#### Excelsior

Founder Editor S.D. Rohmetra

#### **Deportation of** Rohingyas

eports that all is set to initiate an exercise deport thousands of Myanmar Rohingyas who came all the way from their country Myanmar to probably settle in Jammu should allay the fears of majority of the people perturbed with such an illegal entry which contributes towards disturbing the demographic equations of the Jammu region that finally the day of reckoning for such illegal entrants has come nearer. Their "smooth" landing in Jammu, unfortunately started from the year 2002 right up to 2014 during the rule of successive Governments respectively. Perhaps, the process would have not been stopped even after 2014 had there not been the change of the guard at the Centre. The new Government seized of the matter had made it known that people having illegally entered into Jammu and Kashmir from Myanmar etc were likely to be deported which led to many of these Rohingyas leave for Uttar Pradesh, Assam, West Bengal and even Bangladesh, again with malafide intentions to mix up with the locals to evade deportation.

There are areas like Sunjwan, Belicharana, Samba Narwal etc in Jammu where their clusters continue to be there and are in concentrated manner. Although their number is stated to be much higher, yet only 6000 of them have so far been identified. The question as to where have others from them gone should be a cause of concern. Many people claim to firmly believe that the remaining number not coming on the radar of identification must have succeeded in melting in some groups of locals or having gone intentionally "missing". "Holding Centre" created at Hiranagar Jail has received the first batch of nationals of Myanmar while in different parts at M. A. Stadium, their registration has started and when the same is concluded, could more be known about their number.

The management of housing so many illegal immigrants is not that easy looking to their estimated number to exceed whooping number of 25000 which have necessitated for additional "Holding Centres" even if it meant extra pressure on the administrative apparatus. We know that these people have neither any valid travel documents nor any cogent proof of pointed nationality, for that the process of proper verification and even in biometric manner shall be started to pave the way for their deportation. However, we feel the exercise should have started much earlier as during the long period, say past several years they not only have "established" themselves here but in most of the cases, may have managed to prepare a ground to stake claim under many hues with ulterior motives to "continue" to live here. There are instances where a few were having fake Aadhar cards, PAN cards and passports etc thus creating more problems.

undertaken by the Union Home Ministry, an understanding must have been reached with the Government of Myanmar by the Government of India where presently military junta is in power and may create impediments or total refusal to get their nationals back. Necessary data compilation, identification and verification process, however, have all to be done to facilitate such deportation for various reasons. Many a time these Rohingyas were found involved in committing crimes and even Pakistani terror outfits tried to yoke them in for carrying out terror activities in India. If deportation of Rohingyas does not take place, it would send signals that entering into Indian territories especially border areas like Jammu and Kashmir was easy and facilitated by certain "over-ground agencies" and some self styled NGOs. Last but not the least, identifying and punishing those 'elements from within'is absolutely necessary who facilitate such aliens enter into the country, transporting and harbouring them especially when in many advanced countries such helping and harbouring is a serious crime carrying a prison term of

#### Reserving the 'seat' in **WTC** in England

ndian cricket team did it again splendidly at Sabarmati Ahmedabad, this time greatly contributed by Axar Patel and Ravichandran Ashwin by taking 5 wickets each and dismissing the already rattled and confused English team for just 135 thus putting into their kitty 3 victories and winning the series. With this, the Indian team has confirmed its Final Berth in the forthcoming World Test Championship (WTC) scheduled to be played in June this year in England.

It is worth noting that the percentage of winning matches between the two teams that will try their luck on the pitch at Lords are 72.2 and 70 for India and New Zealand. The impressive 96 by W.Sunder however could not be turned into a three figure to be recorded as an impressive century by him but overall dexterity in almost all departments earned the host team a magnificent victory. Man of the Match Rishabh Pant and Man of the Series Ravichandran Ashwin like feats prove the extent of talent among the young and the new in the country being phenomenal.

## Memoirs of an eventful journey

9 years ago, Dr Karan Singh was born as Heir to the throne of princely State of Ioanni Kashmir II monarch had the history of the sub-continent followed its chronology right. Nevertheless, he rules over the minds and hearts of vast spectrum of people world over as can be seen from the photographc retrospective of his eventful public life in Amar Mahal Museum. The display tells that His Excellency is an inseparable constituent of not only pre and post independence socio-political history of India but also of the contemporary world. It tells the story of the Prince, the inheritor of largest empire in British India, turning into formidable intellectual and world renowned statesman. The pictorial retrospective is a presentation of his life ourney beginning from France. It covers his childnood, schooling, royal wedding, heading the State n various capacities and his role in national and nternational socio-political spheres which can hardly be projected in papers, periodicals and ooks due to space constraints.

The charming Yuvraj who started his glorious ourney of life, all the way from France, as back as March 9, 1931, continues to traverse the globe nonstop illuminating the world intellectually and spiritually. When he was born, Mahatma Gandhi led independence movement was challenging the British slavery in India. Seeing independence in the offing, the Maharaja and Maharani groomed him for democratic role in independent India. Partition led independence plunged J&K in great turmoil. That catapulted Yuvraj into active politics. Under the compelling circumstances HH Maharaja Hari Singh left the State for good, appointing Yuvraj as Regent on June 20, 1949. Barely 18, he handled subsequent transformation from monarchy to democracy remarkably well which was liked by Pt. Nehru. He nimself terminated monarchy in J&K on Septemper 15, 1952. But with that his role didn't end. Constituent Assembly of J&K elected him Sadar-e-Riyasat. In 1967 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi called him to Delhi for more important political role n the Central Govt. He was the youngest and most handsome minister in her Cabinet.

The prince turned politician of J&K indeed had ualities that made him an extraordinary politician o make one wonder how he straved into this world of tumultuous politics from a feudal ancestry. It was the political turmoil in the sub-continent at the time of partition that forced him into politics. Had that not happened, he would have ruled Jammu and

But the destiny had some other plans for him to ating compendium. Do we know that his first book which he adjusted remarkably. He aspired to be the prime minister or president of India. While in Deli, he continued pursuing his political ambitions while gaining and spreading knowledge and spiri-

A remarkable aspect of his life is not that he couldn't realize his dreams but it is his spiritual evolution in the tumultuous events of contemporary Indian history despite attempting big deals in pol-

itics.Otherwise reticent about his achievements, he has revealed on many occasions that he wished to be Prime Minister or President of India for which he had positioned himself comfortably in Delhi at a very young age. He has said, "when Indira Gandhi brought her son Sanjay Gandhi in politics, I realised that I stand no chance now". Hence he fell apart with Indira Gandhi when she clamped emergency in India. Even after Sanjay Gandhi lost his life in a fatal accident, his chances remained dim because he had lost favours of Indira Gandhi

An opportunity did come his way during the first will of people, the first representative of the new top constitutional post at the behest of Dr. Manmohan Singh but the Left Parties grounded his chances because of his feudal inheritance and study/work on Hinduism. He is a Hindu but secular. Being Hindu, he never ever made any public exhibition of Hinduism. Yet he paid the price for being a Hindu scholar. It wasn't a small price to pay. Being Hindu in secular India is still considered a taboo. Dr. Karan Singh could not be an exception. To be ambitious and pursuing ambitions is common to every human being. But stretching them too far is to err. To that extent the Prince was no exception that too when he had big doors open for him elsewhere also.

Though a loser in political field, he is a big winner in spiritual field. Searching for enlightenment, he rarely seems to have missed an opportunity of engaging with the enlightened world. His views on Hinduism unshackles him from the narrow and rigid definition of religion and truth. His conversations with Japanese thinker Daisaku Ikeda of

was 'The Mountain of Shiva', a work of fiction written over 50 years ago about spiritual quest in Kashmir which was even made into seven parts Televi $sion\,Serial.\,Deep\,philosophies, in tense\,wisdom\,and$ scenic descriptions of Kashmir are combined into this appealing narrative/compendium. It is a novel with a spiritual quest in which the author takes the readers to on an exhilarating journey to the snow clad peaks of Kashmir valley and deep layers of

philosophy through an engaging story of love, compassion, misunderstanding and friendship. It remains one and only novel written by the heir apparent.

intellect and influence has always fallthat of the gentle dew, unheard and scarcely marked, yet bringing into blossom the fairest of the

unique instant of the last representative of the old order becoming, by the

UPA term. He was all set to be nominated for the order. Out of the past is built future. Our state has a history of its own to offer to the world. Our ancestors were great. Dr. Karan Singh is one such great personality who offers our glorious past to the posterity. We must recall him more often and enlighten ourselves by his knowledge. The more we study his distinguished life, more will be our knowledge of the past. And whoever tries to bring the past to the doors of everyone is the greatest benefactor to the society and the nation. To that extent Dr. Karan Singh has been very successful. He sought less favours and perhaps gave even lesser. In that sense he is a living rarity.

His distinguished service to the humanity, spanning over 72 years, in various capacities, has made him eminently renowned statesman. I am sure history will judge him as a real legend, not to the large status he inherited but the path on which he tram-

Knowing that Jammu will remain discriminated under the political structure favouring Kashmir, Riyasat reiterated. Till that is done, his regrets will Nichiren Buddhism Sect and Dalai Lama, spiritu-al and political head of Tibet, are given in his book, Pt. Nehru, knowing fully well that it was not easy

Kashmir as an autocratic ruler like his forefathers. 'an Examined Life'. It is an educating and invigor- to stand up to his bias against Dogras. But he did it most consciously retreating and submitting when the occasion so demanded. Ironically whenever he tried to convince Nehru of discrimination of Jammu by Sheikh Abdullah, Nehru saw him as a conspirator to derail democracy and secularism in the State. The warnings and the solutions offered by Dr Karan Singh, on numerous occasions, to Nehru and Indira Gandhi were ignored and what was asked by Kashmiri leaders was conceded. Nehru's letter to Dr. Karan Singh of September 9, 1952 in connection with Jammu grievances suggested that problems of Jammu are not political but commu-

> Reacting to the reorganisation of the State, former Sadar-e-Riyasat said, "all empires invariably come to an end and this, in case of J&K, was no exception". In an exclusive statement issued to Daily Excelsior, he said: "It will be useful to recall how it was created and what a significant role it played en upon the world like in our strategic and geo-political history since the last two centuries. This multi-regional, multi-cultural, multi-linguistic and multi-religious state continued until October 26, 1947 when my father signed the Instrument of Accession to India"

"It was an empire ruled for 101 years by the Dr. Karan Singh is a Dogras and then for 72 years by the Kashmiris. Half ique instant of the last of the empire was lost when India signed the ceasefire agreement with Pakistan. This left huge area of Gilgit-Baltistan and the Western Muzaffarabad-Mirpur under Pakistan control, involving roughly half the geographical area of the original State and a third of its population"

"It is not generally appreciated that the original State of Jammu and Kashmir covering 84,000 square miles, the largest princely State in British India, was in fact a Dogra empire built up at great efforts and sacrifices by my ancestors Maharaja Gulab Singh and Maharaja Ranbir Singh, who extended the frontiers of India to the borders of Tibet and Central Asia. This involved sustained military endeavors by the Dogra Army led by legendary Generals like Zorawar Singh, who conquered Ladakh, General Baj Singh and Mehta Basti Ram, who conquered Gilgit.

The Dogras thus substantially extended the Northern frontiers of India which otherwise may not have gone beyond the Banihal range. This is a feat for which the Dogras have not received the credit that they deserve in our history books and in our general imagination";the former Sadar-e-

### Why do we need Vertical Farming in J&K?

Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat

armers in Jammu and Kashmir are officially recognized as marginal farmers because of very small agricultural land holdings estimated at 0.55 hectares during the agriculture census 2015-2016. Unofficial sources say that land holding is much smaller (around 0.45 hectares ). In Kashmir valley, the size is even smaller. During the 2010-2011 agriculture census, the average size of operational land holdings in India was 1.15 ectares. This figure was lower, at 0.62 hectares in ammu and Kashmir. Districts in Kashmir valley had even lower landholding sizes than the state as whole. Kulgam 0.39 hectares Anantnag 0.39 Shopian 0.56, Pulwama 0.48, Srinagar 0.31, Budgam 0.43, Baramulla 0.51, Ganderbal 0.37, Kupwara 0.51, Bandipora 0.48. This figure again came down during the 2015-16 census as discussed above. In Jammu & Kashmir where majority of the farmers own less than an acre of land, any Government policy related to land acquisition, especially for "development projects", needs to take into account the fragile mountainous environment and climatic conditions as well. At a time when the agricultural land is shrinking day by day and population on rise, what is the future of agriculture in Jam-Since actual deportation process is going to be mu & Kashmir? Has Government ever thought what is the future of Basmati farmers in Jammu of the apple growers of Kashmir?

The world's overall population is expected to increase by another 2 billion by 2040. Feeding such a large population will be the most challenging task? Scientific studies show earth has lost one-fourth of its arable lands over the last 50 years only? India has a huge population. Urbanization and industrialization is shrinking India's agricultural land. The Vertical farming is the solution to these challenges. This type of farming is an innovative way of maintaining our agricultural practices. In India, vertical farming is mostly polyhouse-based farming. Polyhouse farming is a protected way that gives higher productivity and yield of vegetables and fruits

What Is Vertical Farming? Vertical farming is the practice of producing

food on vertically inclined surfaces. Instead of 2018 at Srinagar. This 62-kms alternate road will farming vegetables and other foods on a single level, such as in a field or a greenhouse, this method produces foods in vertically stacked layers commonly integrated into other structures like a skyscraper, shipping container or repurposed warehouse. Using Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) technology, this modern idea uses indoor farming techniques. The artificial control of temperature, light, humidity, and gases makes producing foods and medicine indoor possible. In many ways, vertical farming is similar to greenhouses where metal reflectors and artificial lighting augment natural sunlight. The primary goal of vertical farming is maximizing crops output in a limited

Firstly, the primary goal of vertical farming is producing more foods per square meter. To accomplish this goal, crops are cultivated in stacked layers in a tower life structure. Secondly, a perfect combination of natural and artificial lights is used to maintain the perfect light level in the room. Technologies such as rotating beds are used to improve lighting efficiency. Thirdly, instead of soil, aeroponic, aquaponic or hydroponic growing mediums are used. Peat moss or coconut husks and similar nonsoil mediums are very common in vertical farming. Finally, the vertical farming method uses various sustainability features to offset the energy cost of In fact, 1 acre (8 kanals) of an indoor area offers farming. In fact, vertical farming uses 95% less

Why vertical farming in J&K

As discussed above the agricultural land holding in Jammu & Kashmir is very less. Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently told RajyaSabha while highlighting the schemes introduced by his Government, that the three new farm laws seek to fulfill the aspirations of over 12 crore small and marginal farmers. Surely he meant to also include the farmers in Jammu and Kashmir as well. The Government is in the process of acquiring more than 600 acres of land for the Srinagar Ring Semi Road project in Jammu and Kashmir. Some villages in Pulwama, Budgam, and Srinagar are affected by the land acquisition process for this project. This high-

be constructed on highly fertile land. Budgam alone a lot of agricultural land during construction of Qazigund - Baramulla railway line. Due to urbanization a lot of paddy fields were converted into housing colonies around Srinagar, Budgam and Ganderbal districts. Shopping malls, hospitals, schools have come up on agricultural lands. Have we ever thought about our future generation? Will people in Kashmir valley be able to grow vegetables or paddy in 2050? No not at all. What is the solution? Why are our agri -scientists and researchers not coming forward and guiding people on vertical farming?

Advantages of Vertical farming

Vertical farming has a lot of advantages. However, there are some challenges as well. The advan-

**Preparation for the Future:** 

In the next 30 to 35 years around 70 % of the world population is expected to live in urban areas, and the population growth will demand more food. The efficient use of vertical farming may perhaps play a significant role in facing such challenges.

**Year-Round Crop Production:** equivalent production to at least 4-6 acres of outdoor capacity. According to an estimate, a 30-story building with a base area of 5 acres can potentially produce an equivalent of 2,400 acres of conventional horizontal farming. Additionally, year-round crop production is possible in a controlled indoor environment which is completely controlled by vertical farming technologies. This is indeed a very useful technique for a place like Kashmir in view of shrinking farm lands and harsh winter months Vertical farming allows us to produce crops with 70% to 95% less water than required for normal cultiva-

**Unfavorable Weather Conditions:** 

Crops in a field can be adversely affected by natural calamities such as torrential rains, cyclones. way project was inaugurated by Modi on May 19, flooding, snowfall or severe droughts-events which

are becoming increasingly common as a result of climate change. Indoor vertical farms are less likeis losing 500 acres of its farmlands. We already lost ly to feel the brunt of the unfavorable weather, providing greater certainty of harvest output through-

**Production of Organic Crops:** 

As crops are produced in a well-controlled indoor environment without the use of chemical pesticides, vertical farming allows us to grow pesticide-free and organic crops. Indoor vertical farming can significantly lessen the occupational hazards associated with traditional farming. Farmers are not exposed to hazards related to heavy farming equipment, diseases like malaria, poisonous chemicals and so on. As it does not disturb animals and trees inland areas, it is good for biodiversity as

**Challenges of Vertical farming** 

Vertical farming takes place in a controlled environment without the presence of insects. As such, the pollination process needs to be done manually, which will be labour intensive and costly. Labour costs can be even higher due to their concentration in urban centers where wages are higher, as well as the need for more skilled labor. Automation in vertical farms, however, may lead to the need for few-Thevertical farming ensures to produce more er workers. Manual pollination may become one of crops from the same square footage of growing area. the more labor-intensive functions in vertical farms. The development of better technologies can always increase efficiency and lessen costs. But the entire vertical farming is extremely dependent on various technologies for lighting, maintaining temperature, and humidity. Losing power for just a single day can prove very costly for a vertical farm.

Conclusion

The constant shrinking of agriculture land is a big challenge at global level as discussed above. For a place like Jammu & Kashmir the shrinking of agricultural land due to urbanization and population growth will lead to food crises in future. Vertical farming is the only hope now and our agriculture scientists, universities and research institutions need to shift their focus to on this particular way of

(The author is Founder & Chairman of J&K RTI Movement.) feedbackexcelsior@gmail.com

# Natives welcome ceasefire agreement

eace process means different things for different people. For people living alongside the LoC, ceasefire have revived their lives, brought peace and given security after about 10 years of war like situation prevailing in the border areas. The people in this belt were suffering from continuous shelling and firing across the LoC. The civilians living in exposed and vulnerable areas were the main victims of the shelling, because the shelling and firing was not hitting only army installations but bombs dropped in the villages, habitations and populated areas killed innocent people and cattle, destroyed crops and houses, stopped movement of natives, compelled them to take refuge in bunkers and houses, created harassment and tension and the habitants were not in a position to cultivate their lands, start commercial activities, attend institutions and neither they could organize social functions. The tension on the border had worsened after August 5, 2019, when special status of J&K was revoked, the Pakistan Army started indiscriminate and without provocation firing throughout the border especially in Tangdhar, Uri, Poonch, Mendhar, Rajouri, Nowshera, Sunderbani on the, R S Pura and Kathua District on international border. Pakistan also inducted terrorist during shelling for disturbing peaceful atmosphere inside Jammu and Kashmir. No doubt that befitting reply was given by the Indian forces but Pakistan continued this scenario to internationalize the situation.

After a year of some worst fighting on India's frontier with Pakistan and China both the neighours suddenly started talking about peace to defuse he situation by realizing that tension on the border shall not suit them on the border as well as on international forum. Therefore recently Chinese Foreign

Minister Wang Yi discussed plan to disengage cal backing also. The Indian National Security upper Kasba Village told that they are free from troops from Ladakh with his counterpart S. Jai Advisor Ajeet Doval and Moeed Yusuf Pakistan's regular harassment and depression due to threat to Shanker. Phone calls between the two foreign ministers which lasted for more than one hour came shortly after India and Pakistan released a joint statement announcing ceasefire on LoC and other sectors. These measures have some impact of new policy of engagement of president of America Joe Biden, because now there was no alternative for Pakistan to keep the pot boiling on the LoC.

According to ceasefire agreement on the LoC and other areas in J&K, the Armies of India and Pakistan have agreed ceasefire along the LoC and other sectors w.e.f. midnight of February 24 & 25 2021. The DGMO's held discussions and reviewed situation alongside the LoC and other sectors in free and frank atmosphere and declared-"in the interest of mutually beneficial and sustainable peace alongside the borders the DGMO's of India and Pakistan agreed to address each other core issues and concerned which have propensity to disturb peace and lead to violence"

This agreement have been reached in a very surprising manner as the talks were kept secret and after finalizing all the measures and steps, the announcement was made as a normal news, but it was the big news which has national and international dimensions. This agreement has broken the ice and talks between the two countries hopefully, shall resume in the near future. No doubt that it is a big step but a first step towards peace. It appears that more such steps are expected after ascertaining the effective enforcement of ceasefire on the LoC and other sectors. This development is likely to give relief to civilians residing in border areas on both

The above said DGMOs agreement has politi-

Advisor Ajeet Doval and Moeed Yusuf Pakistan's regular harassment and depression due to threat to Special Assistant to National Security division were in touch with these talks which led to ceasefire and set the modalities for sustainable peace on the LoC and other sectors. Yusuf Confirmed to reporters in Islamabad that two countries made efforts behind the scene in a very calm atmosphere away from press and media which resulted ceasefire agree-

The ceasefire on the border was firstly effected on Nov 23, 2003 on Eid-ul-Fitr by Pak PM and the then Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee responded positively and agreed with proposal of ceasefire which was enforced on November 26, 2003. This ceasefire successfully continued upto 2011 and not even a single violation was reported during this period. By encouraging from this ceasefire, during 2005-06, two routes on the LoC namely 46 kms Poonch-Rawlakote Road and 55 Kms Slamabad Uri- Muzaffarabad road were opened to divided families living on both the sides of LoC. During 2008 cross LoC trade was also started to provide trade avenues to the people residing near the LoC. After 2011 Pakistan again started violating the ceasefire agreement. During last 10 years the ceasefire violation has become a routine matter due to which the trade and travel across the LoC was also stopped and even the trade center Poonch was bombarded by Pakistan. After August 5, a war like situation was witnessed by the habitants of bor-

The natives of border belt have welcomed the ceasefire and feel secure and protected from indiscriminate firing and shelling in their localities across the LoC. Mohd Jamil Sarpanch of worst hit

life. Parvinder Singh Sarpanch of Village Degwar was of the opinion that we should wait and watch the response of Pakistan's behaviour because in the past also ceasefire was declared a number of times but later on violated by Pakistan.

Kirni Mandhar is another worst hit village located exactly on the LoC. A native of this village Rashid Ahmed while appreciating the decision told that they were not in a position to come out from the bunkers and houses and have now started normal life after 10 years. He further added that there is a need of strict vigil on on the LoC because there is apprehension of crossing the border by the militants who are sitting on the launching pads on the other sides of this area.

Karmara is a last inhabited village on Poonch-Rawlakote road which is touching the LoC. Mohd Sharif Sarpanch of this village told that they rejoiced the moment by drum beatings after a long time. The families residing in this area have also started social functions and inviting friends and relatives to their houses. The habitants have again got an opportunity of secured life with honour and dignity. By thanking both the countries he said that the peace may be prolonged on the LoC which is in the interest of border people and need for friendly relation between the two countries.

It is a fact that ceasefire will provide huge relief to people living in border areas alongside the LoC on both the sides and open the gates for further steps towards normalcy. However, it is also important for the defense forces to be on vigil, alert and in preparedness on the border and inside Jammu and Kashmir to face the challenges on the border and to combat terrorism inside the area

feedbackexcelsior@gmail.com

(The views expressed by the authors are their personal)