Most students do research as they don't have any other option. Research is considered a stop-gap arrangement between marriage or employment. One main issue affecting Indian science is the plight of Indian research scholars. In many institutions, scholars are considered equivalent to a class four employee. They are made to work like a horse in a lab, with no free time, no holidays and a meagre salary if one is not fortunate enough to get through some of the fellowships like CSIR-UGC or ICMR, DBT JRF etc. Even in labs, many passionate scholars are tortured by their supervisors. May supervisors in India think that scholars are their slaves, and they make them do anything they want, especially in getting good publications. No scholar is given the freedom to pursue their line of thought in the research. Most supervisors repeat the work their supervisors have trained them. There are very few supervisors who shift to a new domain of research, unlike their Western counterparts. If a student doesn't obey, the supervisors cause undue delay in completing the thesis. There are instances of students completing their PhD within 7 to 10 years. Ofcourse, few scholars make purposeful delays in completing their work. For them getting CSIR-UGC fellowship, up to 5 years is the priority, of course, its better than searching for a job. There are even instances where supervisors ask for monetary benefits for completing the PhD. In some private universities, fellows working in Government-funded projects ask students to reimburse part of the fellowship amount to the supervisors. In Government-aided institutions, students must undergo administrative hurdles to get the fellowship on time. Even after the completion of PhD, many scholars find it difficult to find employment and end up in menial jobs for which their higher qualification doesn't have any weightage. If India has to become a scientific superpower, we need to build a robust next-generation workforce. This will become a reality only if our young researchers passionately conduct their research and are placed in a good jobs.

As a person exposed to Indian research, I know that most of the above-mentioned issues are true. In this era of artificial intelligence, where AI dominates every field of human life, I was inquisitive to find out how AI will perceive Indian science.

With this objective, I asked the most popular Chat bot, ChatGPT its perception of Indian science. Regarding the issues affecting Indian science, the bot gave the following.

Funding: One of the major issues affecting Indian science is the lack of funding. While the Indian Government has increased funding for science in recent years, it is still much lower than that of other countries. This lack of funding makes it difficult for researchers to conduct high-quality research and to attract and retain talented scientists.

Infrastructure: The lack of proper infrastructure and facilities is another major issue. Many universities and research institutions in India lack basic equipment, and researchers often have to rely on outdated technology.

Brain Drain: There is a significant brain drain in India, as many of the best and brightest scientists and researchers leave the country in search of better opportunities abroad.

Education: The quality of education in India needs improvement, especially in the fields of science and technology. This is necessary to produce more competent and skilled scientists and researchers.

Bureaucracy: The bureaucracy in India can be a significant hurdle for scientists and researchers, causing delays in obtaining funding and approvals for research projects.

Political interference: There have been instances where political interference has affected scientific research in India. This can hinder the development of science and technology in the country.

Collaboration: There is a lack of collaboration between researchers and institutions in India. This makes it difficult to share resources, knowledge, and expertise, which could hinder scientific progress.

If we analyze critically, the answers provided by the bot are highly relevant to our current scenario. There is concern regarding the quality of science education in the country. For this also, the bot gave the following concerns.

Poor quality of education: One of the main issues affecting science education in India is the poor quality of education provided in schools and colleges. This includes outdated syllabi, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of qualified teachers.

Limited resources: Many schools and colleges in India lack basic resources such as science laboratories, which are essential for practical learning in science subjects. This can result in students having a limited understanding of scientific concepts.

Inadequate teacher training: Teachers in India often lack adequate training in science subjects, which can hinder their ability to effectively teach science to students.

Gender disparity: There is a significant gender disparity in science education in India, with fewer girls pursuing science subjects compared to boys. This can be attributed to societal stereotypes and a lack of female role models in the field.

Lack of interest: Many students in India do not show a keen interest in science subjects, which can be attributed to a lack of engaging teaching methods, limited career opportunities, and a lack of awareness about the importance of science.

Inequality: There is also an inequality in science education in India, with students from lower socio-economic backgrounds having limited access to quality education and resources.

Emphasis on rote learning: The education system in India places a significant emphasis on rote learning, which can hinder students' ability to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This can also limit their ability to understand scientific concepts and apply them to real-world situations.

There are several ways in which the quality of scientific research in India can be improved. According to the bot, the quality of scientific research can be improved through the following means.

Increase funding: Increasing funding for research in India can help create more research opportunities. This can include funding for research projects, scholarships, and fellowships.

Encourage collaboration: Encouraging collaboration between Indian researchers and researchers from other countries can help to create more opportunities for Indian researchers to work on international projects and to access resources and expertise that may not be available in India.

Improve infrastructure: Improving the infrastructure and facilities of research institutions and universities can help create more research opportunities. This can include providing access to state-of-the-art equipment and facilities.

Promote entrepreneurship: Promoting entrepreneurship can help to create more opportunities for Indian researchers to commercialize their research and to create new businesses and job opportunities.

Provide training and mentorship: Providing training and mentorship to Indian researchers can help to develop their skills and to provide them with guidance and support throughout their careers.

Address bureaucracy and political interference: Addressing bureaucracy and political interference can help to create a more conducive environment for researchers to conduct their work. This can include simplifying the process of obtaining funding and approvals for research projects and ensuring that politics does not interfere with scientific research.

Provide career development opportunities: Providing career development opportunities such as workshops, conferences, and networking events can help to create more opportunities for Indian researchers to develop their skills, to learn from others in their field, and to establish connections with potential collaborators and employers.

Incidentally, the policy decisions taken by our central Government are in lieu of the points highlighted by the bot.

The response of bot regarding the attitude of supervisors in India towards their research scholars is quite interesting. It has rightly pointed out the correct picture of our supervisors in an impartial manner. According to the bot, the attitude of supervisors in India towards their research scholars can vary depending on various factors such as the supervisor's personality, work culture, institutional policies, and the research scholar's performance. However, some general trends can be observed in this regard. In general, supervisors in India tend to be highly respected and hold considerable authority over their research scholars. They are expected to guide and support their scholars in all aspects of their research work, including conceptualizing and designing experiments, analyzing data, and writing publications. Some supervisors may take a more hands-off approach, expecting their scholars to work independently and only providing guidance when requested. Others may be more involved and expect frequent progress updates and regular meetings with their scholars.

However, there have also been reports of supervisors in India exhibiting a lack of professionalism, such as being dismissive of their scholars' ideas or concerns, being inaccessible or unresponsive, and even engaging in unethical behaviour, such as taking credit for their scholars' work. Such behaviour can be detrimental to the scholars' academic progress and well-being.

Human observation can be biased, as it is an innate human quality. However, observations made by AI may be impartial until and unless there is human interference. Our policymakers must take urgent steps to correct the fundamental issues affecting Indian science as we need to build a strong workforce for the future.

(The author is a science communicator and columnist.)

Practice of Urban Agriculture

Dr. Parvati Rekhi

Urban agriculture is the practice of farming in urban and peri-urban areas and it connotes a wide range of food and non-food products that can be cultivated or grown. In connection to Indian cities, the focus is on the cultivation of vegetables, fruits, and flowers for human consumption. It is now part of a growing trend in cities globally to look towards locally produced food. At the global level, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) believes urban and peri-urban agriculture has a role in food and nutritional security. The Urban Food Agenda is an FAO flagship initiative to enhance sustainable development, food security, and nutrition in urban and peri-urban areas. It encourages partnerships with different stakeholders such as civil society, academia, international agencies, city entities, and the private sector. In several countries, community organisations and individual city residents, facilitated by city administrations, have taken up small-scale agricultural activities on private and public lands. The "Draft Citizen's Policy for Urban Agriculture in Delhi", submitted to the Delhi government in September 2022, aims to provide a holistic framework for urban farming. It recommends building on existing practices, promoting residential and community farming through rooftop and kitchen gardens, allocating vacant land for agricultural use, creating a market, developing policies for animal rearing and spreading awareness.

Advantages of Urban agriculture: Despite the limitations, urban agriculture is worth promoting for several reasons. Firstly, even if the food is grown in a small fraction of the total output in the country, a little more of it is welcome, since even this small fraction is bound to provide sustenance to a large number of people. The small-scale decentralised production can also be done to

supplement diets at household or community level and furthermore, it had local employment value and labour-intensive, it can add to the number of jobs and improve livelihood opportunities in the cities and generate some income, especially for the poor. Secondly, urban agriculture has a significant role in urban environmental management as it can combat urban heat island effects and function as an urban lung in addition to providing visual appeal. Additionally, it brings purposeful recreation that has direct impact on city health.



Thirdly, urban agriculture helps city-dwellers to establish linkages with nature and educate them in its richness and diversity. Urban thinkers who have been worried about the disconnect of urbanites with nature and have been looking at ways by

which that interrelationship could be re-established. Urban agriculture provides a fine opportunity for such engagement and eco-cultural learning. It also helps to develop community bonds and a sense of sharing through community agriculture where people come together and share their stories about their experiences in growing a variety of food.

Lastly, since cities are struggling with waste management and disposal, urban agriculture can provide some help to deal with it. The use of suit-

waste and its dumping on land, thereby, reducing the requirement of landfills. It is one of the most advisable forms of waste recycling for cities of the future.

Role of Urban Local Bodies in promoting Urban Agriculture

Urban local bodies can pro-actively assist activity in three ways. First, they can make some of the unutilised public lands that are not likely to be brought under development in the near future should be available for urban agriculture. These can be leased to private parties through an agreement with mutually beneficial terms and conditions. Indian cities have preferred open spaces to carry ornamental vegetation. However, to promote urban agriculture, public spaces can partly have edible landscapes. Furthermore, the civic bodies could use zone lands for urban agriculture in their development/master plans for a period during which they are not likely to be pressed into service for other purposes.

The ULBs can provide technology extension services through soil and water testing laboratories. Additionally, ULBs could provide standards for use of terraces, balconies, open spaces within private/cooperative housing society compounds for urban agricultural use. In heavily populated cities, where availability of land is a constraint, a different approach may be needed to overcome the scarcity of urban space for urban agriculture including developing technologies for vertical farming. In this background, a vital addition to municipal functions should be used for urban agriculture. Similarly, urban planning would require to include urban agriculture as a planning item in its land use plan and the future beckons that urban agriculture does not merely remain a marginal esoteric interest but a critical urban function.

(The author is Lecturer GCW Parade)