Proposal to cultivate medicinal species

KT NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR, Mar 14: The state contains more than 2500 plant species used in Indian System of Medicinal Plants out of which 45 to 50 species are on the verge of extinction. The statistics were divulged by speakers during a four day meet of working group set up for planning of medicinal plants in the state.

The meet concluded today and officials from forest department, doctors of ISM, voluntary groups, traders collectors and exporters from different districts participated in the meet.

Dr C M Seth, chief conservator forests and convenor of the working group and A R Wadoo, CCF Kashmir, in their lectures, said the state is rich in such resources and their scientific management can boost the state economy and ensure security of health.

Out of 2500 species, they said, 90 percent are extracted from wild which has resulted in over and unscientific exploitation. They expressed need for a project involving people from all fields in the sector to achieve the goal.

Dr Kabir Dar, OSD State Medicinal Plant board and SS Jamwal, president confederation of voluntary organisations also attended the consultations.

The participants, according to (Contd. on page 4, col. 1)

From Tashi Morup

LILH, Mar 14: Producers of the finest quality Pashmina now rely on raw goat skin bought from meat vendors to make their livelihood. Kharmak-ling, a fresh ghetto in Choglamasar near Leh town has about 80 families migrated from the nomadic areas of Changthang, majority of them from remote Kharmak in the eastern Ladakh.

From nomadic lifestyle they have resigned to either selling de-haired Pashmin from the hides bought at high prices or work as labourers to earn their daily bread.

Out of 93 families 43 have already migrated to Leh from Kharmak and more are likely to follow suit. Most of the migrations took place in the recent decade. Most evidently the breaking up of traditional joint families based on polyandry system has been the main factor behind this distress migration. A large livestock including sheep, goats, yaks and horses grazing on limited range forage in Changthang wilderness demand an efficient management by the individual families and enough family members to do it. Co-operative sense seems to be confined to relatives and that too finds difficult to carry on in more populated Changthang facing shortage of pasture today.

Through the ages, Polyandry practice among the Changpa nomads has been significant not only in sustaining a large livestock but also this system of brothers-sharing-everything restricted the population growth. However, split up of such joint families not only affected the population growth but also left them in want of men to efficiently deal with the livestock ranging from 200 to 500 per family. Presently livestock population grazing on Kharmak pastures is 18193. And more-than-ever number of families to rely on this livestock, which remains more or less static due to limited pasture.

According to an official source, revenue record tells the initial figure of just eight households in Kharmak, which has today multiplied into 93 families. And according to the census carried out by Leh Nutrition Project (LNP) in 1993, the community consisted of 67 families. This means increase of 26 families in just a decade. And there are reports about three more cases of family split up recently.

And it is their sheer inability to cope with the harsh conditions that force especially the small families to quit nomadic lifestyle. In joint family system members are relatively less insecure in this remote and severely cold desert sans medical and educational facilities. Passable Dollius has aptly described about Kharmak in his paper Mountain Deities Among the Nomadic Community of Kharmak published in Recent Research on Ladakh, Volume 8: "The nomadic community of Kharmak is located on the Chang-thang plateau of eastern Ladakh, bound to the north by the Karakoram range and to the east by the Tibetan Plateau. It is one of the nomadic communities living on the south bank of the Indus River, at an average elevation of 4350m along with the Rupshu pa and the Korzok pa. In the region where the Kharmak pa live, there is no lake. The main streams fluctuate considerably in volume."

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Recoered 200 kilogram RDX, 30 litres acetone, 2 bundles of copper wires, sulphuric acid, hydrochloric acid, sulphuric cylinder. The 200 kilos RDX was packed in 5 gunny bags 40 kilos each. The bags were hidden in plastic barrel.

Security forces busted another hideout in Mahore and recovered 42 rounds of AK ammunition, 3 AK magazines, 24 UMG rounds, two hand grenades and eight UBGL grenades.

Tashi Morup

Former Director General of Punjab Police KPS Gill lighting the traditional lamp to inaugurate national seminar on Global Terrorism at Jammu University. Union MoS Home Dr Swami, VC JU Prof Amritpal, Matto and Hq Prof Kewal Kour also seen. —KT photo/Afzal Shah

Breaking of joint families sends Chang-pas to ghettos

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In different seasons and are completely frozen in winter. The landscape is mountainous, bare and rugged. Except for patches of grassy land confined to the immediate vicinity of springs, vegetation is scarce and is dominated by woody tussock plants. The climate is extreme with great diurnal variations, a harsh winter with heavy snowfall and temperatures falling to 35 degree centigrade; a brief summer, which is pleasantly warm and dry, but with sudden storms.”

Under these circumstances a family has multifold duties to perform ranging from grazing livestock and community obligations to taking a sick family member all the way to Leh for treatment, and even from other household activities. January 24 this year (11th month as per the local calendar), a day before Kharmak community moves from Ldak, the main encampment. The pack animals horses and yaks were just brought down from high pastures in the adjacent valleys. Except for kids everybody had a job to do preparing for early morning Rebo (camp) move to another camp Tsamartse, which was about three hours distance.

During such hectic moments the advantage of a joint family over small one is most visible. In the family of 46-years-old Tsering Phunsok works were shared by his younger brother Sonam Deldan, his wife Skalzang Illma, daughter Dolma Chondol and the monk son Jigmjet Chonjor. Another son Jigmjet Yangjor was taking care of the fully-grown sheep and goats kept at Yagam camp, 40-kilometers away from Ldak. And Phunsok can afford his youngest son studying in Jammu.

Thus preparations were smooth for Phunsok's big family, but it was a testing time for his nephew Jigmjet Lobzang. He had just his elder sister besides him, Lobzang's parents, wife and school-going kids live at Kharmak-ling in Leh and his elder brother has joined Ladakh Scouts. Lobzang's father was the eldest among three sons of Sonam Targias (70) and Pagsang Dolma (74). But he decided to separate from the main family to look after his own. And his two younger brothers Phunsok and Deldan settled for one wife.

Meanwhile, Phunsok's two-room house at Kharmak-ling Bagplol was burnt down. His ten-year-old son, who goes to a primary school in Leh.

Similarly, another nomad Skarma Targais walked on snow for days crossing high passes to reach Leh for his ailing pregnant wife in Kharmak. She was brought in an unconscious state to Leh in helicopter. "Khorang Shis Marshia Dugpin, Thugu Ning Malus (she was as good as dead, but the baby did not survive)," Skarma said recalling the most tragic moment in his life. He is now got class IV job in a government school in Nyoma. There are several similar cases. Most recently a six-year-old child suffering from cold died even after he was brought to Leh for treatment. A Nursing Officer and an ANM in the name of medical facility for entire community do not help much in case of serious illness. And their rare presence to complete absence during difficult winter only adds to the problem.

And modern demand of education for the growing children has further crippled the management of livestock especially for the increasung nuclear family. As young children play active role in taking herds to graze. The present ill-designed government school system has failed in this area and more and more nomads would like to send their kids to schools in Leh. Nun members of the families too have stopped continuing as an active participant in the nomadic work unlike before when they had strictly religious lives. These changes have also contributed to the severe shortage of armi-lag (manpower) in taking care of their large livestock often leading the families specially the nuclear ones to a crisis situation. Actual calumities has been reported to the government about the considerable reduction in livestock the further make nomads of Changthang highly vulnerable. "Changpe Nor Tang Gang-ge Riling" this nomadic proverb meaning Changthang is like sheep and goat dung stop a knob tells the uncertainty about their property (livestock).

Swami calls on Mutfi

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were fired upon from within a room.

The police team was searching the hotel after a tip-off that a group of three to four members of the drug squad, who were planning major strikes in Poonch town, were staying there, Gupta said.

He said as soon as the police team opened the door of one room, a heavy volume of fire came from inside killing DSP Manjeet Singh and the constable.

Soon, a heavy posse of policemen rushed to the area and a stiff encounter began with the holed Ultras, he said.

Meanwhile, panic gripped the Rajouri town this evening when local residents found cardless phone lying on a chemist shop near Subhol bridge. The other shopkeepers shut down the shutters of their shops. Bomb disposal squad were pressed into service and during the checking it turned as hoax.

Swami calls on Mutfi